



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

INTERMOUNTAIN BIRD OBSERVATORY

Lucky Peak Crew Handbook



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The Lucky Peak Project

The Intermountain Bird Observatory (IBO) is a non-profit Academic Research and Outreach Program of Boise State University. The IBO is located within the College of Arts and Sciences, and collaborates directly with the Department of Biological Sciences and Raptor Research Center at Boise State. The IBO provides research and training opportunities for both graduate and undergraduate students at Boise State. Though we are best known for our fall Lucky Peak project, we conduct conservation-oriented bird monitoring, research, and associated outreach throughout the Intermountain West and maintain various international collaborations.

The Lucky Peak project began in 1992 when students and faculty of Boise State discovered a significant raptor migration corridor along the Boise Ridge, located in southwest Idaho near Boise. Several sites were explored along the ridge during fall of 1993, and the greatest concentration of migrating raptors was found at Lucky Peak, the southernmost peak on the Ridge. In 1997 IBO began our long-term songbird fall migration monitoring project, and in 1999 we began mist netting for small forest owls. All three of these research projects take place within a few hundred meters of each other at the same camp, meaning that during the height of fall migration the station is in operation essentially 24/7!

As the project has grown, one of our main priorities beyond our research goals has become public outreach and education. In most years we host around 2,000 visitors to the site including local schools, scout groups, birding and outdoor groups, and the general public. As one of the crew, you will be expected to communicate with the public about the work you are doing and answer questions for passing hikers, bikers, and visiting groups, families, and individuals.

Lucky Peak Field Station

Our research station serves as the home of our songbird, hawk watch, hawk trapping and owl banding projects. This means that during the fall, the site is home to about 10 crew members, plus a number of volunteers and visitors on any given day. Our station is located at ~5,900 ft. elevation on the top of Lucky Peak. The site is accessed from Boise along highway 21 and is about an hour drive from town. Half of this drive is on a rough and steep ~5-mile single track dirt road that leads to our site just above treeline. In some years the site is accessible to brave sedan drivers, but in most cases, plan on accessing the site using the provided crew truck, or using a personal 4x4 or high-clearance vehicle.

Our research station is located on the Boise River Wildlife Management Area (WMA), managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG). The main purpose of this WMA is to provide suitable habitat for wintering ungulates, namely mule deer and elk. Boise State has signed an agreement with IDFG which allows IBO IBO to maintain the research station at Lucky Peak. Under this agreement, certain exceptions to WMA rules are allowed at the research station, including camping for crew and IBO visitors, access through a locked gate, etc. For IBO crews and the general public alike, all other WMA rules apply

Station Guidelines

Camping

Surrounding the main camp, a number of level tent sites have been constructed for use by the crew. Each crew member should bring their own tent while working for the fall. Most sites are sized for 1-2 person tents, but there are a few sites that are large enough for a medium sized 3-4 person tent. (Please contact us ahead of time if you have a larger than 2 person tent).

There is also a large centrally located camping pad that is used by visiting groups, volunteers, and families.



The main group camping area at Lucky Peak (yurt in background)

Crew Truck

We have a Suburban available for official crew business. Because IBO covers fuel and maintenance costs on this vehicle, we try to limit its use as much as possible. The camp crew leader will complete a crew schedule that allows each crew member transportation to Boise at least once a week. Crew members should carpool as much as possible to make these trips efficient.

To be eligible to drive the IBO vehicle you must have a valid driver's license and have passed an off-road driving course. Training will include use of 4-low, braking, safe driving practices, dirt road 'manners', and appropriate destinations and uses for the crew vehicle.

Crew members with 4WD vehicles should use their own car to get to town if they plan to go more than once a week.

Personal vehicles

On the peak:

Parking space is limited at the field station. We must maintain adequate parking for public visitors throughout the fall. An official IBO parking policy exists and is attached to this document-please read carefully. A few personal vehicles are allowed to park on the peak as necessary to transport the crew in case of an emergency. All other vehicles must be left at the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) offices. Please consult with Greg if you wish to keep your vehicle on the peak.

At the WMA:

Adequate parking space is provided at the WMA offices, which are easily accessed from state Highway 21. Vehicles must be parked on the north side of the WMA office building. This area is locked and personal vehicles are safe to be parked at this location. On days off or for trips to Boise, transportation to your vehicle will be provided to you in the IBO crew Suburban. A 3-mile hiking trail also exists which provides access from the field station to the WMA offices.

