

Current

Ada County Parks & Waterways



Spring 2016

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

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 DIRECTOR'S CUT
- 4 SNOOP LOOP RIBBON CUTTING!
- 7 BROADWAY BRIDGE AND BOISE RIVER SAFETY
- 8 WHAT'S NEXT FOR RIDGE TO RIVERS?
- 10 ADA COUNTY 2025 UPDATE



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Special thanks to Jim Shane for providing this issue's Wood Duck cover photo

DIRECTOR'S CUT

Peaking at 6,420 cfs (cubic feet per second) at Glenwood Bridge on April 11th, the big story in the Treasure Valley this spring has been the **high, fast, dangerous flows on the Boise River**. Since April, flows have subsided quite a bit and fluctuated regularly as water managers make adjustments to accommodate snowmelt runoff, reservoir storage and irrigation demand. With these higher spring flows, however, we'll likely be waiting a bit longer than usual this summer until conditions are favorable enough to announce the official opening of the Barber Park launch area and the Raft & Tube rental concession. And even though we held our breath when the river reached the top step here at the Barber Park beach, we're certainly grateful for the drought relief and 2016 spring surplus.

So how do we decide when to "open" the Boise River for floater recreation between Barber Park and Ann Morrison Park? Each year prior to making the official "river opening" announcement, Ada County works collaboratively with agency partners to evaluate three key components and answer several important questions related to the upcoming float season. If the answer to **all** of these questions is "YES" then we're pretty close to making a float season announcement:

1) Outside air temperature

- ⇒ Is the average daily high above 80°F?
- ⇒ Does the extended forecast project highs above 80°F for the foreseeable future?

2) Existing and projected river flow

- ⇒ Is the flow between 700 cfs - 1,500 cfs at Glenwood?
- ⇒ Are daily flows expected to remain relatively stable and between 700 cfs - 1,500 cfs?

3) River debris and obstructions

- ⇒ With public input and guidance from the River Debris Team (Ada County, Boise City, Idaho Department of Fish & Game, and Idaho Department of Water Resources), have obvious obstructions and debris in the river been identified/located?
- ⇒ Has the Boise Fire Department Dive Rescue Team been able to move and/or remove the known hazards and debris (limbs, branches, stumps, fallen trees, etc.) in the river?

As we went to print with this edition of *Current* the answer to every one of these questions was "NO".

Public safety is paramount to Ada County so we'd like to join our partners from the Boise Fire Department in **urging everyone to avoid recreating in the Boise River until further notice**. The water is cold, the currents are strong and unpredictable, and there is a lot of debris making emergency rescue difficult for first responders.

Safer summertime floating on the Boise River is well worth the wait.

-Scott Koberg, Director



Snoop Loop Ribbon Cutting!



Photo contributed by:
Chadd Cripe, Idaho Statesman

Every spring and fall (and sometimes in between) while the soils are still holding some moisture, all of the trails at the Ada-Eagle Bike Park need to be tuned up and properly maintained. Without regular maintenance soils will erode, trail features will degrade, and user experience will suffer. To stay on top of 10+ miles of trail maintenance we've been working with the fine folks from SWIMBA (Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association) for a little over a year now to help organize and lead volunteer trail days, and the partnership has been nothing but positive.

So during the course of trail maintenance last fall when we asked SWIMBA leadership for input on re-routing a short, pre-existing, poorly constructed, ill-designed, erosive trail at the park we figured they'd bring some good ideas to the table. What they brought instead was a **full-blown trail proposal to build something this spring that didn't yet exist at the park or really anywhere else in the foothills — a beginner kid's mountain bike loop.** Since the existing trail was easily accessible from the parking lots and already had the kid-friendly "Snoop Loop" name, the proposed trail was a perfect fit.

A festive Boise Metro Chamber ribbon cutting ceremony attended by Ada County Commissioners Case and Yzaguirre, Eagle Mayor Stan Ridgeway, SWIMBA Board Members, the Boise Young Rider Development Squad (BYRDS), and several eager young riders marked the official completion of the Snoop Loop trail project on April 27th. **The joy on the young riders faces was undeniable** as they pedaled multiple Snoop Loop laps while testing their dirt riding skills and stamina on the short, fun singletrack trail through the sagebrush "forest".



