



TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013



NSA Trails Program Volunteers of the Year

The Trails Team Committee wishes to recognize Kim Maynard (MSO 82) along with her husband, Al Charters, as volunteers of the year for 2013. They have graciously allowed Trail Team Members access to their property for the purpose of certifying/re-certifying members in the use of chainsaws and crosscut saws. Working with trainers and certifiers, Kim and Al have identified trees suitable for falling and bucking. Having proper certifications are crucial for members to safely work on various trail projects, and to be in compliance with USFS regulations.

Due to a generous monetary contribution by Kim and Al, the Trails Project owns a Conex storage container. Located at the Aerial Fire Depot; the container stores the bulk of tools and equipment used on trail projects. Squad Leaders now have greater flexibility to best outfit their projects.

Thank You Kim and Al !

A Buddy Project Jim Phillips MSO-67

The NSA Trail Program employs a buddy system as part of its Project Safety Protocol. We look out for one another. And, increasingly informal buddy projects are cropping up in concert with the NSA Programs.

The latest Buddy Project was for Dwight Chambers (MSO 66). Dwight was paralyzed from the waist down as he performed his volunteer duties for the National Ski Patrol at the Great Divide Ski Area North of Helena. Dwight has been the purchasing agent for the NSA Trail Program medical supplies and a regular at the Helena Chapter of the National Smokejumper Association coffee klatch every Tuesday. His accident hit the local boys pretty hard but not as pervasively as his wife and children.

Dwight had a long recovery including 70+ days in ICU at Benefis Hospital in Great Falls, 30 days in a transition facility in Billings, and another 60 days at the Craig Hospital in Denver. Given the extensive recovery and rehabilitation Dwight experienced it was with great joy to find him in good spirits with his sense of humor intact as family, church, forest service, Marines, Student Assistance Foundation, and Smokejumpers, joined with a professional

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contractor to cement, frame, reconfigure, roof, and landscape Dwight's family home into a handicap accessible facility. For three days up to 65 folks per day ripped, repaired, and reconstructed the Chambers home.



The Smokejumper Buddies able to schedule time to help in the building project were: Paul Johnson (MSO 75), Jack Atkins (MSO 68), Tom Andersen (MSO 67), Jim Phillips (MSO 67), John Holtet (MSO 61), Doug Getz (MSO 58), Bob Benzie (MSO 56), and Ken Travis (MYC 55). At a subsequent coffee session the "buddies" agreed that we really do need one another in the same way we needed one another on a two-manner in the wilderness. We encourage you to reach out to a jumper with an encouraging word, a visit, or a helping hand. They will appreciate the gesture and you will feel good about yourself.

Chuck Corrigan
Jim Phillips (MSO 67)

Chuck Corrigan loves Smokejumpers but now sadly he has to leave behind his summer association with the jumpers on the trail crews. Chuck is a NSA Associate and Trail Program cook and has been for 13 years. Age, infirmity, filial responsibilities, and a reasonable fear I will harangue him as being the world's worst trail cook are his reasons for stepping away.

Chuck Corrigan loves Smokejumpers and they, in turn, love him. Chuck would show up for a trail project equipped and ready to cook or

pack. He slung hash for folks in the Bob, the Selway and the Scapegoat. He came armed with tales tall, whiskey strong and a cussed doggedness to do what was needed. Smokejumpers identified with the bullheaded independence he practiced, his grumbling delight in the trail challenges, and his idolization of those of us who took them on.

I was with Chuck on a Dean Ridge Project in 2010. He lacked some of his usual luster; his banter was blunted; so, I asked him if he was all right. "Yeah, OK," he said, "just tired". Two days after the project he was in St. Patrick's Hospital in Missoula having a triple bi-pass on his coronary arteries. I accused him of having eaten too much of his own cooking.

We recognized this retired College President by naming him trail project volunteer of the year in 2004. If you aren't a Smokejumper, being named volunteer of the year sounds like high praise. If you are a Smokejumper you know the highest praise a jumper receives is ribbing from the bros. Chuck earned and deserved both the award and the joshing.

Renn, Chuck's wife, will gain a husband for a couple more weeks in the summer. Some would say good for her. Those of us who hammered rocks with Chuck's biscuits wonder if she is really getting a good deal.



I will miss Chuck next summer. I will miss seeing him reach into his pack box and extract a bottle of Canadian Mist and throw the cap in the fire. I will miss his stories and the laughter he stimulated and provoked. Thanks, Chuck for being a part of my life. I am a richer man for having shard time with you!

Johnson's Corner Update Stan Linnertz (MSO 61)

The 3rd annual "Johnson's Corner Smokejumper Day" was our biggest and brightest. Here is why -- We were privileged to have the National Smokejumper Scholarship Award presentation during Smokejumper Day. The presentation was made to Chris Wennogle (FBX 07) by Major Boddicker (MSO 63). It was an honor for us who have jumped to have Chris with us, and as Major said, Chris is a talented exceptional young man.

We had our largest group of jumpers/associates along with Johnson's Corner staff. Wild Bill Yensen came from Utah and shared jumper stories with our scholarship winner Chris. Deb Peters and husband Charlie came down from Idaho. Deb has been with our trail program in the Sawtooth National Recreation area for 13 years. She added to the sunshine of Smokejumper Day.

Chauncey and Christy Taylor, owners of Johnson's Corner, and their staff are not only major contributors to our trail program, but Smokejumper Day raised \$1,799.79 this year. They also provide food and Chuck the cook for some of our projects. Christy and Chauncey are major givers to their community, including their church, other civic organizations, and the people they touch in their lives.

Special thanks to Doug Wamsley for his help and our new Rocky Mountain project.

Tax Exemption Status of National Smokejumper Association

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.

Editors Note Steve Carlson (IDC 62)

As usual, some projects changed name and/or location as the start date approached. This led to some confusion in figuring out which ones really happened and what they were called. Two projects were canceled for various reasons.

I could only include information that was submitted. Hence, you will find some reports with no pictures, and some pictures with no names. That is what I received.

I did minimal editing on most reports, (spelling and punctuation mostly) however I did do a little condensation on a couple, but hopefully keep the authors touch for you to enjoy.

You will notice more white space than usual. We have a hard size limit for this, and I had to delete and shrink pictures to make it fit. Sorry 'bout that. If you want to print this document, or part of it, I will be happy email you a version that will have higher quality pictures.

Once again those of us who just show up and play in the woods for week owe a huge THANK YOU to those who spend large portions of the winter working with the Forest Service, National Parks, BLM, and others, for setting up projects for us to enjoy. Check out the website "www.nsatrails.com" for a complete list of who's who in the NSA Trails organization. You will find email addresses so you can send the appropriate folks a "Thank you", to tell them you appreciate their efforts.

Smokejumper base abbreviations:

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

Bear Creek Report

Mike Prezeau (MSO 67)

Another July, another NSA project, another chance to spent a week with your mates in the field. The Bear Creek crew had another great week on the edge of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, at the Bear Creek Guard Station in the Madison District of the Beaverhead Forest, 20 miles south of Ennis. Mike Oehlerich (MSO 60), Mike Prezeau (MSO '67), Bill Hutcheson (MSO 74), and Jack Kirkendall (MSO 74) returned from last year's crew, and Rand Herzberg (MSO 74), who had a conflict last year, joined the crew.

Sunday morning found four of the team grocery shopping as we recovered from a great reunion banquet the previous evening. Kirkendall was en route from an EPA training session in Alabama. Once we were fully provisioned, the four of us headed off across central Montana. As we were driving, Kirkendall was boarding a plane in Atlanta, preparing for a late night drive to Bear Creek after landing in Missoula.

Bear Creek was as we left it the previous July, a beautiful little valley in the shadow of Sphinx Mountain, about 100 yards from the wilderness boundary. We parked at the trailhead and carried our groceries and gear to the cabin, 50 yards or so away. As we loaded groceries into the refrigerator, we sympathized with those intrepid trail crews who were hiking to their wilderness destinations. A couple of us grabbed a shower as the others unfolded their chairs and cracked a beer. Kirkendall arrived after midnight and crashed in the back of his pickup.

The following morning, after a good breakfast and cup of coffee, we embarked early to erect the scaffolding and began tearing the old shingles off the side of the roof we were going to re-shingle. Because of the roof's size, the decision was made to re-shingle one side this summer and the other side next summer. As with last year's project, the roof has a steep 12' x 12' pitch, which requires close attention to scaffolding, cleats, and roof jack placement. There are heavy trim pieces manufactured from peeled lodgepole logs that require hanging over the edge while final measurements are made and the pieces can be trimmed and notched for final installation. As with last year, our senior crew member, Oehlerich, who

trained in '60 (you can do the math) scrambled to the peak of the roof to hang over the edge while the trim pieces (and later, the ridge cap) were installed. Though the rest of the crew would never stop heaping good natured ridicule on one another long enough to admit this, Oehlerich is an inspiration to the rest of us "youngsters." You could put that guy back on the jump list today.

Five inches per course, as the week passed, we made our way up the roof to the peak. We generally started at 7:30 and worked until mid-afternoon, when the sun was blazing. Interestingly, the sun didn't seem like such an impediment for those who retired after work each day to fish the Madison or golf at the beautiful little course in Ennis. Hutch again outdid himself in the kitchen, in addition to working full shifts on the roof, and Rand treated us one evening to a delicious Dutch oven meal.

Tim Aman, the district recreational officer, again did a great job of making sure we had the materials we needed before we needed them, and of working along us with every hammer swing.

It was another successful and enjoyable week for the Bear Creek crew, and we look forward to returning in 2014 for our third year.



Mike on the roof, finishing up.



Time to just take it easy for a bit.



The whole crew on the roof.



L-R: Mike Oehlerich, Bill Hutcheson, Mike Prezeau, Jack Kirkendall, and Rand Herzberg.

Bighorn Crag Trail Maintenance

Perry Whittaker (MSO 71)

This 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 Crag Campground at an elevation of approximately 8,400 feet in Section 31, T. 21 N., R. 16 E., B.M. in the eastern part of the Bighorn Crag approximately thirty-three air miles west of Salmon, Idaho and ten air miles east of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. The trail continues in a north-northeasterly direction from the Crag Campground.

Sunday evening was spent at the campground. On Monday morning July 15 Geoff Fast and the Salmon River Backcountry Horsemen packed our camp supplies into our campsite located in the head end of a tributary of Deer Creek lying in Section 24, T. 21 N., R. 16. E. approximately six and one-half (6.5) miles from Crag Campground.

The crew consisted of ten NSA retired smokejumpers: Bill Werhane (MSO 66), Robert McKean (MSO 67), Bob Smee (MSO 68), Bruce Ford (MSO 75), Jeff Kinderman (MSO 75), Tom Lindskog (MSO 75), William (Bill) Thomas (MSO 75), Mike Poetzsch (RDD 79), Kim Maynard (MSO 82), with 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, the Wilderness Ranger on the Salmon/Challis, and others from the Salmon/Challis worked with us during the week.

The project involved an estimated eight and one-half miles of trail maintenance on the Gant Ridge Trail No. 28 and the main Crag Trail No. 21. July 16 and 17 was spent working an estimated five and one-half miles of the Gant Ridge trail from base camp in a northeasterly direction out Gant Ridge. This work included removal of down trees from the trail using cross-cut saws, falling pack bumper trees, removing saplings and seedlings within the trail corridor; removal of overhead branches within ten feet of trail surface, together with tread work on some of the steeper parts of the trail. The upper parts of the trail approached an estimated 9,400 feet elevation. We had magnificent views from the upper elevations looking westerly into the Big-

horn Crag making the hike in and the daily work most gratifying.

On July 18 and 19 the crew worked from base camp towards the Crag Campground completing trail improvement work on an additional three miles of Trail No. 21 and Trail No. 28. This work included: installation of fifteen water bars, maintenance of five water bars, construction of seven check dams, four trail reroutes encompassing approximately 210 feet, removal of eleven pack bumper trees, removal of numerous saplings and seedlings within four feet of trail center, several hundred feet of tread work, and removal of overhead branches hanging within ten feet of trail surface. All trail work was completed without any significant injury.

We had the pleasure of working with Harrison Stone, a Wilderness Ranger, on July 18 and 19 who taught us how to construct water bars by either falling or cutting logs seven to nine feet long that were then installed in the trail to assist with the diversion of water off of the trail. This was a new water bar construction technique to most of us. He also taught us how to construct check dams with either rock or logs.

The crew thoroughly enjoyed the meals prepared by Suzanne during the week. She went above and beyond the call of duty and we were blessed to have her on the crew. Every meal was a culinary experience. 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! On Tuesday evening it rained on and off for several hours. The crew crowded into the kitchen area under the kitchen fly in an attempt to stay dry and to dry out. Suzanne just went about her business preparing and cooking for us!

