

# YOUR IDAHO

*A Stewardship Guidebook*



PRESENTED BY IDAHO REALTORS®







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# INTRODUCTION

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On behalf of your 1.9 million neighbors, welcome to Idaho! Whether you are new to the Gem State or a lifelong resident, you're part of the enduring fabric of this great state. As you probably already know, Idaho is a special place that is rich in natural resources with a landscape as diverse as anywhere on earth. From the timbered forests and pristine lakes of the north, to Central Idaho's jagged peaks, to the wide-open vistas of the Snake River Plain, to the vibrant cities and high-desert geography of the south, Idaho has it all.

A tradition of caring for Idaho started over ten thousand years ago with the Indigenous people that hunted and gathered throughout the state. Idaho later attracted generations of explorers, settlers, fur traders, missionaries and miners who sought to stake their claim in this exciting territory. Today, the lure of Idaho's beauty, opportunity, and natural splendor prove to be more irresistible than ever. As people discover Idaho and the population burgeons, Idaho REALTORS® invites our new and existing community members to continue in the Idaho tradition of stewarding the land, water, and wildlife while being a good neighbor to their fellow Idahoans.

Idaho REALTORS® is the largest trade organization in the state, and its members are in front of either a buyer or seller in nearly every real estate transaction that occurs. REALTORS® adhere to a Code of Ethics which "...supports the highest and best use of land and distribution of land ownership, the creation of adequate housing, the building of functioning cities, the development of productive industries and farms, and preserving a healthful environment."

**The first sentence to the preamble to the REALTOR® Code of Ethics is: *Under all is the land.***

We believe that to know Idaho is to love Idaho. In our love for the state, we realize it's up to each of us to care for, support, and protect what we appreciate most about Idaho. Thank you for joining us on a discovery of understanding the privilege and responsibility that comes with being an Idahoan and owning land in the Gem State. Welcome!

## *Why Did We Create This Book?*

As Idaho's population continues to increase, Idaho REALTORS® recognized an opportunity to welcome and inform our neighbors about how we can make a positive difference in the common goal of keeping Idaho clean, beautiful, and plentiful.

We created Your Idaho: A Stewardship Guidebook with the goal of providing a visually appealing introduction to property owners that is informative, creates a sense of community, and plants the seeds of conservancy for a land we love and cherish.

Idaho REALTORS® care about the people and communities we serve and understand that with our role as ambassadors to new residents comes the responsibility to promote good stewardship for the future of Idaho. We invite all to become involved in this worthwhile mission.

Sincerely,



**Denise Lundy**

Idaho REALTORS® 2023 President

# WELCOME TO IDAHO

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*Esto Perpetua* is the motto of the great state of Idaho. It means *let it be perpetual*.





## *Geological Formation*

Idaho is quite varied in its landscape and scenery, with so many natural wonders to explore. Some fascinating geographical features were born from geothermal and volcanic activity, shifting tectonic plates, the great Lake Missoula glacial flood, and the draining of the ancient Lake Idaho. The Craters of the Moon National Park, with its vast and eerie lava fields, was even used by NASA as a training ground for astronauts headed to the moon! So, whether you like rolling plains, sage-steppe foothills, rugged and diverse mountain ranges, or world-class rivers, you're in luck. The staycation options are limitless when you have Hells Canyon, the deepest canyon in the country, the Bruneau and Saint Anthony Sand Dunes, the class V rapids of Succor Creek, the secret aquamarine pools of Blue Heart Springs, seemingly endless forests, and pristine alpine lakes flanked by granite cirques. Idaho's landscape and the opportunities it offers are astonishingly diverse.



*Top: Balanced Rock | Photo by Lisa Haney*  
*Bottom: Snowyside Pass | Photo by Denise Lundy*



*French Canadian fur trappers inspired the name Coeur d'Alene.  
(French for "heart of the awl") | Photo by Lisa Haney*

## *Our Population & People*

Idaho has a rich cultural history which started with its Native People. Today, tribal nations in Idaho include the Shoshone-Bannock, Shoshone-Paiute, Coeur d'Alene, Kootenai, and Nez Perce. These tribal members created a legacy of stewardship that sets a high standard for future generations.

Spanish explorers came west and introduced the indigenous people to domestic animals and crops. Next came Lewis and Clark's expedition, followed by French Canadian fur trappers who inspired the name Coeur d'Alene (French for "heart of the awl") and Boise (le Bois in French, meaning the trees). Chinese came to work in the mines during the gold boom. Immigrants from Europe, Asia, and all over the world helped perform hard labor in the mining industries and built the railroads that connected the West to the rest of America. Hispanic settlers became a large part of Idaho's agricultural success. Basque people came from Spain as sheep herders

and farmers. Today, Idaho has the largest Basque population outside of Europe. In the late 1800s, pioneers and settlers spent years engineering and digging canals to bring water from various rivers, like the Snake and Boise, to the early farms spreading across Idaho. In the 1930's, an elite group of Austrians and Germans were imported to teach skiing in Sun Valley!

While diverse in cultural heritage, these hard-working people shaped and enriched Idaho with a wealth of traditions, cuisines, and cultural interests. We're glad to weave you into the richly diverse fabric of Idaho.

Today, Idaho offers opportunities for a diverse workforce with industries including tourism and recreation, food production, aerospace, technology, energy, and manufacturing, to name just a few.





*Sawtooth Mountains | Photo by Denise Lundy*

## Geography

It's no wonder that Idaho is known as the Wilderness State, with nearly 62% of its land being public lands and 14% of public land being designated wilderness areas. That's almost 33 million acres for exploration and adventure and a big draw for our tourism and recreation industries. When describing how preserved wilderness areas truly improve the quality of life for Idaho residents, former Governor Cecil Andrus referred to our public lands as "our second paycheck." This is why so many people flock to Idaho for an adventure holiday each year; it's home to the most navigable miles of whitewater in the lower 48 states and boasts 115 named mountain ranges. Idaho has over one hundred peaks over 11,000 feet in elevation and eight peaks that reach over 12,000 feet. The state's tallest mountain, Mt. Borah, reaches 12,662 feet.



