

NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019 December 2019



2019 NSA Trails Program Volunteer of the Year (VOY)
Chuck Fricke (GAC 61)



The N.S.A. Trails Advisory Committee met on 10 December to discuss the upcoming 2020 trails season and select a volunteer of the year for 2019. Several highly qualified candidates were considered, and the committee selected Chuck Fricke (GAC 61). Chuck has been a stalwart with the trail program right from the start when he participated in the first of two projects in 1999, one of which he was on in the Spotted Bear Ranger District, and has been lending his multiple talents in carpentry, and trail maintenance skills ever since. He is frequently requested on projects that require pack bridge and structure repair as well as trail work, and he is always a welcome sight to those with whom he has worked on previous projects.

Chuck trained in the smokejumper program in Missoula in 1961 after having come out west in 1959 from New York State when he took a job in Yellowstone National Park as a back country packer and smoke chaser, using his pack string Monday through Friday,

hauling supplies to various Park back country locations. He relates his experience during the famous 1959 earthquake that violently shook the area upon being aroused that night and scoping his camp site with his flashlight from his wall tent, encountered a frightened bear that wanted to get into his tent with him! Chuck never quite finished that part of the story; so maybe what happens in Yellowstone, stays in Yellowstone! He said that he also lost all his stock which took him several days afoot, to finally get them rounded back up from a water hole where they had gathered.

Chuck volunteered to assume the NSA Trails Committee treasurer’s position in 2010 when we lost John McBride and faithfully fulfilled those duties until just a few years ago.

Chuck adds that the opportunity for former jumpers to participate in the trails program has for him, been a distinct honor and pleasure to meet and appreciate the many and varied participants through the past years. He would suggest and encourage those who may have considered doing so, to sign up. He says, “you will not be disappointed. It is one of my highlights every year.”

The N.S.A. Trails Advisory Committee is, therefore, very pleased to name Chuck as our volunteer of the year for 2019.

Thanks, Chuck.

See ya, down the trail.

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Base Abbreviations

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

Program Summary for 2019 Fred Cooper (NCSB 62)

The number of projects and Volunteers for the TRAMPS Program was very similar to 2018. We had 17 projects with Volunteers contributing nearly 5,000 hours toward maintenance of our natural resources. In addition to our usual work on National Forests, we added a National Wildlife Refuge to our inventory of hosts (you can read the story in this year's Annual Report). Also, some of our TRAMPS volunteered to assist in cleaning up and providing access to nearby county parks and river access points in their neighborhoods. Our program hosts are always challenging us to practice the skills we learned while Smokejumping.

The TRAMPS program receives more requests for work projects than we can accommodate. Accepting projects involves three primary requirements. They are having enough Volunteers, funding, and a Squad Leader to lead the project.

The challenge is out for all of us to invite another Volunteer to participate. Agencies are increasingly challenged to have enough funds to meet our motto of "we work for food." If any of you know of opportunities for grants, donations, or paying for our food by other non-profit organizations, please seek them out for their assistance. We continue to ask for \$25 per volunteer per day. This pays for our food plus a little extra so we can maintain camp supplies and tool cache. And yes, our Squad Leaders are the backbone of our TRAMPS operation. They are key to project planning with local agencies and logistics for the project and volunteers participating in the project. A big thank you to those who do this and yes, we are always looking for new Squad Leaders. Let us know if you are interested or know of a potential project from an agency.

Tax Exemption Status of NSA Fred Cooper (NCSB 62)

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

Editor's Note Mike Pepion (MSO 82)

A total of 12 reports came in at various times this fall and early winter. And once again, the final part of all that is TRAMPS are hours of laborious efforts by project leaders, crafting individual reports, thank you writers! Editing all the reports, proofing, fixing here and there, allows me firsthand read of course, that is always entertaining. Each of the writers have their own uniqueness, whether in modes of expression, to include the wilds of formatting pictures and script. I have followed sage advice of former longtime editor, Steve Carlson (IDC 62), who at the utmost sought to preserve the essence of each writers' efforts with minimal alteration. I welcome those jumpers out there of whom may just want to "bump in" this next year to edit the year-end report. I have enjoyed my 3 years of helping with the report, time for me to "bump out".

Big Larch Campground

Gary Lawley (MSO 57)



L-R John Salisbury, Neil Marjarrison, Edmund Ward, Tom Wilks, Gary Lawley, Barry Hicks, Dick Hulla

The original TRAMPS Project led by Barry Hicks this summer was scheduled for late July; due to several complications, it was changed to the first week in August. This caused some who originally intended to attend to have to cancel. Still, most of the crew like this project so much that they obligingly changed their entire summer schedule and showed up at the appointed time.

