



NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM (TRAMPS) ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021



2021 Annual Dinner Cookout Celebration at the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) work project. TRAMPS has had an annual project since 2001 (except for 2020 due to COVID) in the SNRA. Read about this year's SNRA project on page 7.

2021 PROJECTS	PAGE	BASE ABBREVIATIONS
Program Summary.....	2	Anchorage ----- ANC
Gazebo Construction.....	3	Boise ----- NIFC
Fourth of July Work Station.....	7	Cave Junction ----- CJ
Eagle Cap Wilderness.....	10	Fairbanks ----- FBX
The Magruder Project.....	13	Grangeville ----- GAC
Columbine-Hondo Wilderness.....	14	Idaho City ----- IDC
San Pedro Parks Trail.....	15	La Grande ----- LGD
Wahotoya Trail Clearing	17	McCall ----- MYC
Continental Divide Trail.....	18	Missoula ----- MSO
Hat Creek Trail.....	19	Redding ----- RDD
Dinner Station Campground.....	22	Redmond ----- RAC
Yellowstone Valley Projects.....	24	West Yellowstone - WYS
Lewis & Clark Trail Clearing.....	27	Winthrop ----- NCSB
Volcano Adventure Camp.....	28	
Monture Cabin & Trails	33	

Program Summary for 2021

Fred Cooper (NCSB '62)

This was our 23rd year of operation. With only a couple projects in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a full slate of projects resumed this year with our usual mix of trail and building maintenance activities. **TRAMPS contributed 4,000 hours of volunteer time on 14 projects this year. The value of the volunteer labor was over \$100,000** based on contributed volunteer time calculated by the Federal Government for non-profit organizations.

The key to our success is, as always, our Squad Leaders. This year, we had 11 and several assistant squad leaders planning, providing logistics, and performing the administrative details that are always necessary. Let me know of anyone who is interested in being a Squad Leader or an Assistant.

This year's projects were in Montana, Idaho, California, Oregon, and New Mexico. It has been over 15 years since we had a project in Oregon, but Russ West and his crew travelled deep in the Eagle Cap Wilderness with horses for their trail maintenance project. Alan Wonders had four projects in as many different wilderness areas in New Mexico.

Jack Sterling in Billings, Montana cancelled his project in the Pryor Mountains due to temperatures over 100 and a nearby forest fire threatening his project site as well as too much smoke. However, this did not deter him and most of his crew members. They spent several weekends and weekdays clearing campgrounds and trash from the Yellowstone River area throughout the year. Read his story in this Annual Report. TRAMPS are versatile and anxious for the comrade and satisfaction of contributing to a good cause.

Over the past two years, the Forest Service has increased funding for trails maintenance. In addition, the recently passed "Infrastructure Bill" provides funding over the next five years for multiple resource management projects. While funding is provided, Agencies are still relying heavily on volunteer labor contributions to accomplish their backlog of trails and back country building maintenance. We trust their increased funding will assist us in them providing us increased logistical support for our projects.

Tax Exemption Status of NSA

Fred Cooper (NCSB '62)

The National Smokejumper Association is a non-profit charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code. Consequently, non-reimbursable expenses incurred by NSA Trail Crew Members may be deductible on your Federal Income Tax Return and perhaps your State Tax Return. Because this varies by individual circumstances, you are encouraged to consult your tax preparer or accountant for more information. Our official registered organization name with the IRS is National Smokejumper Association and the assigned Identification Number is 81-0479209.

Annual Report complied, edited, and formatted by Bob (Spider) Smee (MSO '68)

Gazebo Construction

Snyder Guard Station, Bonners Ferry RD, Idaho Panhandle National Forest
May 3 – 7
By Bob Denner (Associate)

Beneath a snow-capped peak six miles from Canada rushes the picturesque Moyie River. On its bank is situated several white and green buildings of the historic Snyder Guard Station, which was constructed in the early 1900's. Each building is impeccably maintained in its original condition and boasts a plaque stating the year built and the intended use. The Station is part of the Bonner's Ferry District, Idaho Panhandle National Forest.

Within this tranquil setting our TRAMPS Crew settled into the Ranger Residence with accommodating appointments including comfortable beds and furniture, updated appliances, and a pellet stove.



Phil Barto and Bob Smee relaxing at our quarters, Sunday evening.

The crew was comprised of Squad Leader Bob Denner, (Associate and retired forester), Phil Barto, (Associate and retired Civil Engineer), and "Builder Bob" Smee, (MSO '68). Assistance was provided by District Staff Steve Petesch and District trail crewman Lucas Pinkerton.

Monday began with laying a gravel foundation for the structure. A mini backhoe was on the site and had previously grubbed out the construction site to about a foot deep. There was an ominous looking pile of gravel and two wheelbarrows just waiting for us. The backhoe loaded the wheelbarrows and since there were three of us, one could take a short break as we hauled rock about 100 ft to the site.

We laid out four treated 6"x6" timbers for the foundation and used 10" timber screws to hold it together. A 5th treated timber was installed through the middle of the square. We then erected four corner timbers and two mid-lengths to support the roof trusses. These were stabilized with a 6"x6" wall caps. The trusses were composed of 6x6's for the long, or bottom chord and the center strut. The top chords were 6x8" timbers. All were placed one part at a time due to their weight. It took all 5 of us to lift each part of the trusses and assemble them in place.

Bob Smee cutting timbers with a 16" circular saw provided by the Forest Service.



The scaffolding, courtesy of Smee provided a stable means of lifting and assembling each truss.

The next chore was to nail purlins on edge to the trusses with a pneumatic framing nail gun. The crew completed the purlins the next day and began installing 1"x10" boards for the roof sheathing. Also, knee braces were placed on the 4 corner posts. Decorative steel ties were placed where the struts met the top chords of each truss.



Purlins installed.

Once the roof sheathing was finished, 30lb construction paper was tacked down and we started placing metal roofing. A couple of the crew worked on the roofing while the rest installed floorjoists.

Thursday was our last full day of work. The roof was completed and 1"x10" boards were screwed to the floor joists. We finished the day cleaning up the site and putting power equipment under tarps. A few details remained, such as one piece of roof cap and a short length of flooring board. Since the FS crew (Steve Petesch and Lucas Pinkerton) were working 4–10-hour shifts, they finished placing the roof cap, flooring, and picket fencing and rails on the structure the following week. Once that was done, it got a coat of transparent oil stain.

Completed gazebo with gravel walkway.

This was a great project with a mix of us older (and wiser?) gentlemen and the younger and healthy young men. The Snyder Guard Station is a beautiful site, the accommodations are excellent, and the project was just the type of work we enjoy doing. We hope the FS can come up with another similar project next year. Perhaps it could be larger, with a few more Jumpers involved.



The Crew, from L to R. Phil Barto, Pat Hart (retired FS and cook), Steve Petsch (head of FSRecreation group and designer of the gazebo), Lucas Pinkerton, FS trail crew and backhoe operator), Bob Smee, and kneeling, Bob Denner and Bo (the inspector).

Fourth of July Work Station

Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Sawtooth National Forest

AKA Rembrandt in the Sawtooth 2021

By James R. Burleigh (MSO '58) and Dan (Digger) Daniels (MSO '61)

Every job needs a supervisor. We had one and six alternates. Tasked with scraping and painting a workshop at the Fourth of July Creek Work Station in the Sawtooth National Forest near Stanley, ID, the Digger Daniels crew of seven stalwarts fulfilled their obligation during the week July 11-17; albeit, at a pace acceptable to the young among us and graciously appreciated by the ancients.

On most days the usual backdrop of sharp peaks was obscured by smoke from distant fires; a grim reminder of the fragility of the environment we all cherish. There was little gawking at vistas which, in previous years, riveted our attention on snow-clad spires and brought grown men to their knees in admiration of imperial beauty which is the Sawtooth Range. Rather, with eyes focused on work and only a rare, stolen glance beyond the walls of our target, we eagerly sought bottles of cold water and slices of cold watermelon to keep fatigue at bay and brushes moving.



All worker-bees need a good supervisor!