*Idaho's capital city, Boise | Photo by Sean Paul*



*Shoshone Falls | Photo by Lisa Haney*

### **North**

Renowned for its world-class lakes, mountains, rivers, scenic byways, and ski resorts.

### **North Central**

An adventure base for the wilderness exploration, farming communities, spring wildflower blooms, rafting, and fishing.

### **Central**

Adventure awaits among its jagged peaks, whitewater, alpine lakes, and valley ranches.

### **South Central**

Surprises include lava flows, canyons, bluffs, waterfalls, and the Snake River.

### **Southwest**

Home to the capital city of Boise, easily accessible trails, rivers, skiing, and sand dunes.

### **Eastern**

The Gateway to Yellowstone, trout fishing, trails, rivers, sand dunes, and mountain views.

### **Southeast**

Enjoy hot springs, mountain lakes, trails, farming communities and the Idaho Potato Museum.



## Farming & Ranching

Agriculture is an essential part of Idaho's history and economy. The Idaho Century Farm and Ranch program recognizes and honors the many families that have farmed their land for over one hundred years.

These pioneers opened the door to Idaho's current agricultural success as the number one producer in the nation of potatoes, barley, alfalfa and a major producer of peppermint, sugar beets, hops, cheese and milk, onions, dried peas, and lentils. Idaho's leading fruit crop is apples with the climate also allowing for the growth of grapes and many stone fruits.

Over 24,000 farms and ranches around the state contribute to Idaho's 20 billion dollars per year food and beverage industry. In Idaho's agricultural areas, there are courtesies you will want to become familiar with in regard to etiquette toward open ranges and crops. Living near farms and ranches can sometimes require a bit of patience and understanding of the

agricultural way of life. Next time you're on the road behind slow-moving farm equipment, be understanding; they are doing important work!

While farming is a large business in Idaho, it's also made up of many smaller independent farm operations, too. Frequenting farmers' markets and choosing Idaho-grown products in the supermarket is a great way to support our farmers and local economy.



**24,000**

FARMS & RANCHES IN IDAHO



**\$20 BILLION / YR**

FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY



*Idaho's world-famous potatoes*



With a population of 1.9 million people and 2.5 million cows, there are far more cattle than people in Idaho. So it's not surprising that cows comprise the second-largest sector of our agricultural economy, making Idaho the third-largest producer of cheese and milk in the nation. By choosing Idaho beef, you're likely supporting an independent rancher. Many of Idaho's cattle ranches have been operating in the same family for as many as five generations. The best thing about Idaho's farm and ranch industry is the endless possibilities for buying quality, locally produced food.

Whether you purchase Idaho dairy products from the grocery store, farmers' market, or directly from the farm, you are supporting one of Idaho's nearly 500 dairy farms—all of which are family owned and operated, according to the Idaho Department of Agriculture.



## *Wineries and Breweries*

Idaho boasts over 65 wineries and over 1,300 acres of vineyards producing award-winning wines in this rapidly growing industry. You might enjoy the Sunnyslope Wine Trail or Boise's Urban Wine District.

The state's unique climate and soil make it an ideal location for grape cultivation, and Idaho's wine industry has been growing steadily over the years. In fact, Idaho's wine production has more than doubled in the last decade alone, with many of the state's wineries winning prestigious awards for their varietals. Next time you're searching for a bottle of wine, why not seek out an Idaho label?

Idaho also has over 50 craft breweries and counting. With the exponential production of barley and hops, the largest breweries in the nation buy their ingredients from Idaho. There are likely opportunities near you to support a local brewer and an Idaho hops farmer.

Cheers to Idaho!

*Idaho's wine production has more than doubled in the last decade.  
Photo by Tina Witherspoon*



*There are far more cattle than people in Idaho. | Photo by Iga Palacz*



# CARING FOR IDAHO'S NATURAL RESOURCES

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Idaho's deep-rooted tradition of preserving and protecting the land, wildlife, and water has been carried out in a combined and multi-faceted effort. In caring for Idaho's natural resources, the business community, both aisles of the legislature, governmental departments, conservationists, special interest groups, and the public have played a part in working together to strike a balance between realizing the economic benefit of natural resources and looking to best stewardship practices.

There are many such examples of environmental and conservation success stories throughout the state where stakeholders have come together to solve problems and to improve our environmental legacy.

Whether it be cleaning up mine tailings to restore a river to its pristine state, building rails to trails pathways, cleaning up the Boise River and building a greenbelt along the capital city's corridor, enhancing forestry practices, or preserving public lands for future generations; Idahoans have established a tradition of working together to care for the state's natural resources. Our mutual respect and love for this land binds us as Idahoans.

If you'd like to get involved, there are countless organizations throughout the state that promote stewardship, connect people with the land, and help educate people on why a healthy ecosystem is essential for our future and the future of our wildlife.

*“ You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending. ”*

*—C.S. Lewis*



*Bull Moose*



## CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP

An example of an excellent conservation effort brought to fruition in Idaho is the creation of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area in Central Idaho.

The beautiful Salmon River is among the longest free-flowing rivers in the country. On Lewis and Clark's expedition, William Clark was deterred from passing the Salmon River, with its churning rapids and sheer rock walls creating a gorge deeper than the Grand Canyon. Clark deemed it 'The River of No Return.'

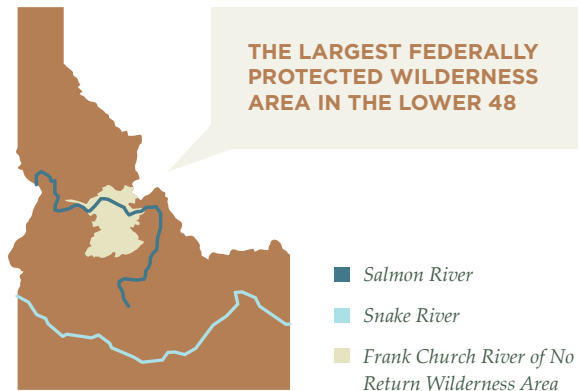
Fast forward about 175 years, and this rugged and wild area was declared a wilderness area, a protection still in place today. The Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area, at nearly 2.4 million acres, is the largest contiguous federally managed wilderness area in the United States, excluding Alaska. The enormous wilderness area spans five national forests and includes portions of the Main Salmon, Middle Fork of the Salmon, and Selway Rivers, all popular for whitewater adventure.

