



For immediate release:

**Henry's Fork Foundation Urges Members to Keep Pressure on Idaho Parks**  
*Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation decision on Harriman State Park still unresolved*

ASHTON, Idaho (January 28, 2010) — The Henry's Fork Foundation is encouraging its membership to continue monitoring and voicing its concerns, as the state's projected budget cuts for the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR)—and the crown jewel of that system, Harriman State Park—could negatively impact the Henry's Fork watershed.

"We need our membership to stay involved," said Steve Trafton, executive director of the Henry's Fork Foundation. The news release from the governor's office states, "The plan presented to the Governor [by the IDPR director] reduces operations to functions that are essential to the agency's mission, implements agency-wide efficiencies, and identifies partners within other State agencies to eliminate duplication of services." The governor also spoke of the need for each park to have a "business plan" under which it operates, to try to address the fact that few parks are financially self-sufficient. Says Trafton: "We want our members who use Harriman State Park to understand that the park is not self-sustaining and to participate in the solution."

On January 22, at a press conference held in Boise, Governor Otter's office announced the following:

- IDPR will *not* be eliminated.
- IDPR will see its General Fund allocation reduced by \$4.5 million (a 70% reduction).
- IDPR will see its full-time staff reduced by 25 positions (a 17% reduction).

From the Henry's Fork Foundation's perspective, the announcement delivered mixed news, including the realization that IDPR's future is far from resolved and that the HFF's need to remain engaged in the future of IDPR is greater than ever. The good news includes:

- IDPR is slated neither for elimination nor for consolidation into another agency with a different, and perhaps an incompatible, mission (such as the Idaho Department of Lands).
- With the preservation of IDPR, the state of Idaho will maintain the terms of the agreement through which the Harriman family donated the park to the state.

The Henry's Fork Foundation concerns include the following:

- How will IDPR continue to provide the same management and services with a dramatically reduced budget and fewer employees?
- Do the proposed budget and personnel cuts leave the agency, or individual parks, with reserve resources from which to manage day-to-day or long-term emergencies and other needs not currently on budget forecasts?
- Is the proposed plan a sustainable business model by which to manage IDPR into the future, or will the parks face the same questions in the coming years?
- From a user's perspective, how can Harriman State Park operate more efficiently and generate more revenue?
- Can Harriman State Park become financially self-sufficient, or at least generate more revenue than it currently does, through means that do not fundamentally alter the character of the park experience or the importance of the park as a natural resource?
- Given that a part of the new plan calls for increased use of part-time and volunteer support, how could seasonal and volunteer support help Harriman State Park to become more efficient and financially sustainable?

"The members and friends of the Henry's Fork Foundation stood up and let their voices be heard during the initial stages, when it was determined the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation was under siege," said Trafton. "Their voices were heard and we take great pride in our initial success in preventing this closure. However, the battle is not over and we need our membership to stay engaged."

The Henry's Fork Foundation will continue to inform its membership on the status of IDPR and is taking the lead in offering ideas and support to the state Legislature. Please continue to write letters, send e-mails, and make phone calls. Some important points of contact are listed below:

#### **Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC)**

The current proposal will be discussed in a JFAC hearing on February 1. The co-chairs are listed below; please request your comments be shared with the entire committee. Please make comments to the co-chairs as soon as possible.

#### **Senate:**

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#### **Governor**

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**The Henry's Fork Foundation (HFF)**, founded in 1984 and located in Ashton, Idaho, is the only nongovernmental organization (NGO) exclusively dedicated to the protection and restoration of the most biodiverse watershed in the Northern Rockies, the legendary Henry's Fork of the Snake River. Emphasizing sound research, and principles of science-based conservation and "smart growth" land use, the HFF engages in collaborative efforts with both private and governmental stakeholders in the region to promote a diverse agenda designed to preserve the lands, waters, wildlife and fisheries of this threatened national treasure. For more than 25 years, HFF has been the trusted "voice of the river." For more information please visit [www.henrysfork.org](http://www.henrysfork.org).

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