Doesn't that look better? You should see the other side. It, too, is a masterpiece of art. Now referred to as "The Louvre of 4th of July Creek".



Digger's crew left to right: Jay Dorr, Gary Cardoza (MSO '74, James Burleigh (MSO '58), Digger Daniels (MSO '61), Neil Rylander (MSO '61), Tom Winter, and Chuck Orona. Larry Thompson (a former pilot for American Airlines and a neighbor of Digger) is absent from the photo. Jay is retired from the USFS. Gary, James, Digger and Neil are former jumpers. Tom is the Wilderness and Trails Coordinator for the Sawtooth National Forest and Sawtooth Recreation Area. Chuck doubles as our cook; a position he has held for several years.

Guest night is always a treat. Chuck Orona (head chef), with the help of Gordon and Evelyn McBride, volunteers at the work site, prepared a meal worthy of a five-star rating in any Cordon Bleu restaurant. Salads were decorative and delicious, steaks tender.



Guests included **Forest Service Personnel**: Debbie Peters and husband, Charlie; volunteers Gordon and Evelyn McBride; Tom Winter, Wilderness and Trail Coordinator and Megan Scott, Support Services Specialist for the Sawtooth National Recreation Area; Kirk Flanagan, Area Ranger for the Sawtooth Recreation Area; Ed Cannady; Jay Dorr; Josh Newman, Deputy Area Ranger; David Miller, member of the fish crew; Caitlin Frawley; Susan James, Recreation Director for the Sawtooth Recreation Area; Aleen Golis, volunteer at the

Stanley Ranger Station and her friends, Cliff Piantino and Pamela Nickell.

Sawtooth Society folks: Hans and Terry Carstensen; Brad and Kathryn Grohusky (Kathryn is Executive Director); David Diets, Trail Leader; Dalton Warr, Stewardship Coordinator.

Former Jumpers: Doug Howard (and son Joe); Bill Ward; Dan Tomich; Tom Kovalicky and wife, Jane; Fred Cooper (Fred's wife Cherie was the only guest among us to have a soiled reputation; having been incarcerated in Vladivostok, Russia along with other staff of former U.S. Senator, Mark Hatfield).

A program highlight during guest night was the presentation of two mounted crosscut saws aptly decorated with the smokejumper logo and given to members of the U.S. Forest Service-Stanley and to the Sawtooth Society.



There are always stories to be told.

Who was President in 1910, the time of the Big Burn? Digger: I was too young to remember.

Ok, Cherie, fess up: how did you get jailed in Vladivostok? You don't look like a criminal.

Gee, 8\$ a minute is a lot to pay to talk to a wife while stranded in South America. Here, name of speaker is withheld by request. If we've heard this story before, Wild Bill, you must change at least one element before continuing: A reference to long-time participant with Digger's crew, Wild Bill Yensen.

A moving ceremony was held to bring Gary Cardoza (the Portuguese kid at age 68) and James Burleigh (the ancient of age 84) into the “Order of the Purple Glove.” After swearing an oath to always exercise strict hygienic practices, both men were honored with receipt of a latex glove, placed on the shoulder of the evening’s principal dish washer so that all in attendance would be confident that plates, utensils, glasses, pots, pans were free of contamination and ready for re-use barring any unforeseen exposure to new variants.

Goodbyes laced with a sprinkling of nostalgia graced our departure. We leave the Sawtooth and offer parting remarks to one another with thanksgiving for days to be remembered and friendships to treasure. Another year awaits. No longer a certainty as we all know. But a hope.

The authors ask permission to pen an adjunct to this report: an expression of unity forged in the crucible of a shared journey of making our world a better place through the Trails Program. A common history we share. A proud history. A history of gratitude. A history of valor; sometimes in the face of danger. A history that does not require detailed explanation or exaggeration to add emphasis. We were smokejumpers. End of story.

Or, perhaps, beginning of story. Stories abound. Few need to be repeated, for there are many. Stories of exceptional fires, of tall trees, of malfunctions, of cold beer. All speak to the allure of Smokejumping and a time when we were younger, and fear of the unknown was a distant emotion ignored or pushed to the rear of our consciousness. Yes, we are a family. No better illustration of that unity than of a son who traveled a long distance to bring his smokejumper father to guest night in the Sawtooth, July 15, 2021. A proud father no longer physically able to do what he always did. A faithful son walking beside his father to lend support when needed. Father and son laughing, enjoying a fine beer. Together.

This is what we are made of - Made for!

Eagle Cap Wilderness Trail Clearing

Green Lake Trail #1666, #1675, and North Minam Meadows
July 30 to August 3, 2021
By Russ West, Squad Leader

Team members: Russ West (GAC '78), Mary West (Associate), Bob Madden (RAC '80), Maria Madden, Jon Larson (FBX '89), Randi Jandt (Associate), Shawn Gorham (Associate), John Hendrickson (Associate), and Kevin Gilbert (LGD '79). Between April 1 and July 30, Russ coordinated with Fred Cooper of the National Smokejumper Association (NSA), TRAMPS program to make it a joint project between them and the Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association (WMHCTA).

Weather was favorable with temps in the high 70s and 80s except for one day when we got some rain with temps in the high 60s. Mary brought groceries and planned meals for the four breakfasts. Dinner responsibility was split between the other team members with John providing hors d'oeuvres every day and everyone provided their own lunches. Everyone brought their own sleeping gear and tent (except Russ and Mary who slept in Steve Morris' wall tent). Steve Morris of the WMHCTA outfitters packed in two mules with some of our gear to his drop camp at North Minam Meadows. Steve allowed us to use his wall tent and kitchen at his drop camp in appreciation for all the work we are doing on trails that his clients use.

Bob and Maria, from Bend and Kevin from Wenatchee stayed with Russ and Mary Thursday night and helped pack. Friday morning, July 30, everyone drove to the Francis Lake/Bowman Basin trail head and

met there at 8 o'clock for a tailgate safety meeting discussing stock safety, staying hydrated, and trail safety. John left early with two signs to be placed at the junction of the Chimney Lake Trail and the Bowman Basin Trail. The other hikers left at 9 o'clock for the 10-mile trail hike to North Minam Meadows. Bob carried a Forest Service radio to inform Russ and Mary if any other pack strings were coming down the trail. Russ and Mary with the assistance of Shawn packed four mules with everyone's gear, food, and tools. Steve packed two mules with the rest of our gear.

The plan was to consolidate gear coming out on August 3rd and try to get everything packed out on four mules so Steve wouldn't need to pack anything out. We got everything packed up by 10:00 and hit the trail. Mary and Russ rode their horses and led the four pack mules. The hikers logged out four small trees on the way in. Maria, with her sharp eyes, found Russ' Sunto watch that he lost riding in. Mary and Russ reached the camp at North Minam Meadows at 1:30. The hikers arrived an hour later. The team set up camp, including a kitchen, water filtration system, electric fence for the livestock, and a latrine. Everyone enjoyed Kevin's pulled pork sandwiches that night.

The next morning was the first workday. Mary cooked a delicious breakfast of pancakes, hash browns, sausage and coffee. We started with a safety meeting talking about tool safety, including crosscut, silky, and eye protection. John and Shawn installed new trail signs at the junction of the Bowman Basin and the North Minam Trail. They also installed a trail sign at the junction of the North Minam trail and Green Lake Trail # 1666.

We discovered considerable improvement was needed where Green Lake Trail crossed North Minam Creek. The approach was eroded and used so heavily over the years that deep ruts and mud made it difficult and dangerous for stock to negotiate. A log on the other side of the creek needed to be removed. Kevin and Randi worked on the tread and installed a water bar. Russ, Bob, and Jon cut a large log out of the way to enable stock to climb up on the bank. It is recommended that more time needs to be spent to improve that crossing. As an alternative, another crossing for stock could be established and signed. Forming three different teams, we proceeded up the Green Lake Trail logging and removing 124 logs that day. Russ led the tool mule with crosscut saws. The crosscuts were not needed until the end of the day when a jim-jam of three big logs were encountered. Other than that situation, the 20" and 24" silky saws were adequate to cut out the trail.