As one of the most remote places in the nation, the wilderness area provides a tranquil respite for rafting or fly fishing on the rugged Salmon River, viewing wildlife, discovering ancient pictographs, stargazing under a blanket of stars, hiking, and connecting with nature.



*Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area*

Through bold action, many special places in Idaho have been preserved and protected for future generations. Carrying forward the indigenous peoples' tradition of caring for the land, wildlife, and water, Idahoans have demonstrated a will to preserve and protect Idaho's wild and special places.





## WILDLIFE

Idaho's valleys, marshes, mountains, and waterways are essential to maintaining a healthy ecosystem for the state's wildlife.

Whether it's the nimble mountain goats that roam our wilderness areas, the majestic moose sipping cool water from within the reeds along a lake's shore, or the salmon that travel hundreds of miles back from the ocean to spawn, all of Idaho's wildlife depend on safe habitat and cool, clean water to thrive.

Remember that even the peskiest of critters—a bat resting in your soffits, a flicker pecking at your wood siding, a deer

browsing the buffet of your prized garden—were all here before you, and that these nuisances can bring you joy when considering you're in Idaho, they play an important role in the ecosystem, and it's part of the adventure!

As Idaho's population grows, we are seeing an increase in housing built in what's known as the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), or the zone where humans and their development intermix with wildland habitat. In part, this human encroachment drives wildlife into urban areas. These interactions can create stress for wildlife, but there are ways that we can coexist while minimizing conflict.





*Left: Sockeye Salmon  
Photo by Zack Disraeli  
(Disraeli Photography)*

*Center: Chipmunk  
Photo by Lisa Haney*

*Below: Mule Deer  
Photo by Lisa Haney*

### **Resist the urge to feed**

As cute and photogenic as they are, wild critters should not be fed. Feeding deer, for example, can lead to increased roadkill, invite predators into neighborhoods, and can cause a host of other problems for deer, not to mention inviting deer to munch their way through your landscape plants!

### **Keep a safe distance**

Whether out in the backcountry or in your own backyard, give wild creatures plenty of space and consider the impact humans can have on their natural world.





### **Keep a safe distance (continued)**

Chasing wild animals causes stress and the expenditure of precious calories. Keeping your dog on a leash and not getting too close to animals, whether on foot, horseback, or on a motorized vehicle, will help the animals thrive. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game website has important information on wildlife harassment issues. For example, dogs harassing wild game can legally be shot in Idaho. Humans who chase wildlife with snow machines are also liable under state law for harassment of wildlife.

Everyone loves to capture wildlife with photography. Remember to give animals a wide berth and resist the urge to sneak up on wildlife or get too close. It's always best to respect Idaho's wildlife by enjoying their beauty from a distance.

The awe of Idaho's wildlife is universally inspiring. To see a bald eagle swoop to grab a fish in its talons, hear an elk bugling, spot a bighorn sheep in the mountains, or watch a Monarch butterfly sail by is motivation enough to want to do our part to ensure our grandchildren are afforded these same experiences.



*Left: Idaho's state bird, the Mountain Bluebird | Photo by Christie Green  
Below: Black Bear | Photo by Pete Nuij*





Elk herd | Photo by Lisa Haney





Coeur d'Alene River | Photo by Clay Elliot

## WATER IN IDAHO

Water is on the forefront of everyone's mind these days, and for good reason. In Idaho, all the water in the state that is flowing through its natural channels, including all springs, lakes, and groundwater within the state is deemed to be public water.

*“ When the well’s dry, we know  
the worth of water. ”*

*—Benjamin Franklin*

## *Water Rights & Usage*

Water rights refer to the authorization to use water in a prescribed manner, such as for irrigation, but not to own the water itself. In Idaho, the priority of water rights is determined on a 'first in time, first in right' basis. The priority date for a water right is determined based on when the diverted public water was first put to beneficial use or when the application and permit process was filed through the Idaho Department of Water Resources, and this varies depending on whether it is groundwater or surface water. A water right priority date is significant because it determines who gets water when there is a shortage. For instance, the oldest and most senior water rights are satisfied first, followed by the priority dates in sequential order until no water is left. At this point, new or junior water rights only get water when there is enough to go around. It's worth noting that a water right or portion of it could be lost if not used for a continuous five-year period.





“ *The earth, the air, the land, and the water are not an inheritance from our forefathers but on loan from our children. So, we have to hand over to them at least as it was handed over to us.* ”

—Ghandi

If you've purchased a property with a stream or creek flowing through or bordering it, it's essential to contact the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) to learn about what property rights you may have. Refer to the Idaho Stream Channel Protection Act before making any alterations or diverting water from the waterway. Also, be sure to protect and enhance the water-loving shrubs and grasses along the banks of the waterway. This riparian vegetation protects the stream from erosion and pollution.

As Idaho's population continues to grow, and we have sustained drought years, it's critical that we all do our part to conserve water. This will ensure our aquifers are being restored (recharged) and not depleted (mined). By ensuring our groundwater is being replenished, we will have water for all of our residents and industries alike.

## *Drinking Water*

While there are some exceptions, such as spring water and lake property owners that draw water from the lake and run it through a filtration system, most of Idaho's drinking water is sourced from either municipal wells or private wells, many of which pull water from an aquifer.

## *Private Wells*

If your property has a private well, a domestic well can be used to serve your home and to irrigate up to one-half acre of land, so long as the total use is not in excess of 13,000 gallons per day. The Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) has more detailed information on wells used for domestic purposes.

# Aquifers

There are approximately 70 named aquifers in Idaho, three of which are deemed to be Sole Source Aquifers. This designation provides extra protection because these aquifers supply at least fifty percent of the drinking water for the service area, and there is no reasonably available alternate drinking water source should the aquifer become contaminated. The three Idaho aquifers that have this special designation are:

- 1 The Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer**, which lies under approximately 370 miles of land in Idaho and Washington. It is about ten trillion gallons in volume.
- 2 The Lewiston Basin Aquifer**, which provides water to the Lewiston Orchards Irrigation District in Idaho and some domestic water for the city of Lewiston, Idaho.