Our crew bonded well and we had a great time telling and listening to stories about one another and other old smokejumpers. The stories around the evening camp fire were plentiful and most interesting some of which I thought had a "can you top this aspect"!

Many thanks go to the Salmon River Backcountry Horsemen for packing our gear to and from the trailhead near Crag Campground to our base camp in the Deer Creek Basin area.



The Crew: Standing L-R; Perry Whittaker, Tom Lindskog, Bill Thomas, Jeff Kinderman, Kim Maynard, Bruce Ford, Rachael Kaufmann, Mike Poetzsch, Geoff Fast, Suzanne Poetzsch. Kneeling; L-R; Bob McKean, Taz Henderson, Bob Smee, Bill Werhane.



Manning the misery whip: Bob Smee, Tom Lindskog, Bill Werhane



Putting in a water bar: Kim Maynard, Isan Brant, Bill Thomas, Bill Werhane, Perry Whittaker



At Left in front of Frank Church Sign: Jeff Kinderman, Mike Poetzsch, Tom Lindskog, Bill Thomas, Kim Maynard, Bob McKean, Bob Smee, and Perry Whittaker

Black Bear Corral Rebuild

Robin Hamilton (MSO 69)

Sunday, July 14, after the 2013 reunion, ten members of the Missoula smokejumper class of 1969 drove from Missoula to Spotted Bear at the South end of Hungry Horse Reservoir, the northern gateway to the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Some of us hadn't seen each other for 44 years. After a night on mediocre bunks, we woke at 5:30 so we could get our gear to the packers by 6:00, then back to the cook house for a breakfast of eggs, sausage and toast. The ten volunteers were Fred Axelrod, Keith Beartusk, Lon Dale, Dave Dayton, Leo Griego, Robin Hamilton, Mark Johnson, Luke Lemke, Mike Owen, and John Stewart.

After driving several miles to the trailhead, we started walking at about 7:30. Dave Dayton, who organized the trip, assured us it was only an eight-mile walk, but he had only floated the South Fork, never walked the trail. We were glad we only carried day packs. The river is a beautiful wild river and the trail provided several spectacular views of gin-clear water with a stunning range of greens and blues: chartreuse, lime, teal, cobalt, ultramarine. Twelve and a half miles later and in 85 degree heat we crossed the suspension bridge to Black Bear Station and set up camp, sweating like mules and twice as tired. Around the old collapsing corral were several dozen cut and peeled logs that we were to use to build a new corral capable of containing a Sherman tank or a herd of bison. Our gear was waiting for us and Phyllis Geddes, the cook, was planning dinner. She and Floyd Adams had ridden in right behind us.

We slept fairly well, although a few of us were on spring cots that must have been flown in before the 1964 wilderness bill. We woke at 5:30 on Tuesday for breakfast and then went to work on three tasks: hanging a new gate, replacing the thirty-six foot feed trough, and building a new corral with sixteen foot logs averaging ten to fourteen inches in diameter. The most difficult chore was pulling the old, rotting posts and digging new holes to a depth of 36 inches.

The Ranger gave us basic directions and after a little analysis of tasks and tools, these old jumpers got to work. The Ranger guided us for the morning, but after watching us work, he just got out of the way. I'm sure he never had a

crew of ten, all of whom knew how to pull a crosscut saw and accurately swing an ax, as well as measure, plan, and use mechanical advantage. Because it's wilderness, we couldn't use any power tools.

We worked until 4:30, then headed for the river for a skin-tightening swim in 62 degree water. After dinner the stories began. Except for a few of us who had stayed in touch, entire lives and careers had elapsed, children born and grown, personal tragedies, successes, failures, triumphs. And, of course, there were firefighting stories. I found a piece of plywood to make my second night's sleep a little better.

The second day we started work at 6:00 a.m. and worked until breakfast at 8:00, then back at it until 4:30 p.m. Another hot day and the wet t-shirt trick utilizing evaporative cooling became popular. We had finished the feed trough, installed the new gate, and built so much corral that we thought we might finish early on the third day. A few went fishing after dinner and reported it excellent, though all fish were released. We had enough beer left for one apiece, cooled in the South Fork. Most of us needed at least a splash in the river to clean up before bed. Mark Johnson facilitated another round of personal stories that deepened our awareness and appreciation of each other's lives.

Same schedule for the third day. Even old smokejumpers don't sleep in when there's work to be done. Sure enough, we finished up early and cleaned up after lunch, about 1:30. If there had been more corral logs ready we could have finished the last thirty feet of the corral. With all the work done, there was nothing to do with the beautiful blue afternoon but swim and fish. So we did. There's a great swimming hole about 300 yards from the Black Bear bridge and Leo, who lives in Barstow, CA, played seal in that cold water for nearly half an hour. Four of us kept our limit of three fish so we had fresh trout as an appetizer. After dinner several people produced small, half empty bottles of spirits since it was the last night and it would be a shame to pack it out. Stories and spirits flowed and we slept well.

The hike out was much easier than the hike in and some of us dallied to take pictures and harvest huckleberries. We stopped at the Elkhorn Bar in Hungry Horse before driving back to Missoula. Dayton asked if we would be interested in another project next summer and most of us said yes, depending on the location. I'm not sure about the other guys, but I slept a good part of the next day. I also wrote a poem about the experience, a villanelle. It's a wee bit sentimental, but the repeating elements of the form reminded me of the repetition of tasks we did in those long ago summers.



L-R: The Ranger, Mark Johnson, Leo Griego in the back, and Robin Hamilton.

Ed: See the backnotes (p. 50) for the poem.



Mike Owen and Dave Dayton with crosscut saw.



The finished corral.



L-R: Dave Dayton, John Stewart (partly hidden), Keith Beartusk, Leo Griego, Mark Johnson, Luke Lemke, Lon Dale, Mike Owen, the ranger, Fred Axelrod, Robin Hamilton.

Bridge Creek Project Clearwater-Nez Perce Forest Bob Whaley (MSO 56)

The NSA Trails Program wound down our 15th year on one of the season's last crews with the Bridge Creek outing in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, sponsored by the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Wilderness Foundation. Once again, Jim Renshaw's North Idaho Back Country Horsemen (NIBCH) team of Joe Robinson (top hand), Larry Cooper, (camp chef extraordinaire) and special photographer, Roger Inghram, did another outstanding job of packer support for their 9th season of getting our sorry asses into the back country and without whose support these jobs just would not get done. Roger put in a lot of time and expertise into filming the effort and we hope he got what he worked so hard to achieve.

This year's crew again saw many of the usual suspects with JB Stone (MSO 56), Dan Hensley (MSO 57), Bob Schumaker (MSO 59), Bob Cushing (MSO 59), Jim Phillips (MSO 67), Jim Lee (MSO 77), and Geof Hochmuht (GAC 63). Geof augmented the crew as part of the NIBCH team and was a great help. Once again, this was an outstanding group of very excellent participants that personified the true meaning of compatibility: Accepting each other's few weaknesses while respecting their many strengths and always striving to do somewhat more than what was expected.

The Bridge Cr. Project was once again on very familiar turf in the Elk Summit area and brought back recollections of our "fleeing" that same area when the Bridge Cr. Fire of 2007 caused evacuation of our Bear Cr. Pass project and destroyed thousands of acres in the Clearwater NF.

This year's assignment took us into that burn for trail maintenance with water bars, steps, trail reconstruction and pulling two to three foot high pine saplings that threatened to overgrow about four miles of trail. (Oh, our aching backs!) Once again we completed more than what was alleged able to be accomplished in the allotted time. Significant improvement was also made to the Hidden Cr. ford on Trail #1 and the ford at Swamp Cr. and Big Sand Cr. which was aided by Joe Robinson and his

steed, tromping down the trail and clearing blow down on the far side of Big Sand which better delineated the ford crossings. The days were VERY HOT with 95 temps and work was called most days at 1500-1530 since the shade was mighty sparse in the old burn. However, relief was quick in coming with the rapid shedding of sweaty clothes as we came into camp and the cool, fresh waters that awaited us in Big Sand Creek with bathing and even some actual swimming in the deep pools that meandered past camp. The SBFC Foundation was very supportive by providing Corey Swanson who was no stranger, having worked with us at Moose Cr. in 2010. He is a very seasoned trail maintenance hand and was most helpful in his guidance in the proper installation of water bars and steps which were badly needed in the two mile section of Trail #28 leading into the Big Sand area. Corey's help and professionalism were greatly appreciated. We cleared nearly fifty blow downs off the trails and completed twenty five water bars and steps on Trail #28. Corey had to leave us on Thursday so we enjoyed our traditional Friday night steak fry on Wednesday so he could participate in that special feast. Before departing he did confide in me that he was anxious to get home to his dog and woman, to which I queried, "In that order Corey"? No, not really he said, but you will never mention that will you? Oh no, I said, not me. Katie Knotek hiked in for the evening meal on Monday and we enjoyed her visit as usual but she had to depart in the morning.

Three members of the original crew had to cancel out due to family commitments and responsibilities. They were Dennis Pearson who missed for the first time in 15 years. He's made every one since the inaugural season of 1999. Also, Larry Nelsen and Gary Weyermann who have been very loyal participants for nearly as long. They were all missed but I know they will return.

We also thank Jerry Power, Dale Floerchinger, and Lonnie Rogers, for meeting the crew at the trail head with the most welcome beer and Pepsi refreshments and Roger

Inghram's surprise with the Haagen Dazs ice cream treats from his rig. Larry Cooper's excellent fare was always anticipated whether it was his Dutch oven dessert specialties, or just performing his magic over the burners for his morning and evening delights. Joe Robinson char-coaled the top sirloins to perfection on Wednesday evening and except for the one that found its way into the turf, which I said was obviously his, were the finest we've ever had. Bob Cushing and Jim Phillips choreographed a very special presentation of several books, signed by all, to Jim Renshaw who was visibly touched by the

thought and gesture. He needs to know that we could never convey to him what we all feel in our hearts for the outstanding support and friendship he and his most capable crew have generously contributed through the years to the numerous successes realized in the maintenance of many miles of trail networks in the Clearwater-Nez Perce Forests. Unfortunately Jim has said that this is probably his last year in the program. "The packs just seem to be getting heavier each year" he said. Happy trails old friend.

Semper Fidelis.



Pelican ... err ... Cache Creek Project Jim Phillips (MSO 67)

Fred Cooper (NCSB 62) negotiated a Yellowstone National Park Project that I scouted and planned with Bill Hopkins, the YNP Volunteer Coordinator. It was an interesting project in "Grizzly Central" or officially, Pelican Valley. The fire gods, though, had other ideas. Two fires loosed in the park threatened the Pelican Valley Trailhead forcing YNP Officials to close our access to the planned project one day before the project start.

Disaster loomed but for the creative and imaginative help of Bill Hopkins. In a scant two hours he secured another project, saving me from turning away crewmembers in route from CA, IA, CO, WY & MT, and resetting the food purchases and logistics for all of us. Bill saved the day with a project but the backup plan was unscouted and so lacked a clear plan of operation which gave the crew fits for a couple of days, until the work could be identified, strategized, and prioritized. Once done the crew hit a production stride expected of a NSA trails project crew.

Battling elevations of up to 10,000 feet, daily rains, obstinate bison, limited beer rations, and 6 to 10 mile round trip work hikes, the crew, composed of Doug Wamsley (MSO-65), Don Whyde (MSO-66), Gene Hamner (MSO-67), Richard Trinity (MSO-66), Mike Poetzsch (RDD-79), Dick Hulla (MSO-75), and Suzanne Poetzsch (Assoc. Cook), persevered and prevailed. Were it not for the ample quantities and creative cuisine of our nurse, cook and mother hen Suzanne, we would have suffered severely. As it was we were only mildly inconvenienced, marginally physically stressed and minimally mentally numbed by our challenges.

Don Whyde has been given a posthumous project dumb ass award. Don claimed he "cracked a couple of ribs" but then refused to take a light duty day opting to "tough guy it" up to the 9,957 ft. Republic Pass, setting water bars, establishing dip drains, cutting trail re-routes, positioning steps, sawing logs, and totting rocks for cairns along the way. We believed Don's claim of injury because in a memorable moment he said that he "fell on the creek rocks" without the requisite "No S---" Smokejumper

story preface. He gets the reward for not milking the situation and ending up with a "good deal" light duty claim.

Though the park standards of use and maintenance production values vary significantly from what the association has grown accustomed on national forest and wilderness lands, Yellowstone remains a viable project area. Clearly the association and the park service can benefit from a continued refinement of processes, procedures, expectations, and protocols to help each organization meet their separate objectives.



Mike Poetzsch masters the drawknife.