That evening a very tired team enjoyed Shawn's elk shepherd pie and Basque bread with visiting around the campfire. The Smokejumpers, of course, told war stories. Before bed, a kitchen fly was erected as rain was predicted for the next day. On Sunday, August 1, rain had been predicted and appeared eminent. Two of the team members decided to stay in camp and the rest headed up the trail to see what could be done if the rain held off. Bob and Maria volunteered to hike all the way to Green Lake on a recon mission to determine what work remained. Russ, Mary, Jon, Randi, and John hiked up the Green Lake Trail to where the work had stopped the day before. They began logging out the trail and made good progress for a mile, logging out 30 trees before it started raining so hard that water was running down the trail. At that point they turned around and headed back to camp where they arrived at around 3 o'clock.

In the mornings, before work and after arriving back at camp, everyone pitched in to help Russ feed and water the livestock. There was a lush meadow across the river from camp that provided excellent feed. The stock was contented and no "jail breaks" occurred. Monday, August 2, was the last workday. Everyone wanted to achieve our goal of clearing the trail all the way to Green Lake. Some of us had been on projects where we fell short of our goal and had to schedule another work project to complete clearing a particular trail. Given the 10-mile trip into base camp, we wanted to avoid having to come back to North Minam Meadows. We left camp at 8 o'clock and arrived where we had left off the day before around 9:30. We knew we had about 100 trees to log out, proving to be a challenge. There was a forked

tree that was 20 inches in diameter and had a bizarre bind. We ended up using a silky saw to cut this tree as a crosscut saw was getting bound and wedges were little help. We broke up in two different Teams. One team ran the crosscut saw, and the other team used the silky saws.

We got to the lake around 1:30 and had lunch. Shawn did some fly fishing in Green Lake and caught three fish. We all hiked back to camp and arrived around four. We felt a sense of satisfaction of accomplishing what we had set out to do. That evening we enjoyed Randi and Jon's dinner and told more stories. The next day was a busy one. We got up at 5 o'clock and Mary got the coffee brewed and made breakfast. Everyone packed up their gear and helped get the packs weighed and loaded the packs for the mules. The electric fence around the pasture was rolled up, and the hi-lines were coiled. The hikers left around nine. Russ and Mary got out of camp with the four mules at 10. There were some problems adjusting the packs that took additional time.

Russ and Mary lead the four pack mules out and passed the hikers and arrived at the trail head four hours later at 2 o'clock. Everyone made it out safely by 3:30. The trip was a big success with no injuries and 253 trees logged. Although the trail is clear to Green Lake there is a "go-round," about two miles up the trail for a large fir tree that is about 3 feet in diameter that should be logged out. The go-round goes up a very steep bank that is dangerous for stock and difficult for hikers. Mary took pictures of this go round. In addition, there are numerous smaller trees that have fallen on about a 100-foot section of the trail below the detour. The numerous trees that have fallen over the years would take at least a half a day.

Statistics: Number of miles of trails cleared: 4.75.

Number of logs removed: 253

Number of miles of trails brushed: 2 miles (1.25 miles on Green Lake Trail #1666 and 3.75 mile on Trail #1675)

Yards of tread improved: 20

Number of stock animal use days: 30

Volunteer work hours: 186

Volunteer driving time: 12 hours for Russ and Mary; 14 hours for the rest of the team.

Volunteer trailer driving miles: 130 miles for Russ and Mary



*John Hendrickson &
Bob Madden figuring
out where the trail
should be.*



Left to Right: Kevin Gilbert, Jon Larson, John Hendrickson, Randy Jandt, Bob Madden, Shawn Gorham, Maria Madden, Russ West, & Mary West.

The Magruder Project

August 8-14

By Joe Kroeber (MSO '62)

Bob Whaley (MSO '56) maintained an excellent relationship with the USFS and Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation in keeping this project after the late cancellation in 2020. Our longtime leader, "Boss Man Bob" had to drop out the last week due to a knee surgery. Dick Hull (MSO '75) accepted the squad leader position. Dick is a saw expert. He has handled many saw training sessions, is an excellent saw sharpener and did a great job leading our project. Bob Cushing (MSO '59) who has been with Whaley many years had a family emergency after arriving in Missoula and could not go on the project. The remaining crew was Dennis Pearson (MSO '62), J.B. Stone (MSO '56), Gary Weyermann (MS '63), Joe Robinson (Associate & retired logger), Chuck Fricke (MSO '61), Linda and Larry Cooper, (Associates and longtime cooks & camp directors), and me. Linda & Larry set up base camp the day before we arrived at the Indian Creek Camp site which is about 60 miles Southwest of Darby. Their meals were great with a different dessert every night. So much for roughing it!

We worked on clearing a trail to the Magruder Massacre Site which has not been maintained for a very long time. There is a usable 7-mile trail from the Nez Perce Road to the signed spot from the South. Relocating and clearing the trail we worked on would complete a trail to the East to the Magruder Corridor Road which is the road to our campground. Mark Smith trail supervisor for the area worked with us the first day flagging part of the old trail. Loura and Kristi Forest Service District trail crew

members worked with Hulla the second day to complete the flagging to the site. The area is very steep, and the trail was not anywhere near the 12% the forest service would like. Temperatures were close to 90 or above the entire week. We crossed the Selway River each day. The deepest area was just above the knees, so it did not cause any problems. I did hear Dennis on the fourth day remark from deep in the brush, “are we sure Magruder did not get massacred right here?”

We sawed over 160 logs, one at least 42 inches, two at 24 inches, twenty 16 to 20 inches, and sixty that were six to sixteen inches. Most required two cuts, and we cleared lots of brush. We were not able to complete the last two large log jams before reaching the sign. Joe Robinson remarked several times that he missed his chainsaw! On Wednesday after supper, we took the 5-mile drive to Paradise Guard Station. You may remember that this is the starting point of the 15-mile trail to Shearer with Moose Creek another 12 miles up the Selway. We had a good surprise at the guard station when we were met by Judy and Norm Kamrud, (MSO ‘64). Norm was a long-time jumper out of Missoula and Grangeville. Norm had just returned with his pack string from delivering and servicing radio communication equipment in Shearer & Moose Creek.

The story of the Magruder Massacre Site is best told by Ladd Hamilton in his book “The Bloody Deed.” His storytelling brings to life the famous murder of Lewiston merchant Lloyd Magruder & three friends by members of his own crew at this site during the 1860’s Idaho/Montana gold rush. We were fortunate to experience another great project. We got to visit and work in a great wilderness area with people that are a joy to be around.

New Mexico NSA Trail Crew Projects (Four Projects)

By Alan Wonders (Associate)

Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Trails & nearby Hondo Cabin

Carson National Forest

June 14 to 18.

Team members: Mike Overby (MSO ’67), Jon Klingel (CJ ’65), Marcos Rivera (Associate), Tom Mavilla (Associate), Allision Stout (MYC ’80), and Alan Wonders (Associate). Forest Service liaison was Craig Saum.

- On Monday and Tuesday, Manzanita Trail #58 was cleared, sawing out 45 logs.
- A day of rest was in store for Wednesday.
- On Thursday, 38 saw logs were cleared on Yerba Trail # 61.
- On Friday, 24 more saw logs were removed on Gavilan Trail #60. Top elevation reached was 10,661 feet.
- Provided general housekeeping around the Hondo Cabin area. Added a metal T-post and wire loop to the gate post. Cleaned human trash from the cabin. Cleared brush around the cabin, corral, trails, and vehicle roadway. Cleared fallen tree from rail fence.
- In summary, 107 saw logs were cleared, ascending, and descending 10,000 feet in elevation. Worked safely with a great sense of accomplishment but had tired muscles and sore joints at the end of each day. Totaled 171 volunteer hours for a volunteer value rate

- of \$25 per hour, \$4,275 dollars of volunteer labor was contributed.
- Recommend the porta-potty at Hondo Cabin be pumped and the building be vermin proofed.



An example of the saw logs we had in three of our trails in the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness. This is why we took a day off in the middle of the week.

