Valley County Recreation Advisory Council

Regular Meeting Minutes — Monday, September 28, 2026 *(date to confirm)*

Called to Order By: *Jeff Mousseau (presiding)*

Attendance

Council/Advisory Members: Jeff Mousseau; Erik Weiseth; Mike Heyer; Paul McCloskey, Patrick Morgan.

County/Staff: Commissioner Thompson; Leigh Holmes (County Recreation staff, attended remotely)

Guests: Randy Fox (Idaho Conservation League / United Payette); Vera Rasmussen (McCall Hiking Club); Larry Meredith (council applicant)

Quorum: *Yes*

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1) Approval of Minutes

- ***July 2026 and August 2026 minutes*** *(distributed in advance by Leigh) — Motion to approve by Mike Heyer; seconded.* ***Approved unanimously.***

2) Guest Presentation — United Payette: Endowment Lands Exchange Update

Presenter: *Randy Fox (Idaho Conservation League / United Payette)*

- ***Proposal:*** *Exchange of ~15,000 acres of IDL endowment land around Payette Lake for USFS lands, at roughly a 10-to-1 ratio based on appraised value. Talks slowed during fire season and are now resuming.*
- ***Lands IDL seeks:*** *Timberland in the Boise NF (including ~2,500 acres adjacent to Tamarack), Adams County, and North Idaho, avoiding salmon and steelhead habitat.*
- ***Alternatives:*** *IDL developed four alternatives that include or hold out the east-side (wedding venue) and west-side (Green Gate) parcels. United Payette supports*

Alternative 1 *(exchange all lands), since those parcels are the most heavily used by the community.*

- ***Status:*** *No appraisals or dollar figures yet. The Land Board approved due diligence in June. USFS Chief Schultz is supportive, but USFS progress likely awaits appointment of a new Idaho state director, and no USFS lead or timeline exists.*
- ***Support:*** *June public meetings in Cascade, McCall, and New Meadows were generally favorable. Senator Risch is expected to lead legislation, with support from Senator Crapo and Representative Simpson. Tamarack Resort and Adams County officials also support the exchange.*
- ***Council discussion:*** *Members raised Ponderosa State Park expansion (possibly held out under an MOU as a later step), protecting existing county infrastructure and leaseholders such as Yahoo Corrals through exchange sideboards, and directing any USFS letter to Chief Schultz. County Rec staff noted that working with a single land manager would simplify trail and lease agreements.*
- ***Request:*** *United Payette asked VRAC to send a letter of support to IDL Director Miller and the Land Board. The council agreed to draft one and share it with Randy before sending.*

3) Guest Presentation — McCall Hiking Club

Presenter: *Vera Rasmussen (Board Member)*

- *Founded in 2003; a 501(c)(7) social and recreational club with 118 paid members ($20 annual dues).*
- *Offers twice-weekly summer hikes at two difficulty levels and weekly winter hikes/snowshoe outings. Large groups are split to comply with Payette NF group-size recommendations.*
- *The club's board would like to take on trail stewardship and add an educational component. Discussed partnering with ITA for trail work.*
- ***Council discussion:*** *VRAC's strategic plan includes a Trail Stewardship / Adopt-a-Trail Program targeted for 2027. The council invited the club to be a partner or pilot group; Vera will take a draft to the club's board. Members also suggested the club share trail condition updates with the USFS and confirm whether its group outings require a Forest Service permit.*
    - ***Staff addition 10/6/26****: VCR is currently working with the Payette NF McCall-New Meadows Ranger District, and regional partners, to better support the Forest's existing Adopt-a-Trail program. VCR staff will include the McCall Hiking Club in future communications about volunteer opportunities via the program.*

4) Program / Project Updates

- ***Stakeholder Outreach Plan:*** *Draft to be distributed to members for review at the next meeting.*
- ***Economic Impact Study:*** *Funding status to be confirmed. Leigh is exploring if the study is a candidate for an Idaho Policy Institute student capstone project.*
- ***Grants:*** *Five IDPR applications in progress (new: Big Creek Summit expansion and Lick Creek Connector Trail), due January 2027. Possible Stibnite Foundation funding (potential as grant match) to be discussed at a future meeting.*
- ***Francis Wallace and Wellington:*** *Construction on previously awarded (2026) IDPR grant projects to begin soon.*

5) Council Membership

- *The council has eight members (up to nine allowed). Two applicants, Larry Meredith and Riley Kies, are under consideration; no vote taken.*
    - *Staff addition: a third applicant, Karl Lindstrom, applied on 9/28*

6) Action Items

- ***Council:*** *Draft letter of support for the endowment lands exchange; share with Randy Fox before sending.*
- ***Randy Fox:*** *Identify the appropriate USFS recipient for a parallel letter.*
- ***Council / Staff:*** *Share the draft trail stewardship program with the McCall Hiking Club.*
    - *Staff addition 10/6/26: Move this action item to a future meeting date.*
- ***Council:*** *Distribute the draft stakeholder outreach plan.*
- ***Council:*** *Consider the two membership applicants.*

7) Next Meeting

- *Next regular meeting — October 28 at 5:30pm at 48 E Lake Fork Rd.*
- *Agenda includes stakeholder outreach plan review; revisit trail stewardship programs.*

8) Adjournment

- *Meeting adjourned.*

Minutes prepared by Erik Weiseth and Staff.