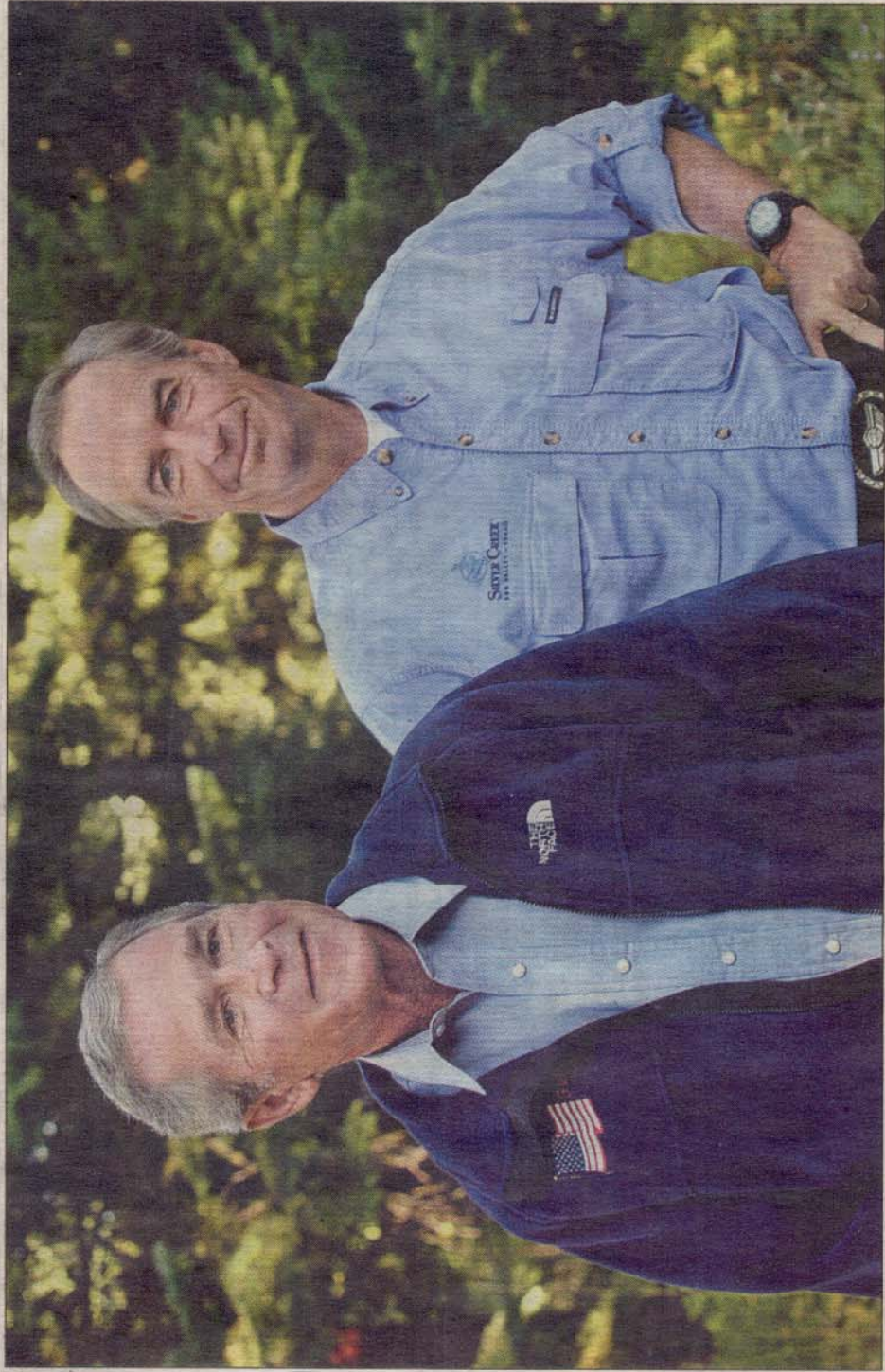


The Idaho Statesman

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Bush bikes, boats and says, ‘I should have come here sooner’



Accompanied by Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne, President George W. Bush makes brief comments to the media Tuesday before beginning his day of vacation at Tamarack Resort near Donnelly.

