



TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012



NSA Trails Program Volunteer of the Year Johnson's Corner Stan Linnertz (MSO 61)

Johnson's Corner is a world-famous, full service truck stop just off I-25, south of Fort Collins, CO. They have not closed their doors since they opened in 1952 and "Travel & Leisure Magazine" named them one of the ten best breakfast spots in the world.



L-R: Stan Linnertz, Chuck (chef), Chauncey & Christy Taylor (Owners), Bob (Menu guy).

They started participating in the Smokejumper Trail Program 5 years ago with a \$500 donation. They now contribute "meals on wheels" in the form of a company vehicle and a fabulous chef to two NSA trail crew projects in each of the last two years. Chuck, the chef, has even become an associate NSA member, as well as a fence and gate builder.

Bob Reichelderfer, the menu planner and designer and Chris Harder, the Bakery head guy, have embraced the trail program. Along with Johnson's Corner owners Chauncey and Christy Taylor, Johnson's Corner has made a strong commitment to the NSA Trail Program with their

vision of contributing to the tomorrows of our forest and wilderness for all people.

They sponsor an annual "Smokejumper Trail Day" that has raised close to \$3,000 over the last 2 years. Johnson's Corner's total contribution for the five years they have been involved in the program has amounted to approximately \$15,000. In recognition of their support, they were given the decorative cross-cut saw seen below.

Table of Contents

Volunteer of the Year	1
Others Who Helped us out	2
Logistics Report	2
Accomplishments Report	2
Tax Exempt Status	2
Art Jukkala Trail	3
Bear Creek	5
Bear Lake Trails	6
Blue Bend Rec. Area	7
USFS/BWCAW/WCB/GTHS Project	8
Snowbank Lake Trail	10
Dixie	12
Dry Gulch Trail	13
Challenge Cr. Cabin/Corral	15
Big Bill Cabin	16
Greenwood Cabin	18
Horse Butte Lookout	19
Huckleberry Lookout	20
Little Dead Elk	22
Mann Gulch—Phase One	24
Moore's Station	26
North Fork American River	27
North Fork Blackfoot Cabin	28
Priest River Experimental Station	30
Sawtooth Early Crew	33
A Gathering at the Sawtooth	35
Turkey Springs Guard Station	37
West Yellowstone	39
Note of Thanks	42

Edited and published by Steve Carlson
(IDC 62)

Others who helped us out

We would like to thank Left-Hand Brewery for their support of \$850 dollars, and for promoting the NSA and Trail Program with a series of keg tapping events that allowed us to create additional information about the Trail Program and the National Smokejumper Association. We will look forward to another Smokejumper beer in the next 24 months.

Also, Colorado Motor Carriers Association and executive Greg Fulton contributed \$200 to the Trail Crew Program and allowed Stan Linnertz paid time-off to participate in the program.

Logistics Report

Gary Weyerman (MSO '63)

This year ten projects, going to Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, were supported from Missoula included the food for 1,580 meals, cooking gear, and tools for crew sizes varying in number from 5 to 17. One crew went out in June and the other nine went out the last two weeks in July. Six were configured for pack-in projects and four for drive-to projects. The members and associates, who assisted in preparing everything so the crews were properly equipped, included Rod McIver, Chuck Fricke, Tom Blunn, Ron Larson, Wendell Beardsley, Jim Phillips, Dick Hulla, Jeff Kinderman, Ted Nyquest, and Bob Whaley. This year interior shelving, exterior painting, and gear organizing were the main improvements made to the new storage container. This was the first year to base the logistic operation from the container and it proved to be a very suitable arrangement. Each time going into the container we are reminded how fortunate it is to have such a nice storage facility.

Accomplishment Report

Fred Cooper (NCSB '62)

We had 23 projects on Forest Service units in nine different states. In addition, there were two projects on city/county property. Over 150 jumpers and associates contributed 175 volunteer work weeks (five days each). Also, many hours of administrative volunteer time was contributed for planning, managing finances,

logistical support, and operational support. Over \$250,000 in value of volunteer labor by the NSA Trails Program was contributed based on the Forest Service method for calculating volunteer services. A tremendous thank you goes to all who gave of their time to support our natural resources management program.

Tax Exemption Status of National Smokejumper Association

Fred Cooper (NCSB '62)

Keep in mind that the National Smokejumper Association is a non-profit charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Consequently, any non-reimbursed expenses incurred by NSA Trail Crew members may be deductible on your federal income 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.

Siskiyou Smokejumper Base (aka Cave Junction)

Although we did not receive a report from the Cave Junction Base restoration project, it was felt appropriate to recognize their efforts over the last couple of years. The base is being rebuilt to its original look and opened to the public as a museum where visitors can check out the loft, office, training area, etc. as it existed when the base was in use. For more information contact Gary Buck at joebuck@gmail.com. They have had at least one week long project every year. A search for "Siskiyou Smokejumper Base" will get you to a page about the details.

Editor's Note

Some project names changed after the sign up roster was made which led to some confusion as reports drifted in, and the confusion could continue as folks try to match the roster to names shown in the table of contents.

Maintaining the Art Jukkala Trail

Fred Cooper (NCSB '62)

Art Jukkala (MSO '56) created and launched the National Smokejumper Association (NSA) Trail Maintenance Program in 1999. He was a retiree of the Forest Service Technology and Development Center in Missoula. Art discovered that only 800 miles of trail in the Bob Marshall Wilderness was being maintained compared to nearly 4,000 miles in the 1930s. Trails are essential to nearly all aspects of national forest management in designated wilderness areas. Art asked "how can the Forest Service manage the forest and its resources if it cannot enter it to observe what needs to be managed?"

Art decided to do something about it and he recruited 18 veteran smokejumpers as volunteers and partnered with the Bob Marshall Foundation in 1999 to identify two projects. Art led one of the projects and Jon McBride (MSO '54) led the other. Art died of a heart attack while on the project he was leading. The trail has been officially designated by the Forest Service as the Art Jukkala Trail.

It is Trail Number 401 on the Flathead National Forest, Seeley Lake Ranger District. (A Google search for "Art Jukkala Trail" will result in showing its location and the topography.)

The NSA Trails Program has volunteered to maintain the 6.76 mile Art Jukkala Trail. On October 8, 2012, ten volunteers performed maintenance work on the trail. The crew was a combination of jumpers and the Missoula-based weekly "Boys of Wednesday" (BOW) hiking group. The crew of ten split into two squads of five each with Squad One working the lower part of the trail and Squad Two the upper portion. Members of Squad One were Ivan Kays, (BOW), Jim Phillips (MSO '67), Dick Hulla (MSO '75), Gary Weyermann (MSO '63), and Fred Cooper (NCSB '62). Squad Two members were Ron Larsen (BOW), Joe Aquino (BOW), Wendell Beardsley (BOW), Roy Williams (MSO '60), and Vernon Maul (BOW). We had two members who were conspicuous by their absence. They were Roger Savage (MSO '57) and

Bob Whaley (MSO '56). Roger called the day before and claimed he had a major house water leak that he had to get repaired and Bob said he was still recuperating from a hernia operation that he said had to be repaired, as a result of being over worked on his Little Dead Elk project earlier in the summer.

The agreed on time for the two squads to meet back at Trixie's in Ovando was by 5:00 pm so we could be back in Missoula by six. Squad One got back to Trixie's before five, had a beer and left a message with the barkeeper that we had left for Missoula. Members of Squad One followed up to be sure the second squad got out OK and discovered that they got out so late that they ended up having dinner and an extra beer at Trixie's before heading back to town. It was reported that Roy and Joe lost track of time and kept going up the trail with the chain saw.

The two squads cleared nearly 100 down fall and leaners, performed lots of trail side clearing, and did some minor tread and water bar repair. It was reported that Squad Two also cleared a big portion of a hunter and guide service trail that went cross country to the upper portion of the Art Jukkala Trail. The hunters and guides should be very pleased!





Squad One L-R: Ivan Kays, Jim Phillips, Dick Hulla, Gary Weyermann, Fred Cooper.



Squad Two L-R: Ron Larsen, Joe Aquino, Wendell Beardsley, Roy Williams, Vernon Maul

Bear Creek

Mike Prezeau (MSO '67)

It was a heck of a good deal. Our task was to reroof a historic FS cabin on the Madison District of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. The cabin is located on Bear Creek, a few hundred yards from the boundary of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Area, near Sphinx Mountain. It was a drive in project. A good deal, of course, begins with a good crew, and we had one, beginning with Mike Oehlerich (MSO '60), the oldest crew member, but the one whose boundless energy set the tone throughout the week. Mike Jensen, an associate member, was a nailing machine. Jack Kirkendall (MSO '74), our youngest member, who joined us in between fire assignments as a member of overhead teams in Colorado and California, added another strong hammer and work ethic. Bill Hutcheson (MSO '74), provided excellent meals throughout the week, although he only added that duty to his regular shifts in the roof. The author's (MSO '67) primary contribution was to assemble this stellar crew and try to keep up.

It's difficult to have a good project without good support from the district, and we had that in spades. When we arrived on Sunday, we were greeted at the cabin by Ken Harris, the District Ranger, and Gene Hardin, resource specialist and our liaison with the district. We were glad to see that the scaffolding had already been erected for the first side and the materials delivered to the job site. There was a second cabin at the site that served as our base of operations, where we pitched our tents and ate. Throughout the week, Tim Aman, the district recreation technician, worked along side the crew on the roof and at the end of each day, Tim typically hauled away a pickup load of debris to the local dump.

The job required us to strip the old cedar shingles from the roof and replace them with new ones. The roof was relatively small (about 9 squares), but steeper than a cow's face (a 12' x 12 pitch). It required careful attention to scaffolding and safety lines as we worked our way up each side of the roof. The weather was largely favorable, although we were rained off the roof during the early afternoon of the second day. The weather was good the rest of the

week, although on the warm side during the afternoons. We started early most mornings, to take advantage of the cooler temperatures, but that didn't seem to affect the time we wrapped up each day. The crew was intent on finishing the job, and midway through the week, that looked like a touch and go proposition. As we moved to the second side, however, our pace picked up as our technique improved, and we were able to finish the roof, tear down the scaffolding, and clean up the job site by late afternoon Friday.

While we had to work hard to finish the project on time, there was plenty of time at the end of each day for a few beers, and even an opportunity for the fishermen among us to drive to the Madison River for some fishing, and for the golfers to drive to Ennis to thread our way through small bands of antelope as we hacked our way around the beautiful little course.

In sum, it was a great week. We worked hard and did a good job. We managed to scramble around the steep roof without incurring any injuries. We found time to recreate and drink a few beers. The chemistry of the crew and district interaction was outstanding, and a good time was had by all.



L to R: Jack Kirkendall (MSO, '74), Mike Jensen (Associate), Mike Oehlerich (MSO, '60), Tim Aman, (Madison River District), and Bill Hutcheson (MSO, '74).

Not pictured, Mike Prezeau (MSO, '67).

Bear Lake Trails Project

Tim Aldrich (MSO '62)

This year's project in the West Pioneer Area of the Wisdom, Dillon and Wise River Districts of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests brought together an amazingly efficient and productive crew composed of Phil Difani (MSO '67), Kim Maynard (MSO '82), Joe Chandler (MSO '71), Jeff Nerison (MYC '77), Jeff Kinderman (MSO '75), Dick Hulla (MSO '75), Bill Thomas (MSO '75), Rod McIver (MSO '64), Kathy Elzig (Assoc.), Nancy McIver (Assoc.) and Tim Aldrich (MSO '62) for a challenging and diverse array of tasks. Nate Gassman, who was the Forest's representative for the project, met us at the Wyman Creek Trailhead and provided an orientation, radios and maps. I note that Jeff Nerison created and provided a great project-area map using USGS Quads with contours and a scale that really facilitated locating trails, planning and scheduling our work. Thanks Jeff!!

Our campsite at Bear Lake included a small cabin that provided a place to secure our food and cooking gear and a retreat for Jeff and Kathy's puppy "Buster" who simply did not like or tolerate thunder. When it was not storming, Buster excelled as the night watchman and kept our members safe from marauding elk. The nearly seven mile hike to the Cabin through mature lodgepole stands and large gorgeous grass and flower filled mead-

ows got our blood flowing, our boots muddy and our conversations and expectations for a great week together totally fired up.

The project included all kinds of trail work including: reinstalling trail signs, clearing down-fall, cleaning drainage structures, building and extending log water bars, constructing an approach to a puncheon, leveling and replacing curb rails on a puncheon and more. Our instructions were to perform this work on system trails in a roughly 56 square mile area. I estimate we walked and worked on over 50 miles of trail. The trails radiated out from our campsite which was fortunate, but for most of the trails, there was no circuit that could be worked in one day, so there was a lot of backtracking miles and time.

