



NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM (TRAMPS)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

Contents

Volunteers of the Year.....	2
NSA Smith River Project	4
Nichols Creek Connector Trail	7
Madison Ranger District Fencing Project	9
Reservoir Lake Campground	12
Chalis Beaver Creek Trail Maintenance	15
Lochsa Ranger Station	18
Magruder Ridge – Year Three	20
Yellowstone River Area Projects	25

Base Abbreviations

Anchorage.....	ANC
Boise	NIFC
Cave Junction.....	CJ
Fairbanks.....	FBX
Grangeville.....	GAG
Idaho City	IDC
La Grande	LGD
McCall	MYC
Missoula.....	MSO
Redding.....	RDD
Redmond.....	RAC
West Yellowstone	WYS
Winthrop	NCSB

This was our 24th year of operation. TRAMPS contributed nearly 2,500 volunteer hours on six trails and building projects, an educational program, and cleared trash and debris from the Yellowstone River and nearby campgrounds in Billings, MT. Projects were in Montana, Idaho, and California.

The National Smokejumper Association is a non-profit charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code. Non-reimbursable expenses may be deductible on Federal and State Income Tax Returns. 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 edited and formatted by Bob (Spider) Smee (MSO '68)

TRAMPS VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2023

Annually, the TRAMPS program has recognized a Volunteer of the Year (VOY) for the last 20 years, except for the last three. For one of those, we didn't have a program due to COVID. So, it is catch-up time. This year we are recognizing two, very deserving VOY's who have been with TRAMPS for over ten years. They have not only been squad leaders, but are our crosscut and chain saw certifiers, keeping their certifying credentials up to date with the Forest Service. They are also members of our TRAMPS home team keeping storage units, camp supplies, tools, propane, chain saws, first aid kits, etc. stocked and in good working condition. Unbeknown to probably all of us, they were Missoula rookie bros in 1975. Neither of these guys are the kind who blow or toot their horns, so if you want to learn more of their stories, you'll need to share a brew with them around the campfire and start asking questions. Testament to their dedication to TRAMPS is reading the project summaries in this report and the projects they volunteered on this summer. Their pictures are included in project reports below.

Dick Hulla –(MSO '75)

Dick Hulla is proud to say that he was born in the Missoula Library! Does this explain his extensive knowledge of worldly events? When pressed, he sheepishly says “well, it was actually in the Missoula Hospital but that was when the hospital sits where we presently check out our library books.” Dick is truly a Missoulian, graduating from Hellgate High School in 1969, the first class to attend all four years after Missoula County High School split into Hellgate and Sentinel.

In August 1969, Dick accepted his first Forest Service job at Moose Creek Ranger Station as a fire control aid. Returning for the 1970 and '71 seasons, he was a member of one of the two, two-man backpack trails crews on the District. Those were the days when much of the District was patrolled, trails maintained, and fires put out with two-man crews wondering around thousands of forested acres. In 1972, he was assigned to be the first ever River Ranger on the Selway River, doing that job for two seasons. In 1974, his interest took him back to working on trails, working on the Slate Creek Ranger District, Nex Perce National Forest.

In 1975, his world took a life changing turn when he rookied out of Missoula with, as he explains, “the best jump class ever!” (How many of us have heard that story before, but with a different year or perhaps jump base?) Dick transferred to Grangeville (you will have to ask him why) and while there, he met his future wife, Kim where they both worked. (Ask Kim and she will give you many reasons why Grangeville is the “center of the universe.”)

While smokejumping every summer and ski patrolling at Sun Valley, ID in the winter, Dick pursued his commercial pilot's license and became a pilot in 1995 on the DC-3, flying smokejumpers out of Missoula. It took him 21 years to figure out how to stay on the plane. In 2006, Dick became the Supervisory Pilot flying Sherpas in addition to the DC-3, retiring in 2008. Dick says the “Doug” was the “best jump plane on God's green earth.” You will be hard-pressed to find anyone to disagree with him.

Love of the outdoors, jumper comradery, and his love affair with saws, led him to join TRAMPS right out of retirement. He enjoyed taking his horses, Happy and Teekum on several projects.

Jeff Kinderman – (MSO '75)

Jeff was born in 1949 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, growing up but where else in Wisconsin – on a dairy farm! After graduating from high school in Eau Claire at the age of 17, he enlisted in the Marine Corps for the start of a four-year commitment which included a tour in Vietnam.

At the end of his Marine Corps commitment, Jeff attended the University of Wisconsin, at their Eau Claire campus. While attending college, he was contemplating and discussing jobs with a cousin who told him about government jobs posted on the campus bulletin board. His application led to his first Forest Service job which was on the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont supervising 14 Young Adult Conservation Corps female crew members working on campground maintenance projects.

College and temporary assignments led him to working as a fire crew in the Willamette National Forest in 1974. Seeing smokejumpers in action that summer didn't take any convincing for him to see what his next job would be. In 1975, Jeff started his smokejumping career. For the next 31 years he was a Missoula smokejumper occupying every position at the base, if not on a full-time basis, in an acting role. He was instrumental in training, coaching, and certifying hundreds of jumpers for a multitude of positions. Safety was always a primary concern in his teaching. In addition, he made over 500 jumps. You will have to ask him for the total, including how many on fires.

Jeff's wife, Kathy feels it is his German heritage and midwestern upbringing that formed his sensible and practical approach to whatever is needed and asked of him. This includes his willingness to volunteer and help whenever needed and the best thing about that is that it also brings him fulfillment. Most of us have also met Kathy, another volunteer who is the cook on many of our projects! For example, on the Reservoir Lake Campground project this summer. Thanks, Kathy.