- 3 The Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer**, which provides water to a large population, provides irrigation to three million acres of farmland and discharges 2.6 trillion gallons per year into the Snake River. It lies under an area of 10,800 square miles. The groundwater stored in this aquifer is equivalent in size to Lake Erie!

We are lucky to have these world-class aquifers in Idaho. They are crucial to our state's prosperity. There is higher demand than ever for our state's water. In recent years, groundwater users in some areas have entered into an agreement to reduce usage to prevent the decline of the aquifer and in an effort to recharge the source.



MAP OF THE SOLE SOURCE AQUIFERS IN THE UNITED STATES

## *Irrigation*

A great deal of Idaho's water resources, especially in the Snake River Basin, is used for Idaho's robust agricultural industry. Farmers and ranchers have made strong efforts to conserve water usage in recent years due to increased use and continued drought conditions. Progress has been made by farmers switching from flood systems to more efficient pressurized systems, or center pivots, which are sprinkler systems connected to an arm that slowly moves, applying water directly to the crop to reduce water loss.

Even more efficient are micro irrigation systems, which deliver water directly to the plant's root zone through hoses embedded in the soil.

While not practical for every crop or farm size, micro irrigation systems use up to 50% less water than typical sprinkler systems.

If you own a farm, ranch, or timberland, there are programs and resources available that you could learn about by consulting your local soil and water conservation district. There are conservation programs including grants and low-interest loans for purchasing equipment to implement conservation measures that address soil and water issues, like improving riparian areas and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat.

*Canada Goose and goslings | Photo by Lisa Haney*

## *Water for Habitat*

From the eagles feasting on spent Kokanee salmon in Coeur d'Alene Lake to the migratory birds visiting the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, wildlife and water in Idaho are immeasurably intertwined. If you are lucky enough to have wetlands on your property, you can help sustain wildlife by keeping them wild and healthy. You will support the countless birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and fish that depend on that habitat.







Coeur d'Alene Lake | Photo by Denise Lundy

Wetland habitats are vital to the countless species that depend on these riparian grasses, shrubs, and trees that cool water temperatures and keep the water clean by preventing runoff, erosion, and sedimentation. Cool, clean waters are necessary for salmon and steelhead to successfully complete their circle of life.

The natural vegetation in riparian areas plays an essential role in the health and vitality of many species of wildlife as well as the water's quality. Wetland habitat is especially important to endangered and threatened fish species.

Idaho Fish and Game has a *Habitat Improvement Program (HIP)*, funded by license dollars, that provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and public land managers who want to enhance habitat for upland game birds and waterfowl.

## *Water for Recreation*

Idaho is a renowned playground for water sports enthusiasts, with more than 2,000 lakes and 93,000 miles of named streams and rivers. Water recreation is one of the driving factors of our tourism industry. Recreating responsibly means following protocol to ensure against the transport of invasive species so we can help keep Idaho's waterways clean and healthy. Be a partner in Idaho's *Don't Move a Mussel* program by taking care to *Clean, Drain, Dry* all parts of your boat, bilges, and fish wells to ensure against the transport of invasive species. Adhering to boating speed and no wake zones are important in stopping erosion that could change the chemical makeup of a waterway.

It is worth working together to recreate responsibly for our own benefit, the benefit of fish and wildlife, and our recreation and tourism economy.

## Idaho Forests

When autumn arrives, the mountains of North Idaho are dotted with the western larch. This evergreen-looking tree is in fact, deciduous. Before losing its needles, the western larch turns brilliant yellow, orange, or chartreuse, in stark contrast to its forest green evergreen neighbors, and serves as a testament that autumn has arrived.

The Idaho white pine is the state tree, and was important in the history of the logging industry. Idaho has several forest zones and offers conifer, soft, and hardwood forests as well as a large variety of deciduous trees. Idaho harvests over a billion board feet of timber annually and supports tens of thousands of timber jobs. In parts of North Idaho, it is possible to see timbered forests as far as the eye can see, a testament to the balance between economic prosperity of natural resources and stewardship in action.

Idaho has a native plant society in addition to the Bureau of Land Management native plants program. Next time you are out on a walk, take notice of all the different tree species you see. They are an essential part of the history and success of Idaho. Consider Idaho's native plants, their benefits, and how adapted and hearty they are when planning your landscape.



*Western larch in North Idaho*



**1 BILLION +**

**BOARD FEET OF TIMBER HARVESTED ANNUALLY**



**10,000 +**

**TIMBER JOBS SUPPORTED**



## *Native Species*

Idaho has many ecosystems and, thus, many types of plant and animal species. The state has many revered native plants that have been beneficial for many uses to indigenous people and are still widely enjoyed today. A few highlights to look out for are mentioned below.

Once you've been here for a while, the arrival and disappearance of certain birds and plants will mark the seasons and become a measure of time. Wildlife depends on many native plants, such as blue bunch wheatgrass, whitebark pine, sagebrush, and huckleberries. These are unique as they cannot be cultivated and only grow in certain elevations. You can tell a North Idahoan likes you if they share with you their secret spot for picking wild huckleberries or morel mushrooms. Also elusive, is the Sacagawea bitterroot. This shy beauty grows between 5000 and 9000 feet of elevation in North Central Idaho's mountains. It pops up from the rock to bloom, and then, after blooming, poof! All above-ground traces disappear until next year!



*Top: Morel Mushroom | Photo by Beth Macdonald*

*Bottom: Sagebrush*



## Preventing Wildfires

In recent years, 'smoke season' from wildfires has become a fifth season in Idaho and other western states. Forest fires can decimate our timber resources, threaten neighbors' homes, be costly and dangerous to fight, and create a risk from breathing unhealthy air. Nationally, nearly nine out of ten forest fires are human-caused. When recreating on public lands, consider the temperature and drought conditions and check for any restrictions on campfires, burning debris, or using Off-Highway Vehicles before heading out. If dry and windy, consider opting for a non-motorized option to reduce the risk of sparks igniting a fire.