San Pedro Parks Trail
San Pedro Wilderness, Coyote Ranger District, Santa Fe National Forest
August 22 to 27.

Team members: Alan Wonders (Associate), Watson (Java) Bradley (MSO'74), Marty Peale (Associate), and Jon Klingel (CJ '65). The crew cleared Rio Gallina Trail # 30 and Upper Gallina Trail # 36 in the San Pedro Parks Wilderness. We installed two Forest Service signs – one at the wilderness boundary and another at the junction of trails #30 and #36. Extensive brushing included removal of Gambrel oak, maple, aspen, spruce, and fir in this relatively wet corridor.

Jennifer Subtlet with the Espanola-Pecos Ranger District provided sawyer training and certification.

A total of 184 volunteer hours was contributed for a value of \$4,600 of volunteer labor contributed.



Resting after a day of fun at the end of the day before their four-mile jaunt on the trail back to camp. Left to right – Watson “Java” Bradley (Farmington, NM), Alan Wonders (Richardson, TX), Jon Klingel (Santa Fe, NM). Photo by Marty Peale, newly certified sawyer & cook (Santa Fe, NM).

*Jon Klingel and Watson “Java” Bradley
Junction at the Upper Gallina and Rio
Gallina Trail.*



Wahotoya Trail Clearing
Spanish Peaks Wilderness, San Isabel National Forest, Colorado
July 23 to 28.

Team members: Bowe Ellis (Associate), Ross Hallihan (Associate), Jon Klingel (CJ '65), Tom Mavilla (Associate), and Alan Wonders (Associate). The crew cleared over 200 logs from 17 miles of trails. The 200 logs were large enough to require one or more cuts and/or the use of a peavey to remove them. About 50 of the logs required two-person saw work. Three days required self-supporting hiking, working, and camping. Obscure switchbacks and dispersed tread were located with tread being reestablished and ten rock cairns built for hikers to locate the trail. There were numerous sightings of wildlife including seven bears the first two days. We learned that bear spray should be carried with the trigger safety clip in place until used.

A total of 150 volunteer hours were contributed for a value of \$3,750 of volunteer labor.



Left to right: Ross Hallihan, local La Veta Trails Club Volunteer; Tom Mavilia (Taos, NM); Bowe Ellis (Taos, NM); Jon Klingel (Santa Fe, NM); Alan Wonders (Richardson, TX).

Continental Divide Trail
Chama River Canyon Wilderness Area,
Coyote Ranger District, Santa Fe National Forest.
April 7 & 8

The team members were Kevin Howe (Associate), Jon Klingel (CJ '65), Marc Rivera (Associate), and Alan Wonders (Associate). Fifty logs were cleared over 8.4 miles on the Continental Divide Trail with a total of 64 hours of volunteer hours contributed for a volunteer labor value of \$1,600.



*Beautiful scenery from a portion of the Continental Divide Trail in New Mexico.
Wide open spaces with colorful geology.*

Hat Creek Trail Maintenance
Salmon-Challis NF
July 18-24, 2021
By Perry Whittaker (Missoula '71)

The project was on the Salmon-Challis National Forest in two different locations. The first location was in the Hat Creek area south/southwest of Salmon, Idaho approximately twenty-four air miles and secondly north of Gibbonsville, Idaho which is north of Salmon approximately thirty-five miles.

Sunday, July 18 was spent driving to the Hat Creek campsite and setting up a nice camp for the first two days. The crew camped near Hat Creek in the center of Section 29, Township 18 North, Range 20 East, Boise Meridian. The weather was relatively hot and smokey although we had short afternoon rain showers Monday and Tuesday. The campsite was at an elevation of 6,720 feet and was good, with some tree cover, creek water nearby, and a toilet. There were minimal insect issues. The project was a trail clearing project outside of the wilderness; therefore, we were using chainsaws, hand saws, nippers, Pulaski's, and shovels to clear trails, and construct tread. We removed overhead leaners, pack bumpers, down logs, saplings, seedlings, along with constructing and cleanout of water bars within the trail corridors.

The crew consisted of eight National Smokejumper Association (NSA) retired smokejumpers, and two cooks. Crew members included Jeff Kinderman (Missoula '75), Kim Maynard, (Missoula '82), Bill Werhane, (Missoula '66), Dan Roberson, (Missoula '75), Bill Thomas, (Missoula '75), Rodgers Wright, (Missoula '91), Grant Godbolt, (Missoula '71), with Perry Whittaker, (Missoula '71), as squad leader. This was a strong crew with many years of smokejumper experience and NSA trail projects under their belts.



*Rogers Wright, Jeff Kinderman, Dan Roberson, Lillian Bowen, Mark Bowen,
Bill Thomas, Bill Werhane, Grant Godbolt, and Kim Maynard.
Perry Whittaker (photographer)*

Lillian and Mark Bowen (Associates) did a fabulous job planning the meals and cooking for the crew during the week. They fed us very well and we were very lucky to have them cook for us. I would wager money that none of us lost weight during the week.

The first two days Monday, July 19 and Tuesday, July 20 we worked to clear and improve Forest Trails No. 6092 (North Fork of Hat Creek) and Trail No. 6246 (Old Indian Trail). This involved an estimated three and nine tenths (3.9) miles of trail maintenance on Trail No. 6092 and Trail No. 6093. An estimated 81 water bars were cleaned and 20 trees across or over the trail were sawed. Numerous small trees were also removed or cut from the trail corridor. We tied Trail No. 6246 into a road in the saddle north of the South Fork of Iron Creek. This trail work included sawing an estimated 55 trees from the trail.



*Rogers Wright
falling a pack
bumper. He
wasn't waiting
for a chainsaw.*



*Bill Werhane
(aka) Chicken
Man after
getting
drenched on
Tuesday.*

Wednesday, July 21 was spent tearing down camp and moving to the Twin Creek Campground north of Gibbonsville, Idaho, where we set up camp for the remaining three days in Section 4,

In addition, a new trail route was pioneered, and new tread was constructed for 617 yards. The afternoon was completed in a wet and wild hail/rainstorm for at least the last hour of the workday. Since we were in an old burn there was not a lot of cover, so our rain gear got thoroughly tested. We had some wet clothing by the time we returned to camp. The trail work was generally in an old burn in mountainous terrain between 7,200 and 8,920 feet above sea level. We worked an estimated one and a quarter mile of trail.

Township 26 North, Range 21 East, Boise Meridian. This was a very nice campsite with fire pits, tables, and bathrooms. By the time we got the new camp area set up, there was only enough time remaining to sharpen saws and hand tools, so we drove up to the Idaho/Montana line and began working Trail No. 106 (Continental Divide Trail) west of the Lost Trail Ski Area. Thursday, July 22 we worked the first mile of Trail No. 108 (Twin Creek); however, it looked as though another crew had already cleared the trail. Friday, July 23 was also spent removing trees and widening Trail No. 106, the Continental Divide Trail. Since it was in an unburned forest, there were lots of saplings and seedlings to remove from the trail corridor along with water bar work. We ended up working an estimated four and one-half (4.5) miles on Trail No. 106. Another trail crew had also worked on the trail earlier this year.

In summary, the crew cleared approximately ten and one-half (10.5) miles on five (5) different trails; pioneered trail for around 617 yards with hand tools during the four days of trail work; constructed and cleaned out many erosion control structures; and removed overhead leaners, pack bumpers, down logs, and saplings.

The crew worked well together, stayed healthy, and enjoyed being in the woods. Wildfire smoke was visible from both project sites. The work brought back old memories of work as fire fighters during a previous life. We had a great time telling and listening to stories about one another and about other old Smokejumpers who were not present to refute or substantiate the stories. Evening campfire stories are

always plentiful and most interesting. We broke camp and departed for our respective homes early the morning of Saturday July 24, 2021, peace and harmony prevailing.

Many thanks go to Geoff Fast, Wilderness Ranger, on the Salmon/Challis who coordinated the project and provided sufficient guidance regarding what he wanted to accomplish. Geoff knew where to set up camp to provide a good experience. The project could have been more productive if we only had to set up one campsite for the week with sufficient work for the five days of trail clearing.