L-R Facing Camera, Dick Hulla,
Rich Trinity, Doug Wamsley



Foreground with saw - Rick Trinity,
Background with pulaski - Mike Poetzsch



Standing L-R, Suzanne Poetzsch, Mike Poetzsch, Doug Wamsley, Don Whyde,
Rich Trinity, Dick Hulla
Kneeling L-R, Gene Hamner, Jim Phillips, Bill Hopkins (NPS)

Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum

By Tommy Albert (CJ 64)

The Siskiyou Smokejumper Base, affectionately known as the Gobi, was decommissioned after the 1981 fire season in a centralization move by Region 6. Subsequently, the property was turned over to Josephine County. The county had no real use for the buildings and they sat, unmaintained for 25 years. In 2004, the Josephine County Airport Manager proposed bulldozing the buildings down.

The Gobi, not unlike other jump bases, holds a special place in the hearts and souls of those who jumped there. It is difficult to put into words, but the nostalgia one feels when walking the grounds floods the mind with fond memories of comrades, the adventure, and tradition. Having near 40 proud years bulldozed into the ground in one afternoon was unthinkable. To make a long story short, Wes Brown (CJ-66), Roger Brandt (NPS Retiree), Gary Thornhill (CJ-68), Gary Buck (CJ-66), Sharon Westcott (Airport Board Member), and Harold Hartman (CJ-65), entered into a drawn-out, often heated battle to keep this from happening. In order to convince the Commissioners keeping the buildings was in the best interest of the county, they had to present a plan for their use; thus, a museum.

One way to help solidify this into viable museum status was to get the base on the National Register of Historic Places. There are strict guidelines to meet the Register criterion. It required that the structures be returned to their original appearance. This was not a simple task because some had been modified from their original state. This, plus the brutal weathering they endured during the quarter century of neglect placed a labor intensive and costly burden on a restoration project. Money was not our strong point. It was fortitude, coupled with a vast treasure of skills and drive from those who jumped at the base, including a handful from other bases, and local volunteers collectively resurrecting the base.

There is more to be accomplished but the work that has been completed truly impresses visitors, especially those who have seen the "before and after". When they learn it was accomplished by volunteers, they are even more impressed.

The museum has accumulated an impressive amount of display items, largely from donations from other bases, including a 4000 photo archive stretching back to the early 40's. As all of us know, jumping is not your run of the mill, 8 to 5 job and the story intrigues visitors. Many never heard of "Smokejumpers". Those who had heard of Smokejumping only had a cursory knowledge and were awed by the tours. Though we just officially opened the doors late last spring, we have had over 1600 visitors and the word is spreading so we anticipate this to increase substantially in the future.

One of the more exciting additions to the museum is the acquisition of a Twin Beech. We are still actively soliciting donations to reassemble and modify the airplane with the special smokejumper modifications (jump door, static line, spotter's window, jump step) and painting it in the 60's era Forest Service paint scheme. When completed, this will be a popular display. We are also preparing to reconstruct the training area which, like the airplane, will be a popular and interesting display for visitors.

Though the museum is located on the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base, it presents the complete historical record of Smokejumping and firefighting from its conception to the present. We hope you will come and visit. Better yet, we invite you to participate as a host, a tour guide, a work party volunteer, or a donor. We have a comfortable apartment available as well as camper hook-ups. The museum is open from March 15th through November 15th but special tours can be arranged at any time by calling Gary Buck at 541-441-4804 or by visiting our web site: www.siskiyouSmokejumpers.org. Gary can also answer any questions you may have about participation.



Twin Beech to be restored for a static display.



The Admin building in underway. L-R: Murray Taylor, Tommy Albert, Don Bisson, Troop Emonds, and Garry Peters.



The Admin building getting the finishing touches.



Loft interior, packing room.



The crew working on the loft roof.



Above: Admin office interior, with display pictures.

Right: Barracks and bathhouse.



BACK TO THE SAWTOOTH

Ron Stoleson (MSO 56)

It was a hot, dry, breezy and sunny day on Sunday, July 7th when we met again for a week of work on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in Central Idaho. This was the first year our project would be independent of Missoula for equipment such as Tents, Stove, etc. All our food and gear was brought by Stan Linnertz in a rented van from Colorado. Our work site was the Tuckaway horse pasture, a couple miles north of Obsidian in the scenic Stanley Basin. On reaching the site, we found a candy striped parachute spread out as an umbrella providing a shady place for the camp stools. The chute had been set up by Digger Daniels and Wild Bill Yensen who had spent the previous week with Kovalicky's crew rebuilding a corral at this same location. The turn off to the campsite from the main highway was signed with the initials NSA and an arrow. Some of us were worried that we could be mistakenly identified as a camp for THE NSA, the agency so much in the current headlines for spying.

We had originally been scheduled for a job near Bowery Guard Station up the East Fork of the Salmon River but were diverted because of potential right-of-way problems. Our crew was made up of veterans of other Sawtooth jobs—in fact at least three have been returning to projects on this Forest for 13 years. Our specific mission this year was to repair and renovate more than one-half mile of barbed wire pasture fence along the main Salmon River. Because the horse pasture is also used by antelope and wintering elk, there were special requirements for the fence construction that would make it wildlife friendly. Antelope passage considerations required the bottom strand of wire be no less than 18 inches off the ground. The fence was to be constructed so it could be let down during the snow season and not become a barrier to the movement of wintering elk.

Monday morning dawned clear and cold. I had ice on my tent and the hot coffee and breakfast really made a hit. Our excellent food was donated again this year by Johnson's Corner Truck Stop who also provided a fancy, leather-bound dining guide listing the menu for the week. Chuck Orono, a chef at the truck stop who has cooked for us the last two years, was

unable to join us this year but Stan Linnertz and Deb Peters, long time crew cooks, took over the meal preparation job without a hitch.

Monday mornings work involved finishing up some corral and fence work left over from the previous week before starting on the main fence along the Salmon River. We got to the bigger job that afternoon and were faced with many posts to be removed and replaced along with the removal of old, rusted barbed wire. The ground was very rocky so the post hole digging was tough. We also had a lot of brush clipping to clear the willows from the fence line. But with work horses like Jim Burleigh, Ken Kiser, Digger Daniels, Charlie Brown, Doug Howard and Wild Bill Yensen, the job progressed rapidly.

We were joined for dinner on Tuesday by Deb's husband Charlie and Deb's Forest Service boss, Jay Dore. On Wednesday night we were joined for our Surf 'N Turf dinner by five Sawtooth National Forest personnel including Forest Supervisor Becky Nourse. We were pleased these officials shared their time with us. We had some good discussions around the campfire that night.

The project was completed by Friday morning which allowed Digger to travel to Missoula for the smokejumper reunion that afternoon. Ron had left the day before to pick up his wife in Ogden and then travel to the reunion.



Jim and Digger caught working.



Sawtooth Tramps 2013 with Sawtooth Range in background

Back row L-R: Ken Kiser (MYC 75), Ron Stoleson (MSO 56), Digger Daniels (MSO 61), Deb Peters (Assoc. and Sawtooth Project lead), Doug Howard (MSO 64)
Front row L-R: Jim Burleigh (MSO 58), Charlie Brown (IDC 56), Wild Bill Yensen (MYC 53), Stan Linnertz (MSO 61). Photo courtesy of Wild Bill.

Two Tales of Dixie

Wild Bill Yensen (MYL 53) Part 1
Jim Phillips (MSO 67) Part 2

Part 1

We started to gather at the Pine Valley Ranger District Bunk house on May 5th. Stan Linnertz (MSO 61) and Chuck Orona (Assoc) were first to show up in a van full of food from the Johnson's Corner truck stop in Colorado. Wild Bill brought Dr. Dave Hemry (MYC 64) and Mike McCracken (CJ 60) in next. Then Jim Rush (MYC 65) showed up and a few minutes later Doug Wamsley (MSO 65) and Jimmie Dollard (CJ 52) rolled in. Jim Phillips (MSO 67) arrived and shortly after that Tom Wilks (GAC 87) was delivered by his son who lives in Cedar City. We claimed our beds in the bunk house, put up tents, and had supper when Digger Daniels (MSO 61) and Gary Hendrix (Assoc.) arrived and got in on supper. Our crew was widely dispersed, one each from Utah, Hawaii, New York, Alaska, Idaho, and Kansas, three from Montana, and four from Colorado.

We had strange weather for May in Southern Utah. We had intermittent hail, rain, snow, and thunder nearly all week. The weather did not stop us from getting a lot of very good work done. Jim Rush took most of the crew and built the fence around the Bunk house area. Jimmie Dollard, Dave Hemry and Wild Bill built a pole gate to finish the enclosure. The fenced in area required 935 feet of three-wire, smooth wire with cedar posts and stays and the 16 ft. gate is a work of art.

We also built a bulletin board sign, repaired a hinge on a gate at the entrance to the camp ground, repaired two tables in the bunk house, and corrected the lean in the fence at the Heritage Center. We also burned a slash pile.

The weather cleared enough every day to allow us to get all our work done. It was cold and wet and one day the snow stayed on the ground till afternoon. It was cold enough that we were very lucky to have that bunk house as it rained nearly every evening and twice it snowed.

We all enjoyed the superb food prepared by Stan and Chuck that they brought from Johnson's Corner Truck Stop in Johnstown Colorado. Chuck is one of their best Chefs. We all thank them for supporting the N.S.A. Trails Program.

We all had a great time, in spite of the weather, and we are all very proud of our work. The Dixie Forest people all said "See you next year".

Part 2

It was a wonder. Mike McCracken (CJ 60) traveled from mid-state New York and Tom Wilks (GAC 88) winged in from Princeville, Kauai, Hawaii for the project. The wonder was not that they had traveled so far but as NSA Trail Project rookies they declared and were inducted into the sacred society of the Order of the Purple Glove. For the greater number of you not so anointed the OPG is a dishwashing honorary society and only the most diligent scrubbers are certified as members.

The wonders continued with the apprenticeship of Jim Phillips (MSO 67) and Dave Hemry (MYC 64) in "witchery". That's to say in the utilization of arcane scientific principles to walk about with witching rods and locate sources of water. It was truly a wonder that Dave, a licensed physician and rational scientist, didn't combust having allowed himself to be romanced by the occult practice of "witching". But following the witching exercise there were no further incidents of exposing buried wires or sewer lines.

It was a wonder that a crew of 10 would contain four engineers and an even greater wonder that "Digger" Daniels (MSO 61), Charlie Brown (MYC 56), Gary Hendrix (Assoc.), and Jimmie Dollard (CJ 52), could envision, lay-out, and complete a combination pole and wire fence complete with a gate. Under normal circumstances with four engineers the fence would still be in the plans and testing phase of development. It might be the Smokejumper influence, but that assertion should be tested, verified, replicated and subjected to peer review.

Maybe the old saw of "those who can't do, teach" was again proven erroneous by teachers Jim Rush (MYC 65), "Wild Bill" Yensen (MYC 53), Tom Wilks (GAC 88), Mike McCracken (CJ 60) and Jim Phillips (MSO 67), who stopped asking "WHY?" and dug and tamped and stretched and stapled and wired the fence as directed. The practiced orations of former Marine

and prosecuting attorney Doug Wamsley (MSO 65) provided the verbal stimulus for the aforementioned to work fast and get out of earshot. All that is wondrous!

None of the demonstrably great construction accomplishment would have happened had the crew not been fed the delicious Johnson's Corner food prepared by supreme cook Chuck Orano, an NSA-assoc. Had there been more time the boys would have stopped wondering if and found evidence of some old impish Norwegian pranks played by Stan Linnertz (MSO 61). We strongly suspect Stan of casting Norse spells leading to two days of rain and two of snow in a bizarre perverted attempt to give Hawaiian Tom Wilks a full mainland wilderness experience.

The crew's appreciation of Johnson's Corner chow, structurally accurate fence construction, witching, engineering miracles, and the absence of WHY questions were bracketed by two seminal events. First, while some of the more

mature and rational folks were fetching fencing supplies, some of the boys torched a brush burn pile, which had the effect of startling the local fire warden into making an animated appearance and notifying the district ranger. The second event was the last night appearance of the district ranger to bless our Herculean effort of creating a fencing edifice from scant supplies and to absolve the guilty parties of complicity in attempted arson.

It was all so much fun some of the boys failed to consume all their adult beverages before pulling out and it was incumbent on those remaining to complete that task. As I remember it was the first time I had fun finishing what others should have finished. Oh, yeah, despite the questionable arson charge the Dixie Forest land managers want us back. Guess sequestration is working in favor of the NSA Utah Trail Crew. Wonder about that!



