

Current

Ada County Parks & Waterways

Fall 2015



Current

Current *adjective* \kúrrənt\
: happening or existing now; most recent; of the immediate present; in progress

Current *noun*

: the swiftest part of a stream; a steady, smooth onward movement

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DIRECTOR'S CUT

Where else can **boaters, bobcats and beer festivals** coexist than in Barber Park? This question entered my mind in mid-September when, one week after closing the float season and a few days removed from encountering a litter of bobcats just outside our office, I found myself standing in the grass parking field prepping for the first ever craft beer festival and concert in Barber Park.

I never did come up with an answer. But I will say our entire staff was happy to see the bobcats still roaming the park in the days and weeks after the boaters and beer lovers had departed.

A former colleague of mine used to encourage his employees to “pause and reflect” in just about any situation. These words of advice were uttered regardless of whether the matter pertained to personal, professional, public or even existential situations. Sometimes it was all of the above. The length of the pause and reflection depended on the depth of the situation.

See a litter of bobcats? Pause and reflect... Then realize you don't have to be in such a hurry.

Getting an earful from an irate customer? Pause and reflect... Then respond tactfully.

Can't make sense of the data? Pause and reflect... Then re-evaluate later with clarity.

Offered a new job? Pause and reflect... Then decide if it's the right fit for you.

Trouble at home? Pause and reflect... Then go buy flowers and apologize. (*Wait, what?!*)

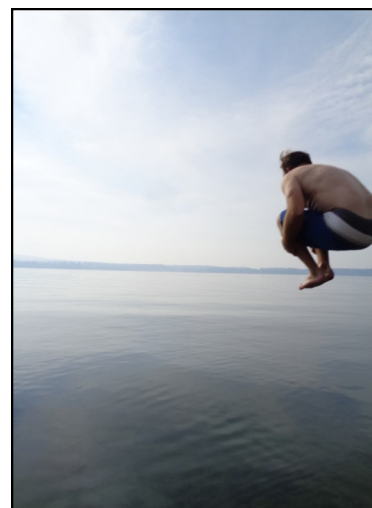
Turning 40? Pause and reflect... **Then cannonball into the frigid lake.**

At the end of September as we here at Ada County Parks & Waterways closed out another fiscal year, it seemed appropriate to pause and reflect on the year gone by before jumping into the next. This allowed us to ask important questions about the level of service we provided in FY2015 to determine how we can improve as we move forward. Did we accomplish our department goals and objectives? Were we fiscally responsible? Did we meet the needs of the public for our services? Were we proactive or reactive? What were our biggest challenges? Did we work well with our partners? Are we satisfied with our performance? What can we do better?

Pause and reflect.

Looking back it's clear that FY2015 was a satisfying and successful year for our department. We achieved several key goals and objectives that we weren't even sure were attainable (120 events booked at the Barber Park Education and Event Center and a record breaking float season) while ushering in lots of “firsts” at our facilities (races, festivals, contests) all while working as a tight-knit team. I'm proud of our staff and all that we accomplished. That said, we'll strive to do even better this year.

-Scott Koberg, Director





When the temperature reached 99°F on Tuesday, June 9th we had a feeling the 2015 Boise River float season might be one for the record books. We announced the official season opening a few days later on June 12th (our earliest opening date ever) and now, after wrapping things up on Labor Day, it's clear that **2015 was off the charts in several ways.**

For starters let's talk about the weather. With the exception of one anomaly (June 1st, 2001) **never before in the past 21 years has the daily high hit 99°F in Boise earlier in the year.** And even that anomaly 14 years ago was followed two days later by a steep drop in temperature to a high of just 61°F. This year, in addition to recording the hottest temperature of the summer (110°F on the 28th) **June was a full 6°F hotter on average (91°F) than the next hottest June on record.** When it's that hot that early in the summer folks float the river early and often.

As for **river flows** within the designated floater segment (Barber to Ann Morrison Park), **anything between about 700 - 1400 cfs creates nearly ideal floating conditions.** Depending on a variety of factors including weather, snowpack, and reservoir storage the river may not fall within that range until late June or July causing a delay to the opening of the float season. In 2010 for instance, the flow in the river was a whopping 5724 cfs on June 12th whereas this year on the same date it was 811 cfs and **the average flow remained a moderate 932 cfs — nearly perfect for floaters all season long.**

Fortunately we were prepared. Working closely with our contractor [Boise River Raft & Tube](#) in the months leading up to the float season we implemented several critical improvements to our facilities, equipment, outreach and operations. When it was all said and done this combination of luck and preparation resulted in **a 20% increase in total revenue over our busiest season on record (2013).**



Although the sun has set on another float season we'll continue doing our best to leverage local tax support with this unique revenue stream. Our goal is to enhance existing amenities while creating new recreational opportunities for Ada County residents and visitors.