Most people love the cozy ambiance of a campfire. While they can provide hours of warmth and invite lively conversation, campfires have inherent risks. If you are headed into the backcountry or to a campground, it is best to check for restrictions and follow best practices to ensure your fire is thoroughly doused and cool to the touch before leaving the area or turning your back on the fire.

A good firework display can punctuate a holiday or celebration. While they are dazzling and exciting, fireworks are a major source in human-caused wildfires. Many towns in Idaho host spectacular holiday fireworks displays that provide safe alternatives. If you choose to light fireworks, your neighbors will thank you for checking local restrictions, assessing the fire danger beforehand, and cleaning up the debris post-celebration.



*The Table Rock Fire in 2016 was started by a firework.  
Photo by Zack Disraeli (Disraeli Photography)*

*“ Without its rugged, forested landscapes, a fundamental piece of Idaho would be lost. To ensure we have this treasured resource into the future, we must foster both the tools and open dialogues that help to manage our lands against wildfire risk while still conserving them for future generations. ”*

*—U.S. Senator Jim Risch*



If you want to burn yard debris, you can be a good neighbor by checking the air quality report, weather conditions, knowing what is safe to burn, and obtaining a burn permit. In Idaho, burn permits are required between May 10 and October 20 outside of any city's limits. Check with the Idaho Department of Lands or your local municipality before burning debris. It is said that one out of five human-caused wildfires start from a debris or trash burn. A beneficial alternative to burning yard waste and food debris is composting.

Accidental fires are devastating and dangerous, but not all fires are bad. Fire can play a natural and necessary role in nature, and prescribed burns can be healthy ways to manage the forest. Working together, we can prevent human caused wildland fires.

You can find more information on fire safety on the U.S. Department of the Interior website.





*Payette Lake | Photo by Steve Nielson, Ninzie Digital Media*





*The infamous "Goathead" weed*

## NOXIOUS WEEDS AND INVASIVE SPECIES

### *Invasive Plants*

Noxious weeds and invasive plants are a primary threat to our ecosystem function. They take over habitats, spread and reproduce rapidly, and can reproduce prolifically to take over a variety of habitats. They aggressively out-ribose native species. Idaho's plants deemed to be noxious are considered injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife, or property. While it may seem daunting, Idaho law requires property owners to keep their property free of noxious weeds. Your county extension office is a great place to start asking questions about plant identification and eradication. Many helpful resources are available to property owners, including cost sharing and grant programs available to help property

owners pool resources to eradicate noxious weeds. You can find information on the Invasive Species Idaho website or contact the University of Idaho Extension or your county extension office for information on noxious weeds in your area. They will be happy to help and glad you asked!

If you are an equestrian and might be bringing livestock to Idaho's USFS or BLM lands. Idaho has a proactive program that requires your hay or straw must be certified weed free under the noxious weed-free forage and straw certification program.

"Knock it Off" is a great slogan the state branded to remind folks that after being out tramping in the woods, to check clothing, shoes, and pets to rid yourself of any unwanted hitchhikers that could be looking for a ride to start a new home. A great habit to form is to clean your vehicle's undercarriage if it has plant material on it, too.

The toxic yew plant is a highly poisonous plant that is dangerous to humans, pets, and wildlife including big game, livestock, and birds. Ornamental yews were introduced and gained popularity as landscape plants for being hearty and evergreen. Because they are evergreen, wildlife browse on them in winter months when food is scarce. Several counties in Idaho have banned planting yews in landscape because they are so toxic. Many elk and moose have died as a result of eating even a small amount of a yew plant.

## *Invasive Beetles and Insects*

Idaho has a *Burn it Where you Buy it* campaign to create awareness that moving firewood can introduce and transport harmful beetles that can wreak havoc on forests. Firewood has proven to be a significant pathway for invasive species. People can transport these non-native species long distances on firewood. Unfortunately, new infestations of tree-killing insects and diseases are commonly found in campgrounds and parks.

The state also offers assistance to help mitigate grasshoppers, Mormon crickets and other pests on private land. The Invasive Species Idaho website has information on programs that may help you to rid your property of these invasive nuisances.



*Tree destruction caused by Bark Beetles*

## *Invasive Aquatic Species*

Quagga and Zebra mussels are small mussels whose larvae are drawn into boat engines and bilges, where they grow into adults and clog equipment. These mussels can deprive other aquatic species of resources necessary for survival and cause irreversible ecosystem changes and losses of both native species and sport fisheries. These mussels can be transported from waterway to waterway on gear, equipment, or boats. Nearby states, sadly, have had significant waterways infected by these mussels.

If you have a home aquarium and may have purchased a product containing Marimo Moss Balls, be advised that they are found to carry Quagga mussels! Please consult the Invasive Species Idaho office for information on safely disposing of these aquarium products. Please do not flush this product down the toilet, into ponds or waterways, or into the storm drains.



# RECREATING RESPONSIBLY

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If you have purchased property in Idaho, you may be looking forward to recreating in Idaho's public lands. Whether hiking, backcountry skiing, snowmobiling, riding an off-highway vehicle, horseback riding, camping, backpacking, hunting, fishing, gathering, cycling, ornithology, or whatever recharges your batteries, Idaho truly has something for everyone. It's easy to see why working together and adhering to a code of conduct is beneficial to all.

*“ Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature. ”*

*—Rachel Carson*



## Trail Use

When you are enjoying the great outdoors, here are a few tips to maximize your enjoyment and that of those around you:

- Be friendly – give a smile and a hello to those you encounter on the trail, even those on different modes of travel!
- Stay on designated trails to prevent erosion and trampling fragile plants.
- Use the restrooms at the trailhead. If you must go outdoors, bury all your waste at least 6" deep and 200' from any water source.
- Keep your dogs leashed to reduce their impact on deer, birds, and other wildlife.
- Adhere to the *Knock it Off* program to avoid spreading noxious weeds. Brush off your pants, boots, and pet's fur, and check carefully for unwanted hitchhikers.
- Bikers yield to hikers and horseback riders, and hikers yield to horseback riders. If the same mode of transportation, downhill traffic generally gives way to uphill traffic.
- Motorized traffic yields to non-motorized traffic.