L to R: Charlie Brown, "Digger" Daniels, Gary Hendrix



L to R: Gary Hendrix, kneeling unidentified, Jim Rush, view of Levis unidentified, Doug Wamsley, Mike McCracken, Tom Wilks



L to R: "Digger" Daniels, Doug Wamsley, Jim Rush



L to R: "Wild Bill" Yensen, Jim Rush, Charlie Brown, Mike McCracken, Dave Henry

Moving the gate— A mixed group of jumpers, associates and district personnel.



Standing L-R, Stan Linnertz, Tom Wilks, Charlie Brown, Doug Wamsley, Jim Rush, Jimmie Dollard
Kneeling L-R, Wild Bill Yensen, Carlos Orona, Gary Hendrix, Digger Daniels, Dave Henry, Mike McCracken, Jim Phillips

Gateway NP & NYC Dan Mitchell (RAC 78)

The crew met May 19th at Ft. Tilden, Rockaway Peninsula, Borough of Queens, New York City. Our Squad Leader, Chuck Reinhardt (MSO 66), a New Jersey resident, planned and organized this project to assist after the devastation of super storm Sandy.

The crew consisted of: Chuck, Gene (MSO 68) and Becky Hamner (Assoc.), John Driscoll (MSO 68), Greg Lee (FBX 73), Linda Robbins (Assoc.) and myself.

Ft. Tilden, a former Army base, was part of the coastal artillery of World wars 1 and 2, later it became a Nike missile base that was decommissioned in 1974, then it became part of Gateway National Park. Our housing was the former base commander's residence, with ample room for all.

The project for Monday and Tuesday was constructing a fuel break to protect the residential structures of Breezy Point from fire originating on The G.N.P. The work was done old school, i.e. chainsaws, brush cutters and loppers.

Wednesday brought a change of venue. A 2.5 hour bus and subway ride brought us to the northern part of Central Park. Under the guidance of the Central Park Conservancy we improved hiking trails by installing log barriers. The trip to Manhattan included a visit to the American Museum of Natural History.

Thursday we drove north to the Jamaican Bay Wildlife refuge to rough cut a trail that will eventually be a handicapped path for bird-watchers.

Friday we drove across the Verrazano Bridge to Staten Island, the former Ft. Dix, which is now part of the G.N.P. Here we cut brush for a fence line. The fence will pen in goats to be used for fuel reduction.

It was an interesting and fulfilling week. The rain did not deter hard work. Our objectives were met and surpassed. The usual trail crew evenings around a campfire were replaced by communal meals and long talks in the residence dining room.

A "Thank You and Good job" goes to our park service liaisons: Keith White, the volunteer coordinator, Tomas Liogys, A.F.M.O. and the gregarious Chris Mailo, Maintenance Su-

pervisor. The work of Carl Hemphill and Ralph Guccione of E-94 must also be noted in this reported.

No one in the crew knew of the severity of Chucks' poor health before we met on May 19th. He toughed it out until Thursday when chronic fatigue forced him to return home to his family. Much to our sorrow died on June 11th. Chuck will be greatly missed on NSA trail projects. His warm friendly manner with a keen sense of humor will be missed.



Our humble home away from home at Fort Tilden Park, NY.



L-R: John Driscoll and Gene Hamner on the log, a park employee, Lin Robbins and Greg Lee on right, working on a water barrier.



L-R: Gene Hamner, Greg Lee, John Driscoll, park employee, Dan Mitchell making a water barrier in Central Park, NY.



L-R: Lin Robbins, Gene Hamner, John Driscoll, two Park employees, Dan Mitchell .

Hidden Lake Trail Project Phil Difani (MSO 67)

Due to a FS administrative glitch (sequester), the funding for the Ledford project disappeared and rather than cancel the Gallatin NF participation for this year, Gordon Ash, the Ennis Ranger District, designed a replacement project at Hidden Lake.

The crew members were: Robin Embry (GAC 85), Richard Trinity (MSO 66), Phil Difani (MSO 67), Jim Phillips (MSO 67), Rod McIver (MSO 64), Nancy McIver (Assoc.), Joe Chandler (MSO 71), Kathy Elzig with dog Buster (Assoc.), Gary Stitzinger (MSO 65), and Dick Hulla (MSO 75).

Day 1, July 14: We traveled to Hidden Lake trailhead and after some spirited discussion, settled on an unimproved campsite adjacent to the trailhead. Gordon Ash arrived late in the afternoon with a wall tent and the rest of the tools. Camp was set up, Nancy and Kathy served a fine dinner followed by the familiar beer drinking, acquainting, and reacquainting stories.

Day 2, July 15: Most of the crew worked on installing 10 large water bars right at the start of the main trail while Rod and Phil worked a 1/4 mile secondary trail used to get boats down to the lake.

Day 3, July 16: We worked 2 1/2 miles of trail to a point where we met a Montana Conservation Crew working the other direction down from Hoodoo Pass.

Day 4, July 17: Worked a 5 mile section of trail from Hidden Lake through Lost Mine Canyon to a ridge top above Cliff Lake. Lots of chainsaw work with Phillips and Trinity doing the sawing while we swamped and swung pulaskis. Jim and Richard did such an outstanding job sawing they got B falling/bucking certified. Later, Phil and a crew went ahead to do some fence mending which they did on some barbed wire, but just didn't get up to the cross buck fence on the to do list. Next year?

Day 5, July 18: Grant Godbolt (MSO 71) arrived the previous evening and agreed to join the crew. We split into two crews and worked in opposite directions sawing out an old 1/2 mile long spur trail that connected the boat trail down to Hidden Lake with the main trail. This trail was still popular with fishermen and hikers,

even in its logged in state, thus our effort should be appreciated. We were done early enough to enjoy some fishing and swimming. Gordon showed up for steak night and thanks to Grant and Dick it became a surf and turf dinner with the addition of fresh trout.

Day 6, July 19: We spent the morning packing up camp, which ended with the ceremonial final trash fire. Most of us got away around noon, after assisting Grant in dragging his boat back up to the parking lot.

A good time was had by all. Nancy and Kathy proved once again their mastery of backcountry cuisine; Phil and Gary kept us informed of the bird sightings that ranged from sand hill cranes to the western wood pewee; Rod and Joe kept the two chainsaws in fine shape and Rod proved you can file rakers with a large mill bastard and no gauge. At least two different bears were sighted, one large black bear and one most surely grizzly, plus a large cat track. On most days a dip in the lake was made after work and the fine evenings around the campfire were spent discussing such esoteric subjects as socialism and capitalism while modest amounts of beer and whiskey were consumed.





HORSE BUTTE LOOKOUT Bill “Murph” Murphy (MSO 56)

Our project started on July 14, 2013, the Sunday after the Missoula Smokejumper reunion.

The crew was small with two talented members, Bob Derry (MSO 45) and Monroe “Spud” DeJarnette (MSO 49) with Bill Murphy (MSO 56) as the third helper/squad leader.

We had excellent support from the District with Fred Jones, West Zone, FMO Gallatin NF and Rudy Slegel, Maintenance Foreman, Hebgen Lake Ranger District who worked alongside the Smokejumper project crew. Fred and Rudy spent the entire week working with us. District Ranger Cavan Fitzsimmons also spent part of a day working with us.

Our crew members were provided quarters in the Hebgen Ranger District bunk house in West Yellowstone, MT. There were individual rooms, hot showers and a kitchen with multiple refrigerators that stored our “evening refreshments”.

Since this was a small crew, we were not provided with a cook. However, we did have terrific meals which were provided by the local High Altitude Catering Company. This was a pretty cushy deal for us “Old Timers.”

The project called for maintenance of the Horse Butte Lookout which provided spectacular views of Hebgen Lake, the surrounding Gallatin National Forest and Yellowstone National Park.

Safety fencing on the catwalk was removed and the railing was raised to meet OSHA standards. Four of the eight shutters were replaced. The shutter job was made much easier by using the wench on Bob Derry’s truck to hoist the new replacements the 40 feet up to the catwalk. The job also required much scrapping and painting of the safety rail, the exterior of the cabin and the stairway. Bob helped to break the monotony of scrapping by accidentally using the power grinder on his left arm. The grinder incident took a small chunk out of his forearm. For those of you who know Derry as a “hard worker and tough as nails”, you will not be surprised to hear he did not miss a lick of work after first aid at the site was applied and a brief run into the West Yellowstone medical clinic.

The good news is by the end of the week, our crew had completed everything the District had indicated they wanted done.

Overall, this was a great week for all of us. The weather was perfect with a scenic work environment. We also managed to uphold the Smokejumper tradition of completing our planned project for the year with minimal manpower.

There were lots of stories and new friendships forged with tasty refreshments during the “happy hour”. The “*old timers*”, Bob and Spud, did try to lead “*the kid*”, Murph, astray with “*the hard stuff*”.

Come Saturday morning - Bob and Spud were up bright and early for the return drive to their respective homes in Wenatchee, WA and Auburn, CA. Murph headed out later for nearby Dillon, MT.



L-R: Bob Derry, Spud DeJarnette, Fred Jones, Rudy Slegel, and Bill Murphy



L-R: Spud , Fred, and Bob, figuring it out.



Spud working on the deck



L-R: Spud, Bob, and Murph

Huckleberry Lookout Project Don Whyde (MSO 66)

Year two at Huckleberry Lookout started on Sunday when the crew assembled at Blackrock Ranger Station and Work Center about eight miles east of Moran Junction. The crew included several members from last year: Fred Cooper (NSCB 62), Doug Wamsley (MSO 65), Don Whyde (MSO 66), Jamie Schoen and JP Schubert from the Bridger Teton Forest Headquarters at Jackson Wyoming. The four new members were: Jack Sterling (MSO 66), Jim Scofield (MSO 66), Dennis Kissack (our cook), and Bill Hesketh (Assoc.).

We met with Jack Hatch, our packer, and dropped off our gear and tools for the project. There was the usual check of personal gear, and a tool inventory. We met briefly with Tom Matza, the District Ranger. We drove to Flagg Ranch. After dinner we met in the parking lot at the Lodge to discuss the project details and established a time to meet in the morning. Then we set up camp for the evening.

In the morning we gathered at the trailhead by 8:15 AM, and hit the trail at 8:45. Jamie Schoen went ahead to meet the packer at our campsite cutoff from the main trail. That seemed like a good idea at the time. The climb out of the Snake Valley to 9,000 feet did not seem as tiring this year. Maybe we were in better shape or perhaps the pace was just about right.

The packer passed us about 3 miles in. We all thought "Great- our gear will be at camp when we get there. We will have the afternoon to set up our camp facilities and get everything ship-shape." Ahhhh-the best laid plans of mice and men. We arrived at camp at 12:30 PM. The first surprise was "No packer, no Jamie, and no gear". We waited at our campsite until 2 PM when we sent out two search parties. We found Jamie and our gear about 500 yards south of our campsite along the base of Huckleberry Rim. They had gone too far south before cutting west toward the rim and missed the campsite. That is a nice way of saying-"mixed up, turned around, and confused."

Now we had to decide if we should establish camp where the gear was or move to our designated campsite. The drop point was not a good site, undergrowth, trees, a weak wa-

ter source, and 500 yards from the Rim trail. Don, the crew leader, decided that we would move to the designated campsite. The move was upslope, grueling and tiring. The last load was at camp by 5:30 PM and the crew was plain tuckered out. No facilities had been constructed except the latrine that Bill and Don set up. Neither swore to its functionality. On the upside, Dennis had dinner ready by 6:30 and provided all with a much needed dose of calories. He also had a most welcome campfire going. Some of the crew did not eat dinner, just pitched a tent and hit the sack.

Tuesday broke cool but the sun already promised a lot of heat for the day. It was not a false prophet. The kitchen crew was at work getting their area set up. Jim was busy setting up the shower and the water crew was at the spring improving it, and filling bags. They would have made a Marine sergeant proud. Breakfast was pancakes, eggs and kielbasa. I don't know where Dennis got the recipe for kielbasa and eggs but it was a very good lumberjack breakfast.

We loaded up our gear and tools and hit the Rim trail at 8:30. It was just 20 yards from camp. The trail itself was not so welcome-steep, rocky, and nasty for about 300 yards to the rim, then easy money to the Lookout. There was the usual lookout appraisal before turning our focus to the window arrangement and how to remove them. Bill did a little screwdriver and hammer work and says "Yeah-they come out like this". Hmmm, that flatlander might be handy to have around!

We split into two groups, saw crew and the shapers. You can figure out what the saw crew did. The shapers smoothed the logs on two sides so they fit flat when stacked. Sounds easy but that crew had to center the log, mark the two sides that would be shaped for fit, and then shave the sides with axe and drawknife. It was precise work and Fred, Jamie, JP, and Bill did that job professionally. Doug and Don were the sawyers and Jim and Jack were the lookouts. More than once during project they demonstrated sharp eyes and sound knowledge about falling. And they were great relief partners when Doug and Don were tired. The fallers cut 3 trees,

bucked them to 15 foot lengths and, with help from the shapers, hauled the logs to a work station where the shapers could go to work. Now folks, a fifteen foot log nine inches in diameter on one end and up to twelve on the other is not a load that you just walk away with. We had three log haulers so we had a six man team hauling the logs and that made the job much easier.