On August 3rd, 2019 the same diverse group of individuals that worked together in 2018 met, either at Crew Leader Barry Hicks house in Bonner for a nice lunch, or at the Seely Lake, Montana, Ranger Station.

The project now involved performing long overdue maintenances on the heavily used Big Larch Campgrounds, which is just north of the village of Seely Lake, Montana. It seems a microburst had hit the area the year before and blew down a lot of the old growth Tamarac trees which had made the campground a favorite camping place for many Montanans for years.

Most members of this Trail Crew are retired Smokejumpers who gather annually somewhere in the Pacific northwest (mostly) to work a week or two for the Forest Service and visit with old friends.

Here is the 2019 crew:

Barry Hicks (MSO 64), Dick Hulla (MSO 75), Gary Lawley (MSO 57), Neil Marjerrison (Associate), John Salisbury (Associate), Eddy Ward (MSO 80), Tom Wilks (GAC 87), Jan McLaren (MSO 71) Jan had to drop out due to medical issues but joined us for supper one evening.

The Seeley Lake Project is on the Lolo National Forest north of Missoula, MT. This area has special significance to many Smokejumpers; there was a temporary Jump Base near here back in the early days of Smoke jumping and it was the birthplace of TRAMPS. Many of the members of this TRAMPS Crew worked there previously on "Project" while jumping out of Missoula. Gary Lawley has worked on four previous projects in this Ranger District.

The Big Larch Campground is one of the most heavily used campgrounds in this part of Montana. It is right on the shore of Seeley Lake and has a nice swimming area. The huge trees offered great shade on the hot days of summer before they blew down. The campground is one of the main staging areas for hikers and horse riders into the 1.5 million acres of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex.

The work on the project consisted of constructing wooden barriers to keep people from driving or making walking trails all through the large campground since the huge old trees have been removed. We selected the right size (12 ft long, 6 to 8-inch diameter) poles from standing dead timber in the campground or from the numerous existing woodpiles, and constructed the ugliest, but strongest pole barriers ever seen.

Once we had placed a barrier at every location where entry could be gained, we entered the center of the campground and scattered brush on all the non-authorized trails to discourage their continued use. Then we took Pulaski's and cleared out several areas for tent locations. Man, that was hard work! Finally, we took weed eaters and cleared out the high grass from the Campground Amphitheatre meeting area.

One day we quit early and went up to the nearby Double Arrow Lookout to size it up for a future project. We were asked to give the District Ranger our view on how to save and restore the old lookout, which is a historic structure. Our input varied with our experience and desires and ranged from "get a private construction contractor to spend thousands of dollars replacing the rotting foundation logs" to "just tear it down and build a new one".

One evening we had an interesting conversation around the fire. It seems there was a lightning strike in Alaska, earlier in the summer, near the highway and was easily accessible. Since there were no structures involved, the Forest Service chose to just let the fire go and act as a "controlled burn". Long story short, it burned 90 plus days, grew to 150,000 acres and caused a severe smoke problem throughout Southcentral Alaska, and closed a major highway several times. It shut down fishing on the mighty Kenai River during the busy fishing season and cost several communities millions of dollars in tourist revenue. It also created thousands of acres of improved moose habitat. Can we afford to allow such large burns to continue in the future?

Another topic that came up was why don't we coordinate closer with the Museum of Mountain Flying in Missoula. They have all our old jump planes and tons of jumper material, including a great display of the Mann Gulch disaster. They keep and maintain the DC3 that flew the Mann Gulch jumpers and they helped organize the Normandy ceremony where selected jumpers departed that old DC 3 over the D Day landing area.



Barry and Ranger Quinn Carver

Could we combine the proposed Smokejumper Museum with them? We recommended Fred Cooper check this out and report back to NSA managers.

We completed the planned work in four days, a day ahead of schedule. People, (e.g. Forest Service personnel), are always amazed that such a diverse group of "old folks" get so much work done so fast. Here is how it works. Everyone in the crew is a true volunteer and is there because they want to be there, and they are there to work! There is very little structure on a TRAMPS Project. Each crew member is a self-starter, motivated to figure out how to help the best way they can.

Crew members determine without hesitation who can best do what activity. The crew members know what tools are needed and know how to use them. We all enjoy working outside in the beautiful National Forests. We do talk about safety, but each of the crew understands basic safety and to watch out for themselves and each other all the time.

