

A Brief History of the Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands

Since its beginning in 1972 the Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands, private nonprofit and nongovernmental, has worked to protect outdoor resources. The foundation has handled more than \$12,000,000 in assets and our administrative budget has never been more than one percent of our asset base. Our charter maintains flexibility because Idaho is so diverse. The opportunity for land conservation is entirely voluntary and we only go where we are wanted. There is no maternity ward for terra firma. Two of Idaho's staunchest park supporters – Governor Robert and Lu Smylie helped in the early development of the land trust in Idaho. Both knew the Harriman brothers well, dined with them at the Railroad Ranch in Island Park, on their private railway car and sometimes in New York. Working with E. Roland and Gladys Harriman, who owned 75 percent of the ranch and W. Averell Harriman with his 25 percent, Governor Smylie wrote the agreements that would preserve all 15,000 acres as a gift to the people of Idaho. The Foundation played a critical part in this, its first transaction. What a legacy for this state! The Foundation will always take a multi-faceted approach to support local land protection for areas left in their natural state...managed as agriculture land... improved by adding bike paths...developed for parks and recreation... and the list goes on.

A public benefit privately-funded organization can provide for safekeeping of land assets as part of land preservation. These properties, as they are acquired, may be held and then either conveyed to a public agency or stay in protective status and management permanently with the Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands. This has been the concept and founding principle of the foundation (formerly Idaho Park Foundation) when it was chartered in 1972 during the first administration of Governor Cecil D. Andrus. Since its inception it has been the recipient of more than \$8,000,000 in assets. The reason it is called a "foundation" is that it can make "grants" of land to public agencies.

The Foundation's goals are promote the acquisition, preservation, conservation and maintenance of open spaces and related ecosystems. It is organized to cooperate with community groups and governmental units within the state. The Foundation has been fortunate, in building its track record, to acquire most of its holdings by donation rather than purchase. A key element in the process is public and private trust and confidence. Importantly, each property must be held and cared for according to the wishes and conditions of donors.

People generally donate for preservation, not for financial benefit. Often potential donors prefer to deal with a private organization rather than a public agency. A perpetual conservation easement means the property will never be subdivided and developed. Easement contributors receive a tax break based on the appraised difference between the property's value as agriculture acreage and its subdivision value. Landowners retain all other rights of ownership.

A sampling of land donations follows:

In 1973 the Hemingway family made the very first gift to the Foundation, a 450- acre area along the Little Wood River called the Taylor "Bear Track" Williams fishing preserve in honor of Ernest Hemingway's favorite guide. It is now managed by Idaho Fish & Game. Under the impetus of

the Harriman gift in the Island Park area of eastern Idaho which involved 15,000 acres and a share of voting capital stock the Foundation was formed and at an agreed-upon time orchestrated its delivery to the State as part of the acquisition of what is now Harriman State Park of Idaho. The Foundation also received approximately 1,000 acres known as Harriman East through which two and one-half miles of the well-known Henry's Fork fishery flows. In partnership with the Henry's Fork Foundation, a smooth wire, solar-powered, high tensile fence was placed along both sides of the river to protect the fishery. This cooperative effort earned the foundation the Take Pride in America 1987 National Award as a semi-finalist demonstrating that man, cattle and the environment could work together.

Contiguous to both Sun Valley and Ketchum, the Reinheimer Ranch's 110 acres is a gateway to the world-famous ski and summer resort area. In the midst of highly valued real estate development the Reinheimer Ranch functions as a reminder of the area as it looked in the 1880s. The Big Wood River and Bald Mountain on one side, Dollar Mountain on the other, the ranch came to the Foundation by bequest of Eleanor Reinheimer. It was her stipulation that an individual continue farming the property during his lifetime and that no structures be built. In 1988, the foundation purchased the 100-foot railroad right-of-way adjoining the Reinheimer Ranch allowing for another segment of the Wood River Trail system to be installed.

The Barber Pool Natural Area, six miles east of the city of Boise, consists of 400 acres bisected by the Boise River. Chosen as one of the top twelve Unique Wildlife Ecosystems in Idaho, the Barber Pool provides excellent habitat for wildlife and plant species as well as a high concentration of wintering bald eagles. The foundation has entered into a management agreement with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation which emphasizes its continued use.

Preservation begins with people. Pick a spot, any spot in the State of Idaho. Give it a special effect—exciting geology, beautiful scenery, fine fishing, farm or ranch land, parkland or open space. If possible, give it some breathing space and not too many buildings or crowded areas. These settings represent the makings of a land trust. It would be impossible to rank the accomplishments of the Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands in order of importance, but in chronological order of acceptance, here is a sampling of land projects to date:

1975 – 1000 acres adjoining the Railroad Ranch in Island Park, known as Harriman East; home of the trumpeter swan and the blue-ribbon Henry's Fork fishery; held by the foundation until 1994.