Trash and Recycling

Trash and recycling are stored outside the kitchen tent and need to be emptied ***every time someone goes to town***. Trash can get extremely smelly in the summer so it is a top priority to bring trash to town at every opportunity. Do NOT overfill trash bags or transport trash bags that have leaks, holes, or are too full to close tightly. You do not want to ride in the crew suburban with leaky trash. Double-bag trash when necessary. Recycling should be fully rinsed to avoid smell. Glass recycling needs to be kept separate from other recycling. See the recycling information below which outlines what can and cannot be recycled in Boise. Please make every effort to recycle as much as possible.

Take initiative to change trash bags *before* they are overfilled. Place trash bags outside the kitchen tent for loading into the Suburban.

Ask crew leaders about the best locations to dump trash, recycling, and glass in Boise.

Water and coolers

There is no running water at the site. The crew is responsible for filling water jugs during trips down the mountain in the crew vehicle. Water from a good well is available at the WMA offices, about a 30 minute drive from camp. Empty water jugs should be refilled any time you make a trip to town. Water is to be used for drinking and washing dishes.

We use coolers and plastic jugs filled with water and then frozen. An IBO freezer is dedicated to this purpose and is stored at the WMA offices. We have found that frozen jugs are handy, less messy than loose ice, and re-useable. IBO provides crew coolers, but crew members should bring their own coolers if at all possible. If using IBO provided coolers, be prepared to share with other crew members as necessary. Like water jugs, ice bottles should be changed out any time someone makes a trip to town—this is especially important early in the season to be sure that coolers stay cold in hot weather.

Handle water jugs and ice bottles with care to avoid cracking. They are in limited supply and easily break if jostled in the Suburban.

Take initiative

Help your fellow crew members out. Help each other load/unload trash, recycling, ice, and water into the Suburban before and after trips. Offer to take trash, recycling, ice or water in your personal vehicle when possible.

Kitchen

Camp is equipped with a large kitchen tent that is shared among the songbird, hawk, and owl crew members. This tent has some storage space for food and coolers, and a large picnic table.

We provide a propane stove and basic cooking utensils and dishes for the crew (pots, pans, spoons, spatulas, bowls, plates, and some cups). Be sure to bring any special cooking supplies you need, such as a coffee press, toasting rack, coffee thermos, pressure cooker, Tupperware, etc.

The kitchen tent needs to be kept clean and organized at all times. **You are responsible for your dishes and for keeping shared utensils 100% clean.** Personal items left in the tent may include dishes and other cookware, as well as food bins and cooking supplies. Games and books or other “sharable” items may be stored on the shelves in the tent with permission of the camp leader. ALL other items such as clothing, backpacks, and other personal belongings should be stored in your own tent, car, or in the wall tents (if available).



The kitchen tent area at Lucky Peak

Because we host so many public visitors to our site, it is important to keep the entire camp, and especially the kitchen tent, neat and tidy at all times. This is an area where visitors always congregate-its appearance should reflect positively on the IBO crew, it should not be a mess! This means cleaning and organizing the kitchen tent daily. Keep gear stored neatly inside or behind the tent in designated areas.

Dishes need to be washed at the end of each meal. In particular, shared items like pots, pans, and cooking spoons/spatulas need to be washed as soon as possible so that they are available for other crew members. If you are planning to cook something messy and will need to soak dishes before cleaning them, please coordinate with other crew members to be sure that they don't need the dishes first. If you have a personal dish that you do not wish to wash (such as a coffee mug, etc.) you must store it in your food bin. Dirty dishes (personal or communal) cannot stay in the sink.

Take special care when cleaning cast iron cookware. Ask the camp leader how best to do this. Do NOT use soap.

The kitchen sink empties into a 5 gallon bucket to make dish washing a bit easier. Since we dump our dish water on-site, we provide biodegradable dish soap. The camp leader will set up a schedule for emptying these buckets, but crew members should take initiative and empty buckets **any time they are ¾ full.**

Outhouse

Lucky Peak is equipped with an outhouse/pit toilet. This bathroom is used by crew and visitors, and it is important to keep it clean throughout the season. The camp leader will assign cleaning

duty for the outhouse once a week. Each crew member will be expected to contribute equally to these cleaning duties. To reduce smell, please remember to close the lid before you leave. When toilet paper is down to one roll be sure to carry another roll down with you. *Refill the paper before it runs out!*

Electricity

We have a solar panel and battery set up that allows us to run our owl calling system. Batteries may be used to charge phones, laptops, and other devices, as well as power lights in the kitchen tent and banding yurt. The camp leader will set up a battery rotation schedule. Crew members should keep track of dead and charged batteries, and charge new batteries as necessary. During stormy stretches when solar power is low, charging should be limited to essentials such as phones and data entry laptops only.