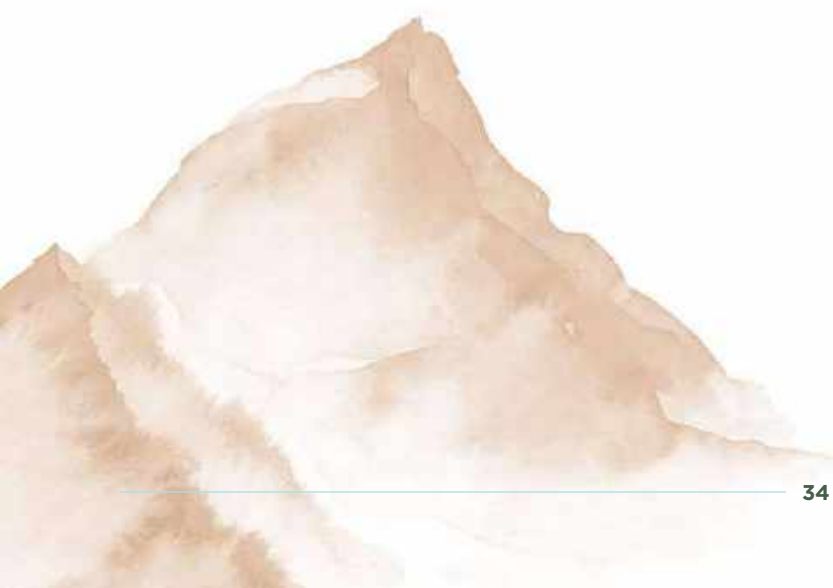
Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes in the Silver Valley | Photo by Denise Lundy





Working together, we can keep our public trails open for use, healthy, and viable. Staying off the vulnerable, high desert, shrub-steppe areas in the muddy season will help to protect the vegetation and prevent erosion and runoff, for example.

We are lucky to have many wild, pristine places with public access. Learning more about being a good steward will help preserve this public access into perpetuity. Check with the managing authority before wandering into the wild to ensure that you aren't inadvertently doing something harmful to the ecosystem. Avoid camping on fragile vegetation near a lake's shore, cutting trail corners, or creating alternate paths. Stay on the established trail, and adhere to the adage of leave no trace, pack it in – pack it out. Once you explore Idaho's wild places, you will no doubt feel compelled to leave them in the same or better condition than you found them.



*Left: Hikers in North Central Idaho | Photo by Clay Elliot*

*Right: Used responsibly, OHVs can be a great way to explore Idaho's trail systems*



## Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

Off-Highway Vehicle use has become more popular in recent years. It is estimated that there are more than 90,000 OHVs registered in Idaho. The Idaho Fish and Game Department is launching a "Use your Power Responsibly" campaign to educate hunters and other OHV enthusiasts. Most hunters know that it is illegal and unethical to chase game. Still, the focus is more on the responsibility to stay on established trails. The most significant impact of OHVs on the land, wildlife, and other people is from driving off-trail, which can cause erosion, start wildfires, spread noxious weeds, and damage wildlife habitat. The Idaho Fish and Game website has information on when, where, and how it is legal to use OHVs in Idaho. If you are off-roading, your exhaust can reach temperatures of over 1,000 degrees. Fires can start from driving over or parking

on dry grasses. It is advised that you keep your vehicle, off-highway vehicle (OHV), or chainsaw well-maintained as they can otherwise create sparks from the exhaust. If you are pulling a trailer, check the tire pressure, that the axles are well-greased, and the safety chains are not dragging on the ground. Having a shovel, bucket, and fire extinguisher in your vehicle is a good idea. Don't use equipment that sparks when it is hot and dry, and remove fuel from where you are working.

When enjoying the freedom of riding an off-highway vehicle, be sure to check the undercarriage for noxious weeds before transporting, stay on established trails, respect wildlife, and be fire safe.





*Lake Cleveland*  
*Photo by Lisa Haney*

## *Impact on Aquatic Environments*

Whether you enjoy kayaking, power boating, ice fishing or fly fishing, or flying a float plane, Idaho is the place for you. If you enjoy water recreation, there are a few things you should know about the aquatic invasive species that pose a threat to Idaho's waterways, hydroelectric power systems, infrastructure and agricultural economy.

Recreating responsibly means taking great care to ensure you are not transporting or introducing Quagga or Zebra mussels, milfoil, or toxic algae into a body of water. Idaho has a *Don't move a Mussel, Clean, Drain, Dry* campaign. The protocol is to thoroughly clean, drain, and dry all parts of your boat, bilges, gear, waders, and fish wells after use in the water to eliminate the spread of invasive aquatic species.

If you are transporting your boat and see an inspection station, be sure and stop to allow for your boat to be inspected. By doing so, you are helping to prevent the spread of invasive mussels. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has information on preventing the spread of these dastardly creatures, including treating your vessel and gear.

As the water temperatures in navigable waters become warmer, algae bloom and milfoil increase. This makes it more important than ever to help minimize the spread of these invasive species by remembering to rinse, wash and dry your boat or gear after water recreation.



*Rafting and fly fishing are among Idaho's most popular outdoor activities.*



# BEING A GREAT PROPERTY OWNER

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Whether you're already a resident or planning on building a new home here, we want to make sure your property ownership experience is enjoyable, responsible, and successful. One important thing to keep in mind is the land itself, such as sun exposure, drainage issues, and wildlife habitats. Homeowners are encouraged to properly maintain their on-site septic systems to avoid contamination of nearby water sources. Another key consideration is residential fire safety, which can be addressed by creating a defensible space and incorporating fire-resistant materials into landscaping and building design. The following information offers some valuable insights that all Idaho residents can consider.

*“ Take care of the land, and the land will take care of you. ”*

*—Hugh Hammond Bennett*



## *New Construction*

If you are planning to build your dream home in Idaho, you will likely have a team of people to help you with construction, design, and adhering to local building codes. By talking with neighbors and others in the community, you may find that by exceeding code requirements, you save money in the long run and stay comfy in your home throughout all four seasons.