We headed off the ridge at 4:30 and had a dinner of pasta with meat sauce and veggies at 6PM, a hearty fare for a hungry crew. After supper the shower received a workout. Doug broke out his traditional grape beverage and goblet and Jamie kicked in with some Jack Daniels. The campfire was a most welcome evening affair. The bugs were light, the stories all true, and the laughter robust. A satisfying end to a good day.

Wednesday broke cool and promised some relief from the heat. Breakfast at 6:45 was pancakes and sausage, as good as any you'll find. We hit the trail at 8:15. It was a great way to get the heart and lungs working properly. The saw crew began scouting for logs. They cut four trees, measured them, and bucked them to length. 156 inches someone said and that was what we cut. Now let's do some quick mental math here because we didn't do that at the time. 156 inches is not 15 feet. Dumb! So we ended the day with 4 logs, two at fifteen feet and two at thirteen feet which is somewhat of a mystery. Where the hell 156 inches came from remains shrouded in secrecy. Somebody knows but they ain't talkin'! The upshot is that we ended up two logs short.

The saw crew found two trees earlier that contained very good logs but were joined together at the stump. The cut angle was high and the arrangement looked dicey so they passed them. Now, however, they looked doable so they decided those were the logs to get because they were close to the shaping station. The first was easy to figure out but the second was big and straight up which made the fall angle difficult to figure. The first was cut and we calculated where the second would fall. This is where our two lookouts came in big time. Jack proved to be an accomplished wedge man and forced that tree over to where we wanted it to go. It started to fall but hung up. In a flash three actions occurred: Doug removed one

saw handle plus all its parts, Jim finished the job with a few short strokes, and Dennis picked up a Paul Bunyan sized pole and levered the tree precisely to where we wanted it to fall. Everyone headed for the escape routes. When we put the saw back together, the wingnut was missing. It had been dropped along the escape route. There we were, six guys combing the duff and soil looking for a wingnut. We never did find it. We blamed it on Doug who felt badly but we still nicknamed him "Wingnut!" JP came to the rescue. He used a nut off one of the log haulers and it fit perfectly. We fixed the log hauler with "100 mile an hour tape", and were back in business.

We left at 4:15 PM for camp. Supper was Pena pasta, meat sauce, beans and a salad. Good fare. As is customary, Doug had his box of liquid refreshment set up but the evening was capped with a cold alcoholic beverage from our spring. Elixir from the Gods! The fire was warm, banter keen, laughter hearty, but the "Fact Checker" may have had trouble with some of the stories.

Thursday morning was sunny, and already warm. Dennis served up a breakfast of pancakes, bacon, eggs and coffee. We hit the trail for another day in paradise. The logs had been cut so this was a day for shaping and hauling logs to the lookout. We decided to have a 6th log, just in case, so the fallers located one and quickly had it cut and bucked to length. Jamie, JP, Fred, and Bill centered and marked the logs then everyone set about making chips fly. To get the logs to the lookout with the log haulers and six men, we adopted the old line "bump up" method to change out tired arms. We finished at 5:15. According to Jack's pedometer, he logged a total of 6.59 miles that day. Astonishing, but up, down and around, up to the lookout and back, it all adds up.

We headed down the ridge to a dinner of chicken enchiladas, salad, and chili beans. Folks, you have not tasted chicken enchiladas like Dennis makes. They were divine as was the chili. The pots were scraped clean and we were looking for more.

The fire was welcome, the stories superb. Some may have made a con man blush but insofar as this writer could determine, they were all factual! There was Doug's favorite beverage to finish off and Jamie's JD. Those were polished

off with gusto. Two beers were left. I don't know who got the last one but Bill got the other. It was a most satisfying day on a project well done.

Friday morning we awoke to the smell of fresh coffee, which will rouse the most ardent sleeper. Pancakes, sausage, bacon, and hash browns were the perfect beginning for a hike out. We were ready to head out at 9:45 AM. The packer had not arrived so we waited until 10:45. Still no packer, so we hit the trail. Jamie stayed behind to help the packer and come out with the string. He kept a radio so he could keep us updated. JP had the other. We met the packer about a mile from camp and figured about an hour wait for him after we reached the trailhead.

We met a family about a mile from the trailhead, three teenagers, two girls and a boy, mom and dad. We all noticed their attire: shorts, tank tops, sandals, one in flip flops, no visible water, no jackets, rain gear, bear spray, map, and likely no GPS or compass. They wanted to hike a trail in the West before heading to Yellowstone. Sheffield Creek was the one, more by chance than anything else. They intended to walk as far up the trail as they could, then turn around and be back by nightfall. We wished them well and reminded them to be careful.

We hit the trailhead at 1:30 PM. Long sleeves came off, t-shirts went on, boots came off and sandals appeared, long pants came off and shorts appeared. There was one exception. Jim wore the same set of shorts and t-shirt the entire project. It was rather difficult to describe them and even more difficult to describe his bitten, scratched, and bruised legs. Someone wanted to take a picture for posterity but something in Jim's voice indicated that wouldn't be prudent.

Don had a few Gatorades left and they quickly disappeared. At 1:55 the family we met arrived back at the trailhead. They had hit the steep part of the trail and realized how unprepared they were. They made a wise choice in coming back out.

No packer by 2:30 PM (seemed to be the norm for this trip) so folks began to wander off. Several went to Sheffield Creek to wash the trail dust off, some to Flagg Ranch for a cold drink or coffee and one went to the Snake River to clean

up. I bet you can't guess who that was but he came back with clean shorts and T-shirt, and looked like a million bucks!

By 3 PM, still no packer. Repeated calls on the radio got no response. Jamie arrived at 3:15 without the packer. A young mule had broken loose and they had one hell of a time catching him. The same mule acted up again while they were loading which cost more time. The packer finally arrived at 4:14 PM. By 5:30 everything was unloaded and everyone had their gear and we said our goodbyes. A good crew headed for the comfort of home.

Well Done Guys.

See You on The Trail!



Huckleberry Lookout



Felling Crew: Doug Wamsley, Jim Scofield, Jack Sterling, Don Whyde



Lunch time L-R:-Jack Sterling, Jim Scofield, Bill Hesketh and Doug Wamsley (standing)



<— Log haulers front to back:
pair 1-Jack Sterling and Fred Cooper;
pair 2-Doug Wamsley and Jim Scofield;
pair 3-Bill Hesketh and JP Schubert



L to R-Bill Hesketh, Don Whyde, Jamie Schoen, Doug Wamsley, Dennis Kissack, Fred Cooper, Jim Scofield, JP Schubert, Jack Sterling

Lost Jack trail project Hal Howell (MSO 55)

It was the start of the endless two mile trail, after overnight at Spotted Bear and a nice visit with Ranger Deb, we departed Meadow Creek trail head for an unscouted camp site at the intersection of Lost Jack and Meadow Mtn. trails. After the first mile and a half the trail became hard to follow because of the brush growing over the tread. Finally we located the trail intersection at a creek crossing. There was just enough space at the trail juncture for the cook fly but no place for our tents due to brush and steep terrain. After a lot of hacking and slashing we pitched our tents on uneven ground and examined the trail to be cleared. Jim Snapp's (MSO 65) comment was "I guess we will have lunch in camp since we won't get very far the first day!"

An 18 inch 100 foot log was length wise on the trail and covered in brush. Oh well, we signed up for work, didn't we? About one eighth of a mile later a slide had washed out about 150 feet of trail into the creek. This required building a new trail thru heavy brush up a steep hillside with switchbacks. Lin Robbins (Assoc.) commented that Snapp and Tom Boatner (FBX 80) looked like they were born with a Pulaski in their hands. Scott Bates (MYC 69) scouted ahead and found lots of logs and little trail.

At the end of the first day, our cook Jim Emanuel (Assoc.) and his assistant Karen Bates (Assoc.) had the Dutch ovens going and beer in the creek. We put a thermometer in the creek. It was 42 degrees, beer perfect. I guess we made about one half mile the first day. There were only two miles to go but it looked endless. We found one jackpot after another. We had two cross cut saw teams leap frogging each other: Jack Sisco (MSO 60), Alex Mihali (Assoc.), and Lin Robbins on one and John McMahan (MSO 58), Tom Boatner, and me on the other and Snapp with his trusty Pulaski. We all took turns sawing and chopping and still only made a mile. As the trail climbed the brush thinned out but the logs increased.

On the second day as we started the hike to camp a thunderstorm arrived along with lightning and hail. It makes for great fun hiking through wet brush and hail. But the beer was still cold and the Scotch was warm.

At the end of the last day the two miles were still endless even after counting 80 logs cut, new trail built and thousands of bushes lopped. Maybe someone in the future can find the end of the endless two mile trail.

Monongahela National Forest Trail Project
&
Daniel Boone National Forest Trail Project
John McDaniel (CJ 57)

This report is short because the Monongahela project in West Virginia was cut short due to severe weather. Nevertheless, 50% of the primary mission was accomplished. The scheduled project involved the rehab of a 1930's fire lookout residence on the White Sulphur/Marlinton District. Five jumpers participated, Denis Symes (MYC 63), Jack Atkins (MSO 68), Hank Brodersen (MSO 54), Rick Blackwood (CJ 79), and me.

The building was scheduled to be

scraped, painted, new windows and a door installed. The interior was in relatively good shape and required no attention. A new shake shingle roof was also scheduled, but because of the weather it was not attempted. The rest of the project was completed.

Food and lodging was provided by the USFS at a local 4H camp that also closed early.

The Daniel Boone project in KY was cancelled due to lack of participation.



← Jack Atkins (MSO) 68 and Unknown AmeriCorps volunteer



Rick Blackwood with one of the USFS men →



Rick Blackwood (CJ 79) holding ladder , Jack Atkins (MSO 68) on ladder , Hank Brodersen (MSO 54) far right others are USFS personnel and AmeriCorps volunteers

West Yellowstone Smokejumper Center Bob Smee (MSO 68)

Here is a summary of our project at West Yellowstone as best as I remember. There were eight volunteers counting the cook. In the old Ranger residence, we hung drywall and taped three bedrooms, the hallway, the laundry and the foyer, while some electrical and plumbing work was also done. Outdoor work included relocating a fire pit and monument for the burning of unserviceable American Flags, which was originally built by the local Boy Scout Troop. There was an addition to the physical fitness units for the youth. The grounds were cleaned up, which included moving the firewood pile and some re-grading around the buildings for water runoff abatement.

I think everyone enjoyed the project and the time we spent at West Yellowstone.

The names of the participants as I recall were Tom Blunn (Assoc./Cook), Chuck Haynes (Assoc.), Bill Murphy (MSO-56), Steve Anderson (MSO 63), Ted Rieger (MSO 51), Geno Bassett (MSO 80), Hans Trankle (MSO 51),

Bob Smee (MSO 68). Frank Fowler was on the list but had a health issue prior to the project. Barry Hicks did not make the project due to a work conflict.



The Crew

North Fork Cabin Trail

Mike Overby MSO 67

As a follow-on to a 2012 TRAMPS project (that didn't quite get the job completely finished), this year's project included a small – but robust – team of five former Missoula jumpers. The team consisted of Gary Baker (67), Jim Thompson (63), Wendy Kamm (83), Lee Brissey (66) and myself. We were fortunate to have the best cook in the program, Associate Chuck Corrigan.

The project was located on the North Fork of the Blackfoot River in the Sealy Lake Ranger District/Bob Marshall Wilderness. We assembled at the North Fork Trailhead (just north of Ovando, MT) and hiked in a very flat 7 miles to the cabin.

We were grateful again for the support of the Montana Backcountry Horseman for packing us in and out - Richard Tamcke, Mike and Kim Fisher and Mark Right.

Last year the NSA North Fork Cabin crew had the job of tearing out what appeared to be a perfectly good hardwood floor in the North Fork Cabin. It had been painted in traditional "Forest Service green" at some time in the past. None the less, the earlier team was able to do the complete floor replacement and put down a few coats of polyurethane on the new floor. This year we continued the work by applying four more coats of poly that should last a long-long time. We made good use of the old green painted hardwood that was still piled up outside the cabin – it made great firewood – even though someone mentioned the old paint was most likely "lead based". We didn't inhale.

In addition to the flooring job, we also had the job of clearing the four trails that radiate out from North Fork Cabin. As these trails are highly used and major entry/exit in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, there was not a lot of downfall/clearing to be done – in most cases just kicking rocks off the trail (we did an excellent job of "getting our assigned rocks off" during the week).