Calling All Trail Users!

The Ridge to Rivers partnership is initiating a master planning process that will guide development and management of the popular trail system over the next 10 years

Ridge to Rivers is a cooperative, multi-agency partnership consisting of the City of Boise, Ada County Parks & Waterways, the Bureau of Land Management Four Rivers Field Office, the Boise National Forest and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Existing Ridge to Rivers pathways cross all of these jurisdictions as well as many privately owned lands via revocable or permanent easements. The Ridge to Rivers management area stretches from Highway 55 to Highway 21 and from north Boise to the Boise ridgeline.



“We are very interested in how the public would like to see the system managed in the future,” says Ridge to Rivers Program Manager, David Gordon. “Our goal is to put together a plan that meets the needs of our trail users while balancing wildlife habitat, clean water and natural resource management.”

The planning process will take place over the next year and includes an on-line trail user survey available from October 1st through October 15th at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ridgetoriverstrailplan> followed by two rounds of public open house workshops. Additional on-line opportunities for public input will follow. More information

about the planning process is available on the Ridge to Rivers website at: www.ridgetorivers.org as well as at:

<https://www.facebook.com/boisefoothillstrailconditions>.



By participating in the process you are helping to shape the future of the Ridge to Rivers trail system: how it will be managed, where it will grow, and what types of new opportunities the system can provide to Treasure Valley residents and visitors.

A sample question from the on-line survey:

17. One trail management strategy could be to prohibit downhill bike use on a currently shared use trail, in exchange for a new trail that is designed and built specifically for downhill use by bikes, with features such as berms, banked corners, and jumps. Would you support this approach?



Going for the Gold

Story contributed by:

Chris Cook, Ada County Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board Chairman

When Marc Grubert and I started down the road to seek a Gold Level Ride Center designation for the Boise/Eagle area from the [International Mountain Bicycling Association \(IMBA\)](#) we already knew we had a really good thing going on here. We also had the feeling that most serious mountain bikers outside the Treasure Valley didn't know much about our trails beyond what little they rode while passing through town on the way to or from more popular riding hotspots like Moab, Utah. Rolling out of my driveway on my mountain bike I can ride on dirt trails within one mile. That's something very special that many of us living near the Boise Foothills take for granted. We decided to take the time and effort to prove to others just how special this place is.

What is an IMBA Ride Center?

The ride center designation represents IMBA's Model Trail recognition for large scale mountain bike facilities that offer something for every rider. As the IMBA website states, "We are confident that these awardees should go on your short list of riding destinations. These are the trails worth traveling to, the best places to introduce someone to the sport we all love and are the facilities that builders and advocates should look to for inspiration. From expert-only to family-friendly, you'll encounter the best the sport has to offer."

What's involved in the Ride Center application process?

Trail variety is the key and the Boise/Eagle area has lots of trails but we needed to fit specific trails into specific categories to earn more points. It required hours of research, deliberation and riding to ground truth our selections. To better illustrate the variety of our trails we added all of those we included in the application to [mtbproject.com](#), a popular site provided in partnership with IMBA. The site allows for a map and description of each trail so the selection committee could more easily verify trail details. Thanks largely to the [Ridge to Rivers](#) trail system our area is very strong when it comes to singletrack, long distance rides, and total trail mileage. Our weakest categories were "very difficult" and "extremely difficult" mountain bike specific trails but thanks to the great variety at the **Ada County\Eagle Bike Park** we were also able to meet the criteria for these types of trails.

Is it just about the trails?

The Ride Center designation is not just about trails. IMBA also evaluates things like dining options, microbrewery variety, and community commitment to open space. The Boise/Eagle area has all of these. We even earned bonus points for the amazing public/private partnerships that have led to landowners granting public trail easements on private property throughout much of the [Ridge to Rivers](#) trail system. These easements allow public recreational access to many of the larger trail loops frequented by mountain bikers in the foothills above Boise.

The IMBA site visit

Once we submitted our application and made it through the initial selection committee we received a visit from Chris Bernhardt, IMBA Director of Field Programs. Chris showed up and scouted out our trails on his own and then we were lucky enough to take him on one of the best rides in the valley. Using the shuttle service [Pedal Idaho](#) we got a ride up to Bogus Basin and then rode Deer Point to Around the Mountain and then finished up with a descent down Mahalo and Dry Creek. Chris was very impressed with the ride and this definitely sealed the deal when it came time for the official word from IMBA on our Ride Center designation.