Kim Maynard and crew fording Twin Creek.



Grant Godbolt with one of his many erosion control structures.

Dinner Station Campground & Aspen Picnic Area
Dillon Ranger District, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
July 11-17, 2021
By Richard Trinity (MSO '66)

NSA crew: Jack Atkins (MSO '68), Tom Blunn (Associate), Jeff Kinderman (MSO '75), Bill Kolar (MSO '59), Rod McIver (MSO '64), Richard Trinity (MSO '66).

District Crew: Gail Provanic (Recreation Spec.), Adam Norlander (Recreation officer on loan from Bozeman), Seasonal District Crew: Rubin Lyngrass, Tori Bollinger, Nate Owen, and Ben Kelly.

So it was that we met for lunch on Sunday noon at Sparky's restaurant in Dillon to eat and greet and fill out the requisite paperwork. Thence to Safeway for final cooler ice and Murdoch's to purchase a needed Stihl hedge/brush cutter and accessories. Then we caravanned to the Dinner Station Campsite on Birch Creek, 17 miles northwest of Dillon. At campsite #6 Adam and Rubin had erected a wall tent for Tom the cook to work from. Bill had parked his small camper there for Tom to use (after all he is 92). Bill had saved the day when he snagged the campsite at the last minute when the original campsite planned for a different nearby location fell through. We all had creek-side burbling tent sites. Tom provided a nicely cooked supper.

At breakfast the next day it was clear the propane cook stoves had worn valves and could not perform appropriately. So back to town for a new set of cook stoves from Murdoch's, which worked just fine.

Meanwhile work began following instructions and discussing Adam's nicely provided detailed work list. As usual we all self-selected which worklist item to engage. Jeff slipped on the harness of the motorized brush/small tree cutter and was a one-man clearing machine for the next two days. Bill knew what was expected for a proper gravel spread at each campsite and set out. Jack checked out the peroration off an electric rotary sander and attacked the picnic tables and attached benches with 50 grit sandpaper to remove years of assorted surface accumulation. The first sander motor burned out on the first day. The next one held up until the end. Portable gas generator supplied the electricity.

The robust tables were constructed of what seemed like 4x12 bridge planking attached to cement stanchions for both the benches and tabletops. The paint crew followed with Rod, Richard, and eventually Bill using a paint roller and 4" brushes applying USFS brown paint. Sanding and painting migrated to four outhouses. In the lag between initial and thinned sanding and painting, the paint crew cleared brush and thinned new growth Lodgepole pine around the individual campsites. These activities were assisted each day by one or more district personnel, which made the whole project flow successfully.

After finishing the main campground, the whole outfit moved two miles down the road to the Aspen picnic area and performed the same activities. The last outhouse had to do with an incomplete paint job due to a nest of Hornets in the eaves that got stirred up. After two crew members suffered seven stings, we pronounced the outhouse project complete. Several smaller projects were performed at both places and are listed below. Much of the activity shifted back and forth between people, jobs, supplies at hand, and the heat. Daytime temps were in the 90's and it sapped energy. Naturally there were good times of camaraderie during meals and after supper (no campfire, too hot). But saying so anyway, we enjoyed tasty and healthy meals created by Tom each day.

One evening an ex-MSO jumper from Seattle with his grandson stopped by for a visit. He and Jeff had jumped together. Another day a journalist from the Forest Service Regional Office visited and

interviewed us about being smokejumpers and why we did the Trail Crew projects. Friday night was steak night. Gail Plovanic, (District Recreation Officer) and son Benjamin arrived and recounted their experience of observing a lightning strike and fire at the mouth of Birch Creek as they drove out to meet us that evening. The local sheriff and deputy also stopped by to notify us of the fire being attended to. Saturday morning, we broke camp and afterwards the district crew took down the tent and the campsite was deserted by noon.

Work completed:

Sanded and painted 16 picnic tables (3 long, 3 regular)

Sanded and painted 2 single, 2 double outhouses

Brushed and weed whipped campsites and picnic table eating areas

Thinned and stacked new growth Lodgepole Pine at campsites

Installed outhouse fixtures

Re-sprung outhouse door and latch

Install two road signs

Smoothed campsite new gravel parking areas

Filled holes where posts were removed along campground roadway

Submitted by Richard Trinity



Richard Trinity, Jeff Kinderman, Jack Atkins, Bill Kolar, Rod McIver, Tom Blunn

Yellowstone Valley TRAMPS Projects, 2021

Billings, Montana

By Jack Sterling (MSO '66)

Our trails project scheduled for July 11-16 in the Pryor Mountains was cancelled due to a nearby fire and temperatures at and exceeding 100 degrees. But that did not deter us from doing our patriotic volunteer duties. Several of us in the Billings area met at various times during the year to clear brush in and near parks and remove trash from the nearby Yellowstone River.

In early January the Yellowstone Valley Area former smokejumpers and associates were busy working at the Blue Creek Fishing Access site clearing Russian Olive trees and preparing burn piles. Bruce Morey MSO-67 cleared a lot of Russian Olive trees. Several of us cleared a spot for park benches built by Associate, Auzie Blevins who is the father-in-law of Bruce Ford (MSO-75). Joe Sterling MSO-72, Chuck Hull MSO-67, Mike Penfold MSO-58, Bob Dayton MSO-65, Dan DeBar, Associate, Auzie Blevins and Jack Sterling MSO-66 worked on building burn piles, removing weeds, and eventually burning them. Five of the six fires were dead out the next morning -- the sixth one burned for several days. There was snow on the ground but there was concern someone might get hurt so Bruce Morey made us go out in the cold and put it out. Having snow helps mop up efforts. Dan DeBar pounded a lot of fires and was great help mopping up.

The next project we volunteered for was to remove a barbwire fence on the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range in the Big Horn Canyon Recreation Area. We received training and signed forms before working on this project with the National Park Service. We were not to remove anything older than 50 years. Most of the crew was more than half again that age and there was concern us about being able to leave the area. This crew consisted of Auzie Blevins who helped Jack scout the project a few days before. Bruce Morey, Chuck Hull, and Jack Sterling did the clearing. The wire and posts were removed quickly.

In March, an old water tank was removed from Two Moon Park, after getting permission. In the process of hauling the tank out by Bruce Morey and Jack Sterling, they ran into Kayhan Ostovar. He said he had been looking at that tank for 10 years trying to figure a way to get it out of there. He helped roll the tank out on a game cart and told us about a cleanup project he has with the Yellowstone River Institute.

Each September on the second Saturday, a group floats a section of the Yellowstone to pick up trash and old metal from numerous car bodies that were dumped into the river or were used for riprap. Kayhan showed Bruce and Jack a car frame in a dry channel of the river and asked if there was a way to get it out. We assured him there was and he had also spotted a roll of felt about 15 feet long and 12 inches in



Jack Sterling, Chuck Hull, Bruce Morey, and Auzie Blevins.

diameter that was in an exposed log jam. We met him several days later and removed the car frame and cut the felt roll into three pieces and hauled it out on a game cart. Joe Sterling brought his DeWalt grinder with cut off wheels and a saws-all and made smaller pieces of the car frame. We hauled the pieces out with wheelbarrows.



Yellowstone Riverbank – Before and after clean-up.

Several weeks later we met again, joined by Bob Dayton, Mike Penfold, Auzie Blevins, Joe Sterling, Chuck Hull, Bruce Morey, Dan DeBar and Jack Sterling. This time we had a lunch at the end of the cleanup detail compliments of Steve Fenter MSO-95. We were joined by Kayhan Ostovar and a Rocky Mountain College student as well as Roger William with Yellowstone River Parks Association.

The next week we met again at Norms Island and this time were able to get a skidster with a frontend loader and a trailer close to the location of the items to be removed. We were joined by Don Wirth with Yellowstone River Parks Association. Don is an amazing volunteer and in November will turn 89. He loaded the material on the skidster and hauled it to the trailer. You can see video of some of this on YRPA406 on Facebook.