NSA Smith River Project, Montana

May 12 – 18, 2023

By Jim Lee (MSO '77)

After several years of cajoling, pleading, and general pestering, **Kim Maynard (MSO 82)** was able to convince the Forest Service and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks that an NSA trail crew was what they needed on Smith River hiking trails. None of the trails had been scouted for over six years so the FS had little knowledge of their conditions and welcomed some willing hands. The Smith River is the only permitted river in Montana and it is increasingly hard to get a permit. So the possibility of combining trail work with rafting and kayaking this stunningly beautiful river was a way in. And it worked. Luckily, our crew had the three required skills: chainsaw and trail work, river running, and knowledge of the Smith River specifically. It was an ideal proposition.

Originally planned for 2022, the mission was scrubbed for lack of water in the Smith River. Resurrected for 2023, the project was nearly scrapped this time because of *too much* water. But with a timely reduction in flow (from nearly 5,000 cfs to a more manageable 1,500 cfs), our veteran group of rafters were given the green light. Still, we were looking at a mighty fast-moving river.

In kayaks, squad boss Kim Maynard and **Billy Thomas (MSO 75)** did recon ahead of the four rafts, as the landings in high water were sketchy as hell and required some planning and finesse. Raft captains were **Dick Hulla (MSO 75)**, **Dan Pierson (Boise 74)**, **George Johnson (MSO 77)**, and **Jeff Nerison (MCL 77)**. They proved over and over they knew what they were doing. The rest of the crew consisted of **Jim Lee (MSO 77)**, **Kathleen Nerison** (Jeff's wife, NSA member, and Associate cook), **Julie Jones** (Associate cook), and **Dean Jones** (Associate). Losing one chef and one sawyer at the last minute, Kathleen had recruited her friend Julie late in the game to help cook. Then Julie's husband Dean jumped in to help carry heavy things and, well, work the trails, and tell lies around the campfire. Both Joneses proved to be fine companions and workmates.



Kathleen and Julie did a great job cooking for the crew, and as anyone who has rafted can attest, the cooks have the most challenging job. Making and breaking camp most days is a tough time to provide tasty and nutritious meals. These women delivered in spades. Like most trail projects, many of us came home weighing more than when we left.

The crew met in White Sulphur Springs, Montana on May 12, camping at Conestoga Campground. It rained. Everybody enjoyed an evening on the town. More rain. The next morning started out okay but devolved into rain as we readied the boats for a put-in at Camp Baker. After meeting with Bob Gliko, Forest Service Trails, we signed all the needed documents and got on the water about 11:30 am.

The first night we camped at Scotty Allen Campground, a 12-mile float. In seriously fast water, we were there in no time. The weather held pretty well, and the scenery is what you would expect from Montana's premier "permitted" river. If you are okay with stunning cliffscapes around every corner, this trip is for you.



We broke camp early on the 14th, pleasantly surprised to be dry. The float to Sunset Cliff Campground was nearly 12 more miles. Luckily, we found a suitable eddy upstream because we had to wait for the previous night's tenants to depart. A good reason to have the kayaks scouting ahead with radio communication to the waiting rafts. We were able to stage successful landings at a pretty tricky tie up.



After setting up camp, we began trail work on trail #331. Kim and Jeff did a good job getting ahead of the crew, reconning the trail, and looking the project over. With no preview information on the trail conditions and needs, we took a guess at tools and loaded up with a few small chainsaws, one larger one, and a bunch of hand tools. The trail proved to be in relatively good shape, mostly overgrown with re-prod and juniper bushes with some downfall. But the gain in elevation from river bottom up was a kicker. It can be best described as steep. Over 1500 feet in less than two miles. We got a good start on clearing logs, brushing, and overall improvement. By the end of the next day, the crew had completed the work up to the junction with trail #310, which starts at Bear Gulch Campground on the river below.

On the 16th, we broke camp at Sunset Cliff and floated just a little over 5 miles to Bear Gulch, set up camp, and started work on trail #310 from the bottom. We made some improvements working from the river trailhead to a meadow above, until the tread simply disappeared across the meadow. Kim, Dick, Jeff, and Dan continued casting about with maps and GPS for the trail. Eventually they think they found the continuation of the original trail about three quarters of a mile away on the other side of the meadow. They took some lat/longs for the FS trail folks or for next year's trail project.

The weather continued to hold pretty well and with only occasional squalls, we broke camp on the 17th and floated nearly 15 miles to a semi-flooded Staigmiller Campground. The boat tie-up posts were underwater and there was a river channel between the camp and the latrine. Dan Pierson has a nice photo of Kim kayaking back from the latrine. Other than kayaker Billy Thomas, the rest of us decided to wade over to relieve ourselves.



The 18th dawned clear and dewy and after breaking camp for the last time, we launched for Eden Bridge and the takeout. After about 13 miles we were glad to see the vehicles had been safely delivered and the boats were soon unloaded of gear and loaded onto trailers.



Back row: George Johnson, Dean Jones, Dick Hulla, Jim Lee, Jeff Nerison.
Front row: Bill Thomas, Kathleen Nerison, Julie Kieckbusch Jones, Kim Maynard, Bob Gliko, USFS

As is common on all trail projects, problems were overcome, adversity reduced by a common goal, friendships begun, relationships strengthened, and that special bonding that spans decades relished. My thanks for being included with a shout out to the cooks and TRAMPS, and especially to Kim for a great adventure.