To watch us work, you would think we had spent days in training because we work so smoothly together; truth is, we were all trained in working hard and being responsible as Smokejumpers and during our successful careers. This results in a lot of work getting done in a short while

The Seeley District Ranger was kind enough to stop by every evening to visit with us, and Fred Cooper stopped by on his way from the Mann Gulch Memorial ceremony to have dinner and a beer with us, which we greatly enjoyed.



After the project, some of us went back to Missoula to call old friends who were not on this project and have a toast to our recently departed buddies. It's not lost on us that we are a pretty old group and we don't have many more years to enjoy a few weeks in the woods together each summer. It is great to have a crew that spans 4 decades telling stories.

Thank goodness there is going to be a reunion next summer in Boise. One more time to see everyone again! It will be a scheduling problem for some of us, figuring how to attend the reunion and then doing a couple of projects in a short summer, but we will manage.

NSA Beartooth Ranger District Line Trail Project



The crew consisted of Don Whyde (MSO 66), Chuck Hull (MSO 67), John Bastrup Associate and cook for the last three years, Dave Thompson (MSO 68), Dan DeBar Associate and former Hot Shot crew member, Joe Sterling (MSO 73), Jack Sterling (MSO 66) and we were lucky to get Bruce Morey (MSO 67) for a day.

Originally, we were going to do trail maintenance on trails up Bridger Creek but due to high water we had to move to another project. The week before the project we did a scouting with Allie Woods who is head of the Beartooth Ranger District Trails, on a reroute of the Line Creek Trail south of Red Lodge. The trail starts in Wyoming on the Shoshone Forest and then comes into the Custer/Gallatin at the Montana border. Bruce Morey, Chuck Hull, John Brastrup and Jack Sterling went on this scouting mission. Allie flagged the route as far as she thought we would get. There had been a fire through this area a few years ago and there were not many live trees.



High water had washed out three creek crossing so the decision was made to move the trail to one side of the creek which required brand new trail. On Sunday June

23rd we proceeded to Clark, Wyoming and then up Line Creek just short of a creek crossing that the road was washed out on.

After getting our tents set up, we had all our vehicles on the south side of the creek. There was another road into the area from the north and Jack Sterling took his pickup around and we used it to drive from the washout up to the trail head each day which save about a mile hike each way. Planks were put over the wash out and posts were pounded in on each end and a rope was attached to help us get across each day.



We started Sunday afternoon working on one section of the trail that had been partially washed out and Monday morning started rerouting the trail up Line Creek. By Wednesday afternoon we had gone past where the trail had been flagged and tried to find a route that could be traveled by a pack string. We were able to check in with Allie as we had a cell signal up the canyon which was unusual. She couldn't believe we had gone that far and came out to see for herself! She was really pleased that we had gotten the trail tied into the existing trail up the canyon. The work was hard digging and the terrain was extremely steep and rocky. One of the items that speeded up our work was the use of Rhino tool which is almost three times wider than a Pulaski. Some of those had a pick like tool on one end and Dave Thompson became our expert rock mover.

Some of those were very big. There was one section we had gone up and down to get around some big rocks but she wanted us to go straight across the rocks and she would blow them to make it passable. We did the reroute on Thursday with Bruce doing a little work. Total distance seems like miles but when stepped off came up short of a mile. He was awfully spry going up the trail and wasn't like some of us who were getting worn down. That afternoon he wasn't nearly as spry but was able to put away a steak that night. We had great food from John again this year and Joe Sterling supplied us with cinnamon rolls each morning.

Black Mountain Lookout

Bonnors Ferry, Idaho

Bob Denner (Associate)

After some angst and nail biting, this project finally got off the ground. The government shutdown held up the planning and funding and my FS contact, Pat Hart, could only give me some general idea of the work. Thus, the information posted on the NSA website was vague and consequently, there was no response (and no cook). I was close to canceling the project when Bob Smee (MSO 68) contacted me with encouragement and recruited a friend, Phil Barto (a retired civil engineer). Bob also got Tom Wilks (GAC 87) to join us, making a crew of 4. As it turned out, 4 was a good number of grunts for this work. A last minute blessing was the addition of a cook, Rosemary Garofalo, who was recruited by Pat.



The cast, from left, Tom Wilks (GAC 87), Rosemary Garofalo (cook extraordinaire), Gary Quin (FS Rec leader), Phil Barto (Associate/volunteer), Pat Hart (FS contact), Bob Denner (Associate), and taking it easy, Bob Smee (MSO 68).