Wood stoves

The kitchen tent, wall tents, and the yurt (where songbird and owl banding take place) are equipped with wood stoves, making them great places to warm up when the weather gets chilly. The crew is responsible for supplying firewood and keeping a *dry* supply on hand as needed. Because of high fire danger, it is important to make sure that the stoves do not send sparks into overhanging trees, and that flammable materials are kept away from the stove and stove pipe inside and outside the tent. Make sure that no tent material (such as roof flap) or branches are touching the stove pipes.



The songbird and owl banding yurt

Showers and Laundry

We will provide shower cards that give access to the Boise State University Recreation Center showers in town. Each crew member will get their own shower card which will be good for about 1x weekly showers throughout the season. The BSU Rec Center has towels available.

There are a number of coin-op laundry facilities available in the Boise area. A crew favorite in past years has been Jiffy Clean Laundry on Broadway Ave. They are in a central location and have free internet with plenty of chairs and tables.

Online resources

A list of supplies to bring, a map with key Boise landmarks and locations, and additional information can be found at this link: http://ibo.boisestate.edu/lucky_techs/

Crew Guidelines

As our project continues to grow, it has become even more important to keep camp clean and present a good image for the public. Here are a few guidelines for the crew to make sure everything runs smoothly.

Behavior and appearance

Lucky Peak is a remote field site. We realize that being dirty and a bit stinky are par for the course. However, when interacting with the public, we expect our crew to maintain a reasonable level of personal hygiene. Though you may only get to shower once a week, changing your shirts (and underwear!) regularly goes a long way to keeping body odor at a natural, minimally-offensive level. Brushing your teeth also helps! As part of maintaining a professional appearance with our visitors, we also ask that crew not wear clothing with any offensive images or messages. Extreme piercings or hair styles should not be worn while on-duty.

Although Lucky Peak will be your home for the fall, the crew needs to be sure that their behavior is above reproach even while "off duty", especially when there are overnight visitors. The kitchen tent and guest camping areas are very close together, and sound carries well. Because of this, crew should be careful to keep noise levels down while groups are camping: this includes playing loud music, talking about subjects that are not 'kid friendly', or using foul language.

Alcoholic beverages are allowed during off-duty hours, but crew should use discretion, especially when visitors are present. Think 'family barbecue' not 'dance party'. :)

Crew members should not drink (or appear to be drinking) while participating in monitoring activities: this includes visiting other projects such as hawk trapping or owl net runs while off-duty. Do not bring alcoholic beverages with you to banding areas or on net runs.

Smoking is not allowed in public areas at Lucky Peak, around visitors, anywhere near banding operations, or in areas where sparks could create a fire danger. Crew members who wish to smoke should do so away from other crew and visitors in gravel areas with no dry litter. Smoking is not allowed when wind could carry ashes into nearby vegetation as fire danger is high. Clean up all litter.

Camp cleanliness

Your camp crew leader will designate a cleaning schedule that works for everyone. **Each crew member is expected to contribute equally to all cleaning chores.** Crew members should also be sure to keep their personal items neat and organized, and out of communal areas. Clutter and other items in the kitchen tent and banding areas should be cleared out daily.

Camp chores include but aren't limited to: raking, kitchen cleaning, outhouse cleaning, collecting firewood, changing batteries at the solar panel, maintenance, and general tidying up.

Various tasks may pop up throughout the season. Work days to accomplish tasks and other duties around camp will be scheduled at least 2 days in advance, so crew members should make themselves available to help when something needs to be done. Be helpful when you can, ask if there is anything you can do, and be thoughtful. If something breaks, help fix it!

Camp setup and takedown

The songbird crew is responsible for camp set up at the beginning of the season.

Hawkwatchers and owl crew are responsible for take-down in October.

This includes (un)packing and cleaning all kitchen gear, (un)loading supplies, banding gear, and furniture, and setup/takedown of signs, yurt, and wall tents.