Nichols Creek Connector Trail

Beartooth Ranger District, Custer-Gallatin National Forest

By **Jack Sterling, (MSO '66)**

Sunday June 4, 2023, saw a four-member team from the Greater Yellowstone Smokejumper Group commence the completion of the Nichols Creek Connector Trail. The team consisted of **Jack Sterling** (MSO'66), Squad Leader and primary camp cook, **Dan Debar** (Associate), **Scott Bates** (MYC'69), and **Chuck Hull** (MSO'67).

The team met with the **Allie Wood**, Beartooth District Trails Foreperson on Sunday at the Ranger Station. After discussing the project, Allie led the team to the trail site and explained the work that was to be accomplished. While most of us have done trail work in the past, this project was somewhat different. Rather than being in a remote rugged area, it was to be constructed near the Red Lodge Ski Area, and relatively close to the town of Red Lodge, Montana. Work on the trail had already been started by the District Trail Crew. We constructed the middle portion of the trail according to expanded standards, given the location near the Ski Area and the town of Red Lodge. Fairly heavy use is expected for hikers, mountain bikers and others, so the trail was built to accommodate this type of traffic. Several mountain bikers, hikers, and their dogs stopped and expressed their appreciation for the work we were doing. One of the dogs tried to make off with Scott Bates' lunch!



Chuck Hull,
Jack Sterling,
Dan DeBar, &
Scott Bates

Rainy weather during the week added to the overall experience. At times it was a challenge to do the work as well as keep a dry camp at the Palisades Campground. Storms showed up every afternoon with major thunder and lightning. Due to the lightning in the area the team was occasionally pulled off the mountain for safety reasons. Since the Squad Leader could not always hear the approaching thunder, it was mentioned that a team member might "hear" thunder early in the day, resulting in a work break. That idea was not implemented!!

Overall, this was a fun project. The original project was to include clearing burned timber at another site which was in a rugged area and at higher elevation. Given the weather forecast, that project was not feasible. We agreed that the change was a good decision.



Scott Bates



Chuck Hall



Jack Sterling



Dan DeBar

Madison Ranger District Fencing Project

Beaverhead/Deerlodge NF

September 11-15, 2023

By Richard Trinity, Squad Leader

NSA Volunteers: Mary Ferguson-Pope (Cook), Dick Hulla (MSO 75),

Wendy Kamm (MSO 82), Bill Kolar (MSO 59), Jim Lee (MSO 77),

Bill Werhane (MSO 66), Richard Trinity (MSO 66)

Madison District Workers: Chris Hericks (Rec Spec), Tony Stream (Trail Spec), Grady Spencer (Wilderness ranger), Kelly Koch, Tait Olson, & Jacob Atkins

As it happened, we met at the Ennis Cafe for lunch at the smallest round table that could accommodate six people. Jack Atkins was scheduled for the project but came down with the COVID and stayed home. Nonetheless he showed up in Ennis with a container of Jack's Chocolate Addition for the crew. Bill Werhane wheeled in later at the Bear Creek Guard Station/bunkhouse and campground, which was base camp for the project. The bunkhouse had all utilities and functioned as the kitchen. Housing was adjacent including 4 tents, a pickup bed, medium sized RV and small trailer. The campfire was in the tall grass near the kitchen. Eating was outside at a table or individually around the fire. One day it rained a little, so we pushed everything aside and ate a cozy supper in the kitchen. Otherwise, the weather was fine with temps of 40-80F and mild winds.

Chris and the district crew met us at camp the next morning and we drove to Miller's Flats trailhead parking lot (One hour drive). A towed, 8x16x4 foot gated trailer awaited us to begin filling it with 870 feet of old standing post/rail fence. The rails were sawed off next to the posts and loaded at the back of the trailer. The posts were sawed off at the ground level, although many were rotten and could just be pushed over or pulled out of the ground. These were cut in two (for handling) and loaded into the front of the trailer beyond the loaded rails. At first everyone could load pieces individually. But soon someone had to get up into the trailer and carry the post pieces from the back of the trailer to the front. After a while the pole load rose higher and footing was tricky carrying the heavier post pieces forward. Finally, someone had to be on top of the whole load to help pull in the poles at the back. Eventually the divided post pieces had to be handed up over the side of the trailer at the front. Of course, the last 200 feet of fence was downhill towards the creek. Walking back up with fence pieces slowed considerably. We finished late after lunch tired. But the outhouse still had a 20x30 old fence that needed to be torn down and replaced with a jackleg one. After a brief negotiation we suggested and agreed to stay and work as long as it was needed to finish rather than spend another two hours driving the next day to return and finish what was left. So, we did. And the trailer was brimming full. Got back a little late but didn't miss a good supper time.

The next day we drove to Indian Creek trailhead where an enclosure area with 590 feet of dilapidated jackleg fence needed to be taken down and replaced. Tony Stream took over directing the work which included the use of an excavator to distribute material (jacklegs and cross rails) along the path of the fence line. This was easy at first since the corral was ground level and mostly, we just carried it from the stockpile to the nearby construction site. But then the fence went up the hill 10- 15 feet higher. The machine helped move material up to the fence line. A trailer crew again picked up the old, sawed fence pieces. The other part of the crew began constructing a new replacement jackleg fence. Heavy posts were required to hang a replacement 10-foot hinged gate. The excavator dug the holes needed. We came back the next day to finish the simultaneous tearing down with new construction of a jackleg fence using two crews working in tandem. It was interesting to step back once in a while and watch the usual five-step construction sequence with different people rotating through and no delay in the progress. We also dug up the large information sign and replanted it on the other end of the parking lot near the entrance. Used the excavator to dig post holes.

