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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **What's New for Idaho's 2024 Trailing of the Sheep Festival?**

- International judge to participate in the National Qualifying Sheepdog Trials; additional elements include complimentary bike valet
- Sheep Tales Gathering to feature panel discussion on *The Future of Conservation In A Crowded West*
- “Sheep Reads” Book Club to discuss *This House of Sky - Landscapes of a Western Mind* by Ivan Doig

The 28<sup>th</sup> annual Trailing of the Sheep Festival, October 2-6, 2024, will feature a variety of new programming and faces as part of its robust schedule of events, including a renowned international judge for the National Qualifying Sheepdog Trials, a Sheep Tales Gathering panel discussion on *The Future of Conservation In a Crowded West*, and a “Sheep Reads” book discussion on Ivan Doig’s *This House of Sky – Landscapes of a Western Mind*.

### **Fiona McMillan– International Sheepdog Trials Judge from Scotland**

Fiona McMillan is a renowned sheepdog trials judge based in Scotland who has been involved with sheep her entire life. For the past 30 years, she has been actively involved in the International Sheep Dog Society and judged sheep dog trials of all types in Scotland, England, Ireland, Canada, and the USA. She has held various leadership positions in the International Sheep Dog Society and is set to become the organization’s first female President in November 2024.

McMillan has organized many sheepdog trails during the course of her career, including the Scottish Nationals and Internationals when held in Scotland. She successfully secured HRH Princess Royal as Patron of the International Sheep Dog Society after the princess attended one of the trials she organized.

According to Festival Sheepdog Trials coordinator Kelly Ware, “Fiona is widely respected throughout the stock dog community in the United States and throughout Europe, Canada, and the United Kingdom. We are honored and lucky to have her as our judge for 2024.”

The National Qualifying Sheep Dog Trials will be held October 4-6 in a field just north of Hailey off of Buttercup Road. Event organizers are pleased to thank the Kowitz Family for lending their sheep to the Trials this year. In addition, the event features new entry rates by car as well as for cyclists and pedestrians, including a complimentary bike valet on Friday and Saturday. Rates vary depending on occupancy and day fees vs. a weekend pass – visit <https://trailingofthesheep.org/sheepdogs/dogs/> for details. Also, event attendees are encouraged to check the construction conditions on Buttercup Road prior to heading to the Trials' venue.

### **Sheep Tales Gathering Panel Discussion on *The Future of Conservation In A Crowded West***

This year's storytelling evening's conversation and panel discussion, to be held on Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at The Argyros Performing Arts Center in Ketchum, will focus on the importance of both private and public lands, the critical role of agriculture in conservation and obstacles that landowners face in stewarding these landscapes.

Dr. Jared Talley, Boise State University Professor in Environmental Science and Governance, will moderate the evening, with Panelists: Lesli Allison, Founding Member and Chief Executive, Western Landowners Alliance; Hailey Wilmer, Research Rangeland Management Specialist at the USDA-ARS Range Sheep Production Efficiency Research Unit; and Sara Berman, Owner & Operator, Squash Blossom Farm, Bellevue, Idaho, will dive into the world of innovative tools and practices being used by landowners and producers to benefit the habitat they steward and the humans and wildlife that depend on it. The panel will also highlight the idea of stewardship beyond boundaries: the need for all who use the land - landowners, sportsmen, recreationalists, ranchers, rural and urban residents - to look beyond the boundaries of the land or immediate self-interests. The future of the West is dependent on building healthy landscapes that work for all. Tickets are available online at <https://trailingofthesheep.org/culture/sheeptales-gathering>

### **“Sheep Reads” Book Club discussion: *This House of Sky - Landscapes of a Western Mind* by Ivan Doig**

Led by author and Trailing of the Sheep Festival co-founder, Diane Josephy Peavey, this book discussion will focus on the work of renowned writer Ivan Doig, who many consider to be the premier writer on the American West. The event, to be held on Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am at Town Center West in Hailey, is free but attendees are asked to pre-register for seating and read the book ahead of the morning.

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### **Accolades for the Trailing of the Sheep Festival**

The Trailing of the Sheep Festival has garnered some well-deserved accolades over the years, including being recognized as one of the **Top Ten Fall Festivals in the World** by *msn.com travel*, **Top 7 US Fall Festivals** by *National Geographic*, **Top Ten US Fall Festivals** by *smartertravel.com*, **Top Animal Festivals in the World** and **Top Ten Fall Festivals** by *USA Today*, **Top 7 Fun Fall Festivals** by *AARP*, **One of the Greatest Cultural Events in the West** by *Northwest Travel*, and recipient of the Society of American Travel Writer's **Phoenix Award** for best in cultural tourism, and the **Idaho Governor's Award for Cultural Heritage**.

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