

# Current

*Ada County Parks & Waterways*



*Spring 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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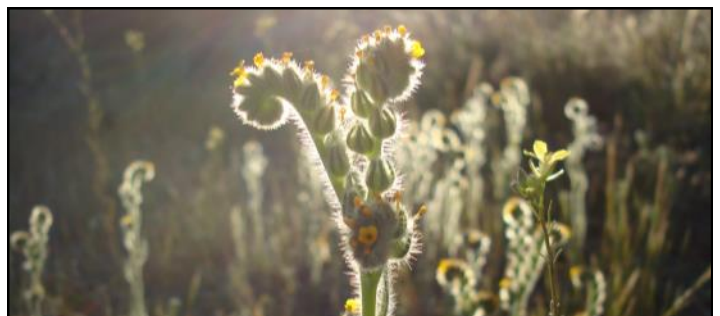
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# DIRECTOR'S CUT

The early arrival of spring-like weather has kept our parks and trails buzzing with activity since February. No place is this more evident than at the **Ada County Bike Park** near Eagle where trail users of all ages and interests congregate to recreate. But the buzz is different this year.

It isn't just coming from the typical swarms of trail *users* at the Bike Park. This year, much of the buzz is coming from the **throng** of

**volunteer trail workers** that have stepped up and pitched in to help us get the trails tuned up and ready to roll again. It's been an overwhelmingly positive experience that has prompted several volunteers to express sincere appreciation to Ada County for the opportunity and invitation to be involved. Of course *we're* the ones who are most thankful for the response that we've received and with the generous level of volunteer support and commitment. On pages 6 and 7 you can learn

more about the new partnerships we've developed with user groups that have us feeling **very optimistic about the future of the Bike Park**.

We also generated a bit of the Bike Park buzz ourselves with the completion of the **highly anticipated Flow Trail Bridge (cover photo)**.

For those not familiar, a "Flow Trail" as defined by the International



Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) is a trail that, "...takes mountain bikers on a terrain-induced roller coaster experience with little pedaling and braking necessary. This style of trail typically contains features like banked turns, rolling terrain, various types of jumps, and consistent and predictable surfaces. As a rider carves back and forth, and up and down, he or she develops a rhythm and 'flows' down the trail."

From the time it was conceived in 2013 the Flow Trail at the Bike Park had been fragmented into two separate segments with a dead end intersection in the middle. As soon as our contractor ([Alpine Bike Parks](#)) completed the bridge and roll-down feature we were able to re-open the fully completed trail on Saturday, April 4th so riders could finally experience the entire Flow Trail for the first time ever. And judging from the excited chatter of the 19 riders waiting for



their turn at the top as the sun set on a recent Thursday evening, the trail with the new bridge and roller coaster drop was well worth the wait.

Go with the flow this spring and thanks for keeping Current!

-Scott Koberg, Director



For nearly a year some dedicated Ada County employees (and cyclists) have been hard at work to identify opportunities and provide suggestions regarding bicycle related issues in **an effort to help Ada County achieve Platinum status as a Bicycle Friendly Business**. This determination is made by the League of American Bicyclists (<http://bikeleague.org/>) whose objective is to support bicyclists in the movement to create safer roads, stronger communities, and a bicycle-friendly America. The League uses **five elements (“5 E’s”)** to determine what level of achievement (Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum) a business will be awarded.

**The 5 E’s:**



- 1) Engineering: Creating safe and convenient places to ride and park
- 2) Education: Giving people of all ages and abilities the skills and confidence to ride
- 3) Encouragement: Creating a strong bike culture that welcomes and celebrates bicycling
- 4) Enforcement: Ensuring safe roads for all users
- 5) Evaluation: Planning for bicycling as a safe & viable transportation option

The grassroots **Ada County Bicycle Club Committee** has been instrumental in helping Ada County embrace the 5 E’s while adopting a mission **to increase bicycle ridership among employees and community members**.

Goals of the committee include:

- To earn recognition by the League of American Bicyclists as a Bicycle Friendly Business at the Platinum level
- To educate Ada County employees and community members about the benefits of bicycling and about the resources available to them to ride safely
- To make showers, lockers, and secure bike parking available to Ada County employees who use bicycles to commute to work
- To encourage Ada County employees and community members to ride by holding events, hosting classes, organizing social rides, and educating employees and community members about bike safety, rules of the road, and the many benefits of bicycling.

Some recent improvements already made at the Ada County Courthouse are the **new Park-A-Bike bike racks and Fix-It Stations** for employees and visitors. The committee has also developed a comprehensive website dedicated to all things bicycling (<https://adacounty.id.gov/Ada-County-Bicycle-Club>). The website includes tons of useful information including bicycle traffic laws and rules of the road, bicycle safety videos, tips and maps for commuters, bike shop links, and an event calendar. For those looking for a bike buddy there's even a link to the [Idaho RideShare](#) program to help cyclists find other riders in the area to commute with.