Then the next two days involved tearing down and replacing a 150-foot post/rail fence horse corral and re-hanging two gates at (home base) Bear Cr. campground. Seemed like Deja vu all over again. By now Jim Lee and Tony Stream were alternating excavator activities as Jim was an experienced retired electric “lineman for the county” and excavator operator. This relieved Tony to do other things that needed not be done without slowing work progress. It was interesting to watch them each dig and fill new postholes (with new posts).

Then it was steak night with Chris and his wife Ella, Tony, and Grady as guests for supper. Mary was in fine form again as our camp cook and delivered another delicious meal for us all. Mary’s son and daughter-in-law were both smokejumpers. Dick and Mary had worked together as USFS employees years ago in the Bob Marshall wilderness. Good stories, conversation and a few cigars were had until dark each night. We gave a farewell toast with *Gordons Gin* to Gordon Ash who had been our cook last year and long-term friend of smokejumpers but passed on this last summer.



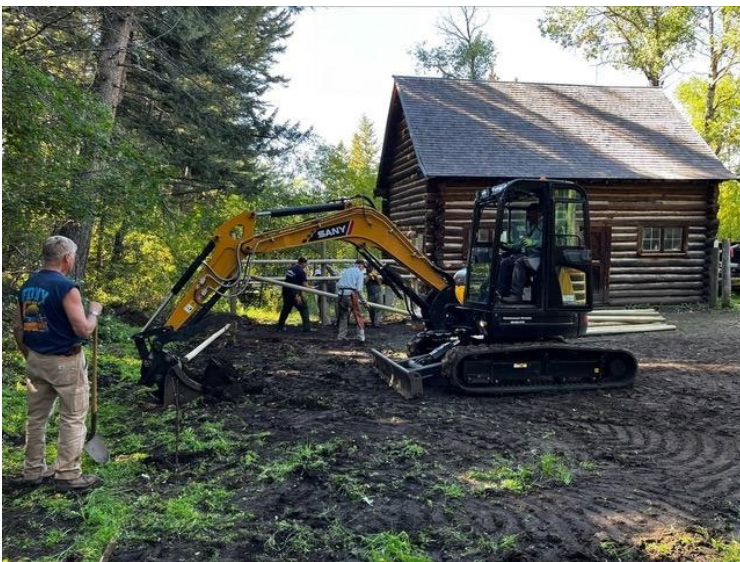
L to R eating Mary
Ferguson-Pope’s
cooking:

Jim Lee,
Wendy Kamm,
Dick Hulla,
Richard Trinity,
Bill Kolar, &
Bill Werhane

Mary Ferguson-Pope --
our Chief Cook -- and
only cook!



Madison RD Fencing crew.



Jim Lee & the excavator
in the horse corral.

RESERVOIR LAKE CAMPGROUND “REFURBISHING”

Dillon Ranger District—Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF

August 14-18, 2023

by Richard Trinity, Squad Leader

NSA Volunteers: Jeff (MSO 75) & Kathy Kinderman (cook), Bill Kolar (MSO 59), Rod McIver (MSO 64), Mike Pepione (MSO 82), Jim Scofield (MSO 66), Richard Trinity (MSO 66), Willie (the dog) 2021

Dillon RD workers: Adam Norlander (Rec Spec, project supervisor), Andrew Schick, Mia Thorne, Nate Owen, Jared Clemens, Kendall Schraffe. Matt Schlepp, John Polites, Tommy Torell

And so it was that they came over Lemhi Pass, Lost Trail Pass, US 212 from Iowa, Victor, Kalispell, Hamilton, Dillon and Bozeman and Oregon to volunteer for the project, meeting first at Sparky’s Restaurant for a noon meal on Sunday in Dillon. Jack Atkins was originally signed up but had to withdraw for some urgent family issues and could not attend the project. Nonetheless he stopped in at Sparky’s to deliver a container of Jack’s Chocolate Addition for the crew and then returned home to Bozeman. Thanks again, Jack.

We arrived late afternoon at Bloody Dick Cabin, our base camp for the week, half a mile from the campground entrance and after driving 55 miles on progressively deteriorating roads. Some of us drove through the campground first just to see what it looked like as we had been there before on a previous project. The cabin was used for the kitchen and had running water, electricity and a gas stove. We set up tents nearby, though two had brought small campers and one slept his pickup bed. Several of us heard/felt night visitors walking around, but no intrusions.

Kathy was our cook, and we were fortunate to have her. Meals were always nutritious and tasty. Of course, Jeff was recruited to be cook’s helper plus early morning campfire starter. Wood splitting and dish washing duties were shared by others.

We met Adam Norlander (Rec. Spec) and his district crew the next morning at the Reservoir Lake campground. They immediately began working on construction of a new 30-foot stairway from the edge of the parking lot down a steep hill to the group campsite. This consisted not only of steps but framework to contain gravel fill both to support and stabilize the stairway. We were initially assigned to paint the two large (9’) signs at the campground entrance. This required removing all the staples from and preserving the various smaller signs attached. So using available equipment of pocket knives, pliers and screwdrivers the attached signs were taken down and the mother signs painted using rollers and brushes and brown USFS paint. As no ladders were immediately available we used our pickups to back up to the signs in order to reach their tops. The aforementioned smaller mall signs were reattached the next day.

About the same time, district sanders began work on the cement foundation/wood topped picnic tables and benches in preparation for their painting (only the wood). Completing the entrance sign painting we moved back to the parking lot from which the stairway was being built. With district crew members we began constructing about 150 feet of post and rail fence along the parking lot adjacent to the staircase to close off multiple social trails down the hill from the parking lot to the group campsite. This required manual post hole digging which was fairly slow because of the rocky ground. We traded off using picks and shovels in an assembly line action. Long self-tapping screws were used to attach the rails using impact drills. At some point several of us split off and started painting tables/benches while the fence and staircase activity continued. Twenty tables/benches of various sizes were painted over the next two days. District people also helped.