This project started last year when it was decided last year to move the lookout to a new location about a quarter mile from where it stood since 1974. An antenna farm had sprouted up around the lookout as that site offered good communications for cell towers etc. Verizon provided a crane to disassemble the cabin and 50 'tower. All the sound parts and pieces were salvaged and moved to the new site.

We gathered at the Bonnors Ferry Ranger Station on Sunday, June 23rd, meeting with Pat, Rosemary, and Gary Quinn, the Rec Leader who supervised the work though

the week. We then caravanned to the worksite. The weather was threatening but we managed to make the drive, set up our tents, and have dinner. The dining site had been prepped by the Rec crew, who hung a large tarp for cooking and dining and cached stoves, kitchenware, cubies of water, tables and chairs.

The threatening weather became a reality that night and the limitations of my tent made for a damp, uncomfortable night. It wouldn't be the last.

Monday morning dawned foggy and damp, with a trace of hail around my tent. After breakfast and lots of coffee, Gary arrived and explained the day's work. The forms for the footing were constructed last year as were the holes for them, dug by an excavator. Unfortunately, the machine could not remove the bedrock. The crew worked on making big rocks into little ones. Tom Wilks (the Ironman) managed to break two sledgehammer handles within an hour. But we kept pounding with heavy hammers and a rock bar, managing to level out the holes. Phil had brought a laser level and we used it often to check the elevations.

After lunch, the sun came out, we dried out and finished beating the bedrock. Bob and Phil figured out a scheme for the rebar pattern that would go into the footings. The footings were built with a tapered, removable top (very clever) so it was just a matter of removing the top and setting the rebar cage into the form. We spent the rest of the day fiddling with the footing elevations and checking diagonal measurements.

For the next couple of days, we cut and bent $\frac{1}{2}$ inch rebar. The tie wire that came out with the first load of rebar was more appropriate for $\frac{3}{8}$ rebar and we saw that we would run short of the steel. But we managed to keep busy and fine tuned our efforts to bend and tie the cages. We discovered (the hard way) that to cut the rebar you had to push rather than pull down on the cutting tool handle otherwise you ended up in the dirt on your back. By Wednesday we had more rebar and a roll of wire and finished building the cages. We placed them inside of the forms and secured them within the form by running wire through each side of the form and tied it to the cages to keep the cage stable when the concrete is poured.



Bob Smee tying rebar.

We finished all we could do with the forms and again checked elevations and diagonal measurements. We back filled each to prevent them from moving when the concrete was poured and managed to finish the day in time for cocktail hour. After 2 days

of decent weather, the sky to the south was looking ominous. Dinner and clean up was taken care of, including a few after dinner cocktails. As we retired to our camp site, we watched an impressive display of lightning and thunder. Wishful thinking had us assuming the storms would slide east of us and blast Montana. That didn't happen. I thought my cheesy tent might blow away and I considered spending the night in my truck. But I survived another night in a soggy tent. The others did just fine since their tents were a little more sophisticated than mine. Concrete was scheduled to be poured the next day but due to weather concerns it was canceled, which was disappointing.



In the foreground is the north side of the timber structure we assembled. Beyond are the completed foundation forms and beyond is the Kootenai River valley and Bonners Ferry.

We spent the next day working with the tower structure. The tower members were salvaged, and their positions were labeled with their location. But the vertical timbers were replaced with new treated 8X8's, in 12 ft lengths. The process started with clearing and leveling a work area, then laying out the new timbers, two to a side to make a 24 ft length. Two of the timbers on each side were butt joined; holes were drilled in each end and an iron rod doweled the timbers together. Then we laid out large iron plates on each side of the timbers, marked holes and drilled. There were timber connectors that were installed with the help of a couple of custom-made drill bits. Lining up the holes, connectors and pushing bolts through the joint was problematic but we managed to put the 8X8's together. Next came the cross and horizontal bracing for the two legs, which were recycled from the old tower. Again, there was the usual gnashing of teeth trying to get the pieces in place, drill the holes in the new timber, and get it bolted together.

By the end of the day all that was left was to tighten all the bolts. We figured that could wait until Friday morning but after dinner Smee and Barto decided to tackle that and break camp first thing Friday.

So that's how it went for us. Other than a couple of nights of inclement weather and chilly mornings, I thought it was a great project. The skills and experience of this crew matched the work and the FS people are very pleased with our effort.



I just got this photo recently. The tower is up, and cabin mounted. The District folks got the roof on, windows installed, and the stairs finished.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) "Boundary Trail Project".

Jon Klingel (CJ 65).