Katherine Jones / The Idaho Statesman

**President will
leave Donnelly
this morning for
Nampa event**

By Brad Hem
The Idaho Statesman

DONNELLY — President George W. Bush spent his first full day in Idaho mountain biking at Tamarack, boating on Lake Cascade, having a private dinner with Idaho's congressional delegation and spending time with Gov. Dirk Kempthorne.

Bush

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ter quality, fisheries, soldiers in Iraq and transportation and energy policies.

"Time and time again, it came through to me that he is a former governor," Kempthorne said.

Idaho's congressional delegation was set to dine with the Bushes on an Idaho-inspired meal of fish, beef, potatoes and other state specialties. The guest list included Sens. Mike Crapo and Larry Craig and Reps. Mike Simpson and C.L. "Butch" Otter and their spouses or companions, and former Sen. Jim McClure and his wife, Louise. Spokespeople for the delegation said they would let Bush decide the dinner conversation.

"That is up to the president," said Mark Warbis, spokesman for Otter. "He's going to be taking his lead from the president. We want to be good hosts. It is (Otter's) district after all."

But the spokespeople also said if the opportunity came up, the delegation would talk about Idaho issues including public land, transportation and energy, the Owyhee initiative and the Endangered Species Act.

Bush was planning to put the finishing touches on today's Idaho Center speech after Tuesday's dinner, Kempthorne said.

Kempthorne spoke to Idaho reporters just before dinner with the Bushes. He said he enjoyed the president's casual conversation, colorful turns of phrase and self-deprecating humor, though he declined to give examples of that humor.

The last two days in Donnelly have given President Bush and his wife, Laura, a chance to "recharge their batteries," Kempthorne said.

"He is an outdoorsman, and she is someone who loves the outdoors," he said. "For Idaho, this is a tremendous opportunity."

The Bushes arrived at Tamarack Resort Monday afternoon on Marine One. Bush will leave Tamarack this morning to address more than 6,000 people, including military families, at the Idaho Center in Nampa.

"I should have come here sooner," Bush said of his first visit to Idaho as president.

Kempthorne said most of his conversations with Bush have been casual, but they often turned to forest policy, access to public lands, education, wa-

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Katherine Jones / The Idaho Statesman
Dirk Kempthorne and his wife,

PRESIDENT BUSH TOSSES THE LINE after an afternoon of fishing with Gov. Dirk Kempthorne and his wife, Patricia, and first lady Laura Bush.

"It is very apparent that the troops are on his mind," Kempthorne said.

The president took a short break around 9 a.m. Tuesday to talk with reporters in a setting that showcased Idaho's forested scenery. He was wearing blue jeans, sneakers and a North Face fleece jacket with an American flag and "GWB" on the front. Bush walked with Kempthorne down a wooded trail lined with pine trees to take about four

questions from reporters, mostly about the war in Iraq.

"I'm going to tell the people in Boise that I made a mistake not coming here earlier. It's a beautiful state," Bush said.

The president spent part of the day with Kempthorne, though the state's top elected official wasn't always able to keep up with the brisk pace Bush set on his morning laps around the pine-studded grounds.

"Did they come by this way?" Kempthorne asked a uniformed officer as he rode past a checkpoint Tuesday morning about two minutes behind the presidential cycling pack, known as "Peloton One" in the jargon of White House security.

In cycling, a peloton is a closely packed group of riders who find reduced wind resistance by drafting each other.

After the ride, Kempthorne said,

the president gave him a little cycling advice, recommending the governor ride with clips for the pedals of his bike.

"He is an outstanding athlete. He outdistanced me," Kempthorne said. "His pace is just very fast."

There were four other cyclists keeping pace with the president, followed by five forest-green golf carts, each carrying three men in military fatigues down the trail. Driving along a gravel road running parallel to the trail were four sport utility vehicles, three of them black Chevrolet Suburbans with electronic communications equipment and turrets sprouting from the roofs.

About 45 minutes later, Peloton One sped by the resort golf course again, with Bush — dressed in black shorts, a gray shirt and a red-and-black helmet — maintaining the same jackhammer-knee pace.