1977 – Reinheimer Ranch, received by bequest of Eleanor Reinheimer: 110 acres to be maintained as open space adjacent to the cities of Ketchum and Sun Valley. This property lies between Dollar Mountain and the base of Bald Mountain.

1978 – Barber Pool Conservation Area: 411 acres containing significant wildlife and habitat values, located within six miles of downtown Boise. Donated by Boise Cascade. Chosen as one of the state's 12 unique ecosystems and a Boise City Heritage Site.

1980 – One acre on top of Dollar Mountain, donated by Elkhorn at Sun Valley for the “Buy an Inch . . . Save an Acre” land sale.

1981 – Smith Ranch, Ltd. , scenic easement. 10.75 acres appurtenant to the Barber Pool.

1981 – Ruth Rowell Modie Wildlife Park, a natural habitat corridor held for the city of Lewiston as part of a five-parcel package.

1982 – 55 acres of River’s Edge Ranch: a benchmark nature preserve on the Big Wood River adjacent to Sun Valley and Ketchum, donated by Helen M. Fassett.

1982 – 51.5 acre tract along Lake Fork Creek near McCall providing a permanent niche for birds, animals and flora, donated by Nelle Tobias.

1987 – 11.7 acres destined for use as a park or permanent open space for the city of American Falls, donated by the Warrick family; reconveyed in 2004.

1988 – Purchase of Union Pacific railroad right-of-way adjacent to the Reinheimer Ranch, a portion of which is bikepath for public use.

1989 – Acquisition agent for 25 acres known as Rock Creek II for Twin Falls County Parks and Recreation; transferred in 1990

1989 – 16 acres on Fernan Hill donated anonymously, being held for the city of Coeur d’Alene as the future Veteran’s Centennial Park.

1989 – 8.6 acre Boise River Island donated as part of the Settlement Agreement for the Boise River Greenbelt by Gregory Jackson and Sheila Smith. It can be used as land match for future bridging and river trail construction.

1990 – Conservation Easement on 321 acres of the East Fork of the Salmon River, donated by the Insinger family.

1990 and 1992 – Two parcels of land along the Portneuf River donated by Wayne Taysom and Cory and Teri Lamb, respectively; now transferred to the Portneuf Greenway Foundation.

1992 – 3.6 acre lot in Whispering Pines Homesites, Bannock County; donated by Dr. Gildon Beall. Unrestricted donation sold in 1995.

1994 – Conservation Easement on 50 acres crosscut by Challis and Bear Creeks; donated by Keith and Patricia Axline.

1995 – Donation of 1.20 acres by Douglas and Susan Randall to provide connectivity for a package of land holdings held in trust for the city of Lewiston.

1996 – Land and outbuildings held in trust for the city of Lewiston as a community arboretum subject to reservation of life estate by Anabel Clementine Osborn.

1996 – 2.62 acres adjacent to the Lake Fork Creek tract; donated by Nelle Tobias.

1996 – 5.98 acres tract donated by Boise Cascade proximate to Horseshoe Bend Mill Pond.

1997 – 5.0 acres donated by the Richard B. Smith family in foothills adjacent to Camel’s Back Park; landbanked for the city of Boise.

1998 – Lot 1, River’s Edge Ranch, consisting of 11 acres adjacent to the 55-acre nature preserve; purchased from the Thomas D. Hormel trust.

1998 – Conservation Easement on 140.5 acres of significant natural, agricultural and open space resources in Hansen donated by Peter M. Link.

2000 – Purchase agent for 21 acres along the Middle Fork of the Payette River as a future community park for the Garden Valley Recreational District.

2001 – 3.63 acres in lots in Creekside at Crosstimber Ranch Subdivision in Garden Valley. Donated by Jon L. and Mimi Barnes. Sold to benefit exempt purpose 2004.

2002 – Donation of 0.352 acres of riverine commercial property along the southwesterly bank of the Boise River as an extension of the Boise River Greenbelt by Sharon and George Watkins/Marilyn Oakes Trust/McDonald Family Trust.

2003 – 10.1 acres donated as individuals and partners by George Anderl and Robert Turnipseed d/b/a Woodland Heights, Inc. and Hayden View Estates Partnership held in trust for Kootenai County Parks & Waterways. It is partially wooded; contemplated for passive park usage.

2003 – Historic barn and two rural residential lots in Creekside at Crosstimber Ranch Subdivision in Garden Valley. Donated by Jon L. and Mimi Barnes.