From Re-Route to Ribbon Cutting

Despite its diminutive length the new trail presented some challenges during construction and the re-route involved simultaneously decommissioning several segments from the old trail. To do this properly required **tremendous coordination, staff time, partnership, materials, labor, and volunteer assistance.**



While Mike Edwards, Scott Perryman, and Margie Rosenberg from SWIMBA took the lead on the new trail construction using volunteer labor, hand tools, and their **ST-240 trail building machine**, Ada County recruited



Mike Pellant (BLM Great Basin Ecologist and Healthy Hills Initiative Coordinator) to help out with decommissioning and rehabilitating the old trail segments.

Mike jumped in right away to implement a strategy that involved breaking up the compacted



surface of the old trail to a depth of 8-10 inches, **hand seeding the newly created seed bed** with native grasses and forbs, and then applying a layer of certified weed-free straw mulch to protect the disturbed soil from erosion while preserving moisture to encourage seed germination. Still planned for later this spring is a bitterbrush and sagebrush planting effort using community volunteers and seedlings donated by the



USDA Forest Service Lucky Peak Nursery. The objective of this effort is to rehabilitate the old trail in such a way that, over time, native vegetation will become more prevalent than invasive weeds and the former footprint from the trail will ultimately disappear and blend into the landscape. As Mike puts it, "**Sustainable trails must be well designed, properly implemented and regularly maintained.**



Healthy Hills Initiative is assisting Ada County with trail sustainability and improving trail aesthetics."

The finishing touches on Snoop Loop included building two puncheons (think boardwalks) across a small drainage area and then installing several sections of two-rail doweled



fencing to separate the old trail from the new. *(continued next page)*



The Vision

We're hoping Snoop Loop quickly becomes a favorite of beginning young riders for practicing the mountain biking skills needed to tackle longer loops and bigger trails at the Ada-Eagle Bike Park and other areas of the foothills. The short length (0.18 total miles), appropriately challenging terrain, and separation from other trails are all intended to provide a **fun, safe learning environment for kids**.

SNOOP LOOP TRAIL

0.18 miles total with the stem
0.14 miles in the loop portion

** decommissioned trail segments*

Snoop Loop re-route features:

- Ada County & SWIMBA partnership
- Beginner kids mountain bike trail
- Target audience 6 - 10 yr olds
- Boise Front Mountain Biking 101
- Tight single track
- Mini-climbing sections
- Technical turns
- Cool man-made puncheon/bridges
- Short little downhills
- Sagebrush "forest"
- Short, Fun, Challenging, Skill Builder



"I was feeling like a proud papa when the ribbon was cut. The icing on the cake was seeing the smiles on the children's faces while riding Snoop Loop."

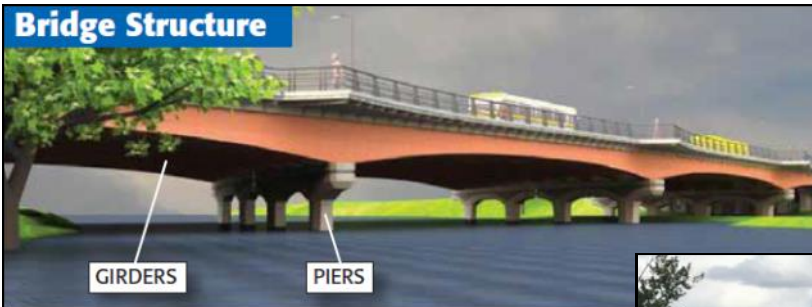
- Scott Perryman, SWIMBA





Broadway Bridge and Boise River Safety

This spring we're fielding several questions about the 2016 Boise River float season and many people are particularly interested in how the Broadway Bridge project might affect floaters this summer. After all, the Broadway Bridge has been under construction since January and it's one of the nine

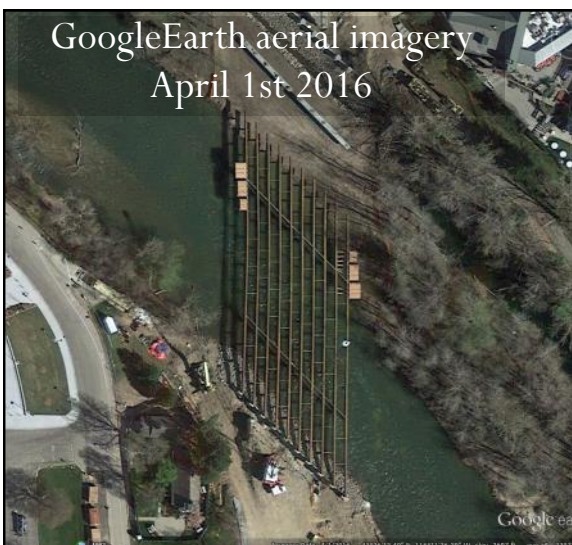


bridges (five road and four pedestrian — including the Ann Morrison bridge at the take out) that floaters expect to glide under on any trip down the river. So what should summer floaters expect to see?