"The president must be in awe — some shape," said Idaho State Police Capt. Wayne Longo of Coeur d'Alene, who was stationed at a roadblock near the cycling area. "Look at him go."

Shortly before 4 p.m., the president and first lady left the resort and drove in a motorcade a short distance to the Poison Creek Boat Launch at Lake Cascade. The first couple were joined by the governor and Idaho first lady Patricia Kempthorne on a small, eight-passenger pontoon boat that had been

stocked with fishing gear, though they came back empty-handed.

The two first ladies didn't cast lines in the water, said fishing guide Tom Doerr. He did say a hummingbird twice landed on Laura Bush's hand.

"They were absolutely delightful," Doerr said. "They were warm, real people."

It was a sentiment echoed by Patricia Kempthorne, who said she has had to remind herself that the friendly couple vacationing with them are the president and first lady.

"It was such friendly conversation," she said.

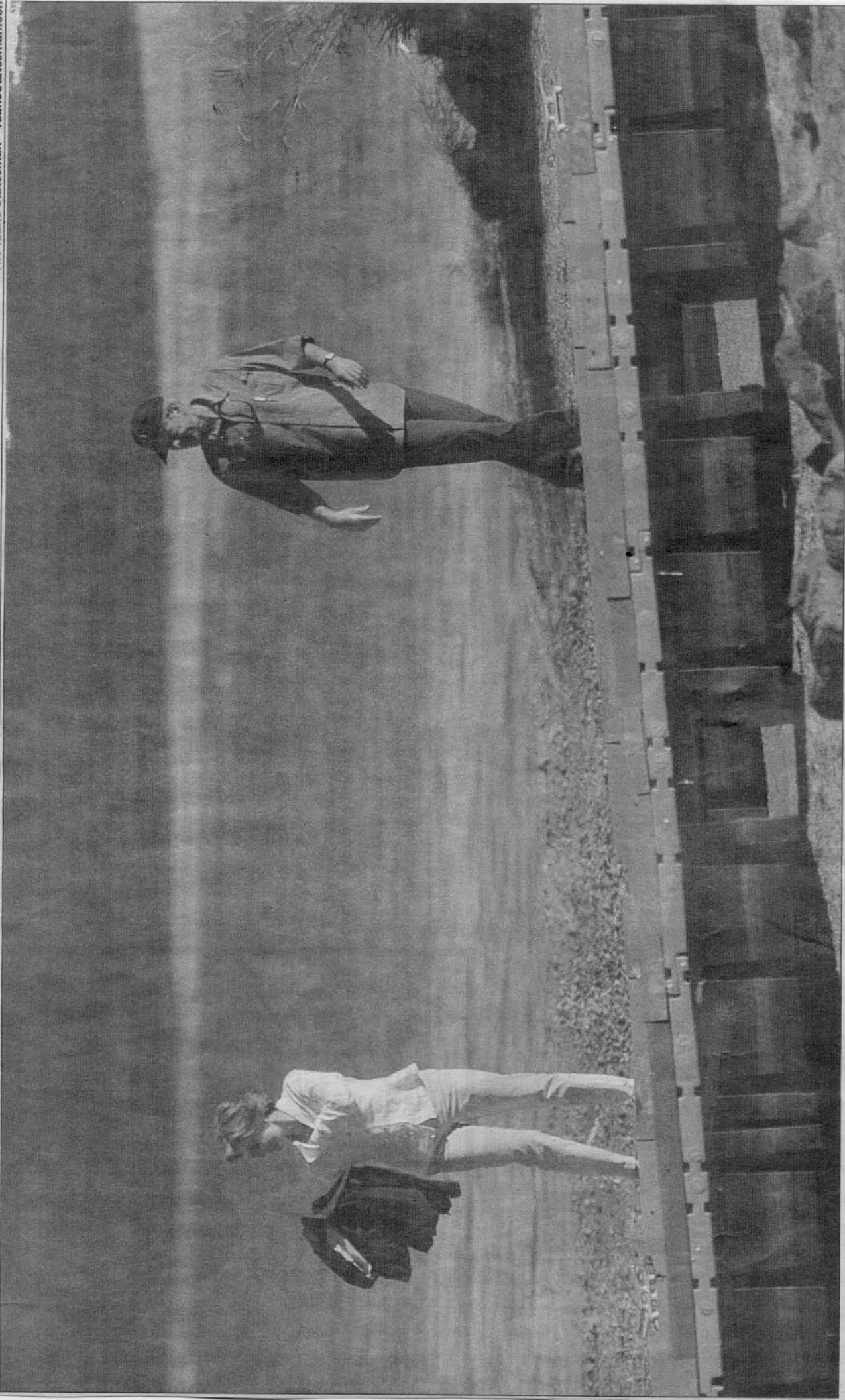
Wearing a bright-red shirt, Bush waved twice to a group of spectators at a nearby campground as he left the dock, his watercraft surrounded by five boats carrying security officers.