This year, there were no evenings around the campfire due to fire restrictions, but this did not deter the sharing of great stories and having a fun reunion of sorts. Once again, we celebrated Kim Maynard's 29th birthday, yes I mean once again—she will most likely never allow herself to be older than 29. Nancy and Kathy, with able support from Dick Hulla, kept our bellies full and smiles on our faces. It was once again, a great week in the woods in a beautiful area with some of the best hard working and fun loving folks that walk this earth. We are in so many ways blessed. Bring on 2013!



L-R: Tim Aldrich, Kim Maynard, Rod McIver, Jeff Nerison, Joe Chandler, Phil Difani, Dick Hulla, and Jeff Kinderman.



L-R front: Joe Chandler, Bill Thomas, Phil Difani, L-R Back: Jeff Kinderman, Rod McIver

Blue Bend Recreation Area, Marlinton-White Sulphur District Monongahela National Forest

John R. McDaniel (CJ '57)

The project was composed of two distinct tasks: 1. Restructure and clear five miles of trail in the Big Draft Wilderness. This is a loop trail that follows Anthony Creek for about one mile and then switches back and becomes a fairly steep trail with multiple switch backs until it finally reaches the mountain summit where it widens out into a "road like" trail. The back side contains multiple switch backs and was overgrown with rhododendron.

Nevertheless, the trail was completed ahead of schedule to the praises of the Forest Service.

2. The second task was to re-floor a pavilion office. This building was constructed in 1930 by a CCC crew. The entire floor was removed revealing a cement base that had 2x2's inlaid at intervals within. These were removed (rotten) and replaced with new 2x2's.

This was followed with a new 5/8 particle board sub floor throughout and then a new oak, tongue and groove floor was laid over all.

Meals were provided at the Greenbrier Youth Camp on a cost share basis with the Forest Service. The crew camped at Blue Meadow Camp Ground within the Blue Bend Recreational Area.

There were twelve jumpers signed up for the project. Two had to leave early due to family emergencies and there was one no-show. Crew members included Steve Anderson (MSO '63), Denis Symes (MYC '63), Hank Brodersen (MSO '54), Rick Blackwood (CJ '79), Dan Mitchell (RAC '78), Bob Miller (MSO '61), John McDaniel (CJ '57), Allen Biller (FBX '82), Tom Oswald (MSO '58), and Jack Atkins (MSO '68).

There were no incidents or injuries during the project. We are invited to return next year.



USFS/BWCAW/WCB/GTHS Project Complex

By Jim Cherry (MSO '57)

Don't worry. I'm not going to leave you puzzling over the alphabet soup of abbreviations printed above. Just thought I'd start by having a little fun with something that usually leaves me frustrated when I have to make my way through the soup. So to begin...

Our MN (Minnesota) project was the last officially scheduled operation of the 2012 trails projects, taking place from September 2-8 in N.E. Minnesota's BWCAW (Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness). It truly was a complex of projects that involved a lot of cooperation between the four participating entities:

1. The GTHS (Gunflint Trail Historical Society) under the direction of Kathy Lande and with the scouting help of Jim Wiinanen, both local residents of the Grand Marais/Gunflint Trail area, put together a 2-day project of clearing a Gneiss/Blueberry Hill hiking trail on Federal land. This trail provides an excellent scenic view of Sea Gull and Saganaga Lakes and the channel that connects them. The trail is through the area consumed in the 2007 Ham Lake Fire and gives access to outstanding blueberry picking. It will provide a valuable history and ecology resource for visitors to the Chik-Wauk Museum that sits at the beginning point of the trail. The GTHS also provided us with funding for some of our food needs.
2. The USFS (US Forest Service – Gunflint Ranger District) under the direction of Tom Kaffine set us up with an extension of work we had done several years earlier when our crew built the Centennial Hiking Trail (also in the area of the 2007 Ham Lake Fire). This time Tom asked us to do a couple of extension spurs off of the Centennial Trail to open up access to some features of historical importance. We provided Tom with a crew for one day of work and, as per our reputation, we got the job done.
3. WCB (Wilderness Canoe Base) is located on Sea Gull Lake at the end of the Gunflint Trail and the camp provided us with meals and lodging as their in-kind contribution to the

work of the GTHS and the USFS in the trail development and in lieu of work that we would be doing for the camp. Will Tanner had a great list of projects set up for us to work on and I know he took me seriously when I had told him that often times our work output is underestimated. Will had more jobs listed than we were able to accomplish on this project.

4. Our Crew numbered 17 in total... a good mix of former jumpers and associates. (When funding sources are tight it takes some creativity and cooperation to get a project to function for the benefit of all.) Our crew was made up of Jim Cherry (MSO 57), Judy Cherry (Assoc.), Chuck Sheley (CJ 58), KG Sheley, John McDaniel (CJ 57), Marceil McDaniel, Dan Hensley (MSO 57), Gayle Hensley, Jack Atkins (MSO68), Elaine Atkins, John Culbertson (FBX 69), Kathy Culbertson, Richard Trinity (MSO 66), Jon Klingel (CJ 65), Don Havel (FBX 66), Bob Aldrich and Lisa Loncar. The spouses named above are all associates. Bob, an associate, is a former WCB staff member who answered my challenge to join us. Lisa, also an associate, is with the USFS and has joined on this project and also the June project in the Monongahela NF. This was an excellent crew... hard working, down-to-earth and fun-loving. As has become custom with the ladies, they disappear for a day of sightseeing and shopping. It happened this year, too, along with the 1000 piece community puzzle that everyone worked on at one time or another.

The weather was good to us... no mosquitoes to speak of, warm days filled with plenty of sunshine and cool nights for good sleeping. There was a chance for some canoeing and hiking and, of course, the happy hour between end of work and dinner. Conversations went well into the evening so flashlights were needed to make it back to the cabin assignments. Soothing, warm showers were also worked into personal schedules... a comfort to stiff joints and aging bones.

Here's a tally sheet of what was accomplished:

- 4.5 total miles of trail cleared or created along 3 trail systems and a sledding trail
- 0.2 miles of new trail created
- 0.1 mile of new sledding hill created
- 3 overlooks created
- 40+ trees dropped and bucked along trails
- 50+ trees bucked and cleared from trails
- 5 (40'-75'+) hazard trees overhanging trails dropped and bucked
- 7287 dirty pots and pans washed and kitchen drain cleared twice by kitchen "Super Crew" with Chuck Sheley providing "Sweep".
- 10 screen doors repaired

- Cabin deck repaired and steps replaced
- Volunteer assistance provided where needed to the GTHS Chik-Wauk Museum
- Cleaning and organizing of the WCB trail equipment building along with repair of canoe packs.
- Scraping off and repainting names on canoes (No, sorry gals, but it's not okay to change the canoe names by putting your names or my name on them. Nice try anyway.)

We are already making plans for next year's project with WCB/USFS/GTHS/BWCAW in September 2013. Consider joining us in the fellowship.



Front row, l to r: Richard Trinity, Lisa Loncar, KG Sheley, Kathy Culbertson
2nd row: Jack Atkins, Marceil McDaniel, Judy Cherry, Jim Cherry (standing)
3rd row: Elaine Atkins, Gayle Hensley, Jon Klingel
4th row: Chuck Sheley
5th row: Bob Aldrich, John Culbertson, Don Havel, John McDaniel, Dan Hensley



l to r. Aldrich, Hensley, Sheley, Sheley, Atkins, Cherry, McDaniel, Culbertson, Hensley, Culbertson, Klingel, Cherry

Snowbank Lake Trail Project – Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness

Scott Belknap (MYL 83)

The week of June 3–10 a hearty group of six former smokejumpers and a member's son filled canoes with gear and paddled to our base camp on the shores of Snowbank Lake. The project for the week was to attack the Snowbank Lake trail with crosscut saws and nippers for the Kawishawi Ranger District of the Superior National Forest.

Richard Trinity (MSO 67), Ron Baylor (MSO 58), Steve Henry (MSO 65), Tom Carlson (MSO 70), Jim Phillips (MSO 67), Scott Belknap (MYL 83) and Steve's son Greg Henry signed on for this unique trail project and came equipped with all the skills/certifications and fishing gear required. Kawishawi RD trails specialist Cory Mensen planned our project and provided motorized conveyance for our week of food and gear to camp.

A number of challenges tested the old smokejumper ingenuity and as expected...we adapted. One would not have thought with a monstrous lake below us that drinking water would be an issue. The location of the trail left us an insurmountable distance to the lake shore so we needed water purification pumps. I carry one in my camp pack and our crew thought ahead to include personal filters allowing us to split the crew and still be able to meet our water needs. The other unexpected kink was the record year for wood ticks. I am not exaggerating

that we pulled over a hundred ticks from our clothing daily. We looked like a band of baboons just back from a day of foraging as we stood in a circle with our pants dropped picking ticks off each other. All evening around the campfire ticks were pointed out crawling on each other. A few actually dug in and were subsequently tortured.

After our first day of work from camp we started using the canoes to ferry part of the crew to work up the trail from the opposite direction. As we completed more trail near our camp this tactic grew to a vigorous morning paddle to start each day. After dropping off half the crew the canoes were ferried to the end point. This approach worked well as we accomplished a lot of trail miles and turned on the uninitiated in the group to canoe travel in the BWCAW.

Meals were satisfying and a pleasurable respite from the day's work. Phillips wants a cook for next year and that idea will be given consideration. Another time slot will also be discussed to accommodate the hard core fisherman in the group. We only had Walleye for breakfast one morning. We were given a special treat from one of the local lodges to thank us for opening the trail to their favorite blue berry patch.



Richard Trinity, Ron Baylor, Steve Henry



Steve Henry, Scott Belknap, Richard Trinity, Jim Phillips



Ron Baylor, Richard Trinity, Scott Belknap,
Tom "Otto" Carlsen



Jim Phillips, Ron Baylor, Richard Trinity

The Dixie Project

Wild Bill Yensen (MCY '53)

On Sunday May 6 the troops came filtering into Pine Valley. Stan Linnertz and Chuck Orana were first to arrive. They brought all the food and the new stove and tableware that had been acquired during the winter. They came with all that stuff in a Johnsons Corner Truck Stop van from Colorado. Doug Wamsley and Jimmy Dollard also came from Colorado. All the rest but me came from Montana. Digger Daniels, Jim Phillips, Jack Atkins, Gary Baker, and our one Associate Member, who was an Air Force Fighter Pilot, Dave Tippett.

The first day Zack Gray lined us out and gave us the necessary safety talk. Jimmy and Digger started to build a gate out of poles. The rest of us went up a trail that goes into the Pine Valley Mountain Wilderness and we obliterated a section of the old trail because it had eroded and was unsafe for hikers. Several trees were dropped across the old trail and lots of rocks, logs, sticks, and brush were piled all over it to render it unusable.

The next day we got busy on the big project which was to replace the cattle guard railing, gates, and fence. We had to set a big cedar Post on each side in exactly the right spot for the cattle guard rails to rest on and the new gates to swing

from. It took four of our strongest guys to get those posts in. Jimmie and Digger created the cattle guard rails and they looked beautiful. By the end of the week we had that all done.

The last project was to build a five foot by seven foot sign out of two by sixes and put a bit of text on it. Jimmie, Digger and I went to work on that the last two days. We had to dowel the two by six redwood boards together and glue and clamp them. Once that was done we had to sand and trim the sign. Then I went to work putting the text and headings on it. I had to lay out the heading by hand and the text with stencils. I would have routed the letters if we had had more time but Zack said he would do the routing. That was the end of the work.

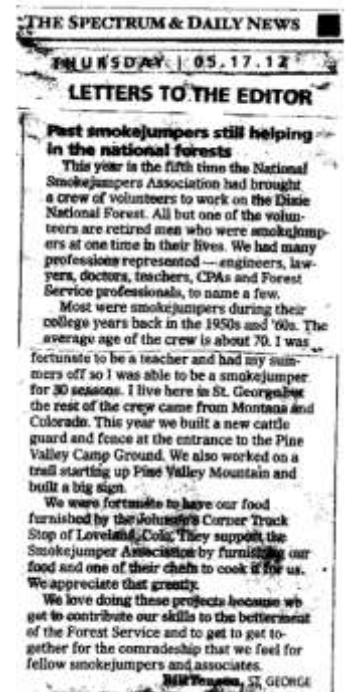
Needless to say, we ate like kings with Stan and Chuck doing the cooking of all that great food they brought from Johnsons Corner Truck Stop. They even paid Chuck's salary while he was there with us doing our cooking. Chuck came out and worked with us most of the time. He is a hard worker and a great chef.