Pay: Time sheets and per diem

We pay all our volunteer interns (that's you) using a per diem system. Unlike salary, you do not have to pay taxes on this source of income because this is a reimbursement and not a wage. Because you are paid on a daily basis based on the number of days you spend in the field, it is EXTREMELY important to fill out your time sheets properly so that you are paid fairly. If you do not fill out your time sheets correctly, you may not receive your full amount of pay for the season.

Keys to getting paid on time and in full:

- You are paid per diem for each day spent in the field. In your case this also means your days off, since you will still be camping. Fill out your sheets accordingly.
- You MUST fill out your time sheets in the crew binder on time. If you do not, you will not get paid on time, and may not get paid at all for those dates.
- If you skip filling out days on your time sheet, there may not be enough days left in the season to make up your pay.
- Ask Jessica or the camp leader if you are not sure about how to fill out your sheets. Mistakes can cost you big time!

Lucky Peak Field Station Safe Driving and Parking Policy

To: All IBO staff and volunteers, & Boise State University employees and students.

Justification: As popularity and scope of IBO's Lucky Peak project has grown, the number of staff, volunteers, university students, and public visiting the field station has increased tremendously. Along with improved roads and parking areas, has come an increase in the amount of traffic in camp. This increased vehicle traffic creates several problems including:

- 1) Public perception of inappropriate use of a "closed" road.
- 2) Safety concerns with vehicles coming and going when hosting groups, schools, families, etc. (greatly compounded at night).
- 3) Safety concerns in the event of wildfire or other catastrophic event.
- 4) Insufficient room in the main camp area for authorized vehicles and visitors to safely access the facility.
- 5) Unnecessary damage to vegetation and soil.
- 6) Increased dust and noise.

Policy

- 1) Drive slowly and safely at all times on Highland Valley Road. Be courteous to other drivers, making room for them to pass. Pull over and let faster vehicles pass you. Slow down, pull over, and stop to let mountain bikes or hikers pass you when they are encountered-this reduces dust and increases safety.
- 2) Official university or agency vehicles **ONLY** inside gate. No staff or volunteer personal vehicles unless designated with official signage on both sides of vehicle.

Exceptions:

- a. Mobility-impaired persons.
- b. Loading and unloading. After unloading, vehicles are moved outside gate.
- 3) Authorized vehicles neatly parked in designated parking areas only. Please park as far to the east as you can. Do not park next to songbird banding area. Temporary parking elsewhere for loading and unloading only. Parking must be made available for vans and visitor vehicles when expected. Check visitor schedule! Make room!

Visitor Parking Policy

- 1) **NO** visitor vehicles inside gate.

Exceptions:

- a. Mobility-impaired persons.
- b. Loading and unloading equipment or supplies. Visitor vehicles associated with temporary overnight camping may remain parked inside gate overnight but may not block main road.

Recycling

Crew members should recycle items whenever possible

Items accepted: (no sorting)

- Aluminum & steel (tin): **Rinsed** soda **cans**, soup cans, pie pans, aluminum **foil**, uncoated metal hangers, and empty aerosol cans. Labels may remain on cans.
- Corrugated **cardboard**: Flatten or cut boxes so they fit completely inside the recycling cart.
- Paper: Newspapers, shredded paper (put in a papersack and scrunch the top down), magazines, catalogs, junk mail, white or pastel paper, paper bags, envelopes, brochures, greeting cards and wrapping paper without foil, construction paper, and phone books.
- **Plastics**: Household plastic containers with a **number of 1-7 on the bottom** (maximum size: three gallons). Labels may remain on containers. Smash or flatten plastics. Lids may be recycled.

SORT GLASS SEPARATELY!!

Items **not** accepted:

- **Glass** is not accepted in mixed bin! (delivered to a separate recycling facility).
- **Styrofoam** is not accepted
- Paper plates, cups, towels, napkins, tissues, diapers or toilet paper
- Plastic grocery **bags**, garbage bags, plastic wrap or film
- Foil-lined items like cookie and chip bags
- Food boxes or containers that have excessive **food residue**
- Hardbound books (Donate, if possible)
- Cardboard milk or juice cartons (waxed or with foil lining)
- Packing peanuts or bubble wrap
- Plastic utensils
- Plastics labeled "PLA"
- Yard waste