He's expected to leave Tamarack by helicopter late this morning and travel to Nampa where he is scheduled to deliver a speech on the war on terror to military personnel.

Following the speech, Bush will speak privately to 25 families of those killed in Iraq or Afghanistan. He will meet with each family member from Idaho, separately during at least two hours, White House press officials said.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

Bush's Visit to Idaho



PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH AND FIRST LADY LAURA BUSH head toward the car after an afternoon of fishing for small mouth bass on Lake Cascade on Tuesday with Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne and his wife, Patricia.

Katherine Jones / The Idaho Statesman

It took five years, but this RSVP was worth it

Gov. Dirk Kempthorne worked for five years to get President Bush to visit Idaho. The fruit of his labor is bountiful.

Kempthorne cornered the market on face time with the president, relegating the congressional delegation to a secondary role.

It's a remarkable coup, given a protocol that typically requires a president to spread his glow. Kempthorne will share Bush with just one audience — service men and women and their families today in Nampa.

Kempthorne was in Salt Lake City on Monday for Bush's speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and was singled out for a warm-natured joke from the president. The governor arrived in Boise with the president on Air Force One, adding that tremendous

photo atop the stairs to his



DAN POPKEY
Commentary

scrapbook.

Kempthorne even chose the location for Bush's downtime. He shepherded the president to the nascent Tamarack Resort, which Kempthorne has boosted for years and which sits a few miles from where the governor plans to retire.

Kempthorne and Bush emerged from a grove of trees at Tamarack to meet reporters Tuesday morning.

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Popkey

From page 1

The handsome governor was a bulwark for the president in media across the planet.

Yes, Kempthorne benefits from this access to power. But Bush gets something back, says Dawn Craner, a communications professor at Boise State University. "He's demonstrating he has a wall of support," said Craner, who studied video of the press conference. "The governor appears taller, and there's his shoulder, backing up the president."

When a reporter asked the president why he won't meet again with anti-war protester Cindy Sheehan, Kempthorne looked stern, shoring up his commander-in-chief. Those images, Craner said, can be stronger than words. The setting also is important, she said. Here are two vigor-

ous men in the woods in casual clothes, riding bikes, floating Lake Cascade, exuding likability and toughness.

Kempthorne pulled this off for two reasons: He's been working on it for a long time, and the president needed him. The latest Zogby poll says 53 percent of Americans view Bush unfavorably. Idahoans like him better than folks in any other state, giving him 59 percent approval, according to Survey USA.

For five years Kempthorne's done the spadework, urging Bush to visit, a fact the president mentioned Tuesday. "I finally made it," said the president. "I made a mistake in not coming here earlier. It's a beautiful state."

Former Sen. Jim McClure and his wife, Louise, have a home in McCall and were at Tamarack to greet the president. They are great friends of the first President Bush, an acquaintance that goes



Elaine Thompson / The Associated Press
President Bush leads a group of mountain bikers along a path near Lake Cascade State Park on Tuesday.

Full page inside

Main 4

- ▶ Plane caught in no-fly zone.
- ▶ War protesters spoke in front of the Statehouse.

Today

- ▶ Local TV stations will air live coverage of the president's address to service men and women and their families, scheduled to begin at 11 a.m.
- ▶ Check for updates and see our Bush photo galleries at IdahoStatesman.com

Bush says withdrawing from Iraq would weaken U.S.

DONNELLY — President Bush took on the California mother who has been defiantly protesting outside his Texas home, saying Tuesday that Cindy Sheehan doesn't represent the views of most military families and that fulfilling demands like hers for withdrawal from Iraq would weaken the United States.