Finally, the last two days were largely spent distributing and spreading gravel around all the 16 campsites, bear boxes, bathroom paths, water spigots and two outhouses. Adam Norlander (Dillon RD Rec Spec) used a racing “Bobcat” to deliver/distribute 50 yards of gravel from three piles dumped off, prior to the project, at one end of the campground and parking lot. He reported his best cycle of delivery was about 3 minutes. Almost everyone was involved spreading the gravel with shovels and rakes and feet. We were fortunate that all levels of the District crew were capable workers good to work with. We enjoyed working together.

One day Recreation Director Gail Plovanic and Jaime Trivette (Dillon RD Partnership Coordinator) drove out to the Campground to see the work in progress and do some informal interviews. (By chance we were doing our morning group calisthenics when they drove in!)

Meanwhile back at the campsite, the handrail down the steps at the cabin was wobbly and insecure. Unfortunately, no replacement material was immediately available. So, we brought back several long self-tapping screws from the work area and stabilized it satisfactorily in the meantime. Since the work campground was so close, we drove home for lunch. Breakfast and evening meals were taken individually to sit around the campfire talking. One night we made a list of the things we had learned as smokejumpers that carried on to the rest of our lives. The weather was nice with 80’s during the day and high 30’s low 40’s in the morning (easy to see our breath) and at 7K+ elevation. No rain.

Then it turned out Rod’s car had a dead battery or alternator and faced the issue of an expensive tow job. Fortunately, his son-in-law visited one day and offered family help. However, Jeff diagnosed a bad negative post battery connection and fixed it with screw. Willie was nice to have around and became everyone’s friend—especially around mealtime. Steak night came and went, and we packed up and left by noon the next day. Adam said he will have us back next year if we wanted to volunteer again. The district gave each of us a handsome coffee mug and a B-D Forest bandana.



Repainted and “spruced up” campground entrance sign.



Left to Right:
Jim Scofield
Mike Pepion
Richard Trinity
Jeff Kinderman
Bill Kolar
Rod McIver



Our cook: Kathy Elzig and her helper, Willie. Willie is also the watchdog, keeping the chipmunks out of camp. (His eye is on them – not the food!!!!)



New fence and graveled trail in the refurbished campground.

Chalis Beaver Creek Trail Maintenance

Salmon/Challis NF

July 19th - July 24th

By **Dan Roberson** (MSO-75)

This project was located on the Salmon/Challis National Forest along Highway 21 (Ponderosa Pine Scenic Byway) about 20 miles northeast of Stanley, Idaho. The campsite was located at Beaver Creek Campground on the southern edge of the **Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness (FCRNRW)**.

The project was arranged and supervised by Salmon/Challis NF Lead Wilderness Ranger **Jesse Lutz**. It was originally planned for a motorized/non-motorized trail in the Knapp-Loon area, but Jesse found a volunteer group with motorized resources for that trail system and switched us to a completely non-motorized trail system in the Beaver Creek drainage. The crew consisted of six experienced National Smokejumper Association retired smokejumpers and one cook. The crew included: **Billy Thomas** (MSO-75), **Kim Maynard** (MSO-82), **Larry Wright** (MSO-71), **Jeff Kinderman** (MSO-75), **Bill Werhane** (the C-man, MSO-66), **Dan Roberson** (MSO-75, squad leader) and **Steve Taylor** (cook, Great Falls).



Larry Wright, Steve Taylor, Jeff Kinderman, Billy Thomas, C-man, Kim Maynard



Briefing: Jesse Lutz, Dan Roberson, Jeff Kinderman, C-man

Wednesday, July 19th was spent driving to and setting up camp. **Jesse Lutz** joined us the morning of July 20th with a briefing and to get us started working Beaver Creek Trail #4021 just across the road from camp.

The crew worked the trail from July 20th through July 23rd. It became very hot, and the trail ran through mostly a burned-over area with very little shade. We had to be very wary of heat-related illnesses.

Steve did a great job of planning and cooking meals for us. We had appetizers and plenty of good food to eat morning and evening. We were fortunate to have him with us.



C-man on the single buck

**Kim Maynard,
Jeff Kinderman,
Billy Thomas and
Larry Wright on the
misery whip**



A big part of the job was hiking back up to where we had stopped work the day before. Working in the heat without shade required us to carry a lot of water. Because the entire trail was within the FCRNRW only non-motorized hand tools could be used. Water bar maintenance and brushing occurred along 5.2 miles of trail. Limbs and 148 logs were cut and removed from the trail.



**An example of some of the
before/after work done
along the Beaver Creek
Trail**





**Larry Wright, Billy Thomas, C-man, Dan Roberson, and Kim Maynard
returning to camp on the last day of trail work**

We finished our assigned work a day early and broke camp on the morning of July 24th. Congratulations to the crew for a job well done and completing the trail work without significant injury.

Lochsa Ranger Station

Teaching Grangeville and Clearwater Students about Fire Fighting
by **Barry Hicks** (MSO '64)

On September 12, **Mike Oliver** (Associate), **Willis Curdy** (MSO '71), and I spent the day at Lochsa Ranger Station, Clearwater NF teaching and demonstrating over 100 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade Grangeville & Clearwater, Idaho students, the principles of wildland fire fighting. The students were fitted with smokejumper suits, and they had an opportunity to handle parachutes and fire tools, while answering many questions.



Students eagerly unloading and walking to their best classroom all summer.



The best classroom ever!

And the best teachers too!!