We offer that you consider the land before breaking ground. Get a sense of the summer and winter sun exposure, prevailing winds, spring runoff, and drainage issues. You'll want to consider the placement of your driveway, outbuildings, number of pervious surfaces, and how your home will affect wildlife, native plant communities, nearby waterways, and your human neighbors. Aspect can affect your well-being in the home, you may prefer to wake to the morning sun from the east, or rather the southern exposure that melts snow from your driveway naturally. Do you want to have a shady or sunny backyard in the late afternoon? Taking the time to really understand the land around your home is a big undertaking. Still, it can be an opportunity to get to know the ecosystem of your new environment.

Sure, ordinances are likely in place that regulate shoreline and hillside site disturbance, but understanding the impact can be more persuasive than adhering to rules and regulations.

Lastly, when you look at the vistas you'll enjoy as a vantage point from your home, consider what your neighbors will look back at. If you are building on a bluff, would it be beneficial to keep your design low profile and in keeping with a native color scheme? Of course, assuming there are no restrictions, these choices are yours to make. You may be happier in the long run if you settle in a bit and seek out local opinions before finalizing such decisions.







Lake Pend Oreille

## Septic Systems

Many of Idaho's homes are served by on-site septic systems for sanitary sewer. A properly designed and maintained system can effectively treat wastewater and replenish groundwater supplies. However, if the septic system is not functioning correctly, it can contaminate nearby water bodies of water or drinking water sources. An improperly maintained septic system will introduce phosphorus and nitrogen as nutrients into the surface water, where they act as a fertilizer for fast-growing bacteria and algae. This rapid growth can cause algal blooms that can reduce water quality, kill aquatic animals and plants, and form toxins in the water. Harmful algae blooms in lakes and streams can be toxic to people and animals.

You can do your part to protect Idaho's water sources by keeping your septic system well-maintained.

Pump and inspect your septic tank regularly. Learn more about maintaining your septic system by contacting your local health department.



*Barn in the Idaho Farm and Ranch Museum, Jerome | Photo by Lisa Haney*

## *Residential Fire Safety*

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is the transition zone between bare land and developed land. It is where human development blends with and becomes intertwined with undeveloped wildland and vegetative fuels. Homeowners can reduce the risk of fire by creating a defensible space around their home. Spacing and thinning trees appropriately, choosing fire-resistant landscape/hardscape and building materials, reducing or eliminating activities or materials that would generate a spark, working with their homeowners' association to implement best practices to keep their community safe from fire.

Property owners may find it more difficult to obtain hazard insurance for properties in the WUI and areas vulnerable to forest fire. Check with your insurance provider to confirm that your property is insurable. Thinking about fire-resistant

principles in landscaping and creating a defensible when building or renovating a home can help protect your home from fire.

Ask your local nursery which plants are fire-resistant and incorporate them into the landscape around your home.

Landscape design is an overlooked element that can be crucial in preventing wildfires. Some principles for fire adapted landscape include: Using hardscape to break up continuous fuel, making sure any grass is watered and well-maintained, grouping fire-resistant plant materials in islands, moving firewood well away from structures, providing adequate spacing between trees and shrubs, and removing ladder fuels (a plant structure that allows a fire to climb from ground fuels to canopies of large trees via a ladder-like configuration of flammable vegetation).





## *Mitigating Light Pollution*

Idaho's wide-open spaces make for premier stargazing. There are still places in Idaho where the dark sky and brilliant stars create a wondrous window to the universe. Dark skies are also critical to wildlife as artificial light affects predator and prey behavior, and impacts the nighttime breeding rituals of amphibians in our wetland habitat, and migratory and feeding activities of many bird species.

### **You can help by:**

- Selecting exterior lighting that aims downward
- Using timers or motion sensors to reduce light pollution
- Select fixtures that use no more light than necessary
- Step outside and wish upon a star!

Idaho's Craters of the Moon National Monument and City of Rocks National Reserve have earned the coveted International Dark Sky Parks Designation. Ketchum, Idaho, has earned the International Dark Sky Community designation from the International Dark Sky Association.

*Idaho's wide-open spaces make for premier stargazing. | Photo by Lisa Haney*



*Left: Drought tolerant plants can be very aesthetically pleasing.  
Right: Xeriscape Garden*

## PLANTING & HORTICULTURE

### *Xeriscaping*

Xeriscape gardening is a type of gardening that requires very little water and maintenance. While a lawn is useful for backyard games and pet owners, it requires a lot of water and fertilizers to maintain. Xeriscaping uses water conservation, soil improvement, native plants, and mulch to reduce water conservation by up to 70% while creating an appealing garden space.

Using native, naturally drought-tolerant plants will limit your need for harmful insecticides, and their inherent fire-resistance will help in creating a defensible space around your home to reduce fire risk.

If you drive by a turn-of-the-century home, odds are there is a stand of mature trees on the south and west sides of the house. Planting trees on the sunny sides of your home can provide welcome shade in summer and reduce the need for air-conditioning. Providing a landscape with a thoughtful placement of shade trees, a variety of native shrubs, drought-tolerant plants and pollinators, and hardscape elements like paver pathways can have many benefits. It can provide inviting spaces in your garden, increase curb appeal, reduce water and energy consumption, invite pollinators, and create wildlife habitat.





## *The Birds and The Bees*

Birds are essential to the natural system as pollinators and for the seed dispersal of many plants, especially native plants. While we have successfully removed the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and sage grouse from the endangered or petitioned lists, there is more work to be done.

For example, the Yellow-billed Cuckoo and the western bumblebee are listed, or on the candidate list, for endangerment. Some of the most common threats to these species that homeowners can impact are our use of pesticides and loss of habitat.

To help these and other important species succeed in Idaho, you could plant a variety of attractors or nectar-rich plants. You can promote healthy bird habitation by providing birdhouses, placing decals on expanses of glass to prevent bird collisions, being a responsible cat owner, limiting pesticide usage and planting trees that provide birds with cover from predators.