No impacts to the Boise River float season related to the Broadway Bridge project are anticipated. Summer floaters will have clear passage under the bridge and can expect to get a great glimpse of the new piers and girders on their downstream voyage.

However, for those that still need the incentive to avoid recreating on the river until the official summer float season, be aware that the “dangerous river conditions” status is expected to remain throughout the spring and river restrictions may be in effect at Broadway Bridge until mid-June. We asked the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) to provide additional information for our readers regarding the project. Here's the scoop:



ITD is replacing the Broadway Bridge over the Boise River and improving Broadway Avenue between University Drive and Front Street (expected completion: Fall 2016). This will occasionally require the Boise River to be restricted in the construction area. Intermittent river restrictions will be in place during the day through mid-June. ITD has placed signs along the river directing recreationalists through the construction zone whenever the river is restricted.

For up-to-date Broadway Bridge construction information Visit: www.itd.idaho.gov/BroadwayBridge

Call: (208) 334-8938 or Text: BROADWAYBRIDGE to 22828



What's Next for Ridge to Rivers?

Story contributed by:
Sara Arkle, City of Boise Foothills & Open Space Senior Manager

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.

In 2017 the Ridge to Rivers partnership will celebrate its 25th anniversary(!) — a testament to the collaboration that's occurred between the various agency representative and our growing communities over the years. Now, as the Ridge to Rivers partnership continues making great progress to enhance outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, and clean water throughout the Boise Foothills, I can't think of a similar partnership with such effective and cooperative federal, state, and local agencies.

Since its beginning, there have always been opportunistic new additions to the Ridge to Rivers trail system as the partners acquired and built connections when they became available, striving all along to offer better experiences for hikers, bikers, equestrians, and families. With so many miles of trails (190 and growing) and so many different types of users the partners felt it was time to build a management plan to guide the next 10 years of trail construction, maintenance, and services.

David Gordon, the City of Boise's Ridge to Rivers Program Manager who will be largely responsible for leading implementation efforts identified in the plan, had this to say about the planning need:

"Our trail system has grown substantially over the last 10 years. This plan will help the Ridge to Rivers partners understand how the community wants the trail system to grow in the next 10 years."



For the past 10 months the City of Boise and its Ridge to Rivers partners have convened citizens throughout our communities in a variety of formats — online, open house settings, focus groups,



and on the trails — to solicit input about desired connections, trail management strategies, and shared recreational use. **Over 3,000 individual comments were received** during the course of those months. These comments, in addition to the input received during countless face-to-face conversations that agency representatives have

had with interested citizens, led to the development of a **draft plan that was released in late April 2016.**

Once the draft was complete, David was impressed with the initial outcome. “We’ve developed the draft management plan with significant public input, addressing the creation of new trail opportunities as well as strategies to manage the growing use of the trail system. **It was great to see so much participation**



from the trail using public, as

well as such a strong desire to continue a shared-use trail system.”

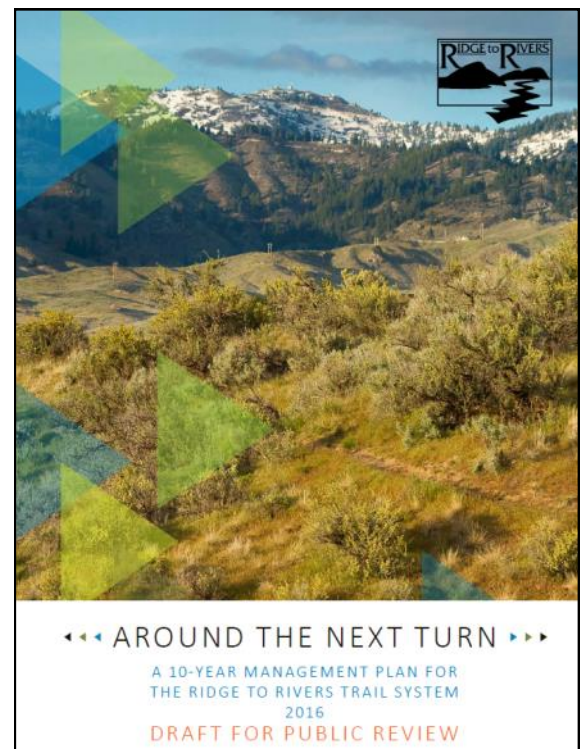
The draft plan will be revised based on additional public input and released in final form this summer. The Ridge to Rivers staff and agency partners will then begin to work on implementation of the plan. Once project specific implementation begins to take place, there will be additional opportunities



