

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

Facts Sheet – Regarding SFY 2011 Governor’s Request

- **IDPR oversees 30 state parks which includes 3 recreational trails, CDA Parkway,**

Trail of the Coeur d’Alene’s, Ashton-Tetonia Trail

- IDPR manages Boat launches, campgrounds, day use areas, providing customer Service and providing a safe environment for families and groups.
- **IDPR manages the state wide grant programs (\$7-\$10 million):**
 - **RV grants**
 - **Developing campgrounds and improvements to them**
 - **Water Ways Improvement Grants**
 - **Boat docks, pilings, and breakwaters Off Road Motor Vehicle Grants**
 - **Recreational Trails Program Grants**
 - **Trails – non motorized and motorized**
 - **Land and Water Conservation Grants leveraged \$65 million in funding over the years**
 - **Development of city and county parks, Playgrounds**
- **IDPR manages the Statewide Trail Maintenance Program that benefits 36 counties**
 - **Clear over 1,500 miles of trail annually by removing downed trees, and installing water drainage structures.**
 - **Reconstruct worn out or damaged trail using Trail Cats**
- **IDPR manages the largest snowmobile grooming program in the west. This consists of grooming over 5600 miles of groomed trails in the backcountry of Idaho for Idaho’s snowmobilers and the countless out-of-state snowmobilers that visit our state. This benefits 39 counties in Idaho.**
 - **For example, tens of thousands of snowmobilers travel to Valley County to access the 500 miles of groomed trails in the region that provide you with great snow, beautiful scenery and endless back-country sledding opportunities.**
 - **While snowmobiling in Valley County, visitors spend an average \$316 per person per trip, or \$106 per person, per day.**

- **IDPR manages the registration program for:**
 - **52,212 Snowmobiles**
 - **131,961 Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)**
 - **91,612 Boats**
 - **Under the guidance of the county these funds provide facilities and education to Idaho boaters and the County Marine Deputies.**
 - **Once received, IDPR distributes funding to 41 of Idaho's counties based on the individual designations received during the registration process.**
 - **These systems require fiscal and programming support resulting in a high level of accuracy.**
- **Idaho's State Parks, partnering with neighboring communities, attract more than 4.2 million visitors annually.**
 - **1.3 million of those visitors are traveling from another state, bringing with them new money to contribute to rural Idaho economies – on average spending \$297 per party on non-lodging expenditures while they're here. This from a 2008 study by Longwoods International for the Idaho Department of Commerce.**
- **Over the last 4 years, IDPR received an unprecedented amount of funding to fix desperately needed buildings and infrastructure. New campgrounds, cabins, docks, and infrastructure were built to accommodate IDPR's increasing customers. Many are still in construction.**
 - **38 restrooms statewide renovated from Priest Lake to Bear Lake**
 - **32 roofs statewide**
 - **Central sewer system at Farragut and Heyburn State Parks along with repairs at Round Lake, Eagle Island.**
 - **Campgrounds at Farragut, Ponderosa, City of Rocks, Cascade Lake State Park**
 - **Over the last three years, IDPR has gotten over \$40 million of projects on the ground with many still in process. These involve design, bidding, contract management, paying of bills and construction administration.**
 - **So, with the focus being for IDPR to increase revenues, requests by the agency to build revenue producing facilities have been denied, even though they were requested to be built with IDPR dedicated funds and would produce a positive cash flow – allowing them to reduce their dependence on general funds. Why wouldn't the Governor want IDPR to develop revenue producing projects?**
- **IDPR has over 60,000 acres of parkland to administer. Included in these properties are over \$265 million worth of water rights that continually need review, updating, and monitoring – especially critical during the North Idaho Water Rights Adjudication process currently underway.**

- **IDPR is an active participant in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing and relicensing of dams . We are the only agency representing public recreation and aesthetic interests regarding hydro licensing mitigation often resulting in improved recreational facilities.**

With very little notice, the Governor has decided that IDPR needs to:

- 1. Reduce its staff by 25.**
- 2. Cut its budget by \$4.5 million in general funds and replace these by:**
 - a. Robbing from the Recreational Vehicle Fund \$2 million of what would normally be granted to public entities to fix existing campgrounds or RV dump stations.**
 - b. By laying off 25 staff save \$1.1 million. These staff perform many of the duties listed above.**
 - c. By reducing fund balances that normally are used for park openings, retail sales purchases, and from moorage and cabin leases usually earmarked for making improvements to those same marinas, docks, and infrastructure associated with the cabins - \$1.4 million.**

If it seems too good to be true – it often is

- 1. By laying off these staff, keeping in mind all the functions IDPR performs, how will IDPR actually get these duties completed along with keeping the public safe? Volunteers currently provide a great deal of assistance to IDPR, over 80,000 hours– is it realistic to presume that they can pick up the loss of 25 professional IDPR staff? Will these layoffs result in less customer safety, less maintenance, more gang activities, and actual loss in revenues because of this action?**
- 2. By robbing from the RV public who annually pay their RV registration fees won't this have a long term impact on cities, counties, and the state keeping up with maintenance when a great deal of these funds went to them in the form of grants for just that purpose?**
- 3. Isn't it short sighted to drain the fund balances of a Department that uses those balances to begin operations in its parks, stores, marinas, and other park functions?**
- 4. And lastly, why is it that IDPR is the only agency that needs to do this immediately? Why wasn't it allowed to phase in this change, since many of the activities that IDPR promotes are not revenue producers like – providing education to classrooms on historical properties, observatory classes, and lessons in nature? They've hosted the World Masters in McCall where over 1,800 visitors from around the world participated and the economy of McCall and the state benefited. Or the Special Olympics or the many cross country races that benefit communities and our youth. These were held without regard to "making a profit" as the community and the state benefited. If the focus is for IDPR to "run like a business", these activities will need to pay their way. A phased approach would greatly help. Why was that not an option?**

Some Bullet Points for Legislative contacts

State parks generate \$40 million in local communities every year.

State parks attract tourists who would not otherwise be pay sales and gasoline taxes in Idaho.

It is a legitimate function of government to set aside public land for public enjoyment.

If state parks are forced to raise fees to the point where people quit visiting, that will not be positive for Idaho.

State parks host thousands of school kids each year for free on field trips. If they start charging for those, who is going to pay? Schools? Parents?

Getting state parks to pay from themselves seems like a fine idea, but it has not worked in a single state park system in the country. Why would it work in Idaho?

Few state agencies actually bring revenue into the state through sales taxes. Why reduce funding so dramatically to one that does?

Your personal experiences: If you've enjoyed camping or visiting a state park, please tell them so, and name the park you enjoyed.