Later in August we got a call from Kayhan to talk about his September River Cleanup. He had scouted an island called Clarks Crossing on the Yellowstone that had several car parts, frames, culverts, and miscellaneous trash that needed to be reduced in size to get it hauled away by boats on the day of the cleanup. It was about a mile hike to get to the river for removal of the junk. We started early, several mornings and worked till noon. We headed back to the shade as the temperatures were in high 90's by early afternoon. We got all the items identified and removed except for a 30-foot culvert that had a 44-inch diameter. A little too much for 20-volt grinders and a saws-all. Maybe next year on that item.

The day of the Yellowstone River Institute Cleanup, Mike Penfold brought his drift boat. Auzie Blevins brought his canoe, joined by Bob Dayton. Jack Sterling brought his Beavertail boat and we had two volunteers shuttle out vehicles. Joe Sterling and Steve Fenter were there bright and early to make it possible to get in our vehicles at the takeout 6 miles downriver.

Following is part of the press release that the Yellowstone River Institute (YRI) issued about this year's cleanup. We have yet to educate them to call us the National Smokejumper Association. Perhaps a couple of baseball caps would help. Below is part of their Annual Report:

“YRI River Cleanup Participants and Sponsors” I know many of you have been waiting for our annual summary statistics. This year it was especially challenging to pull all the data together since we had multiple cleanup events in the spring and fall. Plus, we had a new partner group, who I will call “Jack and the Smoke Jumpers.” They are a retired group of smoke jumpers who keep finding more trash to cut up, haul, and remove from the river. These guys are a priceless example of a group committed to community service and a great example for all our students at Rocky Mountain College. In addition to the float this year, we conducted six other special targeted projects to remove larger items and clean up particularly troublesome areas. The Smoke Jumpers were a big part of these efforts along with a graduating group of RMC seniors, the BLM, Our Montana, and YRPA. Our haul this year with 67 volunteers was more than double previous years and well over our average of 9,640 pounds. The total for 2021 was 26,743 pounds (over 13 ton) and counting.

Bruce Morey has tracked hours worked this year and NSA members worked over 565 hours and with associates it was over 832 hours. We have a good working relationship with the Yellowstone River Institute and Yellowstone River Parks Association.

There are fewer Russian Olive trees in the parks this fall thanks to the work Bruce Morey has been doing to reduce their numbers. Also targeted for removal is Buckthorn. There is no fear of running out of work anytime soon.



The crew and some of their debris, left to right: Dan DeBar, Bruce Morey, Chuck Hull, Don Wirth, Mike Penfold, Auzie Blevins, Joe Sterling, Jack Sterling, Roger Williams, Bob Dayton.

Mike Penfold guarding the trash.



Lewis & Clark Trail Clearing

Jeff Kinderman (MSO '75)

In August of 2018, six members of TRAMPS built a new 2.5-mile Forest Service Trail descending into the Bitterroot Valley from Lost Trail Pass on the Idaho-Montana border. The trail was constructed “in the footsteps” of the Lewis & Clark 1806 Corps of Discovery Expedition on their west-bound journey. The trail route was researched by scholars of the Lewis & Clark Expedition to provide credibility that this was the route in which 31 members, plus Sacajawea and her baby Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, travelled on September 4, 1806. The expedition had 30 horses and “found everything frozen, and the ground covered with snow” as they met and camped with 400 Salish Tribal members that evening near present day Sula, Montana.

TRAMPS agreed with the Forest Service that we would clear the trail each spring or early summer.



Mike Pepion (MSO '82) clearing winter blow-down from the Lewis & Clark Descent Trail on June 6, 2021.

Jeff Kinderman has been the leader of this annual trail clearing and maintenance activity. After the snow cleared, Jeff and Mike Pepion cleared the trail on June 6 this year.

Over the past four years, several Lewis and Clark support organizations have constructed and installed directional and interpretive signs leading to and at the trailhead. It is nostalgic to hike the trail and view several trees that were present when the Corps of Discovery travelled by in September of 1806. Access to the trailhead is about 3 miles north of the Idaho-Montana border along US Highway 93. Follow the Forest Service access road to the trailhead.



Recently constructed and installed Lewis & Clark Descent interpretive sign near the trailhead by partners of the Lewis & Clark Trail Foundation.

Volcano Adventure Camp, Lassen Volcanic National Park

NSA California TRAMPS 2020-21

By Scott "Mouse" Warner (RDD 69)

2020 and 2021 were momentous years for the NSA CA TRAMPS and their Lassen Park (LVNP) and Lassen Foundation (LPF) friends as we worked together for the good cause of the Volcano Adventure Camp (VAC) for kids. 2020 was marked by the damn Covid 19 (Corona Virus - C19); 2021 by the damn nearly 1 million-acre Dixie Fire across 5 NorCal counties (Butte, Plumas, Tehama, Lassen, and Shasta) 2 National Forests (Plumas & Lassen), and Lassen Volcanic National Park.

2020 was all about the Covid 19 virus as it disrupted the whole world and our Volcano Adventure Camp little piece of paradise in the northwest corner of the Park. NSA, LVNP, and LPF have worked together since late spring 2017: building the extensive gravel pathways and fire circles and annually putting up and taking down the enormous wall tents. Old Smokejumper problem-solving and ingenuity with wonderful support and working alongside hard-working Lassen Volcanic National Park Maintenance - we call them the "Engine Room" - has been the greatest. Not to be forgotten have been the well-attended "End of Project Dinners" with good food and good times.

About a month after the virus got a foothold in NorCal in 2020, LPF and LPNF were resolute in wanting the Adventure Camp "To Be There" for kids in the coming summer. The call went out to the NSA CA TRAMPS contingent to get the Tents Up. CA TRAMPS turned to the NSA Trail Committee and NSA Board for endorsement and support to get the job done. NSA was the greatest in support, with the needed



confidence in CA TRAMPS to come up with their own virus safety protocols and work procedures in the outdoor high country setting of the Volcano Adventure Camp.

June 2020 VAC Tents Go Up.

L-R Ken Malley NSA, Tammy Boyd LVNP Education, Tim LVNP ‘Engine Room’, Scott Warner NSA, Bob Harris NSA, Johnny LVNP ‘Engine Room’, Nathan LVNP ‘Engine Room’, Ray LVNP ‘Engine Room’, & Jack Johnson NSA.

We all recall the Coronavirus was a moving target in the early days, but it was more than clear healthy outdoor air, a small local Shasta County Tramps “Work Party” (if contact tracing were to be needed), simple food, “washing up,” and dispersed bunking were common-sense mitigation.

Early June 2020 the Lassen Park “Engine Room” and “Education” pitched in with NSA TRAMPS to take on and complete the work. Among the simple & sensible C19 mitigations: CA Smokejumpers provided fire packs for individual food; plenty of wipes and running water were available for washing up; and normal “social distance” scattered sleeping - since old Smokejumpers snore! Somehow amber liquids and favorite “Tin Cup Whiskey” (for medicinal purposes) became an informal component of C19 protocols around the campfire.

NSA TRAMPS were Scott “Mouse” Warner (RDD 69), Bob Harris (RDD 75), Pepper Jack Johnson (Associate, LVNP & Lassen NF), Pat “Obie” O’Bannon (RDD 70), and Ken Malley (RDD 83).

In just a few days the tents were up and the bunks assembled and in place. It all worked well and everybody remained in good health.

Alas, with the ever-evolving C19 virus and mélange of various government entities (Shasta County, State of California, Federal) involvement, perspectives, communiqués, and ever-changing messaging, the Volcano Adventure Camp never opened for “Campers” Summer 2020.

In early October 2020, the same resolute Shasta County CA, NSA Tramp contingent returned, with our Lassen Park “Engine Room” friends to make quick work in dismantling the VAC tents and bunks for winter storage. It was poignant since the “Campers” never came; yet in perfect mild autumn weather, NSA TRAMPS and LVNP Engine Room camaraderie at work and NSA TRAMPS “off shift” simple grub, libation, and good cheer around the campfire were reward enough. All involved remained in good health.