for comment and input per Ridge to Rivers partner agency guidelines. As we wrap up the planning process we’d like to specifically thank the following Citizen Representatives who provided invaluable contributions as members of our Planning Committee:

Tim Breuer, Ester Ceja, Karen Danley, Ian Fitzpatrick, Todd Graeff, Chris Haunold, Jill Haunold, Mike Lanza, Justin Maines, Jeremy Maxand, Betsey Roberts, Nate Shake, Mark Tate, Lauri Thompson, and Lana Weber.

For more information visit: www.ridgetorivers.org



Ada County 2025 Update

Story contributed by:
Megan Basham, Ada County Development Services

The US Census Bureau estimated Ada County's population in 2015 to be 434,211 and according to the Community Planning Association (COMPASS) of Southwest Idaho **674,000 people are expected to live in Ada County by 2040!** This amounts to about 10,000 new residents every year for 25 years. So what should Ada County be doing to accommodate this projected growth? Ada County 2025 has reached out to the public for ideas and one of the interesting things we found out was that open space and recreation opportunities are clearly important to the residents of Ada County.

So what is Ada County 2025 and how can it help to ensure that our open space and recreation opportunities are not only protected, but made available to all residents and future residents?

Ada County 2025 is a planning process to update Ada County's Comprehensive Plan and create a strategic business plan. A comprehensive plan guides the physical development of Ada County by outlining goals and policies for lands in unincorporated areas outside of city limits and requires extensive public outreach and analysis to determine appropriate locations for land uses. The strategic business plan creates a unifying vision for County leaders and uses public input from the planning process to help guide these leaders to prioritize investment of resources to provide services in a transparent and efficient manner.

Open space and recreation policy will have a prominent role in the Ada County 2025 Comprehensive Plan. These policies will play a part in the land use decisions made by Ada County staff, the planning and zoning commission and elected officials, as well as building upon the foundation of

collaboration that already exists between Ada County departments and other jurisdictions and government agencies.

Who has Ada County 2025 reached out to so far?

Public outreach for Ada County 2025 kicked off in October 2015 with a series of focus groups and online participation. The focus groups were well attended by a wide cross-section of interests including public agencies, farmers, business community members, residents of neighborhood associations, land use professionals, and



representatives from special interest and user groups. From these initial focus group outreach efforts it became obvious that identifying more opportunities for open space preservation and



public recreation was a high priority deserving further attention. This is what some of the focus group participants had to say:

“Open space is a big part of livability in the valley. With the inevitable growth in population we need to be certain policies are put in place to preserve accessibility to our reserves.”

“I’d really love to see more recreation opportunities for families in the west valley.”

“Ada County needs to focus on preserving open space and trails to provide opportunities for adults and children to exercise and live a healthy lifestyle. It is important to focus on the entire County and not just those in the foothills.”

Following up on the input we received Ada County 2025 held an **“Open Space and Recreation Policy Summit”** in February 2016 at the Barber Park Education & Event Center. The summit was well attended by other jurisdictions, government agencies, and users of the existing open space and recreational opportunities. Participants discussed existing policies and properties while also exploring new and improved policy options and untapped funding opportunities. The culmination of these efforts will result in policy guidance for Ada County decision makers regarding open space and recreation goals, priorities and opportunities.



How can I get involved?



Visit our website at www.adacounty2025.com to learn more about Ada County 2025, provide public comments, or review our draft documents including our preliminary vision and goals.

You can also sign up for our email list to stay informed about the process and learn about upcoming events. A full draft of the completed document including more specific policies and action items will be available online in July 2016.





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