If you like water and weren't on this project, you really missed out! We met at Olie & Sven's pizza and beer place in Grand Marais, Minnesota along the north shore of Lake Superior. The four of us: Ron Baylor (MSO 58) a veterinarian from Wisconsin, Allison Stout (MYC 80) a veterinarian from southern New Mexico, Alan Wonders (Assoc.) from Texas and I were looking forward to the idyllic project. We envisioned hiking the Boundary Trail on the U.S. side of the border, cutting out logs, paddling around the lake in the evening fishing and enjoying old jump stories around the campfire. Ron had been on the previous NSA "Stairway Portage Project" on the same lake but this area was new to the rest of us.

The next morning, we loaded the two canoes, paddled to the portage where we entered the BWCA Wilderness Area then paddled across Duncan Lake where we set up camp. Immediately wind and rain began. I knew from past projects that Allison and Alan were tough and wouldn't be bothered by a little rain. Ron was an experienced whitewater canoeist, so rain wasn't going to deter him. It was a short paddle from camp to the trailhead. We worked two days cutting logs and brush in continuous rain and mud. The dawn of day four began with more heavy rain. We stayed in camp and hunkered in our tents. That evening the sky cleared so we enthusiastically looked forward to finishing the next two days of work in beautiful weather. Although, pretty soggy by that time, we enjoyed a nice supper around the campfire. At 3 AM it started raining and by 6 AM it was pouring cats and dogs. Spirits of the crew were flagging. There had been a couple of minor incidents, a frying pan with a dozen eggs landed upside down in the mud, and a pack that accidentally dropped eight feet with a dozen eggs in the bottom. Murmurs of a possible mutiny were concerning. This was the start of the fifth straight day of pouring

rain with no sign of a change in the weather, so we folded camp and paddled out. Alan speculated that the "pouring cats and dogs" rain was because half of the crew members were veterinarians. In spite of the rain we had gotten some work done cutting 19 logs out of two miles of trail, plus clearing a lot of wet brush.

Although the work got rained out, a couple of the guys took advantage of the long trip to the north country. Alan visited Isle Royal and Voyagers National Parks before the project to do some hiking, and Allison Stout went to the "Stout Island Resort" in Wisconsin which his grandparents had owned. Ron went back to Wisconsin to dry out and I was just happy to get back to the hot, clear, blue-sky, desert in New Mexico where I could dry out my truck load of wet gear.

The Margarita Phillips Memorial Project, National Bison Range Refuge,
August 18-23, 2019
Irene Saphra (RAC 86)



Left to right: Scott Bates (MYC 69), Irene Saphra (RAC 86), Deb Yoder (RDD 00), Sarah Altemus (MSO 01), Leslie Anderson (MSO 84), Robin Embry (GAC 85), Kim Maynard (MSO 82), Kelly Esterbrook (RAC 86), Jim Snapp (MSO 65).

Margarita Phillips, (MSO 1988-2010) was a force of nature. She certainly didn't take "no" for an answer. That was why, gathered around a bonfire telling Margarita stories during the celebration of her life, in early December of 2018, a few of us decided we weren't ready to say goodbye. Instead, we came up with the idea of doing a "Trail Project" in her memory. What started out as a seed, took root and grew into the Margarita Phillips Project, at the National Bison Range, near Charlo MT, from August 18-23.

The National Bison Range (NBR) is located within the Flathead Indian Reservation and was established in 1908 "to provide a sanctuary for the American bison." It consists of approximately 18,800 acres and is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. About 350 to 500 bison reside there, as well as deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, black bears and an occasional grizzly. The refuge receives some 250,000 visitors per year, making it one of the most popular wildlife refuges in the US.

We contacted the authorities at the NBR, to inform them about our idea, and they readily agreed. Who could refuse a group of well-qualified volunteers, eager to run chainsaws and haul slash, all for the good of improving wildlife habitat? And what better place to do it, than overlooking the valley where Margarita was born and raised? It seemed like the perfect fit. As Amy Coffman, Refuge Manager put it, "Smokejumpers are a special breed." We put out the call, and the list quickly filled up.

We were quite a diverse group. Our ages ranged from late 30s to mid-70s. Several of us were veterans of the infamous NSA "No-Manner" project of 2014, organized by Kim Maynard (MSO 82), including Sarah Altemus (MSO 01), Leslie Anderson (MSO 84),

Robin Embry (GAC 85), Kelly Esterbrook (RAC 86), and Maynard herself, who played a major part in setting everything up and scouting out the camping area and work sites. Deb Yoder (RDD 00) also joined us. Sara Brown (RAC 03) had to bow out at the last minute; however, she ended up playing a critical role.... more on that later. Irene Saphra (RAC 86) was “Squad Leader” in name only, as this was a true, “group effort.” In addition to those of us ladies that knew, loved, and worked with Margarita, we had two more crew members of the opposite sex: Scott Bates (MYC 69), and Jim Snapp (MSO 65). These last two were, in crew member Deb Yoder’s words: “token brave retired Smokejumper men that joined our group and we were beyond grateful for the balance they brought, even if there was a little teasing that they now knew how we felt.”