On Saturday the 12th we all headed home. We all had a good time and we were very proud of the work we did and the Dixie Forest people definitely want us back next year.



Kneeling-Wild Bill Yensen(MYL53), Jim Phillips(MSO67), Dave Tippett(Associate), Jake B(Dixie FS) Standing-Digger Daniels(MSO61), Gary Baker(MSO67), Zack G(Dixie FS), Doug Wamsley(MSO65), Jack Atkins(MSO68), Jimmie Dollard(CJ52), Stan Linnertz(MSO61). Chuck Orana (Assoc)

Good press about the troops in the local paper.



Dry Gulch Trail/Sagebrush Lookout- Salmon/Challis NF

Perry Whittaker (MSO '71)

The project was located on the Salmon/Challis National Forest in the southern end of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness west of Salmon, Idaho. The trailhead is located at an elevation of approximately 3,445 feet in the SW¼, Section 28, T. 23 N., R. 18 E., B.M. along Panther Creek approximately three air miles south of the main Salmon River and east of the Middle Fork. The trail continues in a west-southwesterly direction approximately seven miles to Sagebrush Lookout at an elevation of 7,146 feet lying in the NW¼, Section 2, T. 22 N., R. 17 E., B.M. The upper parts of the trail work approached an estimated 7,800 feet elevation.

The project involved an estimated seven miles of trail maintenance from the trailhead for the Dry Gulch trail to Sagebrush Lookout. In addition, we worked on another four miles of the Big Horn Crags trail system beyond Sagebrush LO and trails near the lookout. The whole area had been previously burned by the Clear Creek Fire in 2000. Project work included removal of an estimated 380 down trees from the trail. In addition, 275 water bars were cleaned out together with brush removal from the trail. Some cleanup was also completed at Sagebrush Lookout.

The crew consisted of eight (8) NSA retired smokejumpers consisting of **William "Bill" Tucker** (MSO '50), **Doug Stinson** (CJ '54), **Jim "Doc" Phillips** (MSO '67), **Gene Hamner** (MSO '67), **Robert McKean** (MSO '67), **Tom Lindskog** (MSO '75), **Mike Poetzsch** (RDD '79), and **Perry Whittaker** (MSO '71) acting as squad leader. Gourmet meals were prepared by **Suzanne Poetzsch**, (Cook/Medic) an excellent Dutch oven chef. In addition, **Geoff Fast**, Wilderness Ranger, on the Salmon/Challis worked with us during the week.

Almost everyone on the crew attended saw training in MSO the day before we headed out on the project. The crew performed at a high level from a productivity standpoint on both the water bar work and running the cross-cut saws. The crew functioned like a highly

efficient fire crew while digging the water bars using the "bump-up" technique which all old smokejumpers remember so well. The "bump-up" process enables a number of workers to have a part of the process of digging and cleaning out the water bars and reminded each of us that the sum of the parts equals the whole and the process is more fun and efficient when you have several crew members working on parts of each water bar feature. There was significant discussion of how some crew members had used the "bump-up" process in their post jumper careers to teach leadership and how high performance teams operate.

The first two days were spent cleaning out water bars, digging some new diversions to help remove water from the trail, and clearing some brush and small trees from the trail. The first night we went back to the lower camp at Panther Creek. Tuesday morning we broke camp and packed up our gear so the Salmon River Backcountry Horsemen could pack our gear and camp supplies to a campsite near the lookout just over seven miles up from the lower camp. Our hope was that the remainder of the week we would be working at higher elevations, i.e. above 7,150 feet, to escape some of the heat at the lower elevations. We spent the second day working on the middle part of the trail. Water became a limiting factor so about mid-afternoon we made a decision to hike up to the upper camp site. We had barely reached camp to enjoy a cold drink that **Suzanne** had prepared for us when we endured a downpour of pea-sized hail and rain. Within 15 minutes the crew went from being hot and dry to wet and cold. The search was on for pitchy material to get a warming fire started.

The next three days, under the direction of **Geoff Fast**, we split into three 3-person crosscut saw teams to remove trees from the trail between Sagebrush Lookout and Dome Mountain and another trail near the Lookout. **Bill Tucker** worked on cleaning up the Lookout; posting a sign and taking inventory of items on site one day.

Many thanks go to **Geoff Fast** for his assistance with the project. He helped out considerably by having his pack stock at the upper camp to pack water for the crew and cook. He packed water out on the trail so we had sufficient drinking water. In addition, he had one more crosscut which made the crew much more efficient. We would have liked to have accomplished a little more during the week, but left knowing that we had made a huge difference on the trail.

The crew thoroughly enjoyed the meals prepared by **Suzanne** during the week. There was no complaining about food. Each meal was a culinary experience and we looked forward with anticipation to each meal to see what

she had prepared for us. We ate like kings and know we could not have had a better cook!

The views from the upper elevations were fantastic making the hike up worthwhile and the overall project more gratifying. The lookout provided views of the landscape in every direction.

Our crew bonded well and we had a great time getting to know one another. The stories around the evening camp fire were plentiful and most interesting, especially when there was liquid refreshments.

Thanks to the Salmon River Backcountry Horsemen for packing our gear up to the upper camp and back to the Dry Gulch Trailhead on Saturday.



North Fork General Store, L-R: Doug Stinson, Susan Poetzsch, Mike Poetzsch, Jim Phillips, Robert McKean, Gene Hamner, Perry Whittaker, Tom Lindskog, and Bill Tucker



Near Sagebrush LO, L-R: Bill Tucker, Jim Phillips, Gene Hamner, Doug Stinson, Tom Lindskog, Robert McKean, Perry Whittaker, Mike Poetzsch, and Geoff Fast (USFS Wilderness Ranger)

CHALLENGE CREEK CABIN CORRAL

Mark Lennon (MSO 67)

Everyone met at the Elkhorn Café for breakfast on Sunday, July 15, 2012. Also some members of a trail crew lead by Chuck Fricke headed to Spotted Bear on the same day. From there we all headed up to Challenge Creek Cabin on the Flathead National Forest.

The task was to rebuild the horse corrals. We were all up to the task. The corrals were in place but were not to corral standards and we were there to set the records straight. The task was made easier by the fact that Bob Derry (MSO 43) (the tool guy) arrived with a supply of tools that would put most shop trucks to shame. He had a generator, winch, circular saws, drills, chords, possibly a welder and an array of hand tools too numerous to mention. A few of the rest of us also brought some battery driven devices and hand tools. With the winch on Bob's truck, Bob, Steve Anderson (MSO 63) (the bear guy), and Dan Hensley (MSO 57) (the gun/medic guy) made quick work of removing the planks from part of the corral. This however

was not before the wrecking crew of Jim Hage-meier (MSO 57) (the lead reconstruction engineer), Dave Dayton (MSO 69) (the boss) and Mark Lennon (MSO 67) (the humble reporter) completed removing the steel rod fencing on the second half of the corral. From there we retreated to Phyllis Geddes's excellent cooking, then directly to the campfire for an extended period of tall tales and cocktails.

Days two and three involved reconstruction and more true stories, lies, and Phyllis's good cooking. The high light of the day was Bob Derry reciting the poem of Dangerous Dan McGrew around the campfire.

On day four the project was wrapped up and we awaited further instructions on other projects that needed our focus. We were assigned to install a new gate in a corral and install a new fire pit where our old fire pit resided.

On day five we pulled camp and headed to the Elkhorn Café for lunch.



L-R: Dave Dayton, Jim Hage-meier



L-R: Bob Derry, Dan Hensley, Steve Anderson



L-R: Jim Hage-meier, Steve Anderson, Bob Derry, Dave Dayton, Mark Lennon, Dan Hensley



L-R: Dan Hensley, Mark Lennon, Bob Derry, Jim Hage-meier, Dave Dayton, Steve Anderson

BIG BILL CABIN

Doug Wamsley (MSO 65)

As July 2012 was in full swing a crew of four Missoula jumpers and our PhD-wrangler-packer-chef moved into Beaver Creek campground, just nine miles down the road from the Spotted Bear Ranger Station in the Flathead NF. Our objective was to replace the wood siding on Big Bill Cabin, which isn't really a cabin but a small, sturdy shed. But that was okay, because as far as we could determine, it was never owned by anyone named "Big Bill" either. The cabin is about one mile from our camp site and serves as a feed storage facility for a Forest Service corral complex and is heavily used by packers venturing into the nearby Bob Marshall Wilderness.

The objective of the project was not historic restoration or routine maintenance but repair of damage apparently caused by local bears over the winter. The bears, being smarter than they look, figured out that a feed storage facility might well contain something edible. Testing their theory proved somewhat difficult since the windows and doors were enclosed in steel "bear proof" frames. Thus, the obvious solution was to tear off the walls (2x6 lap strake siding with plywood underneath) instead--which they did.

Our answer was to repair the plywood and put up new siding of 2x6 tongue-in-groove siding. The theory is that the bears will have a much tougher time getting their claws into this siding. This winter will be the test of the theory.

The crew was composed of our Senior Statesman, Spud DeJarnette (MSO-49), Bill Kolar (MSO-59), Chuck Fricke (MSO-62), Doug

Wamsley (MSO-65), and our menu planner, campground manager, chef and after-dinner speaker, Chuck Corrigan (Assoc.). Our sponsor was Spotted Bear District Ranger, Deb Mucklow, who is well known to trail project regulars by having sponsored many prior Bob Marshall projects.

The project got off to a flying start, due in no small part to the planning and preparation done by Rich Sievers, our Straw Boss, and the facilities wizard for the Spotted Bear District. Not only did we have all of the materials on site, but also a complete supply of tools, from a generator for the chop saw, down to spare hammers. As many of you know that doesn't happen on every project. Chuck Fricke immediately became the Master Carpenter when we learned he could read a tape measure, as well as add and subtract. Had anyone else done the sawing, no doubt we would have needed a lot more wood.

The work routine developed so well that we actually finished the project ahead of schedule. The last half day was spent staining the cabin. There was some danger that we would run short of stain since Bill Kolar was getting more on his clothes than on the building. But, we made it.

Our evenings were the sort that you always hope trail projects will produce: wonderful food and great social events. Our neighbors in the campground were congenial, but one can only wonder what they thought of the stories we told them. Deb Mucklow and Rich joined us for a final night dinner. It was a project much like that great golf shot you hit in a round; it's what brings you back.



Spud DeJarnette hard at it.



L-R: Doug Wamsley and Chuck Corrigan



The cabin, before on the left, and after at right.



Rich Seivers and Chuck Fricke.



L-R: Rich Sievers, Doug Wamsley, and Chuck Fricke

Greenwood Cabin

Hal Howell (MSO '55)

The second Greenwood Cabin project started on a warm Sunday morning as the crew left Missoula for the Clearwater Junction trail head in the Lolo national forest. The crew consisted of jumpers, Jim Snapp (MSO '65), Jack Atkins (MSO '68), Gary Baker (MSO '67), John McMahon (MSO '58), Wendy Kamm (MSO '82), Hal Howell (MSO '55) and associates Lin Robbins, Alex Mihali, and Diane Tidwell, our cook. We convoyed to Fish Creek Road off I-90 west and then 17 miles of dirt road past the Hole in the Wall ranch to the trail head. We were met by Shiffy Wellborn, the Forest Service project leader, a delightful lady and super worker. Her assistant Lee was a U of Montana grad. After unloading our gear for Mark Haskins, our packer, we started on the relatively easy hike of 6 miles to the cabins. Shiffy was nice enough to bring up the rear; otherwise we would never have been able to keep up with her. Two years ago we had re-roofed one cabin and replaced the base logs. That year we made our own cedar shakes from fresh cut trees on the site. This time the forest service had packed in shakes from the factory. Our work consisted of putting a

floor in the cabin that had been roofed two years ago, and a new roof for the other cabin and new base logs.

One of the Forest Service workers was a young lady whose grandparents had owned the cabins which were built in about 1910. She is a junior in forestry at the U of Montana and had a picture of herself around the cabins when she was a young child. We taught her how to put on cedar shakes and she did a great job all week.

We survived with no injuries or incidents despite lifting heavy logs and working on the roof in blazing sun, so our EMT Wendy and Doctor Alex had to content themselves with telling stories. Wendy told jump stories and game warden adventures and Alex did jokes and skiing adventures. There was the usual drinking of loud mouth and telling of tall tales each night after partaking of Diane's great food.