Mike explaining the principles of the "fire triangle" as gets questions:

"Why all these zippers?"

"Where's my helmet."

"Where does this strap go?"

Mike doesn't get one question about the fire triangle. (Better revise your lesson plan.)



Willis Curdy – the veteran teacher (and politician) managing the classroom and keeping student’s attention!

A plethora of questions:

“Isn’t this shirt too big?”

“Why is my shirt yellow?”

“Why the hard hat?”

“Why are parachutes red?”

“Why does this axe broken with a crooked blade?”

Magruder Ridge Project – Year Three

July 7-13, 2023

By **Jeff Nerison** (MYC 77)

This was the third year of a project initially put together by **Bob Whaley** (MSO '56) and implemented by **Dick Hulla** (MSO '75) to clear the 7.3 miles of trail in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness from a point on the Magruder Corridor road near Observation Point, down Magruder Ridge to the Magruder Massacre site and on down to the Selway River. As it was a wilderness project, primitive tools were required for all work. The first two years of the project got the steep trail from the Selway to the sign denoting the Massacre site cleared, as well as a mile of the trail leaving the corridor on top. The ridge itself is almost entirely in an old burn, so the downfall is thick and recurring. Crewmembers had scouted the ridge in 2022 down to about the 4-mile point from the upper trailhead. The objective for the 2023 crew was to clean up the 1.1-mile section done last year, work the scouted ridge, and try to complete the unknown and un-scouted portion of the trail down to the massacre site sign.

The size of the crew signed up was initially large due to the difficulty of the project. With the average age of our trail worker well north of 70, health issues began to take a toll early, and by the time we met at our camp at Observation Point, we were down three, and after the first day of work, we were down two more. I was not initially signed up for the crew but agreed to fill in for one of the members with a health issue. The crew that met at our camp on Observation Point on July 7th consisted of **Dick Hulla** (MSO'75), **James Haynes** (MSO'82), **Joe Kroeber** (MSO'62), **Larry Ukestad** (MSO'67), **Rodgers Wright** (MSO'91), **Steve Henry** (MSO'65) **Linda Hiatt** (Associate), **Geof Hochmuht** (GAC'73), **Joe Robinson** (Associate), **JB Stone** (MSO'56) **Jeff Nerison** (MYC'77), and our very talented cooking staff, **Linda and Larry Cooper**, and **Mark and Chris Imus**.

The cooks had pulled trailers up the grade from the Selway – no small task and they had a very efficient and comfortable kitchen and camp set up by the time most of us got there.

Day one began with a substantial breakfast, some basic crosscut safety and handling from the guy that keeps them sharp, Dick Hulla, and a short shuttle down to the trailhead from camp. We divided up into three crosscut teams and began to work the portion of the trail worked the year before. Because it was in the middle of the twenty some year-old burn, there was plenty to do, but by turnaround time, the crew had made it to the top of Magruder Mountain which was the site of an old lookout. We cached our tools and made the hot three-mile hike back to the rigs. Carrying enough water to make it through the day was critical, as the ridge is bone dry. There was cold beer, great food and lots of firewood waiting for us back at camp so we soon recovered and felt pretty good about what we had accomplished. The guy in charge of all the trails in the Bitterroot NF, **Mark Smith**, joined us that evening.



Larry & Linda Cooper and Chris & Mark Imus – cooks extraordinaire!



Day two, Sunday. Hulla, who had scouted the ridge in 2022, and Mark Smith, the Bitterroot Trails guy, wanted to see the portion from the ridge down to the worked section up to the Magruder site. They hoped that the trail was in good enough shape to maybe work downhill and avoid the deadhead back each day. I agreed to accompany them, so we hiked with the crew to the tool cache, where they

started working and the scouting party started the down the relatively unknown four and a half miles to the Selway. With the aid of a digitized 1:24000 topo map on a GPS unit, and the trail highlighted on it, we were able to find remnants of the trail and old cutting. Mark flagged the course for the crew.

As it was getting late, and the realization the trail was not something that a crew of our size and resources could handle, we shifted our focus to getting down to the Selway, where Hiatt, Stone, Imus, and Cooper had shuttled a rig for us and Mark. We crossed two large flat spots where Mark was pretty sure that at one of which, the actual massacre had taken place. Magruder and his crew had 60 head of stock with him, and the site where the sign is, is a very small promontory. The theory is that the sign was moved to discourage people from scavenging the original site. We made it down to the sign, snapped a few photos, and continued down the now familiar to Hulla, trail. It is a crazy steep trail, and kudos to the NSA members that worked it for the last two years. Unfortunately, there is already downfall on it, and a particularly large ponderosa managed to cross the trail in two places. We scuttled down to the Selway, put on our wading shoes, and waded the river. Also took some time to submerge. What a treat! We got into the rig and made the 15-mile trip back to camp. Smith spent the night at Magruder RS.



Smith in Ceanothus brush. Indian Ck. fire scar across the Selway is in the background.

The result of the scout was that it was clear that it would not be possible for us to finish the trail. The upside was that Mark Smith was with us and realized the size of the project. He didn't think anybody had been down that trail in 30 years. He was also very appreciative of what had already been accomplished and was very pleased with the opening of a very historic portion of the Nez Perce trail. He also suggested that we work the Flat Creek trail down to Little Clearwater; we had done all we could do on Magruder Ridge. We got back late, but not too late for dinner, and Linda reopened the hors d'oeuvres table just for us.



Hulla & Smith with the old sign at the Massacre site.

Meanwhile, the working crew had moved the finished trail more than a mile down the ridge, and at the end of two days, estimated the crew had sawed and removed more than 175 logs from the trail.