Boise/Eagle earns the Gold!

At the end of the day we earned enough points to boost us into the Gold Level — the highest designation possible. With this [Gold Level Ride Center designation](#) mountain bikers from all over are going to take a second look at the Boise/Eagle area as a riding destination and possibly a gateway for tourism to other trail areas in Idaho. Our state now has four total IMBA Ride Centers with the other three (McCall, Sun Valley, and Driggs/Victor) falling under the Silver Level status. And while there are a total of 37 Ride Centers in the world, the **Boise/Eagle area is now one of only six destinations that have been awarded the highest possible Gold Level status by IMBA.** The Boise/Eagle area is simply one of the best places anywhere to be a mountain biker.

What's next?

Even though we were awarded Gold Level status there's still room for improvement and we also need to prepare for re-evaluation by IMBA in four years when the criteria may be more challenging. With the newly announced Ridge to Rivers trail planning process we hope there is an opportunity to target some of the weaker areas identified in our Ride Center application. With the Ridge to Rivers trail user survey and open house workshops there are a lot of opportunities for public input so we encourage all riders out there to participate as much as possible if you'd like to see more progressive trails like mountain bike specific downhill trails, flow trails or other new riding opportunities in our foothills.



Young racers pedal (and push) to the finish inspiring many at the Bike Park



Story contributed by:
Jessica Wyman and Jessica Gradhandt

On Saturday morning, October 3rd around 200 young student-athletes arrived at the Eagle/Ada Bike Park ready to race, represent their teams, make friends and have fun at the **first ever “Park Pedal” mountain bike race**. The Park Pedal was the 3rd race in the 4-race series of the Idaho High School Cycling League’s

inaugural year (<http://www.idahomt.org/>). This new and exciting league is an official project of the [National Interscholastic Cycling Association](http://www.nica.org/) (NICA).

Race day is always an event. You can feel the energy and excitement the moment you pull into the parking lot. Team tents are overflowing with parents, coaches, student-athletes and food. The student-athletes are burning through the calories as they ride and the teams are ready to feed them as soon as they step off course. The scent of grills has spectators hungry when they arrive.

It was the perfect fall weather and trail conditions for the season’s 3rd race. With a little rain during the week prior to the event followed by a windy day to dry things out, the weather helped create ideal trail conditions for the NICA race. And while the trails were the perfect condition for riding, **several students encountered flats during the race**. It is goat head season and despite efforts to clear the course, flats as well as other types of mechanicals were inevitable.

Several student-athletes were seen pushing their bikes across the finish line and this is when the core values of NICA really showed up: strong character, strong mind and strong body. Student-athletes persevered through these mechanicals to finish the race, recognizing the importance their



finish holds towards their team’s overall standing. Though cycling is often perceived as an individual sport, NICA leagues place just as much emphasis on the student-athletes working together as a team to finish strong.

Jayten Holstine, a middle school student-athlete with Magic Valley Composite, pushed his bike for the majority of his lap. He encountered a flat right after the first downhill and still completed the lap on foot with his bike. Another student-athlete, Conner Dickey with Westside Composite MTB Team, impressed many spectators with his perseverance after his chain broke on the first lap of his race. Dickey’s mom, hearing of his mechanical,



rushed to the lap finish line asking if a kid in an orange shirt had come through. She was informed that not only did he come through, but he never stopped and kept on going for lap two despite the mechanical issues. It appeared that Dickey intended to push his bike up hills and then coast on the downhills. He came running through the finish line on his final lap. She shared how she had been so proud of the middle school rider, Holstine, finishing on his own accord, and now she was incredibly proud watching her own son as he continued on in his race.

Conner made more than just his mom proud that day and that is what the Idaho High School Cycling League is about. Many spectators shared in the sentiment about the kid's determination during the race including Michael Neff who left the following comment along with a photo of Conner on the Idaho High School Cycling League's Facebook page:

"Not sure of this young man's name but he raced on a composite team that was adjacent to Borah's spot in the pit zone. After breaking his chain part way through the first lap he then pushed, ran, one legged it and coasted to finish the race. Truly the heart of a champion and the face of all that is right with the Idaho High School Mountain Biking program."



Race volunteer Gina Green said, "I volunteered as a finish line catcher and I saw so many situations where racers had to overcome obstacles such as wrecks, flats, broken chains, seat and seat post issues just to finish their races. It was all so inspiring!"