We were visited for a day by District ranger Chad and project coordinator Laura, both of whom pitched in and worked with us. There is still work to be done such as more base log replacement, floors, and windows, so the district has requested that we return next year.



One of the cabins being refurbished



L-R: Gary Baker, Hal Howell, Eli ? (FS), Wendy Kamm, Alex Mihali, Shiffy Wellborn (FS), John McMahon, Lin Robbins, Jim Snapp, ?? (FS) standing behind.



← Cook shack and dining area.

HORSE BUTTE LOOKOUT

By John (Jack) Atkins (MSO '68)

Hans Trankle (MSO '51) and I convoyed from Bozeman to West Yellowstone on Sunday prior to the start of our work week. We were very pleased to be billeted in a fairly new bunkhouse complete with full kitchen, bath and shower. Rudy Schlegel, the Hebgen Lake District facilities and maintenance officer, met us that evening and outlined the nature of the work for the next five days. Rudy proved to be very efficient, punctual, knowledgeable and fun to work with. He had all the tools, supplies and materials that we would need for the week. He was a "top notch" supervisor.

It was a scenic ride to work every morning from the Ranger Station to the Horse Butte Lookout at an elevation of 7077 feet. We even saw two buffalo on the road one morning.

Fred Jones (MSO '84), Western Zone Fire Management Officer for the Bozeman/Hebgen Lake Ranger Districts, Gallatin National Forest, was our chief overhead and responsible for the entire project. It was readily apparent that Fred and Rudy had coordinated with each other and had preplanned the project; knew what had to be done; how to do it; and what tools, supplies and materials would be needed. There was no "hurry up and wait" for us on this project.

A grey fox ambled through our work area one day but hardly acknowledged our presence. Fred took his/her picture.

The purpose of the project was to restore, refurbish and preserve the 40 foot historic fire lookout tower on Horse Butte, a few miles north of West Yellowstone. The work consisted of removing wire fencing from both sides of the stairway leading up to the catwalk, reinforcing each of the steps, installing side rails along the stairway, applying a boiled linseed oil/turpentine mixture to the structure as a preservative, installing new windows in the lookout, and laying plywood decking with drain holes on the catwalk (Fred and Rudy did this). We applied the preservative with a hand sprayer which worked very well until the wind came up, which it did every day at approximately 12:30 – 1:00 pm.

Fred Jones treated us to pizza one night in West Yellowstone. The next night Barry Hicks (MSO '64) invited us to dinner at the West Yellowstone Junior Smokejumper Center. In

attendance were four other former smokejumpers, making seven of us in all. We put a serious dent in Barry's supply of PBR. Barry's wife, Linda, prepared a sumptuous meal enjoyed by all. After listening to all the "silk stories", we came away realizing what "heroes" we all had been. Linda had her reservations.

Hans had a joke a minute and one for every occasion. Don't ask him how he likes his coffee if you're in polite company.

Since the Ranger District was providing us with a full kitchen including all utensils to cook and eat with, we purchased and had on hand enough food for our breakfast and lunches. We ate in West Yellowstone for supper but it was expensive.

The Hebgen Lake District Ranger, Cavan Fitzsimmons, was the perfect host. He made sure that everything that we needed for work and leisure was provided and in working order.



L-R: Rudy Schlegel, Hans Trankle, Jack Atkins

HUCKLEBERRY LOOKOUT

Bridger-Teton National Forest, Wyoming

Don Whyde (MSO '66) and Fred Cooper (NCSB '62)

Huckleberry Lookout was built in 1938 by the Civilian Conservation Corps and served as a fire lookout from 1939 to 1957. Very little maintenance has been performed since its original construction; and considering that it is 74 years old, it is in relatively good shape. The lookout is a popular hiking destination located 6.13 miles from the Sheffield Creek Trailhead with a 2,165 elevation gain. As the crow flies, it is three miles south of the southern boundary of Yellowstone Park and three miles east of the John D. Rockefeller Memorial Parkway.

The views from the lookout are fantastic. To the southwest is the Teton Range and Jackson Lake. To the northeast are views of Yellowstone Lake and to the east, Buffalo Plateau, and the Absarokas. We were in the midst of the 1988 greater Yellowstone fires that burned over two million acres. Wildflowers were gorgeous and Lodgepole pine reproduction is coming back. The lookout must have been saved by several fire retardant drops on and near it during the fire.

We had eight people on the project -- four Jumpers, **Doug Wamsley** (MSO '65), **Dan Hensley** (MSO '57), and ourselves; two Associates from the Forest Fire Lookout Association (FFLA), **Joe Luck** (Casper, WY) and **Robert Ewers** (Longmont, CO); and two archeologists from the Bridger-Teton National Forest, **Jamie Schoen** and **JP Schulbert**.

As usual, our crew was diverse and talented. Don is a retired BLM Field Manager from Casper, Dan is a retired Los Angeles area teacher with extensive experience providing security for various organizations and individuals; Doug is a retired prosecuting attorney from the Denver area; Fred had a career in human resources for the federal government; Joe is a retired Air Force Officer who specialized in missile mechanics; Robert is a retired nurse and served as our crew Doc. He is a thespian for melodramas so he was the crew jokester, and he picked one hell of a project to initiate him into his first camping experience. JP and Jamie are archeologists who went to school in the east and mid-west parts of the country but are now firmly en-

trenched in the west.

Monday was devoted to hiking in and setting up camp. **Tom Matza**, District Ranger and **Chris Hart**, one of his District Packers packed in our gear on eight mules. We set up camp a third of a mile on a trail below a cliff along Huckleberry Ridge and about a hundred yards from a spring so water was readily available, filtered of course. Joe Luck acted as the dam engineer for a short term water source and, later on, the old spring box was scooped out. The prize tent went to Robert and Joe. Their shared tent had all the luxuries of the downtown Hilton minus the indoor plumbing. Maybe they had that too. Hard to tell since no one was invited in and they weren't talking. Don brought his portable shower to help Robert feel "at home."

On our hike to the project, two horseback riders passed us on their way to the lookout. We visited with them, sharing what we were going to do. At the lookout, they made the following entry in the lookout log book: "Quite the popular place but we beat the rush! Pretty flowers, good ride up. Hope the old timers get'er fixed up so we can bring our kids up in a few years! God Bless America."

We had no cook so we split into teams of two and took turns. Finding the right ingredients stored in four bear proof aluminum panniers was a trick and remembering what was where was difficult. For example, for lunch on day two we found the lunch meat along with the mustard. But found the mayonnaise on day three. We found the jam for sandwiches on day two and the peanut butter on day three. Found the toothpicks on day three and they sure were handy for the steaks on day four. The cooks took the detail in stride, our meals were not gourmet, but they were rib stickers and didn't poison anyone. We had no table or flat surface to use for a table so thanks to JP's persistence, by the end of the second day he had built a structure that resembled a table out of deadfall limbs tied together with twine and quick ties. It had a lower level serving as a pantry for our dishware. It was ugly but functional and would easily have passed as a prehistoric artifact if not

for the plastic quick ties. We heard that REI sells an easily packable roll-up table that will be on our wish-list for the future.

We were deep in bear country. We tried setting up an electric bear fence but found that impossible with the ground and topography conditions in camp. Every night and morning after chow, food was stowed in bear-proof panniers with garbage and personal items slung from a tree. Come to find out, all we had to do was place Dan Hensley's tent about mid-camp as his snoring at night would fend off (or perhaps attract) even the worst marauder.

A good crew, a good project, and much was accomplished. On Tuesday, our first hike up to the lookout with all our tools was short but a lung buster! By days end, we had repaired and anchored the stairs leading to the upper level, the catwalk and railings were repaired, and we worked on cutting out and extracting a rotten log from the middle of the top structure. A replacement log was cut from a felled snag by Doug and Dan and hauled by hand up to the lookout where cutting and trimming for fit began. On Wednesday, work continued on cutting and shaving the replacement log and we manually hoisted it to the upper level, the first story enclosed structure was cleaned out, three bottom footing logs were removed, new logs were cut and two fitted into place, the main support beam in the bottom structure was repaired and anchored and we started chinking the bottom structure with split wood. The new log on the

upper level was inserted on Thursday and it fit like a glove, part of another rotten log on the upper level was cut out and temporarily spliced, all the shutters were repaired and are now functional and lockable, the last footing log on the bottom structure was placed and secured, the chinking was finished off on the lower level, and a door was crafted and installed for the lower level. There are at least seven more logs to replace which will probably mean two more years of projects. Snags from the 1988 burn will need to be felled and cut for replacement logs. Yes -- the wind was tricky but Dan and Doug need to come back and restore their reputations by felling snags in the direction intended instead of 180 degrees in the opposite direction.

On Wednesday, we had a welcomed visit by **Jacque Buchanan**, Bridger Teton Forest Supervisor, **Pam Bode**, Forest Resources Staff Officer, and **Nancy Arkin**, Forest Recreation Program Manager. It is the first time in the known history of the National Smokejumper Association Trails Program that we have had such high level visitors on the project site who expressed their thanks for our volunteer efforts. We appreciated it. Now readers, they didn't drive to this project site, they didn't ride in on horses; they hiked in over 6 miles UP and back out. They invited us back next year and Jacque said "She would be our cook." Jacque, old jumpers never forget! As a bonus, we'll throw in Joe and Robert's tent and have them rough it.



L-R: Dan Hensley, JP Schulbert, Jamie Schoen, Fred Cooper, Doug Wamsley, Don Whyde, Robert Ewers, Joe Luck



Dan And Robert celebrating a good fitting log.

LITTLE DEAD ELK/DEAD ELK SELWAY BITTERROOT

Bob Whaley (MSO '56)

Yes folks, it was uphill...both ways! Or so it seemed at the work day's end. We cleared nearly 5 miles of trail in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Clearwater/Nez Perce Forests; two plus up the Little Dead Elk Powell District side and two plus down the dead Elk East Fork of Moose Creek side, and though there was some blow down, almost all of it was that nasty, leggy alder crap that totally obliterated the trail in places.

We were met in camp by Doug Olive from Powell Ranger Station who was particularly helpful in getting us off on the right foot and very ably assisted us for three days before he was called back to Powell on day four. His assistance and work right along with us was greatly appreciated. You can always tell a former Marine...but you can't tell him much! Thanks Doug.

"There is so much to do, you will not get it all done in five days" were the early assessments we heard. On day four we were done and came out a day early...again, shades of Hang Tough in '11. This was only possible due to the great teamwork of Jim "Doc" Phillips (MSO '67), Roland Pera (MSO'56), Dennis Pearson (MSO'62), Gary Weyermann (MSO'63), Bob Schumaker (MSO'59), Jim Thompson (MSO'63) and Mike Overby (MSO'67). Once again we had outstanding packer support from the North Idaho Back Country Horsemen and the Jim Renshaw crew with Jim, son Butch (it was nice to see him back in the saddle again), Larry (our excellent chef) Cooper, Jim "Beak" Beale, Larry's chef in training who very ably assisted Larry in the galley with great fare everyday and last but not least, Joe Robinson who always manages to carry his weight with this group.

Early on it appeared that Friday, our fifth and final day, would be required due to the poor tread conditions on the Moose Creek side which I had planned to attack that day. However upon reaching camp late Thursday afternoon on day four, Jim Renshaw revealed to me that the Moose Cr. side was in fine shape...but only after he had taken all his hands and stock all the way down to the bottom of Dead Elk Trail to the East Fork of Moose Creek and back up, tromping the trail into submission. However, a new dilemma arose. Seems as we always have our famous

steak dinner and Dutch oven mastery prepared by Chef Cooper on our last night (Friday) with much revelry and celebration and with great culinary skill, so how to delicately break this new development to Cooper was the question. He was not a happy camper, having looked forward and planned for this all year, his mastery dashed including his Dutch oven dessert masterpieces. However, just a few minutes later, after realizing that they were to remain at the trail head the last night and that someone would have to ensure that the steaks and trimmings would have to be consumed by someone to keep from perishing, he said "that's OK Bob, we'll make do". What a guy!

Unfortunately, two of our regulars, JB Stone (MSO'56) and Larry Nelsen (MSO'56), were last minute cancellations due to extenuating circumstances but were replaced by two new crew "neds" in Mike Overby and Jim Thompson who more than ably demonstrated that they were up to the challenge.

The usual raconteurs, which might be called something else in more uninhibited company, circled the fire each night with readings of Cowboy Poetry with each taking turns with readings from same while sipping the likes of Cooper's wonderful Tangle Ridge Premium Canadian Whiskey that lasted about two passes (maybe) around the fire, some fine Wild Turkey



Larry Cooper, packer and chef.