Bush will meet today with military families at the Idaho Center in Nampa.

Bush said he understood the anguish of the woman whose son was killed in Iraq last year. But he said he disagreed with her assertion that U.S. troops should be brought home before more die in a "senseless war."

"I think those who advocate immediate withdrawal from not only Iraq but the Middle East are advocating a policy that would weaken the United States," Bush said.

The president said U.S. troops in Iraq are keeping Americans safe. He urged patience as officials in Baghdad struggle to complete a constitution.

— The Associated Press



Cindy Sheehan

"It's a great deal for Tamarack. This is being discovered on steroids, having the president come."

Sen. Brad Little, R-Emmett

just bop into town and ask governors to go bike riding."

Might the connection help Kempthorne land a good consulting job when he leaves office in 16 months? "Any time you're standing next to the president of the United States, your stock rises," said Sullivan.

Free publicity and a week of Donnelly datelines also help Tamarack, which depends on lot sales to finance a ski hill, golf course, village, trails and other amenities.

"It's a great deal for Tamarack," said Sen. Brad Little, R-Emmett, who also owns land near the resort. "This is being discovered on steroids, having the president come."

Idaho GOP Chairman Kirk Sul-

today at the Idaho Center, where he can take another step to counter troubling Iraq news. This trip is the start of a show of military pride in the runup to the fourth anniversary of 9/11.

Next week, the president will be in San Diego to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the allied victory over Japan. Count on him to draw a parallel between Japan and Iraq, showing an enemy can become a friend.

Kempthorne has always been a steadfast Bush ally. "The president and Gov. Kempthorne have a strong working relationship that goes back to when they were both governors," said Pat Sullivan, a lobbyist close to Kempthorne. "The president truly likes Dirk Kempthorne. Presidents don't

back to 1966 when McClure and George H.W. Bush were elected to Congress.

Bush met the McClures as a dutiful son. "The president said, 'Mom told me to say hello,'" recounted Louise McClure. "She called and told me you were coming."

They chatted for five or 10 minutes on the golf course where Marine One landed, Bush commenting on the beautiful setting. Louise McClure said, "Well, you're in our country now. This is our home. We like it."

Jim McClure said he guesses the choice of Tamarack sprung from Kempthorne's connection to the resort, where a former aide, Scott Turlington, is director of external affairs.

Bush also will like his reception

livan, said he pitched GOP National Chairman Ken Mehlman in January for a visit. Sullivan also credited Sen. Larry Craig for inviting Bush. But Sullivan said Kempthorne deserves the glory. "It's mainly the governor," said Sullivan. "Dirk's been working on it so long."

The final payoff comes today, with the president's speech. Kempthorne is at his very best marking the sacrifice of soldiers and their families. In February 2004, he briefed Bush after a visit to Iraq; two weeks later he enjoyed a two-night stay at the White House.

Whether you're at the Idaho Center or watching on TV, count on Gov. Kempthorne having the honor of introducing the president. Dan Popkey's column runs Sunday and Wednesday. Phone 377-6438 or e-mail dpopkey@idahostatesman.com

F-15 fighter jet escorts Cessna from airspace near Tamarack; other pilots ground themselves

By Heath Druzin
The Idaho Statesman

DONNELLY — A McCall pilot got an unexpected escort Tuesday when he flew into restricted airspace around Tamarack Resort, where President George W. Bush was vacationing.

The pilot flew his single engine Cessna within a 30-mile radius of Tamarack without registering his flight plan with the McCall control tower. The pilot quickly was flanked by an F-15 fighter jet, McCall airport Manager Rick Harvey said. The plane was forced to land at McCall airport.

Harvey would not identify the pilot except to say the pilot is a part-time resident of McCall. Valerie Smith, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, said the pilot was not ar-

rested but she would not release further details while the matter is under investigation.

"At this time, it does not appear the incident was a threat," she said. The incident reflected how tricky flying was in the McCall area Tuesday — restricted air space ¾ mile from the south runway caused pilots to bank steeply at takeoff — though a temporary control tower staffed for the president's visit helped, Harvey said. The restrictions convinced some local pilots to stay grounded.