Day Three. Back to the ridge. With the crew reconstituted, we once again hiked the ridge trail, slogging up Magruder Mountain once more, to the tool cache and worked it, following the trail Mark Smith had flagged the day before. Hulla had been coordinating with **Krissy Ferriter**, the Volunteer Program Manager of the Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, and in the afternoon,

three members of that organization caught up with us to help with the trail. They were **Ian Harris**, Lead Wilderness Steward for the Bitterroot NF, **Hannah Richter** and **Reyna Rodriguez**, both Wilderness Ranger Fellows. These three skewed our average age way down and it was great to get a chance to work with them. Seemed like they were having a great summer working the trails in the SBFC Wilderness. Close to turn around time, a classic wilderness thunderstorm came across the ridge with lightning, and wind driven rain. It was relatively short lived, and by the time we had covered the five miles back to the rigs, it was hot again. This was to be our last day on Magruder Ridge as we were shifting our focus to the Flat Creek Trail.

Day four – Flat Creek Trail. We started at the same trailhead and hiked on our worked trail about a mile and a half, to where the Flat Creek Trail took off. There was moderate saw work, and the crew made it down the trail five miles, close to the Clearwater Crossing junction. We found flowing water on the west side of Magruder Mountain, and Haynes found remnants of an old trail on a spur ridge. We figured it was the water source for the old lookout.



Haynes, Hiatt, Hulla, & Wright on the ridge.

Thanks to our resident botanist, Linda Hiatt, I now know that this is an Elegant Cat Ear.



Day four – Flat Creek Trail. We started at the same trailhead and hiked on our worked trail about a mile and a half, to where the Flat Creek Trail took off. There was moderate saw work, and the crew made it down the trail five miles, close to the Clearwater Crossing junction. We found flowing water on the west side of Magruder Mountain, and Haynes found remnants of an old trail on a spur ridge. We figured it was the water source for the old lookout.

Day five – last day. We worked the same trail, but left the crosscuts, and just worked on brush clearing, and there was a lot. We knocked off a little early, as this was “visiting dignitary day.” Former crewmembers **Chuck Fricke** (MSO’61), **Gary Weyerman** (MSO’63), and **Jim Lee** (MSO’77) made the drive over Nez Perce Pass to join us for steak night at Observation Point and were ensconced in camp by the time we got back. The party was on! Dick had also arranged to have **Ivar Nelson** from the University of Idaho to join us and give an interesting presentation on the history of the traditional Southern Nez Perce trail, and the Magruder Massacre story, and the efforts to preserve it. Our thanks to Ivar and his wife for making the trip from the west over the corridor, for a very interesting presentation.



Haynes & Wright on Flat Creek Trail



Last day at the trailhead. Nerison, Haynes, Robinson, Wright, Hulla, & Stone.