Bourbon Whiskey from Doc Phillips, Bob Schumaker's Jim Beam and of course, Beak Beal's homebrew that was again a particularly interesting concoction of whatever he could find in the backyard or down the alley. It was actually a very good product again this year, as evidenced by the fact that it too was gone in fairly short order. (However there should have been a warning: NO SMOKING OR CONSUMPTION WITHIN 50 FEET OF OPEN FLAME!)

Though challenging with all the alder and biting little critters, it was a good feeling to finally complete this job because our maiden venture into this turf was on this very project in 2005 when, with significant effort, we cleared Little Dead Elk to the top of the Clearwater/Nez Perce divide and stopped, somewhat frustrated with all the work we had done and that apparently was doomed to go nowhere. It is now open and accessible for those who might envision an excellent circuitous hike/ride from Elk Summit to Big Sand Lake and on up and over the divide down to the East Fork of Moose Creek and then on back to Elk Summit. We all now feel a little more vindicated for our earlier efforts. Good job guys. And I think I would be remiss here not to mention the email help routinely provided by Linda Cooper (Larry's wife) and Gail Renshaw (Jim's daughter) who as-

sisted greatly in pre-project liaison and planning for the packer support. It was needed and appreciated. Thanks gals.

Where's the beef? We know where that went but where's the beer? Unfortunately, the message was garbled regarding our trustworthy trailhead greeting crew in Jerry Power, Dale Floerchinger, and Roger Allen who are always there to meet us with cold libations. They launched early Saturday, the original appointed day, for the much anticipated rendezvous. I discovered the gaffe around 1300 Saturday and headed back up to Elk Summit to tell them they were a day late and many beers short and met them near Savage Pass on their way out. But we love 'em just the same because they made the effort and that's what counts. Just don't ever let that happen again!

Oh yes, and as if not to be satisfied with the exercise expended with steep hikes and long days, deer flies and horse flies a bunch, Doc Phillips and Mike Overby felt the need to seek a little more "adventure" and opted to trek on out to Hamilton via Blodgett Pass and down Blodgett Canyon for another two days of fun and excitement. They obviously made it but the silence about the latter has been a little deafening! (Must not have worked 'em hard enough).



Back L to R: Bob Whaley, Gary Weyerman, Bob Schumaker, Roland Pera, Mike Overby.
Front L to R: Dennis Pearson, Jim Phillips, Jim Thompson



L to R: Roland Pera, Jim Thompson, Dennis Pearson

MANN GULCH – PHASE 1

Jim Phillips, MSO-67

“I owe this to Jon McBride, MSO-54,” I thought as I juggled my glasses while wiping at the sweat stinging my eyes with a dirty charcoal covered jump glove. There had been six years of setbacks and delays; and then a new Ranger, Lori Wood, a new Resource Assistant, Roy Barkley, a newly retired Forester, Kurt Cuneo and a forest archeologist, Kyle McGuire, all committed to the NSA vision of a Preservation and Management Plan for Mann Gulch. Jon McBride believed our thirteen fallen Smokejumper brothers deserved no less than to have the sites where they fell preserved, managed, and maintained. My poking at the Helena National Forest to affect a preservation and management plan has been a small part of a larger effort by many NSA members to ensure the hallowed ground of Mann Gulch is conserved. Fortunately living in Helena I have been a convenient point of contact for the forest officers.

My sweat wiped and my dry mouth moistened with warm hand filtered creek water, I looked down slope along the trail midline at Jimmie Dollard (CJ-52), Doug Stinson (CJ-54), John Driscoll (MSO-68), and Kurt Cuneo (Associate), and considered myself blessed to have the support and company of these fine men hacking, sawing and lopping a twelve-foot wide swath through one of four Aspen Groves. Establishing a corridor by clearing the 2009 fire killed Aspen and the heavy regeneration of Aspen was one of the critical steps in reestablishing the historical trail from Willow Creek to the head of Mann Gulch. Assisting us for a day in the effort were Montana Conservation Corps members Chance Selisker, Rainy Dunscomb, Kelsey Johnson, Dan Schillo, Trevor Lach, Bobby Tillet, Wil Ricitot, and Christina Lemasters. The following day the Jumper crew and the MCC folks were joined by the Helena and Townsend District Trail Crews composed of Joy Sather, Chris Christian, Andi Rodriguez, Gaelyn Domino, Isaac Montoya, Braden Hatfield, Gary Bauman, and Jessica Sagissor.

With the corridor through the Aspen grove established, the district trail and the MCC crews began the task of constructing one mile of Type II reroute trail to moderate the trail grade as-

ending from the 3800 ft. elevation of Willow Creek to the 4800 ft. contour on which the historic trail lay. The Jumper crew, shortened by the family obligated Cuneo, and the medically excused Dollard, cleared eighty-three trees from the trail connecting Mann Gulch to the Meriwether Ridge where Jim Harrison had battled the Mann Gulch Fire before joining Wag Dodge and the ill-fated “Doug” load of Smokejumpers on August 9, 1949.

At this writing the high quality, full bench tread reroute is 2/3 complete with the remaining 1/3 to be completed before summers end by the Helena Forest Trail Crews. The Mann Gulch Phase 1 Project was conceived to reestablish the historic trail beginning from a “drive-to” trailhead as an alternative to the water access routes that have yielded pioneered unofficial trails in the nationally registered historic site of Mann Gulch. The trail is marked by sign posts in the Willow Creek Meadow and on the open ridge of Rescue Gulch. The historic trail tread is discernible, though grassed in. Trimmed trees and the Aspen corridors additionally identify it.

This was my first NSA fling at working in a large partnership project. The Smokejumper crew was charged with providing leadership and historical perspective. That mission was accomplished by the Jumper crew by providing the MCC and trail crews a lecture each morning featuring Colin Powell’s Eighteen Principles of Leadership, arranging for Wayne Phillips (MSO-63) and Yellowstone Institute lecturer to spend an evening doing plant identification, conducting an afternoon of lecture and visitation to the memorial sites in Mann Gulch and hosting a poetry reading one evening.

The Sleeping Giant Chapter of the National Smokejumper Association was a behind the scene support to those of us on the project. Chapter members hosted a reception for Doug Stinson and Jimmie Dollard. Helena chapter members Dwight Chambers (MSO-66) and Ken Travis (MYC-55) did a project site visit, hoping, I believe, to find us lingering in the shade of a Ponderosa. Their disappointment was proportionate to our delight that Dwight and Ken brought sufficient ice to maintain our adult bev-

erage supply at an ideal drinking temperature.

Our time on the project was marked by rain, heat, a bear sighting, a collapsing toilet seat, a rattlesnake event, heat exhaustion and heat cramps, and significant wind events that destroyed our kitchen fly set-up six times in eight days. Those events aside, the memories that will linger and buoy us will be the eagerness of the trail crew and MCC crew to learn, the reverence they showed for our fallen brothers in the gulch, and the desire to show their respect by leaving a quality graded full bench tread to lead disciples from the Willow Creek trailhead to Mann Gulch Trail and the memorial sites therein.

You are our brothers.....
Robert Bennett,
Eldon Diettert,
James Harrison,
Phillip McVey,
David Navon,
Leonard Piper,
Stanley Reba,
Marvin Sherman,
Joseph Sylvia,
Henry Thol,
Newton Thompson,
Silas Ray Thompson.
...you will not be forgotten!



Back L/R - Kurt Cuneo, Jimmie Dollard,
Front L/R - Jim Phillips, Doug Stinson, John Driscoll

Moore's Station Rehab

Salmon River Ranger District, Nez Perce National Forest
Dave Poncin (MSO 58)

In Mid-July a crew of nine, led by Historic Preservation Specialist Ian Barlow, took on the task of upgrading an historic cabin on the edge of the Gospel Hump Wilderness. The cabin was built in the 1920's and used as a pack station for the Adams Ranger Station. The cabin fell into disrepair over the years and was in need of work. Our task was originally to re-roof the cabin using split cedar shakes. As we got into the project we found work needed to be done on the main structure of the cabin before the shingled roof could be put on.

Three new purlins (roof rafters) were needed. We cut, peeled, and placed one 35 foot rafter. Also over the years, the cabin had settled and an interior wall, designed as a divider, became a support wall and as such applied pressure to an upstairs floor, causing it to become exceedingly uneven. We reduced the wall height and took the pressure off the floor allowing it to settle back to level or there about.

As a part of this project we felled hazard trees around a corral used by both the Forest Service and the public. We also maintained a fence around six enclosures that we had rebuilt in previous years as another NSA project. This was a project to protect water quality in the Slate Creek drainage for anadromous fish and bull trout.

The original project of re-roofing the cabin did not get done by our NSA crew because more

interior work was needed on the cabin and the shakes available were too short and did not match the new shakes that had been installed last year by the Back Country Horsemen. The roofing project was finished by District crews this fall as the fire season subsided.

It was a busy week with good fellowship enjoyed by the crew, although a little frustrating because we were unable to finish the work as planned.

Our crew this year has been together for the past three seasons with few exceptions. The crew consisted of: Dave Blakely (MSO '57), retired from the Forest Fire Lab; Terry Danforth (MSO '59), Retired Park Service Ranger, Yellowstone NP; Chuck Haynes (Associate), from Austin, Texas; Joe Kroeber (MSO '62), retired high school teacher and coach and currently State Legislator from Jamestown ND; Rawhide (Cal) Papritz (MSO '58), retired professor from Green River College, Auburn WA; Dave Poncin (MSO '58) retired fire Staff Clearwater/Nez Perce NF; Don Smith (MSO '58), currently works as a Trainer for pilots and crews flying the latest of Boeing aircraft; Larry Ukestad (MSO '67), retired teacher and Administrator from the Jamestown ND school system; and Jerry Zumalt, (RDD '70), retired smokejumper base manager and Forest Aviation specialist Clearwater/Nez Perce NF and currently Emergency Coordinator for Idaho County based in Grangeville, Idaho.



L-R: Rawhide "Cal" Papritz, Don Smith, and Dave Poncin chatting by the fire.



Raising the purlin

North Fork American River

Spud De Jarnette (MSO '49)

The North Fork Project (Aug 15-21) is successfully concluded. Our outfitter brought the second camp load to the trail head Tuesday evening about 1815 hours.

The project began at Sailor Flat trailhead off the Forest Hill Divide Road and culminated at a pack bridge across Tadpole Creek four miles downriver. In all we worked six miles of trail, two miles of steep downhill access (2400 vertical ft.) and four miles of river trail.

Mother Nature was not kind to us last winter! Three miles of trail that five of us opened to USFS specs last September accumulated 20+ new downfalls and a log jam at the only possible horse crossing in New York Canyon. We needed a full work day and three chain saw crews to reclaim everything.

The second and third day we cleared one mile of canyon bottom trail: cutting through piles of down trees, locating trail, and brushing blackberries and canthus over our heads. That section is now to FS specs except for the tread. Water courses have ripped across level sections of trail. 'nuff said.

The fourth day we made better time. We located the switchback that we knew was the way out of the bottom to an easier route over the cliffs lining the river. One pile of down trees blocked the trail about 50 yards up the

switchback. After clearing that one it was easier brushing and sawing. We were variously 500 to 800 feet above the river the rest of the day.

The last day we divided the crew. One group rebuilt a short very dangerous section of the trail; the second group hiked to the pack bridge across Tadpole Creek, located the trail, and then brushed back toward the third group moving toward the pack bridge. This last mile of our project still has some step over logs remaining and is not brushed to FS specs toward the end. However, it is quite passable for man or horse.

We left three logs all about 50 inches diameter. After we prepped the first log, we discovered that we could walk under it, the second and third logs we scarfed a temporary route around their butt ends. The hot shot crew will bring their 48 inch bar into the canyon and cut those after the fire season calms. Our longest bar was 24 inches, not long enough and our R5 certification does not permit us to use longer bars anyway.

All of the crew worked safely through the five days. For those susceptible to Poison Oak, that was addressed each night in the river with special poison Oak removing soap. I highly recommend it. It will most likely remove poison Ivy and Sumac since they are in the same genus.



Back L-R: Bill Wharton (Assoc. & cook), John Culbertson (FBX 69), Arly Kisling (RDD 69), Fritz Koepp (RDD 57), Ken Svilik (Assoc.), John Helmer (RDD 59), Kev Hodgjin (RDD 67), Rich Johnson (Assoc.).

Front L-R: Scott Warner (RDD 69), Spud De Jarnette (MSO 49), Bill Bowles (RDD 57), Manny Haiges (MSO 58).



Jack-straws along the trail.