"In actuality, it's been really slow want to put up with the hassle," Idaho mountain people who don't want to put up with the hassle."

Local and state law enforcement were well-represented in the area — drivers in Donnelly were hard-pressed to drive a block without seeing a state trooper and both the

Boise and Nampa police departments sent officers to assist with security around Tamarack.

Nampa police Lt. Rick Wiley was eating lunch at the Buffalo Gal Market and Deli in Donnelly Tuesday and said it is "an honor" to provide security for the president. He didn't mind the location, either.

"Any day in the mountains is better than a day in the valley," he said.

Boise police spokeswoman Lynn Hightower would not say how many Boise officers were assisting with presidential security, citing a request by the Secret Service to keep logistical information secret. Idaho State Police spokesman Rick Ohmsman also declined to say how many troopers were patrolling near Tamarack.

"I guess when the president comes to town and the Secret Service wants to beef up security, it's

not unusual for them to pull people out of their jurisdiction," Hightower said.

► **MARINE ONE** was stashed in a large hangar at McCall Airport and could be seen from the tarmac. Curious onlookers were kept at a distance by a large Marine with a dagger tattoo peeking from his camouflage top.

► **RESTRICTED AIRSPACE** will move to the Boise area today and the Federal Aviation Administration is asking all pilots who may be flying in the area to check with pilotweb.nas.faa.gov to find out about the restrictions.

► **ANGELA TRACY**, daughter, of Sen. Larry Craig spokesman Mike Tracy, has been chosen to sing the national anthem at today's Idaho Center Event. Tracy, 21, is a senior voice major at Boise State University.



Chris Butler / The Idaho Statesman
NAMPA POLICE Lt. Rick Wiley, left, and Officer Jake Jacoby have lunch Tuesday at the Buffalo Gal Market and Deli in Donnelly. The two are the only ones from the Nampa department working on the local security for President Bush. "It's an honor to be here," said Wiley.

Protesters want Bush to see war opponents everywhere — even in Idaho

By Gregory Hahn
The Idaho Statesman
and The Associated Press

A few hundred Idahoans and a few others from around the country gathered in Boise for two anti-war rallies Tuesday while President Bush mountain biked and boated a few dozen miles north.

Eagle resident Laura McCarthy said she doubted President Bush will acknowledge the protests, but she still believes it's important to let the president know that even in heavily Republican Idaho, there is opposition to the war.

She called on others in the state to follow the example of Cindy Sheehan, the California mom who camped out near Bush's Texas ranch for weeks to protest the war and the death of her son in Iraq.

"President Bush probably breathed a sigh of relief when he touched down in Idaho," McCarthy told the crowd, gathered in Capitol Park south of the Statehouse. "Guess what? He's going to find a Cindy Sheehan in every community across the U.S."

The protesters read the names of the nearly 1,900 American soldiers at the noon rally and small white crosses lined the north edge of the park throughout the day.

Most of the speakers were veterans or families of soldiers, and the protesters said repeatedly they supported the troops but wanted them brought home.

At the evening rally, two women, two children and a dog walked laps around the park with pro-Bush signs.

The protests were organized by the Idaho Peace Coalition, a group of volunteer activists who formed to counter Bush's response to the terror attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

One of the group's leaders, Liz Paul, urged the crowd to join together this morning to line the sidewalks outside the Idaho Center, where Bush is scheduled to speak about the war.

"Idahoans want the troops brought home," Paul said. "This is definitely a message to the president that there's no place in America that people aren't against the war."



'WHY ARE WE THERE?'
As the names of the nearly 1,900 American soldiers who have died in Iraq were read over a microphone, Melanie House hushed her 8-month old son.

"Nothing is going to justify my husband's death," said House of Ventura, Calif., whose husband, U.S. Navy medic John Daniel House, was killed in a January helicopter crash. "Why are we there? What is President Bush trying to get out of this? Why must my son be fatherless?"

House was among more than 100 protesters who gathered at a park across from the Idaho Statehouse on Tuesday, on the eve of President Bush's speech in nearby Nampa. Her tattoo reflects the memory of her late husband.

William DeShazer
The Idaho Statesman