One of the bigger challenges was in clearing trail to the now abandoned Falls Point Lookout – a full day's hike and clearing effort for the complete team. Although the lookout is

now burned down, there was a lot of satisfaction in the views from top of that mountain and return trip to view majestic North Fork Falls on the river.

During the week we were visited by NSA Trails Project Team Leader Jim Phillips (MSO 68) and Steve Straley (MSO 77). Jim brought in a special bottle of liquid refreshment in honor the last project of our great cook Chuck Corrigan. Chuck has served NSA faithfully over the last 12 years of the program. As he will be "hanging up his pots" this year - we celebrated his many years of faithful service to the program.

A special treat at the end of the project was attending the Missoula Base Reunion. Also our official videographer Lee Brissey created a "ready for primetime" YouTube video of our project that can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvEJ5QsuGQg>.



Wendy Kamm (Left-With Saw) and Mike Overby (Right)



Wendy Kamm (Right-Supporting Log), Mike Overby (Red Shirt - Sawing), Gary Bell (Furthest Back- Mostly Hidden) Jim Thompson (Left Pushing on Log with legs from Uphill side).



Wendy Kamm (Right-Sawing) Jim Thompson (Facing-Holding the log) Gary Baker (Left - Back to camera) Mike Overby (In Background Center - "Supervising")



(L-R: Gary Baker, Wendy Kamm, Lee Brissey, Jim Thompson, Mike Overby, Chuck Corrigan)

Priest River Experimental Forest Chuck Haynes (Assoc.)

For the fifth consecutive year, the National Smokejumper Association sent a crew into the heart of darkness at Priest River Experimental Forest in North Idaho. The primordial landscape, harsh conditions, and fierce indigenous wildlife kept us in a near-constant state of anxiety. Nevertheless, this fearless band of brothers overcame all hardships and managed to accomplish a number of tasks which will certainly keep the station going for a number of years (2013 and 2014 come to mind). Bob Denner, the resident forester, tried to keep us busy but repeatedly underestimated our capacity to complete tasks ahead of schedule (old guys rule!).

This year's crew, led by Carl Gidlund (MSO 58), consisted of Bob Sallee (MSO 49), Paul Wilson (MSO 50), Hank Jones (MSO 53), Milt Knuckles (MSO 61), Dick Burns (FBX 64), Karl Maerzluft (FBX 67), Mike Jones (Assoc.), and me. Additionally, since apparently having two Bobs on station wasn't sufficient, we hijacked a couple more from western Montana – Bob Braig (Assoc.) and Bob Cannole (Assoc.) – one as a cook, one as a cook trainee (I'm not sure which was which). Having extra Bobs worked out well. Between them they managed to keep us well-fed. Further, because Carl failed to fully explain the duties of "cook" and "cook-trainee," these guys showed up several times at job sites to lend extra hands. Finally, for those of us who are losing our minds, there was always someone to talk to – just calling out "Hey, Bob" never failed to elicit a response.

The big project this year was to replace the existing footbridge across Canyon Creek, a torrential waterway that wends its way down from Gisborne Mountain. We delayed the project from its normal mid-July time frame to August 12-16, to allow for a lower creek level. The old bridge was a two-logs-held-together-with-bailing-wire affair – not exactly stable and frequently under water during the spring runoff. We were tasked to install two footbridges, a 14-foot span and a 22-foot span, thereby improving the Canyon Creek Trail, which we had cleared in previous years. Two spans were required, since the creek splits around a piece of high ground which is ideal for raising the overall height of the crossing point. We began by

clearing about twenty yards of trail upstream from the old bridge, clearing the area into which the new spans would be placed, and reconnecting to the trail on the south side of the creek. We then leveled the areas where the bridges would rest, using flat rocks taken from the creek bed to serve as footings (simultaneously deepening the channel where the creek would run under the spans). Next we selected and felled western red cedars to serve as stringers for the spans, limbed them, and stripped the bark. We moved the stringers into position, mounted them on butt ends of cedar, and installed 36 inch long treated 2X6s for the tread. We added steps to allow hikers to step up onto the tread, which now rises about two feet above the level of the trail. The new footbridges are wide and stable and offer a substantial improvement over the old bridge (which we subsequently removed). The bridging project took about two-and-a-half days and required the efforts of virtually every member of the crew – from trail work to carpentry to tool sharpening to grunt labor (there was a lot of grunting when we were moving the stringers into place). Even the cooks got involved, as The Bobs brought lunch to our work site one day.

A second big project was limbing trees in the nursery. Apparently, white pines look better when their lower limbs are removed. Also, this will facilitate mowing, mulching, and fertilizing under the trees. (Remember, this is an experimental forest where scientists need to enter, examine, and record readings.) Each of these trees, about 100 in all, has its own tag, presumably making it easier to identify, in case it gets lost. We had to find the tags and move them to higher limbs, then haul away the cut limbs to the slash pile. Although most of the crew participated in this effort, Paul, Carl, and John did the majority of the work. Paul, being an old forester, did a lot of the limbing and, being a conservationist, collected a lot of pitch in the process (mostly in his forearm hair). Carl and John spent a lot of time hauling limbs to the slash pile. Carl began having nightmares about the slash pile. John told The Bobs how much fun hauling limbs to the slash pile is and conned them into helping out.

Another group effort was the clearing of silt from the Benton Creek gauging station. The settling pond is used to measure stream flow for a long-term research project. We attached a fire hose to a pump which sucked water from the creek and sprayed it to loosen the silt. Karl was really good at blasting away with the water (though we rotated that duty when he started mistaking crew members for silt) while another half dozen guys shoveled silt over the dam. Since most of us have years of experience shoveling silt (did I spell that correctly?), we managed to accomplish this task with characteristic aplomb.

The carpenters (Dick, Bob Sallee, and Milt) spent much of their time replacing rotting wood on several of the Depression Era buildings. Dick likes this work so much that he came in a day early to get started. (Apparently, he didn't see the Bible injunction about not working on Sunday. The guys replaced the rotting wood with cedar inserts which they painted to match the existing décor. Actually, when they were finished, they needed to spend more time making their repairs look really old – that would have been a better match.

Finally, we completed a number of minor tasks which have to be done annually – mostly site beautification. We once again put preservative on the amphitheater benches, recoated the barn door on the shop building, and weed-whacked the area around the amphitheater, the conference building, and the office. We felled a number of small trees in the commons area and piled them for burning. Hank, Mike, and I spent a few hours one afternoon performing trail maintenance and cleanup along Crow's Nest Trail

which we've worked in previous years. We also chopped and piled firewood beside the station's one permanent resident's cabin. Marina should stay warm all winter.

Of course, we didn't spend all our time slaving away. Thursday afternoon a few of us drove up to Gisborne Mountain lookout tower. It's an active spotting tower that affords a great view of the surrounding area. Sadly, smoke from fires in eastern Washington diminished the view of Priest Lake and other areas to our west. Every evening we gathered on the lodge's porch to relax and imbibe (mostly iced tea, skim milk, and lemonade) on the lodge porch. Old smoke-jumper tales were shared and eagerly believed. The Bobs brought us hors d'oeuvres, lest we pass out from hunger prior to dinner. One of The Bobs had brought a copy of Young Men and Fire for Bob Sallee to sign. Being the gracious gentleman that he is, Sallee agreed to autograph the book even as he disabused the owner as to the factual accuracy of the book's contents.

We also entertained ourselves watching the fierce indigenous wildlife (mentioned earlier). We spent the first evening fending off yellow jackets, so Denner bought a yellow jacket trap which he hung from the porch. It turned out to be quite a popular gathering place, as more yellow-jackets showed up each night. We probably caught at least 100 during our stay. Naturally, there was a great deal of debate over how best to attract the little pests. A variety of chemical solutions, home remedies, and magic potions were proposed. Mostly, I think the bugs came to listen to the smokejumper stories.

Hank Jones tests one of the new bridges





L-R: Hank Jones, Jim Burns, John MacKinnon and Carl Gidlund clean silt from the settling pond at the Benton Creek gauging station



Top row, L-R: Chuck Haynes, Bob Braig, Bob Connole, Bob Denner, John MacKinnon, Hanker Jones, Mike Jones, Paul Wilson.
Bottom row: Bob Sallee, Jim Burns, Milt Knuckles, Carl Gidlund, Karl Maerzluft

Robinson Flat Tahoe N.F. Scott "Mouse" Warner (RDD 69)

It would be hard to outdo our project at the Robinson Flat Ranger Station on the American River Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest. In addition to making the 1913 Residence and Tack Room look like the good old days of horseback, pack strings, smoke chasers, and old time Rangers as the law of the land, the Trail-side of the project put 4-5 miles of trail leading out of the meadow to the days of yore practical guidelines of "10 and 10". That's 5 feet wide clearance off centerline and 10 feet high for foot and horseback traffic - so as not to comeback for quite a while, except for deadfall.

Robinson Flat is a beloved Forest Hill Ridge landmark at near 7000 feet up in the incomparable California Red Fir forest; cool with no bugs and next to no brush. The Red Firs can attain 48 inches diameter breast height (DBH) or more and be up to 150 feet tall; mixed in with Lodgepole, White Pine, and Mountain Hemlock.

Last summer it was the NSA California contingent and Auburn-Forest Hill affiliated volunteers turn to pitch in with the American River Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest.

We enjoyed an enthusiastic, energetic, multitalented core contingent, 13 strong, with District Archeologist Nolan Smith as our Project Manager. Nolan, like the old time Rangers, worked with us, manning the airless paint gun, lining up supplies for the building restoration, and providing the practical on-site restoration guidance with an eye to history as needed for such a project. He bunked alongside our crew in the Robinson Flat group campground: complete with hand pump deep well water from the open air pump house, graveled access road, plenty of shaded flat ground, minimal dust, endless fire wood for the metal fire pits, and a vaulted "Two-Holer" (separate rooms) Out-house, complete with regular cleaning. Imagine the luxury of no NSA "Boondocks" hand-dug latrine, complete with attacking insects while in a compromised situation!

Also joining in was USFS Captain Pronto's Forest Hill Engine crew who washed down the buildings and taped masking plastic for the paint to follow. Called back from USFS retirement, Mark Lambert, along with the District

Construction and Maintenance crew worked side by side with NSA and our local volunteers on the residence front and back porch reconstruction and window frame work. District Trail administrator Mat Brownlee came by several times. In all, it was a very congenial collaborative effort with little disagreement or "group grope" characterizing the contemporary "Let's have another meeting" work place, as we just all got down to it - utilizing the particular interests, talents, and endurance of those involved.

OK, there were the recalcitrants who refused to paint and some of the Trail Crew did not want to do building work. Explanations were "My wife makes me do this", "Always hated painting", "Not getting up on that steep shingled roof", and so on. Fair enough, and that is why a combination project was cobbled together by co-organizers and squad leaders Spud DeJarnette (MSO 49) and author Scott "Mouse" Warner (RDD 69).

More than anything the NSA projects are about meaningful civic-minded work and the good volunteers - nearly all unique, along with great food, amber liquids, endless stories, and the sometimes excellent and memorable jokes.

A roadside project certainly simplified logistics. Yep, hard to beat drive-in Robinson Flat - someone brought his Recreational Vehicle; another brought a wall tent where occupants could stand up and sleep on cots. The fully equipped cook area was shaded by a big canopy, numerous picnic tables, and even a super insulated cooler for amber liquids.

Auburn volunteer Bill Wharton took his Cook and "Camp Mouse" duties very seriously: consistently putting out tasty start-from-scratch healthy food of great variety, diligent clean up, and the occasional necessary authority for looking after hard-working masters of "BS" old smokejumpers and eerily similar local volunteers. Bill has been with the NSA California contingent since late 2009, taking on with Spud DeJarnette the tasks of planning, logistics, food and supply procurement; packing, and transport. As a retired teacher, Bill has also served as "Camp Counselor" and crew photographer.

John Culbertson (FBX 69) agreed to head up the Trail portion. Former American River

District Ranger Rich Johnson (Redding Hotshots 1968) and Arley Kisling (RDD 69) expertly ran power saws day after day clearing deadfall and encroaching conifer branches in green timber. Bill Bowles (RDD 57) worked just as hard as in his smokejumper days clearing trail and working the tread. John Helmer (RDD 59) meticulously worked both his cant hook rolling logs and extension pole pruner for long-lasting vertical clearance.

The heavily used 4-5 mile Little Bald Mountain Trail loop takes in portions of the Western States Trail passing through Robinson Flat. The Trail Crew side worked very hard - putting the heavily-used trail in excellent, long-lasting condition and earning their evening amber liquids.