Then 2021 came with the hope and optimism a New Year brings. As 2021 progressed, C19 was on the wane, VAC Campers were signed up, and the small NorCal NSA TRAMPS contingent was willing and ready for the early June opening of the Volcano Adventure Camp. It was to be short crew again to outwit the virus, even though our crew of 5-strong were “bullet-proof” being double-vaxed (“already had it” didn’t count). Best of all, NSA California TRAMPS founder and patriarch - just a spry 92 - Spud

DeJarnette (MSO '49) was "On the Load" with Scott "Mouse" Warner, Bob Harris, Pepper Jack Johnson, and Ken Malley.

Once again early June 2021, our Lassen Park Engine Room Friends were side-by-side with CA TRAMPS. Lassen Park "Education" was there too. The big heavy tents went up cooperatively with the benefit of practice and innovation, and only half the 80 bunks were assembled and placed in deference to the still circulating virus. Grub "Circled Back" to campfire Dutch Oven treats: Mac-PepperJack Cheese-home smoked Spam-kettle chip topping for crunch dubbed "Grilled Mac & Cheese" and, the old standby of "Smokejumper Packsaddle" of potatoes-onions-bacon-beer. It sure was good to see the Dutch Oven come back out as in days of yore. Although it should be pointed out, modern California Smokejumper food packs of creatively assembled store-bought items are excellent. A surprise evening snowstorm of 3-inches provoked a TRAMPS "Early to the Rack" on the last night. Spud and Mouse found the Volcano Adventure Camp Tents and Bunks dry, comfortable, somewhat warm, and overall "Fine as Froghair." The VAC opened to Campers the very next week.

Just three weeks later on July 7, 2021, NSA CA TRAMPS Project Organizer/Squadleader Scott "Mouse" Warner and bride "Minnie" visited Lassen Volcanic National Park (just an hour from home in Redding CA) to traverse the Parks Scenic Highway from north to south. It was delightful to see happy youth "Campers" in action in the busy, bustling Volcano Adventure Camp in the northwest part of the Park. Since NSA involvement in 2017, "Happy Campers" have made it all worthwhile: maybe we will even "recruit" a smokejumper from the VAC ranks someday.

Continuing south on the Scenic Highway, so many familiar landmarks: The Devastated Area from the 1915-16 eruptions from Lassen Peak to the west, up to Summit Lake, through Kings Meadows, up over the switchbacks and crest past the Lassen Peak Trailhead to Lake Helen, then down to the Bumpass Hell (extensive thermal activity) Trailhead and Scenic Overlook.



A Prescient Moment came while taking in the familiar far-and-wide vista encompassing Mill Creek - North Fork of the Feather River - Lake Almanor - Keddie Ridge - out to the 'East Side' toward Nevada, and even farther. "This Country is Wide Open" to every NorCal Synoptic Fire Weather Pattern: prevailing South Wind, sometimes bearing moisture to feed thunderstorms; Summer Thermal Convection from the Central Valley; North/East (high to low gradient pressure from the Great Basin) Dry Winds that took out the town of Paradise in 2018; Dry Cold Fronts which historically push California Cascade-Sierra wildfires all over the place. "And it is so, so dry despite the snow just a month ago."



Dutch Oven Smokejumper Packsaddle



Dixie Fire Pyrocumulus Cloud (LA Times)

As a retired forester (and long-ago smokejumper) I had not felt the same uneasiness since August 1992, while looking west off Hatchet Mountain on the Cascade Crest down toward Redding CA at the head of California's Central Valley. Just a few days later, seven of us NorCal timber industry foresters with nearly 45 bulldozers operated by damn fine "cat skinners," squeezed the south flank of the 22-mile-long infamous "Fountain Fire" (arson-sparked). Cal Fire simple strategy: "Industry work the flanks; Agencies protect the folks and structures until we can join you."

That Dry Cold Front- pushed Barnburner "Only" took out 66,000 acres ("Anchor and Flank; Go Direct" works!) of private timberland, 300 structures lost, and so many disrupted lives. Sadly, since 1992 "The Fountain Fire" has been superseded manyfold by countless CA wildfires.

Eerily, on July 13, 2021, no more than a week later from the prescient uneasiness and within sight of the aforementioned Lassen Scenic Overlook, a pesky wildfire down in the North Fork of the Feather River

(this time a tree fell across a power line), relentlessly chewed its way north through numerous burns since 2000 of various age and vegetation mix, through the USFS, flat and groomed industry timberland, toward the communities of Chester and Westwood, and the Lassen Volcanic National Park. The Dixie Fire went laterally east and west too.

Then in early August a Dry Cold Front hit the very spread-out wildfire to make a spectacular 100,000 acre run in one day! A valiant defense of Chester and Westwood spared the communities, while to the southeast the town known to all of Greenville was incinerated. West of Lake Almanor "Dixie" charged ahead into southeast Lassen Park to take out the Mt. Harkness Lookout, then to take a breather near

Juniper Lake. To the east, Dixie flanked the Lake Almanor environs to be secured on the "A21" with backfires that slipped into the Lassen NF Caribou Wilderness and into the adjacent east and northeast portions of LVNP. Far from done, not too far south of where the Scenic Highway leaves the Park, "Dixie" generated an enormous Pyrocumulus cloud to spark two lightning fires which exploded and merged into hundreds of acres within hours. A brilliantly executed "No Other Option" firing operation was then lit and held for miles to the north from the Scenic Highway far into Lassen Park.

By then, the untouched Volcano Adventure Camp was less than 5 miles to the north and about 5 miles west of the Dixie Fire, now a month old. It would be another month plus as the relentless wildfire with “Seven League Boots” chewed its way ever closer to the VAC. The Volcano Adventure Camp was threatened by fire just miles away on fronts, but Dixie was prevented from gaining foothold into the firetrap on the west side of the Lost Creek drainage underneath (northeast of) the VAC.

As Wellington remarked after Waterloo, “A Close-Run Thing” before “Dixie” more or less gave it up to valiant and stubborn firefighters, with the VAC spared.

In 1916 Lassen Peak exploded and gushed snowmelt with massive mudflows down Lost Creek, taking out much of the riparian areas and adjacent timber to the east and then way down Hat Creek. The forests came back after the 1916 Lassen Peak eruptions; as they also will in due course throughout the near 1 million-acre 2021 Dixie Burn. It just takes time and as appropriate, assistance from Homo Sapiens. For more than two decades Lassen Park has done an enlightened and professional job with letting wildfires burn (when appropriate - all about time and place), putting Rx fire on the ground, and strategically reducing fuels in the right places. That’s why the South Center Visitor Center (incredible structure protection right up against tall timber crown out), Bumpass Thermal Area Boardwalks, and Summit Lake Campgrounds were mostly unscathed. Over the years, only the 2013 Reading Fire at 15,000 acres inopportunely “Got Up and Ran” when the rest of California was burning; yet ironically as still relatively “green” in 2021, slowed down the Dixie Fire from taking out the Volcano Adventure Camp.

A favorite saying lives on from the (near extinct for now) NorCal timber industry forest products side of our owners and management: “All foresters are optimists, and he is worse than most.” Same goes for Smokejumpers old, younger, even dead: You don’t “Go Out the Door” with doubts your parachute will open, you will successfully steer into the spot, give your best on the fireline, and “Better Days Ahead.”

So, the Volcano Adventure Camp still stands, there is still some “Green” in Lassen Volcanic National Park, and the Volcanic Lassen Peak and High Country are currently at rest from the 1915-16 eruptions. Covid 19 and the Dixie Fire are in the rearview mirror. There is a lot of work ahead at Lassen Volcanic National Park and in the surrounding areas. So, let’s get on with it, starting with the return of the NSA TRAMPS and “Campers” to the Lassen Park Volcano Adventure Camp in 2022.