**May is National Bike Month™ with Bike to Work Week being held May 11-15th.** Be sure to stay tuned as Ada County announces their Bicycle Friendly Business designation level and throws a **big kick-off party on May 1st at the Ada County Courthouse** featuring a variety of vendors. Also, please join us for all the other fun events we have planned for each of these Fridays in May:



**Friday, May 1st:**

May in Motion Kickoff Party  
 Ada County Courthouse  
 (Public Hearing Room)  
 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

**Friday, May 8th:**

Fix a Flat Lunch & Learn  
 Ada County Courthouse  
 (west side Fix It Station)  
 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

**Friday, May 15th:**

National Bike to Work Day  
 Ride with the Commissioners  
 Ada County Courthouse  
 (depart from west parking lot)  
 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

**Friday, May 22nd:**

[TrailSmart](#) Lunch & Learn  
 Ada County Courthouse  
 (Public Hearing Room)  
 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

# SWIMBA at the BIKE PARK



Story contributed by:  
Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association

If you've been to the Ada County Bike Park in Eagle lately you've likely seen the trails getting some love—and not just from the riders who appreciate the trail system, but from groups of workers and volunteers restoring them to mint condition. It's all part of a **massive undertaking to ensure that the Bike Park trails are properly maintained and the area remains a safe place to recreate.** And the Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA) is excited to be a part of that process.

From 1992 to present SWIMBA has embraced partnerships throughout the Treasure Valley and beyond that prove to be rewarding for trail users. Similarly, we have seen the SWIMBA/Ada County partnership be of great benefit to the community.

Since the early days of the Bike Park's inception, Ada County's vision has been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition. SWIMBA has been pleased to provide support for its development, through both funding and volunteer hours. Over the last several years, SWIMBA has donated \$20,000 toward local groups and agencies dedicated to park efforts. And what's more, to date, SWIMBA volunteer hours at the Bike Park number into the thousands. **(That's right, we don't just ride the trails you love—we build them, too.)**

We are pleased to be **working with Ada County to help with the upkeep and maintenance on a number of Bike Park trails**, specifically, D's Chaos, Junk Yard, and Twisted Sister. By adopting these trails we plan to play our part in keeping the park well-maintained, safe, and enjoyable for years to come. Thanks to Ada County for inviting SWIMBA to be a part of the Bike Park's continued success.

## Haven't heard of SWIMBA?

We work tirelessly (usually behind the scenes) with regional and state agencies to build trail systems that are rewarding and enjoyable for trail users, sustainable over the long term in terms of maintenance and care, and protect the delicate balance of our local ecosystem. Visit our website at [SWIMBA.org](http://SWIMBA.org) for more details or consider an affordable membership (\$25 annually) to help support our trail development efforts.



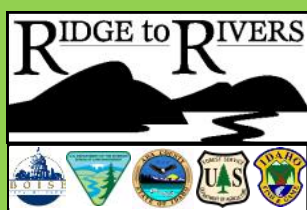
Ada County Parks & Waterways has not only engaged in partnership with SWIMBA to help provide trail maintenance and leadership for the most popular cross country trails at the Bike Park, we have also developed a separate partnership for the downhill specific mountain bike trails on site.

Consisting of unique manmade trail features and technical riding lines, the three downhill-only trails (Flow Trail, Shake N' Bake, and Stormin' Mormon) require different maintenance practices than cross-country/multi-use trails. Accordingly we reached out to the local downhill aficionados from the Boise Area Mountain Bike Association (<http://bambarides.org/>) and Kore North Bicycles (<http://korenorth.com/>) to step up and help keep these trails in shape. **BAMBA has a long history at the Bike Park and we're pleased to once again work together to make positive strides for the benefit of all trail users.**



It's been great seeing all the hard working volunteers using our extensive cache of trail tools from our new on-site storage shed this spring... **and the trail conditions just keep getting better!**

Please email [parks@adaweb.net](mailto:parks@adaweb.net) if you'd like information on how to get involved at the Bike Park.



## More volunteer trail opportunities than ever with RIDGE to RIVERS

Story contributed by:

**David Gordon, Ridge to Rivers Trail Coordinator**

There's never been an easier time to give back to the trails you love! With the addition of a **new full-time trail crew member** Ridge to Rivers is now able to offer many more volunteer opportunities. Long-time trail professional **Sam Roberts** accepted a full-time position with Ridge to Rivers this spring after working seasonally for the program since 2012. Prior to that

Sam was part owner of a highly successful east coast trail construction company. **Sam's number one priority during spring and fall months will be coordination of volunteer trail opportunities.** He is currently overseeing two Eagle Scout projects and has expanded the Adopt-A-Trail program to 19 participants. In addition, Sam will be leading a number of small-scale Saturday trail work projects. Volunteer projects could include: tread construction, trail maintenance, brushing, "in-filling" of eroded tread, and site rehabilitation.