The Idaho National Guard is one of the local league sponsors. Several guard members were there in uniform cheering on the student-athletes. Robert

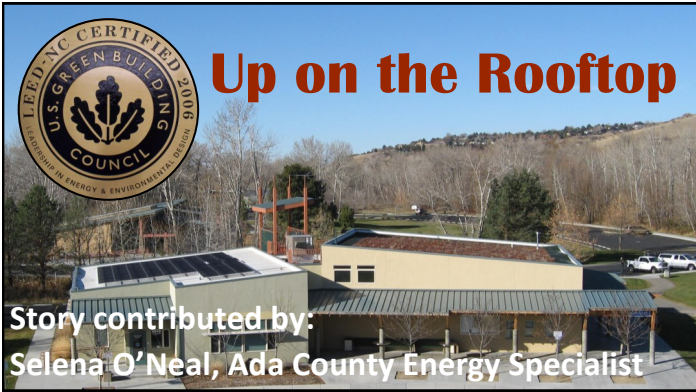
Bond with the Idaho National Guard had this to say about the league, "I wish they had this when I was a kid. I didn't get involved with bikes till I was 21. A lot of these kids are awesome, especially since a lot haven't ridden before."

The Park Pedal race was a chance for the Treasure Valley teams to share their local trails with other state riders. **The Eagle/Ada Bike Park is unique in that the trails are designed and maintained with specific features for mountain biking.** Hannah Green, senior and Varsity rider for Boise High School said, "I love being able to race for my high school! It was great to have people from all over Idaho come to ride and race some of my favorite local trails. It was another great event!"

To learn more about NICA and the Idaho High School Cycling League visit <http://www.idahomt.org/>.

(Photos contributed by: Tami Reed and Adam Haynes)





Even if you visited Barber Park this summer to float the river there's a chance you didn't see a couple of the coolest features in the park. Maybe you noticed the salmon red spires that rise high above the Parks & Waterways headquarters? The spires contain an enclosed staircase with a landing that overlooks the roofs of the administration building and the adjoining raft and tube rental facility.

So what's on the rooftop that could possibly be so interesting?

For starters, on the roof of the raft and tube rental facility there's a rare desert find — a **"green roof"** that's been there since the building was completed in 2006. It was installed using a GreenGrid™ tray system with 462 individual vegetation trays that are 24" x 24" and made from 60% post-industrial recycled material. Each tray contains 2 inches of soil media and **colorful, drought tolerant, hardy plants** (sedums) with common names such as Golden Stonecrop, Dragon's Blood and Coral Carpet.



Benefits of a green roof include:

- Reduced heat island effect (the sun's heat is absorbed by the plants)
- Extended roof life (the sun is not directly hitting the rooftop)
- Increased roof insulation (directly reduces the need for mechanical heating and cooling systems)
- Natural habitat for wildlife (birds and bugs love the vegetation)
- Storm water management (rainwater is absorbed by the plants)

On the roof of the administration building is an equally cool (some might say totally tubular) feature:



a photovoltaic (PV) solar array that produces energy from the sun and generates about 14,000 kWhs per year. The innovative part of this system is that it's not traditional PV panels but a grid of **small tubes that maximize solar input due to their tubular design**. Sunlight hits the top of the tubes but also bounces off of the white rooftop to essentially provide 360 degree radiation.

Ada County uses the energy generated from the PV solar array to help offset the cost of electricity for the park, including the

popular air compressor stations used during the float season. **We think of it as "green power" that fills those rafts and tubes every summer!** So the next time you visit Barber Park, check out the interactive touch screen kiosk display inside the Parks & Waterways Department office lobby with educational videos and real-time charts of the power as its being generated.

Ada County Parks & Waterways

2nd Annual Photo Contest



2015 Cover Shot Contest Winner
Photographer: Mike Paananen

Photos must be submitted between October 1st - December 31st

Share your favorite shots from our parks, trails, and waterways for the chance to be featured in the next issue of Current!

Email photos to: parks@adaweb.net

Include name, date taken, location, and category for each photo

Categories:

1) Landscape/Scenic, 2) Wildlife, 3) Action, 4) Human Interest, 5) Abstract/Close-up

*(*see reverse for additional contest details)*



4049 Eckert Road
Boise, ID 83716

Eligible photo contest locations:

Barber Park (including Event Center), Lucky Peak Lake, Ada County Bike Park, Boise River (float stretch), Boise River Greenbelt (Discovery to Barber Park), Hubbard Reservoir, Oregon Trail (Hwy 21 to Columbia Rd.), Fivemile/Victory Wetland, Snake River Water Trail, or any Ridge to Rivers Trail

Judging:

Photos will be judged by a panel of Ada County employees

Other Info:

No limit on number of entries. All participants grant Ada County nonexclusive and unlimited use of submitted photos for use in digital and/or print publication outreach materials.