Lassen Peak 1916 Eruption



Monture Cabin & Trails Project

Seeley Lake Ranger District, Lolo National Forest
by Dr. Gary Lawley (MSO '57) & Barry Hicks (MSO '64)

Several grizzled old smokejumpers and their friends got together in late May and the first few days of June 2021, at the Monture Guard Station Cabin to do a little work and a lot of visiting. Monture is one of the few remaining pack train (horse and mule) centers remaining in the Forest Service. Monture has a fulltime wrangler and a trail crew stationed there during the summer work season. Monture is a jumping off place for packing into the Bob Marshall Wilderness, one of the finest natural areas left in the lower 48 states.

Some of our gang gathered at Team Leader Barry Hicks' house in Bonner at noon on Sunday for a nice lunch of sandwiches and cold iced tea provided by the helpful Linda Hicks. Others in the group drove ahead to Monture to set up camp, and a couple others came later that evening.

The group was from all over the Western U.S. and ranged in rookie jump years from 1957 to 1991.

The list of the group and where they are from:

Barry Hicks (MSO 64), Bonner, Montana
Dr. Gary Lawley (MSO '57), Anchorage, Alaska
Dr. John Salisbury (Associate), Missoula, Montana
Dick Hull (MSO '75), Missoula, Montana
Edmund Ward (MSO 80), Missoula, Montana
Jay Lawley (Associate), Redmond, Washington
Grant Godbolt (MSO '71), Whitehall, Montana
Bobby Sutton (MSO '91), Sheridan, Montana
Neil Marjerrison (Associate and Cook), Missoula, Montana
Mike Oliver (Associate); Huson, Montana
Matt Walter was our Forest Service liaison, who was very helpful.

It was neat that six members of this group had worked on this cabin in 2017, doing the same work needed this time. Even more interesting, Gary worked on Monture cabin with his good buddy Dennis Gother (MSO '57) while on project work many years ago while he was an active jumper.

Since we had no television, our evening entertainment consisted of watching one of the mules with the name "38 Special" jump over the corral fence to graze near us for a while and then jump back, joining his buddies at bedtime. "Special" was very friendly and occasionally ate a carrot hand-out with the approval of our cook. We also watched the Wrangler's Calico cat, name unknown, stalk one of the three species of squirrels that lived in the ground and local trees. We were sure the squirrels were just playing with the cat, letting it get within a few feet of them before diving in their holes or scampering up a tree. It didn't take much to entertain us. Of course, we also had a few drinks to celebrate the end (almost) of the Covid 19 epidemic that had caused cancellation of many fun activities over the past year.



Left to right

Back Row: Jay Lawley, Dick Hull, Dr. John Salisbury, Neil Marjerrison

Front Row: Barry Hicks, Edmund Ward, Mike Oliver, Grant Godbolt, Dr. Gary Lawley

Not in Picture: Bobby Sutton

We began work on Monday. Our first task was to clean, sand, and respray the historic cabin with a mixture of mineral oil and turpentine. We were offered a trailer load of parts to build metal scaffolding to work from, as we had done in previous years. We declined the offer. It is a complex task putting a scaffold structure together and no one was certified in “Scaffolding,” as is required for people to put up and work on them. It seemed to us to be a little dangerous standing on loose boards high in the air.

We decided to work from ladders. Of course, it is illegal to “work” from ladders, but we carefully used them to do much of the spraying. It would have been safer if we had a mechanical manlift to work from. It is suggested the Forest Service plan and provide the proper regulatory safety equipment to do the work.

The turpentine label on the container recommended wearing respirators when applying the product. We had one, half-face respirator which brings up another safety issue. The Forest Service should provide us with non-hazardous materials to work with, if possible. Our volunteer trail crews are not trained to use respirators, don’t have medical approval, are not fit tested, don’t have a written plan, and are not provided with MSDS which would tell us how to use the product safely. Perhaps we should send a checklist to host Ranger Districts of the items we need to allow us to work within the safety regulations for our designated trail projects.

The cabin walls were sprayed on Monday. We also repaired some dings on the roof. Since it was Memorial Day, we quickly organized ourselves into a Union and charged regular Union wages of Double

Time on a Holiday. It was nice to get that big check to take home! We did thank all the Veterans in our group for their service and toasted to their good health.

Tuesday, we began sanding the front porch and putting a second coat on the cabin walls. Late that afternoon two producer/photographers (Breanna McCabe and her assistant, T.J.) showed up and took pictures and interviewed each of us at some length. We enjoyed showing them our volunteer activity and giving them a bit of our personal history.

We also broke up the three-foot thick pieces of concrete that made up the back and front steps of the cabin. This was grueling work for the younger guys, and it took about three hours of pounding to break each of the concrete steps into moveable pieces. We then replaced the old steps with treated 4 x 12 boards.

A couple of the guys painted the Kiosk in front of the cabin, taking about four hours. We removed the sign hanging from the front of the Kiosk and took it to Keith, the wrangler to carefully repaint the indented letters of the Forest Service sign.

On Wednesday, we drove to the town of Seeley Lake and up to the Morrell Creek Falls Trailhead. On the way there we saw two osprey and four wild turkeys; most of us were unaware there were wild turkeys in Montana. We wondered how they find food during the winter. I guess the local ranchers feed them.

It was nice to see Seeley Lake again after a few years absence. Most of us have good memories of the place. We found the Morrell Creek Trailhead and hiked the 2.5 miles up this nice trail to the falls. Since the creek was in flood stage, the falls was spectacular! On the way back, we cut about 30 dead trees that appeared to want to fall across the trail. This is a recently burned area and has hundreds of trees waiting to fall. We also trimmed a lot of tree trunks that might hit a horses' leg along trail.

Trouble was, no horses use this short trail, so we cut a dozen or so sit-down places where the elderly and those out of shape could sit briefly and take a rest. We should make these trails more user friendly instead of having to walk two miles with no place to rest and no shade.

There were also absolutely no signs on this trail, neither at the trailhead nor at the falls, to provide distances. This is a neat destination, well worth the walk, and maybe it could be advertised more.

Late in the day, Quinn Carver, the Seeley Lake District Ranger came over to visit and meet the crew. Several of the crew were good friends of Quinn. We discussed some of the recommendations for making the work a little safer; Quinn agreed with all of them. Ideas included finding and using chemicals during our work that did not require the use of respirators, providing us with MSDS for every chemical we used, and holding discussions between the Crew Leader and our Forest Service liaison before the project to request the safest equipment possible (like manlifts) on each project.

On Thursday we sanded the back porch, stained the old log barn (two coats), and cut some of the brush and trees from around the old pump house. Dick Hull certified a couple of guys in chain sawing. Then we stained the pump house, the back porch, and gave the old cabin a third coat of protective spray.

The two Montana Public Broadcasting System producers/photographers came out again late in the day on Thursday. This time they brought a drone and flew it to film us working. We all hope we get to watch the results of the reporters' visits. They said it would be on Montana Public Television sometime in late September.

Neil cooked wonderful meals every day. Seemed like he had about a thousand eggs with him, and we had eggs nearly every meal. Some of us told him in previous projects the coffee was too weak, and boy did he make it strong this time. We ran out of coffee by Wednesday and had to go into town and get more. Neil is a hoot, takes our ribbing in stride, and is a perfectionist cook.

Some of the guys went into Missoula to attend a retirement celebration for a couple people they knew. This turned out to be a somber party, since everyone learned about the recent death of a Smokejumper in Silver City New Mexico. This sad event reminded all of us of what a dangerous job Smokejumping is and how lucky we were to have survived with no serious injuries. We drank a toast to our missing friends, including Dan Hensley (MSO '57) who had been with us on many of these projects. Dan is getting new knees and/or hips, planning to be with us in the future.

We wrapped up the work and left Friday afternoon, all of us vowing to stay alive and seeing each other next summer at the Smokejumper National Reunion in Boise, Idaho, August 12-14. We urged our Associates to join us. Hopefully, the NSA will send out word that Associates are invited to our Reunions. We also learned there is an informal Smokejumper Reunion in Thompson Falls in July of this year, sort of a come and go affair to get together and discuss the National Reunion next year in Boise.



Gary Lawley with his son, Jay.; We are sure you can identify who is who. It is great to have father and son on projects.



*“38 Special”
Our neighboring mule.*