North Fork Blackfoot Cabin

Rod Mclver (MSO 64-66, 70-83, 85-88)

As is often the case in our age groups during fire season in Montana, we ended up one man and one day short. Nonetheless, by blowing off the optional trail work, we successfully wrapped up our cabin flooring and shed roofing jobs. The crew was Wendell Beardsley (Assoc.), a Forest Service retiree whose past responsibilities include R.O. oversight of trails and other back country affairs, Richard Hildner (MSO 67), a just now retired high school teacher in the Flathead (also a former fire and trails man at Moose Creek, and a wild land fire adviser in the Peace Corp, and his wife Suzanne (Assoc.), who is a practicing physician who along with Richard has recently run full marathons. If that wasn't medical backup, we also had Ivan Kays (Assoc.), a retired druggist. To round out the crew we had Mark Lennon (MSO 67), a recently retired Montana state urban forester from Polson, Chuck Corrigan (with stock), an ex-Navy renegade turned college dean who kept us resupplied, well fed, and entertained, and me, Rod Mclver, need I say more?

Our principle task was to replace a worn painted floor with clear finished high dollar quarter sawn 6" wide Douglas Fir, and in spare moments replace an asphalt shed roof with metal over an extremely aggravating, thick, sticky on both sides rolled out underlayment. This we did, but it took considerable cussing on the shed and double time for overtime getting on the second finish coat then moving stuff back into the cabin. Clearing the cabin of 75 plus years of accumulation and built ins was the biggest single challenge, but a kitchen cabinet which wouldn't clear the doors fit through a formerly bear-proof window like a key in a lock. To keep things exciting, whenever somebody got good at a job, we switched them out of it. An added benefit of this is that we are all more or less competent at the whole deal for future projects.

Adding further interest was the likelihood

that the cabin had been built by Hal Samsel's (MSO 49) father, who had been the local ranger at the time of its construction. For those from other places, Hal was a beloved institution at Missoula whose career spanned from barely missing the load to Mann Gulch (1949) to being the first jumper I know of to get out on early fire fighter retirement in 1980.

Also, I was the on-site "expert" for reroofing this cabin a few years back. Maybe that's why it needed a new floor.

The storied N. Fork fishing was no disappointment, even though it was only "catch and release". Duffers among us could hook a few on any given evening and Ivan and Richard all but knocked them dead. Richard even had a big one attack a smaller one he was playing in. Being at a popular entry point and crossroads for the Southern Bob, we entertained the game warden one night, and shared the site with a young plant/fire ecology survey crew for several more. They started out a bit early and loud in the mornings for our taste, but we more or less solved that problem by plying them with the extra beers we had leftover because of our long hours spent fishing.

Looking back, two things stand out in my memory. The scouting trips Richard and I took with the district project leader, Jake Long, were invaluable. Even though he had made good, thorough preparations, and planned to be with us during start-up, he got sucked up by fire work and we were on our own. Secondly, the non-jumpers outnumbered the jumpers in the group. The project would have been cancelled without them, and they were great in the job and around the campfire. All of us know friends and friends of friends who would have made great jumpers, but chose other paths. They add breadth and depth to the outing, and if they are as well chosen in the future as the ones I've been with so far, I say "Bring them on!"



L-R: Mule, Rod Mclver, Wendell Beardsley, Ivan Kays, Chuck Corrigan.



New floor with Ivan and Richard staying off of it.



L-R: Ivan Kays, Mark Lennon, Wendell Beardsley, Rod Mclver, Richard Hildner, Suzanne Daniel.

PRIEST RIVER EXPERIMENTAL FOREST

Chuck Haynes (associate)

Priest River celebrated its centennial last October. Most of the buildings, like most of our crew, came into existence in the 1930s. Led by our crew chief Carl Gidlund (MSO-58), we spent the week of July 9-13 doing a variety of projects to restore and refurbish the station. This year's crew consisted of Bob Sallee (MSO-49), Paul Wilson (MSO-50), Hank Jones (MSO-53), Tom Oswald (MSO-58), Milt Knuckles (MSO-61), Dick Burns (FBX-64), Karl Maerzluff (FBX-67), Phyllis Geddes (assoc), Mike Jones (assoc), and yours truly. We sort of divided ourselves into groups according to our interests and skills (or lack thereof). Bob, Tom, Dick, and Milt comprised the carpentry crew; Hank and Mike formed the nucleus of the trail crew; Paul, Carl, and Karl became the jacks-of-all-trades crew, helping out wherever needed, which was virtually every task; I became the ditch-digger crew; and Phyllis kept us well-fed – no one suffered from low blood sugar on this woman's watch.

Last year, the carpentry crew had built and installed a massive frame (seven-foot by six-foot of 6X6s and 4X4s) to hold a grand new sign at the main entrance. The forest supervisor, Bob Denner (a New York City boy), had ordered the sign from a commercial sign-manufacturer, but it had not arrived by the time we departed, so we were all anxious to see the new sign. Imagine our disappointment when we arrived to see a two-foot square sign gracing our magnificent frame. Our first task was to mount the new sign (actually two signs, one on the front of the frame, one on the back), which had finally arrived (well after the centennial celebration). It's one of those yellow and brown Forest Service-style signs you can see from half-a-mile away and is made of recycled plastics for durability (see crew photo). Given our disappointment with the existing sign, we launched into the sign raising with characteristic vigor. Everyone participated, and it was a real team effort. Some of the stronger guys maneuvered the sign into place and held it steady, while the carpenters measured and leveled, drilled and bolted. The supervisory crew (note the plural form) kibitzed and offered inane suggestions.

Denner had a long list of carpentry tasks. Since deterioration has set in on a number of

these Depression Era buildings, there is always work to be done. One problem is that, apparently, the species of woodpeckers indigenous to northern Idaho can't distinguish between trees and man-made structures. They have been making unsightly holes in some of the buildings. Tom and Dick cut, stained, and installed plywood under the overhang of the shop loading dock to cover the damaged area. They also repaired a breach in the soffit on cabin #3, damage caused by swallows making their nests in the eaves. Someone even installed a dead bolt lock on the shop entry door, presumably to prevent the woodpeckers from walking in. Hopefully, these repairs will discourage the birds from further vandalizing the buildings.

Birds aren't the only force damaging the buildings. Snow and wet weather (something we rarely have in Austin) have damaged the posts supporting the porch roof at the lodge. Milt and his crew jacked up the north porch roof and removed the rotten wood at the bottom of the four posts supporting it. They replaced the rotten wood with treated wood and covered the joints with cedar, then painted the posts and the underside of the roof.

The carpenters and "jacks" refurbished three fire hose cabinets. They removed the cabinets, scraped, sanded, and repainted them, replaced hardware (hinges and hasps) as needed, reinstalled them in the ground, rewound the fire hoses into them, reconnected the hoses to the fire hydrants, and cleared brush from around the cabinets and hydrants to ensure that a fire crew could actually get to the hoses.

Of course, there was the annual power-washing of the conference building and the staining and repair of the conference building's deck and the amphitheatre. These tasks always elicit commentary, mostly of a derogatory nature. The "jacks" handled these jobs. They power-washed the conference building, which sparkled until some fool drove by kicking up dust. The porch, steps, and railings got their annual coat of preservative. The amphitheatre consists of three sets of benches which seem to soak up all the oil-based stain available, then dry out before we've left. This year we had to remove and replace one of the seat sections and replace the podium as

well. Bob and Dick arrived a day early and were already working on replacing the bench when the rest of us arrived. Apparently, they didn't get the union's memo about laboring on Sunday. The following morning we cut down and trimmed a snag to replace the podium. The podium is actually a tree stump with a tray-like device on top to hold the lecturer's notes. Karl later pulled out the old stump, replaced and secured it with a new tray, and stained and sealed it. Carl, who has a great deal of experience in the amphitheatre was thrilled (is that the right word?) to help Karl stain the benches.

Hank and Mike spent most of their time clearing brush off the forest roads and checking and clearing the two pack trails (Canyon Creek and Crow's Nest) which we had cleared last year. When they found out how fond I am of cutting alder (I just love that *@#&), they graciously invited me to come along and assist. We cleaned out a clogged culvert that was inhibiting the flow of Canyon Creek and removed debris from above and below it. They also did some tree-thinning between the cabins and in the nursery and felled a few aspen snags at the lodge.

One day they reported finding three piles of ashes (one still hot) on one of the roads. There was also a make-shift altar, beside the road. The next day they found a new pile of ashes. None of us knew the significance of their find, but Denner notified the Forest Service's law enforcement branch for investigation. Strange doings in northern Idaho.

Denner has a small tractor with a number of attachments (one of which is a backhoe). It's sort of his baby, so when I suggested last year (and the year prior) that he teach one of us (even I can drive a tractor) to use the attachments – to free him up for other things – he simply glared at me. A word of advice: be careful what you wish for – you just might get it. This year he decided that he needed a new irrigation line in the nursery. Someone needed to dig a 350 foot ditch, lay in the PVC pipe, connect it, and install risers for the new sprinkling system. I got the ditch-digging part. He

showed me the controls to the backhoe and turned me loose in the open field. Once or twice a day he would come by to check to make sure I hadn't been eaten by a bear (more likely he was checking to see that I hadn't broken his beloved tractor). Eventually, I (with some help from Mike who felt sorry for me) finished the ditch. I am pleased to say that it was reasonably straight (he didn't need to bend the pipe), although it wasn't necessarily of uniform depth. Denner and Paul did the technical work of gluing the pipe sections together and installing the standpipes. I got to shovel dirt back into the ditch to support the standpipes. Just like the Army – dig a hole, fill it back in. My mother would be so proud!

The grand finale was a group project on Friday afternoon. We were invited to go up to the Gisborne Mountain lookout tower. On the way, we stopped at a gauging station used to measure stream flow on Benton Creek. There is a steel-reinforced concrete dam, a gauging pond, and a stilling dam. The stilling dam consists of a log across the creek with cedar boards sticking down into the creek to reduce rippling in the gauging pond, thus facilitating the measurements. The cedar boards required replacing, and the gauging pond needed to be cleared of silt. It quickly became apparent that the tour to the lookout tower had been a ruse, but we all jumped in (some literally) and went to work. Using a water pump connected to a fire hose, we blasted water from the creek to loosen the silt. What didn't flow out the spillway was shoveled over the dam. While that was being done, we removed the old cedar boards and some upstream debris. New boards were cut and nailed into place. It was quite a sight – a bunch of grandfatherly types frolicking in the cold stream like a bunch of school kids.

It was a week of hard work and good fellowship. We all had a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction and decided that we'd had so much fun that we'd come back again next year – assuming that Denner remembers to submit the appropriate forms to the NSA Trails Committee.

Ed. Note: The following information about the Priest River project was copied from the July 16, 2012 edition of the “ExploreR” newsletter. (See the title banner below) A little more good press for the troops.



The Explorer is a weekly employee newsletter of the US Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station.
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Retired Smokejumpers Volunteer at Priest River EF

Members of the National Smokejumpers Association (NSA) recently spent a week volunteering at our Priest River Experimental Forest in Idaho. The NSA is an association of retired Forest Service smokejumpers. Most of them had summer jobs as jumpers while in college, some continued their careers with the Forest Service, while others moved on to other livelihoods. All share a deep respect for the Forest Service heritage, and fond memories of their days as smokejumpers.



Members of the NAS group (L to R): Chuck Haines, Dick Burns, Milt Knuckles, Karl Maerzluft, Tom Oswald, Mike Jones, Hank Jones, Phyllis Geddes, Carl Gidlund, Bob Sallee, Paul Wilson, and Bob Denner. Bob Sallee's first jump was on the Mann Gulch Fire in 1949. That fire blew up and killed 12 of the 15 jumpers, a backcountry fire guard, and later Station scientist Harry Gisborne while he was investigating the fire.

The association organizes its members into volunteer crews that tackle Forest Service projects ranging from backcountry trail work to repairing historic cabins. This year a crew of 10, plus their cook, arrived in July and spent a week working at the headquarters site. “Much of the work that this group completed was critical to maintain the safety and function of the facilities,” said Forester **Bob Denner**. “The work they accomplished was impressive. As the Station’s resources shrink, the value of this organization and the individuals’ efforts cannot be overstated.”

Sawtooth Early Crew

Steve Carlson (IDC '62)

Once again the early Sawtooth crew got to celebrate July 4th by watching the incredible fireworks display from the porch of McCoy's Tackle Shop. And a great show it was. But I get ahead of myself.