Our cook for the first half of the week was Annette Dusseau, another NSA “No-Manner” veteran. Betty Violette relieved Annette during the second half. Major props for keeping us well fed and for nourishing our souls as well! Annette regaled us with stories of her and Maynard’s recent D-Day re-enactment jump over Normandy, from the restored DC3 Miss Montana. And Betty supplied us with bottomless tortilla chips and kept us laughing right up until the last piece of micro trash was picked up.

Our crew convened on a warm summer afternoon in late August, at a stellar campsite just down the road from the NBR Visitor Center. We had everything we needed for a comfortable stay. A lovely creek flowed next to camp, allowing for cool refreshing dips at the end of shift. To the east, the Mission Range provided a dramatic backdrop as we watched Harold, the local resident elk, pay his nightly visit during evening cocktail hour.



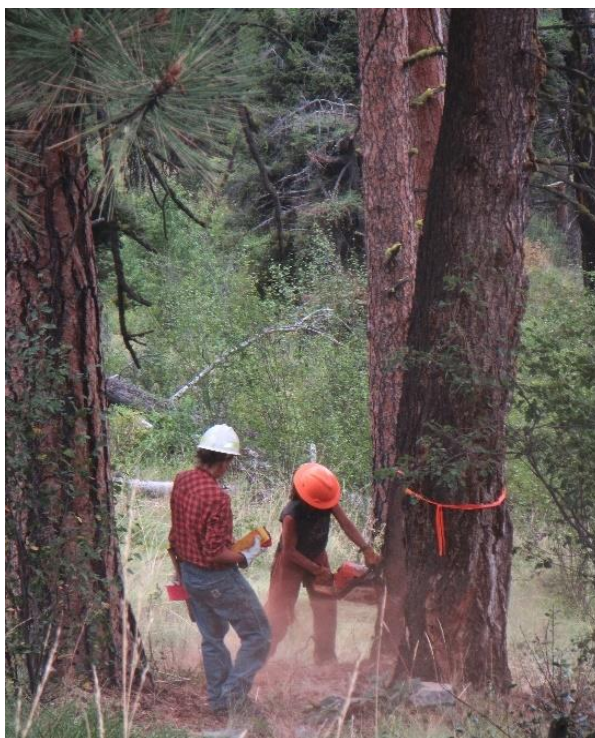
Sarah Altemus (MSO 01) and Deb Yoder (RDD 00) enjoy cocktail hour with the Mission Range in the background.

The first morning we met with NBR representatives Amy and Jody, who lined us out. Our goals for the first 2 days consisted of improving a series of “trails” that contoured around the steep hillsides of the NBR, directly above our campsite. These “trails” were actually paths that would allow riders on horseback to herd the bison for the annual bison capture (aka “roundup”), that takes place each fall. Once they are herded into corrals, the bison are health checked and calves receive an ID chip. They are then sorted off for donation or released back to the Range. This year, 14 bison were donated to the Blackfeet

Nation and 10 to the Northern Arapaho of the Wind River Reservation. These donated bison will become part of Tribally managed conservation populations.

We split up into 3 groups of 3 sawyers/swampers each, and got right to work, “rolling our own” in true Smokejumper style. We completed our first assignment in 2 days, and moved to a different location the 3rd day, ready for a new task. Our next mission was to fall Douglas-fir trees that were encroaching on a stand of old-growth Ponderosa Pine.

The NBR hopes to maintain the old-growth pine component by conducting a prescribed burn in the future. The trees were to be felled, and the slash dragged away from the Ponderosa “leave trees.” The sound boles of the felled trees were to be un-bucked and left in place for future utilization. Some of the trees that were marked for felling were well over 30 inches in diameter, which gave our crew a little pause, since it had been a little while since some of us had cut anything that large. However, after a thorough safety briefing, we were only too happy to give it our best shot. Once again, our 3 crews dispersed into pockets a safe distance away from one another, and soon the woods were ringing out with merry shouts of down the hill, “across the hill,” and, last but not least, “Lunch!” It was a great refresher for those of us that had not sawed in a while.