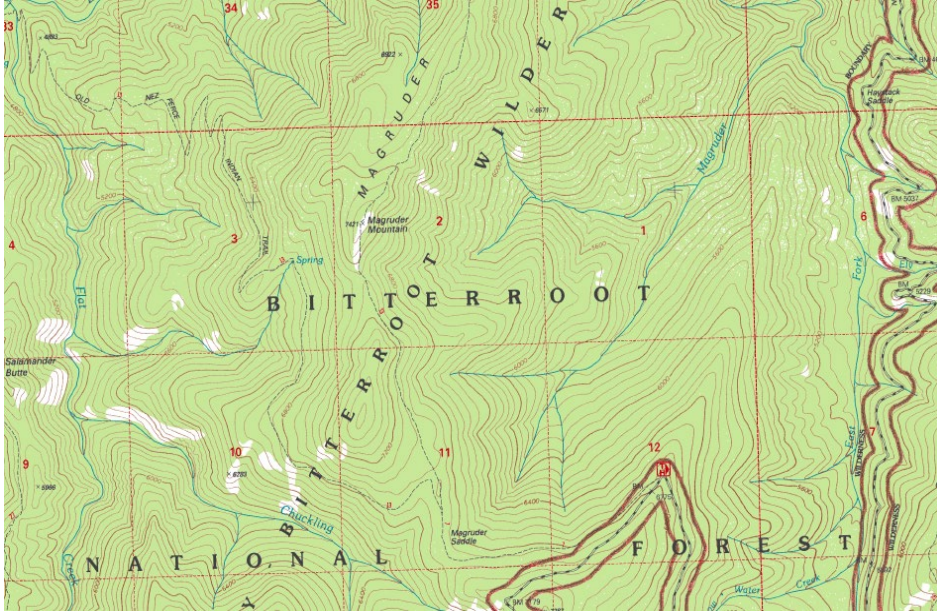


James Haynes, Linda Hiatt, Ian Harris & Joe Robinson

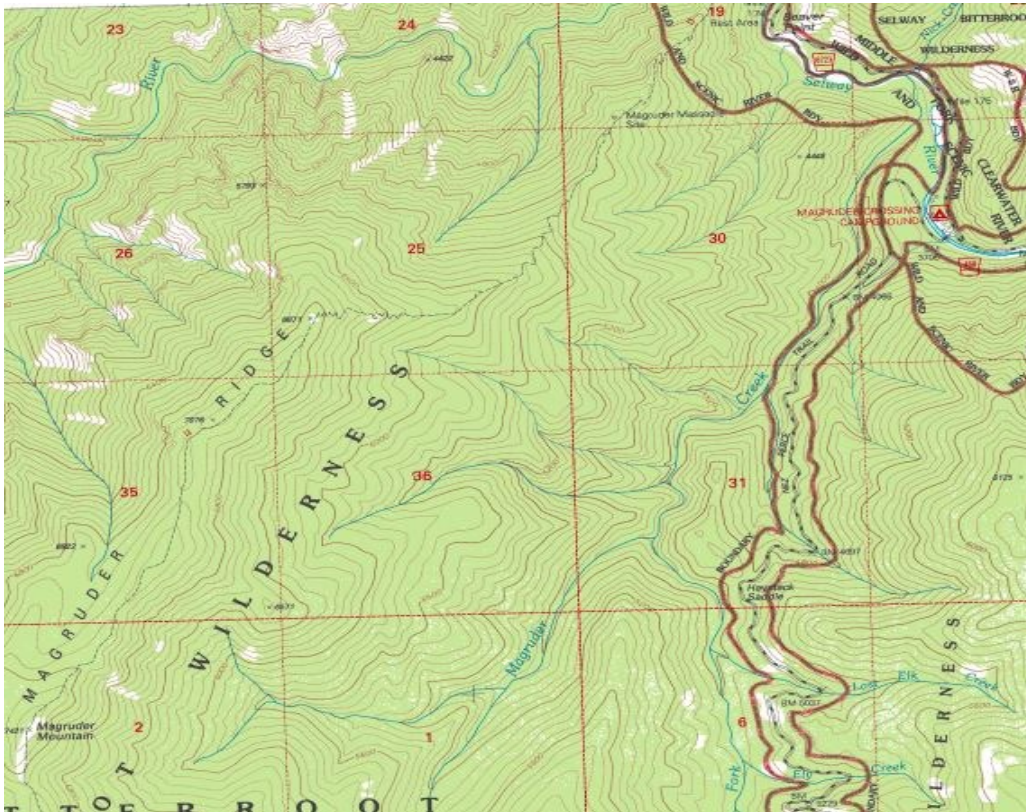


Jim Lee losing a bet to Reyna Rodriguez over who could eat a second steak.

Magruder, Year-Three came to a close with lots of stories, big laughs, great food, and a little top shelf booze. We had accomplished clearing nine miles of trail, most of which was through old burns, and we had hiked about 40 miles to do it. It was an amazing group of people and I feel very lucky for the chance to spend time with them on the trail and around the campfire. Thank you, fellow crewmembers, thank you cooks (especially the cooks) and a special thanks to Hulla for sticking with this project in the face of much adversity, and handling all the logistics. To quote Dick as he puffed his cigar, “Isn’t it great that we’re this old and still making memories”. Amen brother.



Magruder Ridge & Flat Creek Trails. On this map, the Flat Creek Trail is labeled “Old Nez Perce Indian Trail.”



Magruder Ridge trail and on down to the Selway River.

Yellowstone River Area Projects

By **Jack Sterling** (MSO'66)

January 7, 2023 – Burned Buckthorn and Russian Olive brush piles that had been cleared the previous summer and fall in Two Moon Park. Burning in the heart of the winter were **Mike Penfold** (MSO'58), **Bruce Morey** (MSO '67), **Auzie Blevins** (Associate), **John Pugrud** (Associate), and **Jack Sterling** (MSO '66) with the family of **Joe Sterling** (MSO'73) in attendance.



Burn, baby, burn!



Mike Penfold, Bruce Morey, Auzie Blevins, John Pugard, and Jack Sterling on a cold winter day on the banks of the Yellowstone River!



Joe Sterling, donning his oxygen mask, used his chain saw cutting olive trees ten days before he passed away on November 14, 2022.

For three more days in the months of February, March, and April we cleared and burned more Buckthorn and Russian Olive at Two Moon and Dover Parks. We teamed up with the members from the Yellowstone County Weed Control District and the Yellowstone River Parks Association for these projects. During mop-up discussions, we reminisced about several of us being together on the Trapper Peak Fire in August 1967. During the summer we teamed up with Yellowstone River Research Center to remove metal and trash from the Yellowstone River. Mike Penfold, Bruce Morey, Dan DeBar, Auzie Blevins and Jack Sterling helped with the cleanup and shuttling boats and vehicles for the cleanup. For the year, 50,422 pounds were collected. Recycled metal was 19,020 pounds. Most of the trash was tires collected from the river. The NSA logo was on the t-shirts handed out for the people working on the Annual Community Float the second Saturday of September.

We made numerous trips on the river prior to the Annual Float cutting up car parts so they could be loaded into boats, canoes, kayaks etc.



Drift boat loaded with junk instead of fish.

Members of the Annual Yellowstone River Cleanup



R
I
V
E
R

T
R
A
S
H



Volcano Adventure Camp by **Scott Warner** (RDD '69)

It was another busy year for the Volcano Adventure Park at the Lassen National Park in 2023.

In May, there were 10 of us from the TRAMPS program, contributing a total of 26 volunteer days from May 15 through the 19th. With the help of the Lassen Park Maintenance crew, we set up 14 large heavy 14' by 16' by 12' tents and 112 cots.

From October 3 through the 7th there were 6 of us in the camp takedown mode, removing the tents and cots and storing them till next spring.

The Volcano Adventure Park program is managed for youth groups. It introduces youth, from the ages of 6 to 18 years of age, to the joys of camping in a national park. Campers experience mountain ecosystems, discovering their connection to the complex web of life. They learn how volcanoes are formed and the four main types of volcanoes found in the park. They are introduced to wildlife observing the life of a pika, including its life cycle, habitat, and traits. They also learn about the “leave not trace” camping system.

Is fire a friend or a foe – is learned through guided tours of the local ecosystems. Also taught, using local resources, is human history from the period of ancient Indigenous Tribes to the more recent Nobles Emigrant Trail.