Our crew of six gathered at the wonderful "Crooked Creek Resort", aka "Club Med" on Sunday, July 1. Our leader, Tom Kovalicky (MSO '61) must have attributes that don't show to convince Hans and Terry Carstensen to let smokejumpers from the days of yore continue to have access to their wonderful facility. Returning crew members were Tom, George Cross (MSO '74), (Wild) Bill Yensen (MYC '53), Doug (Digger) Daniels (MOS '61), and me. Our rookie to the trail crew project was Bob Smee (MSO '68). Shelly Dumas (assoc.) returned after a year off to cook wonderful meals for us. As noted on many reports, the variety of skills that show up is amazing. Digger was our engineer, Tom made a career of the USFS, and was the first National Sawtooth Recreational Area (NSRA) Ranger. Bob worked for the Border Patrol, George was a gymnastics coach and administrator at U. of Montana, Bill was a teacher in California, and I was a computer tech for Weyerhaeuser Co. in Washington State.

Deb Peters, the NSRA person who deals with volunteer groups like ours (but wait . . . there aren't any others like ours!) had lined out a project for us, but materials that had been ordered didn't show up, so she improvised. On Monday and Tuesday we built a "logworm" fence around a staff cabin at the Redfish Lake visitor center. We had a little extra time, so we sanded and painted two of their picnic tables. The residents of the cabin were thrilled to see such excellent teamwork and craftsmanship from a bunch of old codgers and they felt that their facility had definitely taken a significant step up in class.

Wednesday was July 4th, a holiday for regular employed folks, but not us, of course, so we spent the day doing "area beautification" at Crooked Creek. The big task was replacing old rotted logs that marked the parking lot boundary with sound, very heavy, newer ones. After another wonderful dinner prepared by Shelly, some of us went to town to check out the fire-

works. Being Stanley (Pop. 100), we expected three fusees, a roman candle and seven sparklers. But, whoa, it was a great show, and went on for about 20 minutes. Visible from everywhere in town, too!

Thursday we did maintenance on some signs for trail heads at the Fourth of July Creek guard station. We took a short detour to the salmon hatchery to watch the action as fish came in and got counted. It is quite an interesting operation. Tom finally got us distracted from that and back to the real task at hand. We sanded, painted, and assembled some signs and a couple of registration boxes that were left over from our efforts last year. The crew following us, led by Ron Stoleson, had the pleasure of installing the signs. Be sure to read about their week.

For our last day we were tasked with some fence repair/replacement. A section of old logworm fence that was in disrepair was to come out and be replaced with wire. We did get the posts set for the new fence, but didn't get the wire up, or the old fence torn out. We added a wire gate in an adjacent section of fence, and put in an "H" brace to make sure it all stayed tight and square.

Thursday evening was "visitation night". Tom invited USFS, NSRA, and local dignitaries to have dinner with us. The cook puts out extra fine vittles, we wash up, comb our hair, and try to act civil, if not sober. This year our visitors included Deb Peters, Gary and Sheri O'Malley (Executive Director of the Sawtooth Society), Jay Dorr (USFS Packer), and Robert Garcia, the Ranger's husband. Digger had not just one, or two, but three special presentations. He had two old crosscut saws beautifully decorated, one for the Sawtooth Society and one for the Carstensen's, our hosts in absentia. George was presented with a custom engraved pulaski. I thought he was going to cry! It really was quite moving. The presentations continued on Friday night, when Bob and Shelley were inducted into the Royal Order of the Purple Glove, which was also quite a moving presentation.

Saturday morning we cleaned up the facility, packed up, made a solemn oath to return next year, and headed home.



L to R: Digger Daniels, Deb Peters, Bob Smee, Steve Carlson, George Cross, Bill Yensen, Tom Kovalicky with the Sawtooth Society Saw.



Digger sanding a table at Redfish lake project. Crew in the background painting another table after the fence was finished.



L-R: George, Wild Bill, Bob, and Tom are almost ready to set a post.



Tom and Bob making the parking lot pretty.



George with his new Pulaski.



L-R: Deb, George, and Bob Building the logworm fence

A Gathering at the Sawtooth

Jim Burleigh (MSO '58) (with help from his friends)

Sunday, July 8, 2012 found the now experienced team of Ron Stoleson gathered first, along the river near Pettit Lake in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA), south of Stanley, ID and later, along the east fork of the Salmon River, ESE of Stanley. As in 2011 the assignment was to install an interminable number of trailhead panels which required digging through what seemed to be solid rock. Surely an exaggeration, yet.....

Those present, (pictured L to R top photo next page) were: Deb (the pretty one) Peters (NSRA Trails Rep), Digger (right-on, that's 30" guys) Daniels (MSO '61), Wild Bill (never the same story twice) Yensen (MYC '53), Ron (keeper of tradition) Stoleson (MSO '56), Charlie (optimist and raconteur first class) Brown (IDC '56), Doug (Master of Ceremonies and story teller-in-waiting) Howard (MSO '64), Chuck (chef and much more) Orona (Assoc.). Not pictured are Stan (the chef and by his own unprejudiced account, the Norwegian stallion) Linnertz (MSO '61), and Jim (the quiet one) Burleigh (MSO '58). Stan was busy preparing dinner and Jim was the photographer of this photo.

Holes, holes, and more holes. "Deeper" says Deb, the boss of bosses; "that's not 30 inches deep.... yet". So, Charlie takes over with the crowbar, Doug clears out the loose gravel with the posthole digger, Ron measures the depth, Digger calls out encouragement, Wild Bill photographs each stage. Then the team changes and a fresh crew continues. Finally, the correct depth is attained and Digger man-handles the redwood-sized post and drops it in....clunk. The hole is filled with soil, rock and a sprinkle of water. Concrete would not improve the solidness. Then on to the next hole. At each site we dig five holes..... Uffda (Norwegian for 'gosh another one'). After all posts are installed, panels are bolted in place; "done". Then to the next site.

Deb and the SNRA select the sites but the process of installation is not choreographed. We can sense when a colleague

needs a breather. Without recrimination a rested worker asks for the crowbar or shovel or posthole digger. The tools never stopped moving. We did.

On the final day at the Bowery Guard Station when the last post and panel were installed there were no loud whoops to signal completion, but a collective sigh and expressions of accomplishment. Camp that night was subdued as benefits men 70+ years of age. The last of the Johnny Walker Black Label was consumed and after a soak in the hot tub conveniently located adjacent to the river, all retired to their tents to the rhythmic drumming of light rain whispering in the night. Yes, tough duty.

Friday eve concluded with a solemn ceremony: Wild Bill was inducted into the "Order of the Purple Glove" (OPG), meaning that after all these years of trail crew duty WB finally became a first class dishwasher. Doug Howard was Master of Ceremonies and guided the proceedings with care and precision as dictated by the solemnity of the occasion. Prior to the award, dishes and silverware washed by WB were examined by members of the order and cleanliness certified. Granted, there was some debate as becoming a member of the OPG is an honor bestowed only on a select few but coveted by all. The final vote was in WB's favor.

Is there another trail crew among us that receives a "dining guide" for breakfasts, lunches, and dinners? Eat your heart our lads, such is provided by Johnson's Corner of Loveland, CO through the efforts of Stan Linnertz for the Stoleson crew. Surely all crews eat well during their respective work week so perhaps we should be humble in our story-telling here. Yet, to savor "Chuck's St. Louis Style BBQ ribs, served with coleslaw, corn and dinner rolls" or "Blackened chicken served with jalapeno cheddar mashed potatoes, house salad, green beans and dinner rolls", needs no exaggeration to describe taste and wholesomeness. No crystal goblets for the wine or silver but we ate like kings on paper plates.

One evening we were honored by the presence of Paul Hill, President of the Sawtooth Society, Gary O'Malley, CEO of the Sawtooth Society, and Barbara Garcia and Carol Cole with the USFS-SNRA. A crosscut saw mounted on polished pine and emblazoned with the Smokejumper logo and the names of past and current leaders of the Sawtooth Society was presented to Mr. Hill and Mr. O'Malley in recog-

nition of their efforts to preserve the pristine integrity of the Sawtooth region.

Saturday morning, July 14, saw all departing for their homes, some distant, some not so, but everyone leaving with the promise, the hope, and the plan, to again meet in 2013 along the river in the Sawtooth for a week of renewal and fun work.

L to R: Deb Peters, Doug (Digger) Daniels, (Wild) Bill Yensen, Ron Stoleson, Charlie Brown, Doug Howard, Chuck Orona.



L to R: Gary O'Malley, Ron Stoleson, Doug (Digger) Daniels, Stan Linnertz, and Paul Hill at the presentation of the saw.

Turkey Springs Guard Station

Richard Hilderbrand (MSO 66)

June of 2012 was the beginning of a new project for the NSA members in Colorado - The Turkey Springs Guard Station, San Juan National Forest. The financial support for the project came from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Dominguez Archaeological Research Group. In addition, the San Juan National Forest continued their tradition of exceptional support for the project. Ms. Julie Coleman, San Juan Public Lands Center, Durango, obtained the financial support and Mr. David Singer, Silverton Restoration Consulting, provided expert advice on the restoration. Melissa Childs and Skinny Everett, Elevated Fine Foods, continued the tradition of exceptional gourmet food we have come to appreciate from previous years.

For over ninety years the Turkey Springs Guard Station has stood guard in a stand of tall yellow-bark Ponderosa Pine overlooking a lush mountain meadow. The Guard Station was constructed in 1921 to help the Forest Service control the severe overgrazing that had been occurring on the public lands since the late 1800's. The original Guard Station burned down in 1929; however, an exact replica of the Guard Station was reconstructed in 1935 and the building is completely unmodified to this time. The Turkey Springs Guard Station is an excellent example of the early housing and living/working conditions in which the first guardians of our Nation's Forests lived. It embodies an important era in the history and development of the West. It is the last remaining Guard Station of that era on the Pagosa Ranger District out of the four that were constructed there between 1921 and 1938. The Guard Station is located at an elevation of 7350 feet and is about 8 miles west of Pagosa Springs, Colorado.

The NSA crew began to arrive June 10 for the restoration project. The objectives were rather similar to the previous years of work on Glade, including replacing the aging cedar shingles, preparing and painting the exterior of the building, repairing the brick chimney, and a major carpentry task of reattaching the porch that had settled and separated from the building. Other tasks such as repair of the foundation and screens and grading around the building also

had to be completed. Replacement of the cedar shingles was started immediately. Steve Vittum (MSO 71) and Doug Wamsley (MSO 65) took on the task of removal of the old shingles. This task was hampered by the steep 45° pitch of the roof and the absence of footholds but went rather well and was completed by noon on Monday. Tar paper was placed on the roof and the tedious task of nailing the rows of shingles began. Steve and Doug worked on the west side and Rich Hilderbrand (MSO 66) and Bill Ruskin (CJ 58) worked the east side of the roof. Ray Carter (MSO 54) provided exquisite ground support by passing materials and tools.

The carpentry crew, consisting of Russell Heaton (associate), Ron Siple (MYC 53), Ray Carter and David Singer (working consultant) had their work cut out for them. The front porch had settled severely and had pulled away from the front gable of the guard station building. Flooring had rotted away and the deck had to be completely replaced. The two porch posts were plumbed and bolted together with a 2" x 12" timber with the ends extending beyond the width of the porch to provide a purchase point for a floor jack on each side. The floor jacks were used to raise the porch posts, level the porch roof and force the porch against the Guard Station gable where it was lagged in place. With the posts and roof raised and out of the way, all remaining old decking, joists, and piers were removed and discarded. Excavation was completed and new concrete piers were poured, pressure treated joists placed, and cedar decking installed. All were pleased, if not surprised, when the porch roof and support posts were lowered and all was square and plum. The final step, when carpentry was completed, was for the roofing crew to apply new cedar shingles to complete the porch repair.

The next objective was to prepare and paint the guard station. The building had been painted a light yellow some years in the past; The NSA master paint crew (Warren Pierce (CJ 64), and Bill Kopplin, (Associate) began the cleaning and scraping of the siding. The painting crew was hampered at every brush stroke by the presence of scaffolds, ladders, construction, falling shingles, and frequent requests for assistance from the crews working above.

Despite the many impediments and the absence of Herm Ball, paint meister from previous projects, two coats of paint were successfully applied and the appearance of the station significantly enhanced.

In addition to providing assistance to those working on the roof, Ray Carter also took on the repair and painting of the rail fence surrounding the site. The gate posts were plumbed and aligned and a new gate constructed and hung with original hardware. Ray painted this item as well. The result was a significantly improved and preserved rail fence. Window and door screens were repaired and replaced in all windows and the door by Jim Hickman (MSO 52), under the direction of David Singer and Russell Heaton. Bill Ruskin and David Singer completed repairs on the chimney by replacement of a few bricks and tuck pointing and repaired the foundation by removal and replacement of broken concrete in the stone/concrete foundation. All contributed to the grading of the area around the main structure to allow water to drain. One

of the final tasks to be completed was the performance of a recon mission to determine the possibility of recovery of the old latrine. That was completed to the unsurpassed standards of a U-2 pilot (Warren Pierce) and the final decision reached that the mission was not achievable and should not be attempted.