The Restoration side of the project had its hand's full working the Residence and Tack Room. Mark Lambert's crews and local volunteers have kept the buildings in good condition since the mid-1980s, when the unique 4-sided steeply pitched cedar shingle roof was last rebuilt. As a tribute to old time quality construction and years of committed maintenance, the roof and building have remained in remarkably good shape. Our priorities were to fix fast the four steep roof caps (ridgelines) and the short roof peak, re-shingle the roof and outside walls where needed, rebuild the front and back porches, and paint - Lots of dreaded paint! This has always provoked complaining, sniveling, and even whining - better described in British English as "Whingeing."

With the wisdom that comes with age, some old smokejumpers learn to see past painting as "a sh-- job" to a task that needs to be done! Acquired techniques come into play along with modern technology, like airless sprayers, and easy clean up water-based paint. Lots and lots of paint was spread on the residence and tack room. Colorful language was rare and there was no "Whingeing!" Perhaps it was because re-shingling the steeply sloped roof seemed more challenging.

Great care was taken not to do further damage to the 1987 roof job which was in remarkably good shape. Forest Hill volunteer Larry Jordan generously provided his boom truck with bucket to facilitate shingle work and painting. We hooked a line from the bucket to the unfortunate roof repairman in a harness.

With some shingle experience and perhaps as atonement for "Whingeing" while assigned to painting and other "sh-- jobs" in the smokejumper days, the author (foolishly) volunteered for roof shingle work. Even though securely hooked in, one never felt quite comfortable or balanced.

Not daring to snivel or whinge, on the second day I was snapped out of feeling sorry for myself when patriarch Missoula smokejumper Spud, while working shingles perched up on a ladder, said "I envy you up there." Despite his occasional declaration, "I'm no Spring Chicken", Spud is an inspiration to all. Within a few days he was in the bucket, about 30 feet up spray painting the repaired roof USFS green! Not to be forgotten, my "creative side" inadvertently came out with the short 4-foot long roof peak morphing into a non-regulation, non-historical "Pagoda". The temptation to paint the "Pagoda" gold - instead of regulation U.S.F.S. green - was resisted.

Also on building detail was Gordon Brazzi (RDD 66). There is the good "Gordon" who is cooperative, witty, has great endurance, is hard-working, and genial. Good Gordon scraped paint, plugged Tack Room batten board gaps, applied sealer, rebuilt doors, hauled and positioned paint hose for the boom truck and spray paint applicator, and even painted a bit. But alter ego "Guido" who is a character, total free spirit, sometimes naughty, and capable of insubordination, drew the line at too much painting. Perhaps it has something to do with working in his father's body shop. Or it could be when he (foolishly) volunteered to repaint the Redding Smokejumper Base combination Exit-Shock-Let Down Tower when he was a Poag. "A guy can only take so much International Orange!" snarled Guido. The last night around the campfire, the happy free spirit Guido told about his fling at being a Bull Rider, just to see if he could get good at it - in his late 50s! One never knows even after many years about these smokejumper types!

Congenial, always cooperative, eternally positive Steve Meyers (MYC 73, RDD jumper for many years) was a great addition to the restoration project. Steve scraped paint, custom cut shingles for the aerialists, worked on carpentry, was tireless with any task including hand pumping and hauling water. Although possessed with wit and being an encouraging type, Steve too

drew the line at painting and respectfully asked "To be a trail guy" for a day or so. Maybe during his McCall years he got a bad painting task from a certain foreman.

Without Forest Hill volunteer Larry Jordan, we literally could not have done the one-century-later restoration. A friend of Ranger Rich Johnson and a former tool executive, Larry is a Certified Arborist, logger, jack-of-all-trades, and civic-minded citizen who has opened his heart and wallet for the Forest Hill Ridge and Auburn area for decades. Larry provided the boom truck, custom cut specialty lumber, trailer, ladders, tools, and lots of hard work, including window frame rebuilding, roof shingling, ran the boom truck jib, and painted. "Definitely smoke-jumper material" as would have been observed by our legendary mentor McCall Loft Foreman Wayne Webb. Larry's cheerful sidekick Carol Jacoby was a welcome addition to the effort, pitching in, urging on, and enduring endless stories and the sometimes in-poor-taste jokes and commentary with a smile.

Arley Kisling should be right up there for "Volunteer of the Year" award. In addition to his power saw skills and work ethic, Arley's unmatched humor, wry world view, and finely honed ability to tease right to the edge in good smokejumper fashion, he volunteered for the last critical day of painting! Being a fellow RDD Poag 44 years ago and being in touch since then, I knew of Arley's painting and many other talents, and in the end that he would join the painting effort. Then he cheerfully organized us for a very productive and satisfying paint day.

John Helmer exhibited great character in painting some of the Residence foundation beams one afternoon, even after a day on the trail!

We had lots of contact from campers, hikers, bikers (motor and foot powered), locals, and just plain "pilgrims". Everyone was friendly and delighted with our work. The American River Ranger District has a lot of good will associated with the locals, visiting Sacramento and Bay Area folks, Tevis Cup Horse Endurance Race, and Western States 100 mile Run. That

we made things better for visitors of the Tahoe National Forest made it all the more worthwhile.

Not to be forgotten was the one-half mile level graveled trail complete with wooden bridges circling the Robinson Flat meadow. While on an earlier recon, Spud and I decided a "Cupcake" project should be held in reserve: in the event "Guido", as well as others near "burnout", would need a break. Indeed, "The Cupcake Trail" served as a personnel "safety-valve" and in the process preemptively maintained the path for those who enjoy it while coming to get water, see the old buildings with interpretive signs, and enjoy the meadow.

Another aspect making this project the best ever was our Nolan Smith's archeological survey crew of three joined us for dinner, as did two biology survey crew members. These were recent college graduates - all from east of the Mississippi River. These good kids were getting real life field experience in their chosen fields including the vicissitudes of steep slopes, tall timber, brush, yellow jackets, poison oak, and surely more to come. They joined us for the traditional End-of-Project-Steak-Night and were subjected to certain fireside rituals of the Redding Smokejumper Rookie Camp: tell about yourselves, tell a story, and a good joke. The food and conversation were more than hoped for, with stories of lost in Dublin, the sinking fishing boat with dad, darting wildlife in Africa, and the inadvertent "Joke of the Year" - "Superman while on aerial patrol spotted below" (not a smokejumper story!) The joke drawing laughter and some gasps, was right up there with "Guido's" 2011 classic; all the more unexpected from a young lady biologist!

This project will be hard to beat: a great place in the Sierra Nevada Red Fir timber, worthy Restoration and Trail projects, great NSA members, Auburn-Forest Hill Volunteers, and dedicated U.S.F.S. folks along with an appreciative public and young archeologists and biologists getting to see what the Way-Out-West mountains, forests, and "characters" (including old smokejumpers and like-minded local volunteers) are all about.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

Doug Wamsley (MSO 65)

This year produced a first, while the NSA has done projects in National Parks in the past few years, 2013 was a first time for both Yellowstone NP (the Mist Creek Project) and for Rocky Mountain National Park (known as The Rocky). (ed. Mist Creek turned into Cache Creek. See that report on p. 12.)

Planning for The Rocky began in February when several Colorado NSA members began discussing the possibility of a project in one of our country's most beautiful areas. Our early inquiries looked promising and a May meeting with park staff members clinched the deal. When the project was initially published by the NSA Trail Committee the response was amazing—over 20 people wanted to join us. Several had to withdraw and the final crew numbered sixteen.

On Sunday, June 19, 2013 we gathered at Moraine Park Campground to get acquainted and to get organized. At this point our crew included: Warren Pierce (CJ 64), Bill Ruskin (CJ 58), Steve Vittum (MSO 71), John Payne (MSO 66), Bob Doran (Associate), Bill Kopplin (Associate), Tom Butler (MSO 61), Lorena Kauffman (Associate), Joe Lord (MSO 56), Carlos "Chuck" Orona (Associate and Executive Chef), Stanley Linnertz (MSO 61 and Sous Chef), and Jordan McKnight (NCSB 04). Jordan was a trail crew first-timer and he brought with him his father Robert McKnight, his brother Nathan McKnight and his sister, Elise McKnight. Having missed the meeting where such decisions are made, yours truly was the designated squad leader.

Our evening meal and all subsequent meals were provided by Johnson's Corner, an historic truck stop and restaurant near Longmont, Colorado. The meals were prepared by Chuck Orona, one of Johnson's Corner's premier chefs and a veteran of several trail crews. He was assisted by Stan Linnertz and the food was superb. This was one of three projects supported by Johnson's Corners in 2013. Over the years they have made outstanding, and unmatched, contributions to the NSA Trail Program nationwide. If you are on I-25 in Colorado take exit 254 and stop for a great meal

and you can even shop for NSA gear in their gift shop.

We began Monday morning with trail work in the Bear Lake area of the Park. We were led by NPS Trail Volunteer Coordinator, Zephyr McConnell and her assistant, Emelia Lewis. They were energetic, enthusiastic, patient and very good natured. They were a significant factor in making the week productive and fun. Our next day's project was divided between assisting a construction crew in building a "comfort station", best described as a "six-holer" but with running water. The other project was to begin work on a trail bridge on the trail around Bear Lake. As this is one of the most popular visitor areas in The Rocky, the trail is built and maintained to the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The entire trail has to be wheel chair accessible.

To accomplish this, the entire bridge had to be removed down to the steel beam structure under the bridge and re-built anew. Both tasks were done almost simultaneously. The old material was removed and hauled nearly 600 yards, by hand and wheel barrow, to the trailhead. New material was being cut to length at the trail shop and then was hauled to the site, again by hand and wheelbarrow.

By Wednesday morning we were ready for reconstruction to begin, starting with the challenge of selecting, dropping and ripping a tree that would provide 20 foot logs to be placed on each side of the bridge. This requires heavy lifting and pretty precise saw work. Jordan McKnight's skill with a chain saw impressed all. By the end of the day, the bridge was back in service and a complete circuit of Bear Lake Trail was now possible.

As the park's trail crew schedule is four ten hour days, we were set to finish our work week on Thursday. The plan for that last day was to hike the Flattop Mountain trail up to the top doing trail work as we went. This plan was working well until just above 10,000 feet where we found the trail blocked by almost three feet of snow. But the hike was pleasurable and the views were incredible.

A trail project in a national park is a different experience for those of us who have done most of our projects in more remote areas in national forests. There were a lot of people. On many forest projects we will work the entire time without seeing anyone, but in The Rocky we saw a hundred or more people every day. While this is a different experience, it is not an unpleasant one. Nearly all the visitors were friendly and a good many expressed their appreciation for our work. The camping situation had its' challenges. While we had a large group site, there were water spigots nearby and a two stall vault toilet. This was adequate until a group of eighty high school students and their chaperones, arrived. Suddenly, the two-hole toilet was certainly less than ideal for over one hundred people.

Our national parks are heavily used and that can produce some camping and work experiences that are less than perfect. However, It also means that the work we are able to do is

even more important. We ended our week having accomplished important tasks in a breathtakingly beautiful area of America, we had a good time, we ate good food, we were with good people, and we counted the Rocky Mountain National Park Project a success.



The crew at work.



Standing (L-R) Lorena Kaufman, Stan Linnertz, Jordan McKnight, Bill Ruskin, Joe Lord, Bill Kopplin, Chuck Orona, John Payne, Tom Butler, Nathan McKnight, Doug Wamsley, Elise McKnight, Warren Pierce, Robert McKnight, Steve Vittum, Rob Doran; Seated (L-R) Zephyr McConnell and Emilia Lewis (Our Fearless Leaders)

Tuck-A-Way Corral Rebuild

Steve Carlson (IDC 62)

(With a lot of help from the crew)

We tried a different approach to the report this year. On the premise that we do all this stuff for fun, I thought "the report" could be included as part of the project, and be a group effort. I've done the last several, and thought that other folks might have a different week than I did. I asked that each of them submit a paragraph or two about what they saw/did/experienced in the week. Then I would fill in any glaring omissions. Although I didn't really know what to expect, and I didn't get input from everyone, what did come exceeded my wildest dreams. Some submitted more than two paragraphs, so the space got filled and all is well.

Our crew consisted of Tom Kovalicky (MSO 61 and our esteemed leader), Doug (Digger) Daniels (MSO 61), Bob Donnelley (MYC 52), George Cross (MSO 74), Jim Hage-meier (MSO 57), (Wild) Bill Yensen (MYC 53), Robin Embry (GAC 85), yours truly, and our fabulous cook, Shelley Dumas (Assoc.). We had our usual accommodations at Chip and Terry Carstensen's Crooked Creek resort (Way too nice for smokejumpers!).

Wild Bill's week: This year we had a great crew and built a beautiful pole corral. We got a new crew member who is extraordinary. Robin is the first woman smokejumper to retire as a smokejumper. She quickly demonstrated her skills with a chain saw. Digger turned the planning of the rails over to her, using an attachment that bolts onto the saw bar so you can flatten the spots on the poles as needed for a tight fit. When they were all up she trimmed them all very expertly.

