

## ROAD FUNDS: Come at expense of recreation

Posted: Tuesday, May 19, 2009 - 11:35:31 pm PDT

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**Anyone who has played "chicken" as a youngster knows that the person who loses is the first one to choke and give up.**

Well, such is the case with the Idaho Legislature this session. They had been playing political chicken with the governor over the issue of increased highway maintenance funds or a fuel tax increase. They wouldn't pass a gas tax increase and he wouldn't let them go home. In the end the legislature folded and gave the governor what he wanted in the form of increased money for highways.

They didn't do it by increasing fuel taxes. They did it through a shell game that will hurt park visitors, boaters and off-highway vehicle riders. In essence they slammed the entire Idaho recreational community by taking \$4.8 million of state gas tax away from Parks and Recreation.

This is the tax on fuel that is not burned on highways. It is the fuel used by off-highway vehicles, boats and other visitors to the backcountry. It is the money that maintains trails and protects the environment, builds and repairs boating facilities, and develops park facilities. It is also the money that pays the counties for search and rescue activities.

Their talking points include: We have set up a task force to identify "alternative sources of funding" to keep Parks and Rec. from losing any money. If we can't find it we will take it from the general fund. No mater how you look at it, alternative sources of funding will be a tax on someone.

If you enjoy our state parks, launch your boat on one of our beautiful lakes, or ride your off-highway vehicle in the backcountry. It is time to contact your legislators and let them know that this action is unacceptable.

TOM CRIMMINS

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