There are ways that you can make a valuable difference to a species. For example, monarch butterflies migrate through Idaho to the California coast in the fall and depend on various roosting trees, nectar, and milkweed resources. Idaho has a program for promoting monarch butterfly habitats and tracking migration. Working together, we can preserve these winged marvels.

*Photo by Lisa Haney*

## *Sprinkler Systems*

Planning your irrigation system can be an undertaking, but there are some options that can significantly affect your water usage. For example, micro irrigation delivers water directly to the root zone of plants slowly and over an extended period of time, preventing runoff and reducing evaporation. These systems use 20 to 50 percent less water than conventional sprinkler systems. Using irrigation timers that measure precipitation and factor soil moisture to regulate irrigation will prevent over-watering. Watering in the early morning or evening, checking sprinkler zones regularly for broken sprinkler heads, and ensuring that the spray pattern does not extend onto the sidewalk or street will help to minimize water wastage.

## *Storm Drains*

Stormwater is rain or melting snow that does not immediately absorb into the ground. Stormwater runs off the land and hard surfaces, picking up pollutants such as fertilizers, oil, and pesticides. Eventually, stormwater soaks into the ground or discharges to surface water through storm drains, which can lead to contamination of streams, lakes, and waterways. Fertilizers contain large amounts of phosphorus and nitrogen, which can cause algal blooms in aquatic areas. These blooms deplete the oxygen in the water, resulting in fish kills. You can minimize this by not over-fertilizing and sweeping excess fertilizer off hard surfaces, so they don't enter the storm drain.



*Photo by Annie Gavin*





*Snake River Canyon in Twin Falls | Photo by Lisa Haney*

## *Noxious Weeds*

Idaho law makes it the responsibility of all landowners to prevent and eradicate noxious weeds on their property. The good news is that your county extension office will help you identify noxious weeds and give you tips for eradicating them. Counties work with landowners, but in some cases if a property owner does not remove the noxious weeds, after notice from the county, the offensive weeds are removed at the expense of the landowner.

## *Trees, Shrubbery, Plants*

From the state's capitol, with its nickname, 'City of Trees,' to Coeur d'Alene with its Tree City USA designation, Idaho is graced with dense forests and diverse deciduous trees. The trees give us cool shade, fragrant smells, wood for shelter and for warmth, and habitat for wildlife. They help to keep the air and water clean and bring a sense of peace and contentment.

If you own acreage that includes forest land, you may be eligible for a timber exemption on your tax bill in exchange for implementing a forest management plan. Your county planning department will be able to provide you with information about the timber exemption program and types of exemptions.

If you live in a more urban area, your city's forester will help you with tree selection based on heartiness, redundancy, and disease resistance in your area. You may have city right-of-way areas along the street frontage in front of your home



*Camas Lily bloom in Fairfield | Photo by Lisa Haney*

that you maintain and landscape, but belongs to the city. It is important to check with the city before planting in the right-of-way to ensure the tree is on the city's approved list for your area, and before removing a tree in the city's right-of-way.

There are many resources to ensure your success with your landscape and site development, whether it be a city lot, farm, ranch, waterfront property, or forest land. The city, county, and state all have extensive resources to help you with plant selection and maintenance on your property.



# BEING A GREAT NEIGHBOR

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*“ I resolve in the future to live for mankind, as I have heretofore lived for myself. ”*

*—Meriwether Lewis*



*Photo by Zack Disraeli (Disraeli Photography)*

Idaho is a diverse state, with people from all walks of life who share a love for the land, wildlife, and its natural beauty. We are all committed to the vitality of Idaho, and we hope that when you look around, you see your neighbors as just that - neighbors. In Idaho, being a good neighbor means helping out in times of need, such as bringing a meal or checking in during a power outage. Perhaps your neighbor will even jump-start your car, help you mend a fence, or return your dog if it gets loose. We can all learn from each other, and we may all come to rely on each other at one point or another.

One of the advantages of living in Idaho is the commonality we share in loving this great state and wanting what is best for Idahoans. It's essential to preserve Idaho's natural beauty, resources, and communities for future generations. By working together and taking care of one another, we can ensure that Idaho continues to be a welcoming and vibrant place.



*Neighbors helping neighbors*



Perhaps Idaho's most precious resource is its people. Idahoans have a history of being great neighbors, generous in their communities, and being quick to lend a hand to a neighbor in need.

Here are some tips on how you can join in the tradition of being a good neighbor:

### **Volunteer**

There are many ways to get involved and lend your expertise to the community with an estimated 4600 non-profit organizations throughout the state of Idaho. If you're reading this, chances are you have something to offer that is of value.

### **Buy local**

We want our local, small businesses to thrive. By shopping locally, you will support small businesses in Idaho and get to know your neighbors and local entrepreneurs. Frequent your local farmers' market and seek out Idaho products whenever possible.

### **Limit your impact**

With a population that went from 1.3 million to 1.9 million and growing in just over twenty years, limiting our impact on public lands, water, power usage, and roadways will collectively make a positive difference.

### **Be a good property owner**

Whether you rent or own, you can care for the land around your home by pulling weeds, planting pollinators and drought-tolerant native plants, using water efficiently, and remembering that we share the land with wildlife.

### **Just ask**

You are not expected to know everything about living in Idaho when you arrive. Your neighbors will happily give you the ins and outs of living with wildlife, managing through the different seasons, and anything else you need to know.

### **Be curious and informed**

Get to know what's happening in your community; join a club, take a hike with the Idaho Conservation League, attend a presentation at the library, wander into the local fish and game office, or your local museum.

### **Be patient**

Chances are, things are done a little differently or at a different pace here in Idaho than where you moved from. Try to resist the temptation to make Idaho conform to your expectations. If you let it, you might find that Idaho changes you in a good way!

### **Be friendly**

You will find common ground when approaching someone as a neighbor. And when in doubt, choose kindness.



*Photo by Lisa Haney*



# RESOURCES & CREDITS

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Welcome to Idaho and thank you for being curious and thoughtful as you make a life here. Thank you for considering those that came before you, whether it be thousands of years or twenty years before you, and lastly, thank you in advance, for the many contributions you will make to your community. Welcome, we're glad to be neighbors.



To view the online version,  
scan this QR code or visit:  
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