I always offer to engrave the knives (or anything else) for anyone on the crew. I asked Robin if I could engrave her knife and she said, "You already have!". I asked her when and where and she said in Grangeville back in 1985.

I feel very fortunate to work with and get to know Robin. She was a very capable smokejumper and a credit to all of us!

Jim's Week: The Sawtooth Mountains at sunrise, not much better than that. For a week in early July our crew enjoyed the skyline while

driving to work. Over the years I have been fortunate to be on thirteen projects. Each one has been different yet some things remain the same. I've worked on my share of corrals but this one seemed different. More horse dung and heavier rails. The things that remain the same are the great people and shared experiences. I've always tried to be on different projects to meet new folks. This is getting harder to do but I was happy to get on Kovalicky's crew, my third time, and enjoy his resort. A number of the crew I had met before but I was lucky to meet a few new faces, in particular Bob Donnelley, an avid photographer, Steve Carlson, the astronomer and last but not least Super Women Robin Embry. I had a great week.

Robin's Week: I had a few trepidations about signing up for my first NSA trail project, mostly because the group I signed on with was from another era of smokejumping, and I also wasn't sure I wanted to be considered "one of those *OLD* guys" yet, as NSA members are frequently referred to amongst the current smokejumper ranks. (While I sensed my "relatively youthful" 50 year old energy was a welcome addition to the group, it was mixed with mild disappointment that I was bringing this group's average age down to 70, instead of 75...)

But after a week of working with said "old guys", I realized that there are some things about being a smokejumper that will never change, no matter what era you are from. It was remarkable to see the "*get it done, whatever it takes*" attitude that I love and value dearly, being wildly on display in this group. It showed itself every day as we sweated in record breaking heat to build a pole corral. Nobody wanted to be the first to call a break as we dug postholes in the blazing sun; George got knocked into the creek with a post rail ("Oh, I'm okay, just give me a few minutes here.") and there were secretive discussions on who could, and when to use the chainsaw...I'm sure we were a constant source of anxiety for our tireless and patient NSRA handler, Deb Peters, who had the dubious responsibility of keeping everyone safe and out of trouble.

Equally delightful to witness was the seamlessness with which jumpers always seem to be able to organize themselves, sans communication, into small teams of optimum efficiency. After the first day, we had a hole digging team, an auger team, a measuring and cutting team, a rail setting team, and even though we had the usual "8 different people, 8 different ways to do the job" we quickly settled into a well-oiled corral building machine.

Lastly, the after-hours storytelling, beer drinking, solving the world's problems, and reminiscing about wild and crazy adventures is a given, and hanging with "the old guys" didn't really feel much different than hanging with the bros, just different faces and different places...

I could go on about the Club Med accommodations, the scenery, the fabulous food, and the great NSRA and FS employees we worked with, but in the interest of keeping this short, you'll just have to take my word for it.

I am grateful to the group for welcoming me and showing me what the NSA trails program is all about.

Tom's Week: While I am thinking about it>>>>>>> All that floats thru my mind beneath the gorgeous Sawtooth Wilderness setting is; Deb admonishing us that "I Want those holes 30 inches deep.". I showed her my hands and begged for Mercy as the sun was setting on the horse corral we were building for the USFS Sawtooth National Recreation Area.....Luckily Shelley Dumas our cook fueled us for the next day to dig more 30 inch holes in something that resembled solid rock.....We finished with pride and crippled hands a beautiful corral, our FOREST SERVICE boss Deb Peters cried with excitement when she saw the mastery of our dedication.

Shelley's Week: Meanwhile, back at The Ranch . . . the cook awaits the return of the work crew because it's so satisfying to have CAPTIVE customers for whatever comes out of the oven. At Beer-thirty the freshly laundered bunch gathers on the deck for brews and banter which, luckily, dulls their taste buds before dinner is served. This is a GREAT bunch -- not only because they work hard and savor the well-established camaraderie but also because they are so accommodating! The scenario is so lovely

that one might wonder "What Could Possibly Go Wrong?" (Never mind that Digger happened to walk into the kitchen one morning as I was escorting a pan of Bacon Flambé to the sink.)

Even with the back-breaking work, long hours of liquefied discussions and the quiet, comfortable quarters, this bunch is always up at the first hint of a new day, ready for coffee, grub and lunch-making. As usual, my post-breakfast morning thoughts are of Snow White watching the dwarves trundle off to the mine . . . with a bit of 2013 image adjustment as Snow White becomes Silver Grey and is slightly past middle age.

I try to visit the work site each year to see for myself what all the sweat is about. This year's corral-construction project was set against a beautiful back-drop of the lower Sawtooth Valley; serrated peaks, a lush meadow and meandering creek. When I arrived there were mini-groups attending to specific tasks: notching logs, drilling bolt holes, digging post holes and carrying fence poles. Unfortunately, I missed George's spontaneous audition for The Flying Wallanda's but understand it was quite impressive and, happily, only resulted in a few bruises. . . And justified an extra belt of bourbon before dinner. The finished product was a sturdy, attractive, new stock-holder for the USFS. So once again, the Sawtooth Crew did themselves proud.



L-R: Robin and Bob getting an old rail to the burn pile.

Steve's week: Another week in paradise. We spent most of the first day tearing out the old corral and hauling the logs and posts out of the way of the new construction. Robin and Jim were the only ones who weren't on this crew last year. The only female we have ever had on the crew was the cook, so the trepidation Robin spoke of ran a little both ways I think, until, oh, maybe 10 minutes after she arrived, then it was gone. I actually saw her run when nothing was chasing her! None of the rest of us can run, no matter what is chasing us. And, once again, the fireworks in Stanley on the 4th of July were wonderful.



The crew watching two octogenarians digging post holes. L-R: Digger, Bob (with bar), Tom, Deb, George (with clamshell digger), Wild Bill, and Robin



Our fine Crew: Back row L-R: Tom Kovalicky, Robin Embry, Jim Hagemeyer
Front row L-R: Digger Daniels, Wild Bill Yensen, George Cross, Steve Carlson, Deb Peters, Bob Donnelley

BWCA Project Steve Henry (MSO 65)

The group of seven met at the Fall Lake Campground near Ely, Minnesota on Sunday, June 2. The group included Bob Reid (MSO 57) from Florida, Ron Baylor (MSO 58) from Wisconsin, Jack Atkins (MSO 68) from Montana, Rich Trinity (MSO 66) from Iowa, Joe Kroeber (MSO 62) and Larry Ukestad (MSO 67) from North Dakota and Steve Henry from Minnesota. Many stories and a few beers were shared while we organized our supplies at a pretty campsite. There was frost on the vehicles the next morning.

We picked up our tools at the Kawishi Ranger Station in Ely on the morning of June 3rd and headed into the BWCA through Snowbank Lake with three canoes and a 16 foot Lund with a 25hp motor. (The motor is allowed because part of Snowbank is outside the BWCA.) The Forest Service cannot reserve a campsite so we had to search for one large enough for seven.

We found a great site but it was a long way from our worksite. We had several windy days so we were happy to have the boat and motor.

We cleared trails on Monday afternoon and the next three days. Our primary goal was to clear the Benezie loop off the Kekekabic trail. It had not been cleared for several years. We also cleared three miles of the main trail. It was a good project and went well.

It had been a very wet and late spring in Minnesota, but the only rain we got was a light drizzle for a few hours one afternoon. The days were in the 60's but the nights were cool. This slowed the mosquitoes but the wood ticks were plentiful.

As usual with NSA projects there was good food (Joe Kroeber is a great cook), good company, great scenery and the satisfaction of a job well done.



(Left to right): Jack Atkins, Steve Henry, Doug Stinson, Rick Trinity, Joe Kroeber, Ron Baylor, (not pictured Larry Ukestad)

Wilderness Canoe Base

Bob Aldrich (Associate)

Jim Cherry's (MSO 57) Merry Band of Smokejumpers, spouses, and one extra (yours truly) arrived for what was the fifth annual week at Wilderness Canoe Base (WCB), a Lutheran camp on the northeastern edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). I guided at WCB, and worked under Jim, director from 1973-1982.

Our stated project was to erect a timber frame building, replacing a structure that burned in the Ham Lake fire of 2007. It was a significant fire that destroyed over 40 structures at WCB. Our job was to get the timber frame up for what will become the camp infirmary and nursing station. However, several days before we arrived, one of the septic tanks had been pushed out of the ground by the rising water table, and our first task was to winch it out, brace it, and re-dig the hole in which it was meant to rest.

This we did. Not, it should be noted, without some effort. Chuck Sheley (CJ 58) and wife KG (associate) worked hard to clear the brush from the site. Once that was done the pit crew (Don Larson (MSO 73), Francis Mohr (IDC 63), Don Havel (FBX 66), Will Tanner (WCB camp manager), Bob Aldrich (associate) and Jim Cherry) had to disconnect, and reconnect, all plumbing and wiring, and drop the 500 pound tank down to its exact, proper, and aligned, placement.

Almost every man on the project remarked how they thought that people everywhere should be forced to dig holes: convicts, soldiers, prisoners of war. If there is a hell, it will surely involve shovels.

But, after three tries, we laid the behemoth to rest where it belonged, and moved on to our main task of erecting the timber frame. If you don't know what this is, look it up. The entire frame, a tremendously stout structure, stands without a single nail. The Japanese used this design to build houses strong enough to withstand tsunamis.

We squared, leveled, blocked and decked the platform, erected the frame, and

added the utility room/entrance.

It went up without a hitch, largely due to the instruction and guidance of Peter Henrickson, a timber frame master. It will be a splendid building when finished.

You would think this is all we did. And it would have been enough. But there's more! The main lodge, Pinecliff, had its many windows washed and insulated with plastic overwrap. Pinecliff was given a thorough going over, vacuumed, cleaned, and spiffed by the long suffering ladies (Judy Cherry, KG Sheley, Kathy Culbertson, Tay Mohr and Rosie Strope) who accompanied said Smokejumpers. When that wasn't enough, they went out and picked enough blueberries for two pies and took on the role of sous chefs at various times. The WCB staff of Will Tanner and Jordyn Sjoberg kept us well fed with breakfasts, lunches, deserts and were generally untiring workhorses, keeping us supplied with everything that we needed for all of our work projects.

A small group of dedicated trail-builders (the Sheleys and John Culbertson (FBX 69) and Kathy Culbertson revisited our project of last summer, and brushed 1.5 miles of the Blueberry Hill Trail and cleared it of windfalls. Remember those old Hamm's Beer commercials ("from the land of sky blue waters") that showed a scene shot from a plane swooping over lakes and forests? The Blueberry Hill Trail overlooks those water and woods. Their work on the trail makes for a wonderful resource for visitors to this part of the BWCAW.

Back at camp, the Trailshack was converted by Chuck and John from summer to winter trips, ski racks installed and rebuilt, and John undertook sharpening a series of tools to Smokejumper specs.

Finally, let it be said that no mouse was safe while our crew was present. There are still mice on the islands, but they fear for their lives. They did not, needless to say, enjoy the blueberry pies. The pies were, as the rabbis say, a taste of ha'olam ha'abah, that is, a taste of the world to come.



Timber framing top to bottom: Don Havel, Peter Henrickson, Bob Aldrich, Don Larson



Septic pit photo l to r: Will Tanner, Bob Aldrich, Francis Mohr, Don Havel (headless)



Back row l to r: Don Larson, Rosie Strope, Jim Cherry, John Culbertson, KG Sheley, Chuck Sheley
 Middle row seated l to r: Francis Mohr, Tay Mohr
 Front row l to r: Don Havel, Kathy Culbertson, Judy Cherry, Bob Aldrich

Backnotes

Volunteering in the Bob, 2013

Robin Hamilton

Hard work and danger helped you become a man
in 1969, your first year smokejumping
in Missoula, Montana, fighting wild fires in Western Mountains.

Forty-four year later, you volunteer and plan
to build a new wilderness corral, twelve miles hiking
toward hard work that helped you become a man.

The trail from Spotted Bear to Black Bear station spans
years and lives, advanced degrees, families, remembering
Missoula, Montana, fighting fires in high mountains.

Long pulls of singing crosscut saw, digging post holes, fine
axe work, dirt and horse shit, heavy log lifting:
all like hard work that helped you become a man.

The evening stories of success and grief, distant cities and towns
come together like sawn joints of lodge post pine coalescing
around Missoula, Montana and wild fires in Blue Mountains.

Old muscles and new aches remind you how grand
those days seemed to a young man doing
hard work that helped him become a man
in Missoula, Montana, fighting wild fires in Western Mountains.