Kelly Esterbrook and Kim Maynard cutting a Douglas-fir.

This wasn't your typical NSA project, in that it involved extensive chainsaw work. At the end of each shift, crew members would relax with a cold beverage or two, while doing saw maintenance and sharpening, to ensure everything would be ready to go the next morning.



Saw Maintenance after each shift. L-R: Kim Maynard, Sarah Altemus, Robin Embry, Scott Bates, Kelly Esterbrook

All too soon the fun was over on the 4th day, and it was time to reward ourselves with a little tour of the Range. We drove the Loop Road, pausing for our obligatory crew photo, overlooking Red Sleep Mountain, as well as various bison “selfies.”



Touring the Bison Range on our last afternoon.

On the way back to camp for our final evening, a beautiful rainbow appeared over the mountains to the east. Margarita was indeed watching over us. Her spirit stayed with us all that week, reminding us of why we were together and giving us even more reason to enjoy the company of friends old and new, present and absent.

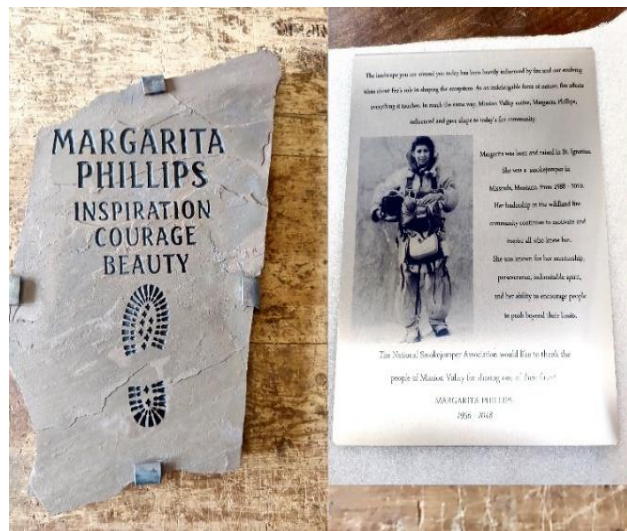
In Scott Bates' words: “All of you lady smokejumpers proved yourselves in my mind and you brought me up to speed on how the organization has progressed. You were pioneers and deserve a lot credit for sticking with it even when the smokejumpers were growing as an organization. There wasn't even one lady smokejumper when I was jumping. It is never easy to be a pioneer in anything. It is good to see that there is more balance in the smokejumper and fire world now. It was a pleasure to celebrate the life of another smokejumper pioneer-Margarita Phillips. She was an amazingly resilient and

courageous woman who never gave up on anything. Even at the end of her life. Thanks for the opportunity to be on the crew.”

During the week, we were visited by various jumper alumni, people who cherished Margarita, including Lori Messenger (MSO 00), Jessie Thomas (MSO 04) , Jen Belitz (MSO 01) and Nels (MSO 62) and Cathy Jensen. Dick Hulla (MSO 75) showed up on Thursday to go over saw recertifications.

The last morning was bittersweet for all of us. Sara Brown had a beautiful stone inscribed and had it transported to the NBR. The NBR had generously offered us a space to remember Margarita, in an interpretive kiosk next to the visitor center. The kiosk display was about fire and tribal history in the Northern Rockies. It was the perfect place to pay tribute to Margarita, a woman who loved the natural world and the forces that shaped it. The only issue facing us was: how to install the stone? We had invited folks that knew and loved Margarita to join us in remembering her, including Margarita’s husband Doug, and their son DJ. Many other jumper alumni showed up, too many to name here.

As our group gathered together, we discussed a creative way to place the stone in the kiosk, in a way that visitors to the site could learn about who Margarita was and understand her role and contribution to the Wildland Fire Community. The MSO “bros” eagerly stepped up and volunteered for the task. Their plan will be to place the stone and words describing Margarita in the kiosk, overlooking the Mission Valley, where she was born and raised. Memorial and inscribed description of Margarita Phillips (MSO 1988), to be placed in Interpretive Kiosk at the National Bison Range.



To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time the National Smokejumper Association has worked with the NBR, as well as the first time NSA has worked with the US and Fish and Wildlife Service. Let’s hope this is the beginning of a “beautiful friendship,” as we continue to work together to enhance and improve wildlife habitat.