The site is eligible to be listed for the National Register of Historic Places for its association with the development and administration of the San Juan National Forest and as a well preserved example of a pre-CCC-era, Ranger-built guard building. The crew feels the work here has given the guard station new life and resulted in the preservation of another structure of historical significance to the USFS. The Pagosa District has used the Turkey Springs Guard Station as a location for outdoor education and interpretive programs in the past, and envisions continuing to use the facility for these purposes and day use programs in the future. Another NSA job "well done".



Just getting started



Making good progress



Finished! Looking really good!



Back L-R: Bill Kopplin (assoc.), Ron Siple (MYC 53), Ms. Julie Coleman (USFS), Russell Heaton (Assoc.), Warren Pierce (CJ 64), Skinny Everett (Elevated Fine Foods), Melissa Childs (EFF)
 Middle Standing L-R: Jimmie Hickman (MSO 52), Doug Wamsley (MSO 65), Zsa Zsa (Dog), David Singer (Silverton Restoration Consulting, seated), Richard Hilderbrand (MSO 66 Standing)
 Seated L-R: Kepler (Dog), Bill Ruskin (CJ 58), Steve Vittum (MSO 71), Ray Carter (MSO 54)

NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER CENTER, WEST YELLOWSTONE, MT

Chuck Haynes (associate)

Barry Hicks (MSO-64), along with a group of others, started the National Smokejumper Center in 2006 to introduce kids to the outdoors by using the history and traditions of USFS and BLM smokejumpers. In September 2011, four historic log cabin structures from the old Madison Ranger Station – the headquarters building, the ranger’s cabin, the barn, and the garage – were relocated to their new home in a city park at the southeast edge of town, on the west entrance road into Yellowstone National Park. It is situated beside a parking lot which it shares with the local visitor’s center and IMAX theatre, so plenty of people see it every day during the tourist season. Barry, his wife Linda, Frank Burhenn (employee), and Mark Petroni, along with other volunteers, run daily classes (Mon-Sat) for children ages 6-12 on the characteristics of fire, how fires start and burn, fire fighting operations, etc. They have a mannequin dressed in a smokejumper’s jumpsuit, suspended from a parachute, surrounded by the various tools jumpers use for fighting fires. The kids are given a short physical fitness test and a written exam. Finally, they do a jump (from a 2-foot high platform) with Barry acting as the spotter, giving last minute instructions and reminders. Upon successful completion, the kids are made “Junior Smokejumpers.” It’s quite a show to watch, and those of us who were there thoroughly enjoyed seeing it. Next time you’re within 100 miles of West, take the time to see the center and the show.

Although individual ex-smokejumpers have volunteered to work at the center, this crew of Ted Rieger (MSO-51), Hans Trankle (MSO-51), Frank Fowler (MSO-52), Gary Lawley (MSO-57), Lowell Hanson (MSO-58), Tom Oswald (MSO-58), Steve Anderson (MSO-63), Menno Troyer (MSO-68), Tom Blunn (assoc.), and I comprise the first smokejumper trail crew to have performed an NSA-sanctioned project there. Joan Hanson and Pat Troyer accompanied their husbands. Joan helped Linda in the gift shop and Pat worked with Menno doing a number of carpentry tasks.

We made a lot of progress, but there is more to do. The headquarters building is used

as the welcome center, gift shop, and office. It is in decent condition, so we did no tasks in there, although improvements are in the works for future projects.

The ranger’s cabin is also in fairly good order, although we had to do a thorough cleaning to make it livable for future volunteers. The basement is unfinished. Menno and Tom O., who did nearly all the carpentry work, built a temporary staircase to allow easy access. Lowell, Frank, Ted, Hans, and I moved the furnace into the basement. We tied the furnace securely onto a dolly, wheeled it into place, and slowly lowered it down the stairs. The area was so tight that we could barely maneuver it into place at the top of the stairs. Once in place, we lacked the space to lean it back. So we threaded one end of the rope through the window behind us, where Hans stood as an anchor to keep the furnace from crashing down the stairs. Frank and I held up the front end of the furnace with straps to keep it from tipping forward, Ted held the dolly handle and gently eased it off the top step, while Lowell stood on the stairs below the furnace to keep its descent slow and steady (and to be smashed like a bug if the rest of us lost our grips or balance). There were high-fives all around when we got that done.

In front of the cabin was a 100-cubic-foot dirt pile that needed to be put under the front porch to fill voids left by the contractor who had dug the basement. The fill was supposed to have been done before the front porch was added, but, the best laid plans So Hans and I filled the wheelbarrow and delivered it to Lowell who crawled under the porch to spread it. Joan came looking for him once, and all we could show her were Lowell’s feet sticking out, like the Wicked Witch of the West.

We also were asked to plant posts along the road next to the cabin, a barrier to delineate the property and to keep the snowplow from getting too close in the winter. I guess that’s important in West Yellowstone. We don’t plow snow in Austin. Nevertheless, the three of us attacked the task with such vigor that we attracted a number of supervisory personnel.¹ We also worked on

¹ Supervisory personnel are those who observe, comment, and offer suggestions. It is important to note that supervisors don’t actually perform tasks or demonstrate the techniques they suggest.

finishing the cabin's back porch railing. Fortunately, Menno came over and did the technical work. The consensus among the crew is that Hans, Lowell, and I are not carpenters.

The garage was divided in half by a wall. To convert the garage into a place to conduct classes during inclement weather, the center wall was removed. Tom O. and Menno tore the wall down, salvaged the lumber, and used it to build two doors, which they installed as a double-door in place of one of the three overhead roll-up doors. They cut the lumber on a diagonal to make sturdy single thickness doors, and then added a second layer on each to double its thickness. These are substantial doors. They should last.

Mounted on the wall they removed were conduits to light switches and power outlets. Those had to be moved to the side walls. Ted volunteered to do the electrical work, but since he's color-blind, he needed an assistant. I'm very skilled at distinguishing between red, blue, black, and white wires, so I agreed to assist. When we were finished, all the conduit, junction boxes, and light switches were neatly and securely mounted to the wall. All the lights in the garage/classroom were on one circuit-breaker and worked and all the power outlets were working off two other circuit breakers. Our colleagues were impressed but suggested that if we ever decided to work as electricians, we should charge by the hour rather than by the job.

After moving to the new location, the staff used the garage and the barn to store whatever wasn't needed immediately. We were asked to clean, inventory, and organize those areas. The barn was particularly problematic. It had become a catch-all storage facility after the move, and Barry identified it as a "nearly impossible" task. Frank, Ted, Gary, and Steve completely reorganized the barn. They emptied it, and then slowly moved items back in, sorting and organizing as they went. They mounted hand tools on the walls for easy access, improvised shelving for the lumber, and put content labels on cabinets. I supervised² much of this

work. Gary did a complete inventory of the garage's attic, sorted and organized, and identified items beyond repair. He also did a lot of the cleaning. He especially loved sweeping attics when the rest of us were working downstairs, under the dust falling through the cracks.

Frank, Gary and Steve dug a trench from the barn to the headquarters building to allow for installation of electrical cables and eliminate the extension cord from the headquarters building. Several of us threaded cables through a PVC pipe, laid it into the trench, filled it in, and mounted a junction box on the side of the barn. Several of the guys gathered and spread sawdust into the lecture area, particularly in the exit simulator area, where the sawdust provides junior smokejumpers a soft landing spot for their practice jumps and keeps the dust down in the area.

All in all it was a great week of camaraderie and accomplishment. Hans kept us smiling with his comedy shtick, although he should not quit his day job. Tom Blunn, chef extraordinaire, kept us well-fed with delicious meals, often overlooking the NSA-provided menu. One evening was spent watching the movie "Red Skies of Montana", which Hans and Ted were in. But the highlight for me was the trip to the West Yellowstone smokejumper base. We toured the facility Monday, and then watched a proficiency jump Tuesday morning. Three spotters on the ground conversed with the aircraft and filmed the landings. Four 2-man sticks jumped, one with round parachutes, three with squares, and there were two equipment drops. Briefed on safety, we were allowed onto the landing zone, so we got some up-close views of the landings. The spotters explained that later the jumpers would gather for critiques of their individual jumps and general discussion on the group's performance. As we were departing, I shook hands with one jumper who responded by saying, "Thank you for your history." Though not a former jumper, I understood his meaning. Those who are jumping today recognize and respect the history, traditions, and sacrifice of those who preceded them.

² See footnote 1.



The crew enjoying the Movie "Red Skies Of Montana"



L-R: Lowell Hanson MSO 58, Joan Hanson, Chuck Haynes-assoc, Hans Trankle MSO 51, Pat Troyer, Menno Troyer MSO 68, Tom Oswald MSO 58, Ted Rieger MSO 51, Linda Hicks, Barry Hicks MSO 64, Frank Fowler MSO 52, Gary Lawley MSO 57, Tom Blunn-assoc, and not in picture Steve Anderson MSO 63.

To Those Who Make it All Possible

Like most casual participants of the “NSA Trail Crew” experience, we sign up, show up, do the work, tell our tales, drink our anti-dehydration fluid, delight in the fellowship, eat “Very Well, thank you!”, and ultimately head home to our “real job”, or at least to our “real world”, if we don’t have a job anymore. However, there are several folks who voluntarily labor through the fall, winter and spring checking out trails, cabins, fences, politics, personalities, and materials needed for the coming summer. Then some of these same folks, and a few others, play “crew leader” for a week in the summer for a bunch of us old timer, used to be, has been, smokejumpers, who for whatever reason, can’t quite get it all out of our systems. And usually with each crew is another volunteer who has the onerous task of keeping this crew well fed. That being said, here is our attempt to say to all these folks a great big **Thank You!**

The folks in the “Management Team” are: Tom Blunn (Social Chief), Dwight Chambers (Med-Kit POC), Jim Cherry* (past Application Chief, and almost everything else), Fred Cooper (Plans Officer), Paul Evenson (Back Country Horsemen Liaison), Chuck Fricke (Financial Officer), Dan Hensley (Safety Officer), Dick Hulla (Training Chief), Jeff Kinderman (Chief Sawyer), Ron Larson (NSA-TP Emergency Contact), Rod McIver* (Tool Maintenance Chief), Robert McKean (Recruitment Chief), Jim Phillips* (Operations Officer), Bill Ruskin (Blog Site Chief), Roger Savage (Chief Scout), Chuck Sheley (NSA Website POC), Jim Thompson (Merchandising Chief), Richard

Trinity (Chief Doc), Gary Weyermann (Logistics Officer), Bob Whaley* (Emeritus Trail master), Steve Carlson (Email Chief), and three folks who help with legal stuff, Jack Atkins*, Doug Wamsley*, and Louis Uranga. Several of these folks also play crew leader and participate in multiple projects.

Others, who were “Crew Leaders” and typically designed their own projects, include: Wild Bill Yensen, Richard Hilderbrand, John McDaniel, Tom Kovalicky, Ron Stoleson, Dave Poncin, Scott Belknap, Barry Hicks, Mike Prazeau, Tim Aldrich, Don Whyde, Perry Whittaker, Dave Dayton, Hal Howell, Spud DeJarnette, Steve Henry and Carl Gidlund.

Several Back Country Horsemen Packer organizations volunteered to get our crews into and out of their projects. These included the Salmon River and North Idaho Chapters of the Back Country Horsemen in Idaho and several Forest Service Ranger District Packers.

And who is left but the cooks? All are volunteers, some were jumpers, and several are associate members of our fine organization. They are: Bill Breyfogle, Karen Connelly, Chuck Corrigan, Tom Blunn, Jimmy Deeds, Shelly Dumas, Sylvia Eisenmann, Phyllis Geddes, Joe Kroebar, Stan Linnertz, Carlos Orona, Sue Palmer, Rawhide Papritz, Beverly Poff, Suzanne Poetzsch, and Diane Tidwell.

Each crew also had one or sometimes two EMT/medical personnel. From all the reports, it appears that they had little to do, which speaks volumes to the way we work in the woods.

*Those so noted were also crew leaders.

Editors PS: A special Thank You goes out to Jim Phillips, Fred Cooper, Jim Cherry, and Crystal (my daughter-in-law), for actually reading this entire document and suggesting corrections, noting omissions, and offering generally constructive comments.