Interested individuals or groups can watch for volunteer opportunities on Ridge to Rivers' Facebook Page – "[Boise Foothills Trail Conditions](#)" but will also need to sign up with the City of Boise's Volunteer Program at [www.myvolunteerpage.com](http://www.myvolunteerpage.com) prior to being able to work on the trails. Signing up is fast and easy and **we look forward to seeing you on the next trail project!**



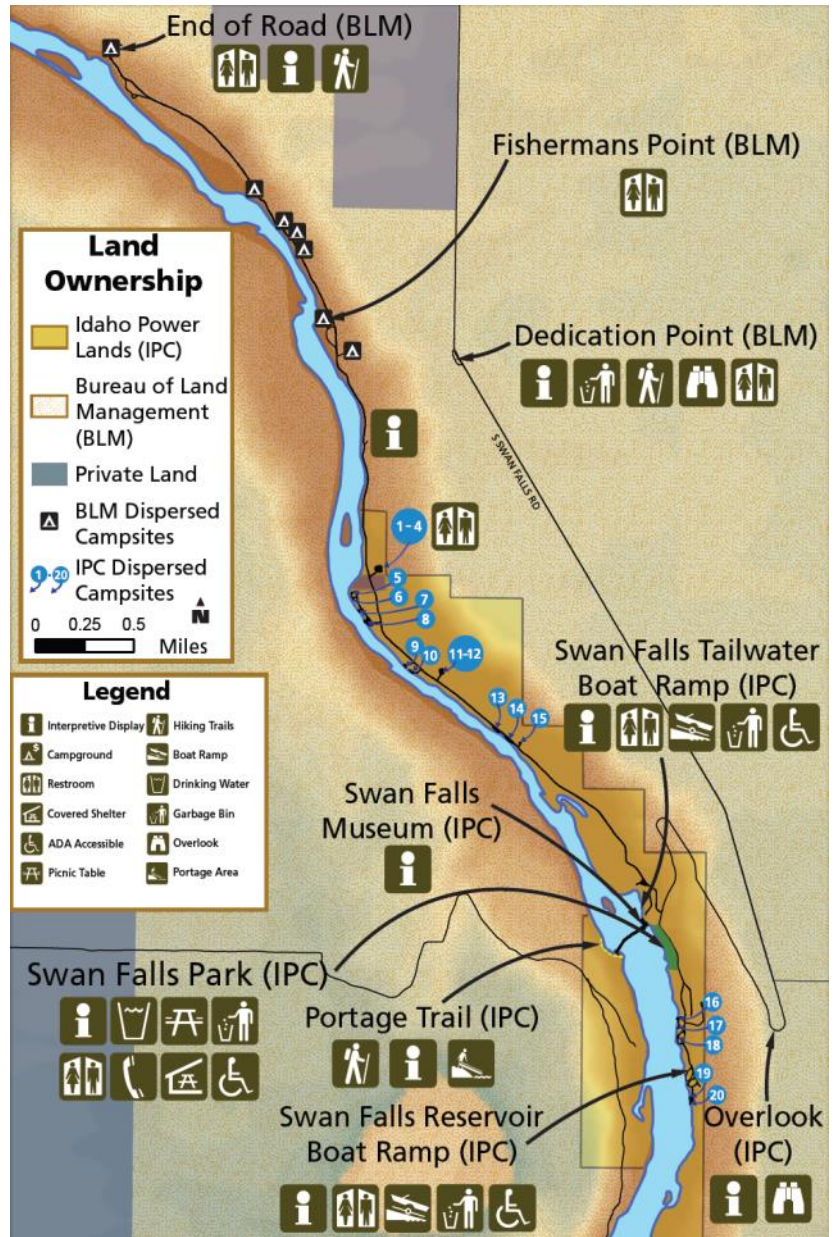
# Idaho-Oregon Snake River Water Trail

Story contributed by:  
Erik Bird, Idaho Power Company Biologist

## Swan Falls Recreation Improvements

Idaho Power Company's (IPC) Swan Falls Hydroelectric Project is located **on the Snake River approximately 20 miles south of Kuna within Ada and Owyhee counties**. Swan Falls Dam is the oldest hydroelectric facility on the Snake River. It began generating electricity in 1901 for mines in the nearby Owyhee Mountains and IPC took ownership of the project in 1916. Today, Swan Falls has a generating capacity of 25 megawatts. At peak efficiency the total maximum output under ideal conditions is enough to power more than 18,000 homes.

Swan Falls is an **ideal spot for bird watchers** because it lies within the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) administered by the Bureau of Land Management. This area is home to many bird species including hawks, owls, eagles and falcons. Other **popular activities include fishing, camping, boating, and upland bird and waterfowl hunting**.



Under the terms of the 2012 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license for Swan Falls, IPC is required to implement measures to protect and enhance fisheries programs, water quality, botanical, wildlife, cultural, recreation, and aesthetics resources within the project boundary. The project boundary **encompasses approximately 1,593 acres of land and water**, of which 186 acres are federal lands within the NCA. These protection, mitigation and enhancement compliance measures came in the form of license articles which Idaho Power is fully engaged in implementing over the term of the new license. **Several recreation improvements were completed in 2014.**



## The specific recreation improvements completed at Swan Falls in 2014 include:

**Swan Falls Park** has an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible route that connects a new picnic shelter, interpretive information, mooring docks, and picnic tables. The retaining wall was rebuilt, new plant material placed, and additional parking spaces (including ADA) were created.



**Swan Falls Tailwater Boat Ramp** has been modified with expanded gravel parking, a new vault toilet, concrete ramp, ADA designated parking, and ADA pre-launch boarding structure.

Dispersed camping has been defined both above and below the dam. There are now **20 new universal campsites** with a compacted, level gravel surface. All sites have improved road access and fire rings and some have picnic tables.



**Swan Falls Reservoir Boat Ramp** modifications included



replacement of the single lane concrete ramp to a two lane boat ramp, expanded gravel parking, ADA parking, a new vault toilet, and docks.

**Camping is on a first-come, first-served basis.** Visitors are asked to camp in designated areas only to protect the fragile soil and plant life in the area. Water is available at the restroom in the day-use area but not at the campsites. Swan Falls Museum, the decommissioned old power plant, will be open each Saturday (9AM - 5PM) from Memorial Day until Labor Day. Enjoy bird watching, camping, fishing, hunting and water sports year round at Swan Falls! **For more information please visit:**

<https://www.idahopower.com/OurEnvironmet/Recreation/SwanFalls/default.cfm>

# Parks and Education

Barber Park is an ideal educational venue for outdoor learning and we're pleased to share another story about Parks and Education from our flagship facility. It's always fun and inspiring to see young students participating in hands-on lessons in a natural setting outside the classroom.



Story contributed by:  
Mrs. Shayna Sklar, White Pine Elementary

White Pine Elementary fourth graders participated in the [Trout in the Classroom](#) program this year. This science unit provides students with the opportunity to actively engage in **observing and caring for rainbow trout raised in the school aquarium**. In this lesson students gain an awareness of trout development and anatomy as they monitor water quality, temperature, and health of the fish. While caring for the trout students learned about habitat requirements, food webs, and ecosystems that support a healthy trout population. They even learned how to spell "ichthyology" (the scientific word for the study of fish)!

Eyed eggs arrived at White Pine Elementary in mid-January and were placed in Vibert boxes inside an aquarium. Located in the school library, the aquarium provided all students and adults in the building the opportunity to stop by and say hello to their fishy friends. Students eagerly observed egg development as they began to hatch the following week. Soon the alevin (newly spawned trout still carrying the yolk) were hiding in the gravel at the bottom of the aquarium. As they developed strength and size they began to swim and dart among the rocks. On April 9th it was **time to head to Barber Park to release the trout to their natural habitat, the Boise River**.



Thanks to the support of the Ted Trueblood Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Idaho Fish and Game, and the USDA Forest Service, students participated in other valuable lessons during their visit to Barber Park. While rotating in groups through four distinct, interactive stations taught by local professionals, students learned about watersheds, fish biology, riparian habitat/ecology, and macroinvertebrates while gaining an appreciation for Idaho's natural beauty, wildlife, and ecosystems.

What a unique and memorable educational experience for these fortunate fourth graders!



# Planning Your Next Special Event?

Call or email to reserve your date today!

208-577-4576 or [eec@adaweb.net](mailto:eec@adaweb.net)



#### RATES AVAILABLE:

Thursday - Sunday

◆ Building Times from 8 am-10 pm or 9 am-11 pm

◆ Cost \$1,254 building with patio

◆ Cost \$1,095 building without patio

#### SPECIAL RATES AVAILABLE:

Monday - Wednesday

◆ Building Times from 8 am-10 pm or 9 am-11 pm

25% Off Building Fee

◆ 5 Hour Time Blocks between 8 am-10 pm

50% Off Building Fee (setup/teardown occurs during the 5 hour time block)

#### AMENITIES INCLUDE:

- ◆ Tables & Chairs
- ◆ Projector and screen
- ◆ Microphones
- ◆ Full facility sound system
- ◆ CD-DVD-VHS player



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