In memory of Margarita Kay Phillips 1956-2018, MSO 1988-2010

NSA Trails report
Reservoir Lake Campground
Beaver Head NF
June 9-14, 2019
Richard Trinity (MSO 66)



Team members: Jack Atkins (MSO 68), Dan Dutton (MSO 75), Jeff Kinderman (MSO 75) Bill Kolar (MSO 59), Rod Mclver (MSO), Dan Roberson (MSO 75), Bill Thomas (MSO 75) Richard Trinity (MSO 66), Tom Wilks (GAC 87)
Cooks: Kathleen Elzig, Nancy Mclver,
Guest/cook: Betty Violette
Dillon District employees: Kori Mooney (Forestry Aid), Martial Jumper (Forestry Technician), Daniel Wight (Recreation Technician)



I suppose you could say that the project action began on the road trip into the campsite as the initial three crew members driving in caravan found one side of the road blocked with fallen tree limbs. Of course, it was easy to drive around it but did not solve the problem. Fortunately, one of the three vehicles had a gassed and ready chainsaw which was put to good use and made short work eliminating the obstruction.

And so, it was, that just after noon Sunday the first three crew members arrived at the padlocked gate where a sign read "Bloody Dick Sta." indicating the *campsite* area (not the *campground* work area) entrance for the project. Having the padlock combination, entrance was made, and passage continued down the road to the one room cabin, outhouse, and storage/wood shed constituting the "Sta."(tion). Word was that the station was a FS rental unit that had one more day to go thus preventing project crew occupation until the next day due to a scheduling snafu. This proved to be false information but by the time it was clearly determined, tent city had already arisen 100 yards further down the campsite road. And just to settle the lingering question in your mind whether "Bloody Dick" was historically a "what" or a "who", there is no doubt it is an officially established cartological designation which also includes nearby "Bloody Dick Cr." and "Bloody Dick Pk.". However, the navigation software in the 2015 Outback reporter's car identifies the campsite location as "Bloody Richard Sta.". So, is this now the final word or just someone's politically correct sanitation of history? For as we all know and have seen with our very eyes, there are several other "colorful" map designations around the national forests that have produced chuckles upon their discovery. For example, well, you know. A likely topic for campfire reporting. And who were those old cartographers anyway?



Meanwhile as Sunday afternoon passed, the remaining members arrived except for Rod who was delayed two days due to an urgent agricultural issue. We all helped unload the cooking supplies, tools, setting up the campsite tarp and get that campfire going. Our cooks were Kathleen Elzig and Nancy McIver who served us tastefully well including PM hors d'oeuvres! Betty Violette visited the camp helping cook meals and harvesting mushrooms for general consumption. A grateful bunch we remain. Jack provided us a secret liquid formulation to be taken alone or in coffee and was affectionally known as "JAX chocolate addition". Spring water from a pipe was greatly appreciated. The woods were alive with mushrooms which were harvested and served as well.

Project work began the next morning as we gathered at the Reservoir Lake Campground half a mile away where we met Kori, Daniel, and Martial—summer workers for Dillon RD (and hard workers they were!). We all worked together at the campground for the first two days, breaking up into self-appointed groups of two to four to attend the various jobs. On day 3 the bridge project was started with four of us leaving off the campground work. As the campground work got completed people began to drift over to the bridge project, firewood snags and saw certification activity. The jobs completed were:

1. Remove and replace 25 roadway sunken guidepost logs using trees available in the campground area all of which were felled, peeled, and cut to length.
2. Replace three vehicle parking site log bumpers using trees as #1 using a portable drill for the bolt holes.
3. Re-stain picnic tables and benches
4. Brush overgrown campsite vegetation
5. Fell/buck two snags for firewood, chain saw certification, repair campfire bench, split cabin firewood
6. Remove and replace a collapsed foot bridge across the nearby creek. This was accomplished felling a nearby 14" Lodgepole pine and using the usual four-man team to split (chainsaw), then peel and carry the bridge pieces to the crossing site. Sill end pieces were fashioned and the 13' bridge anchored in place with re-bar.



After hours campfire times were the usual and unusual recounting of tales and soul-bearing among friends. Various ways of stoking the campfire were demonstrated.

- A group safety meeting was held early on and all subsequently remained effectively safe.
- A windy thunderstorm was experienced with no damage reported.
- Finally, at break-up, one axe remained unaccounted for with further results pending. (update—Not found still... apparently lost in the fog of project work)

Word of wisdom for digging up fence posts: Nothing beats a heavy bar with spade(chisel)/pointed ends.

Rocky Mountain National Park
Robert Doran (Associate) & Nathan Wendell (National Park Service)



The Crew, L-R: Nate Wendell (NPS), Tom Donahue (NPS), Ralph Cadwallader, Ron Baylor, Doug Wamsley, Kyra Stark (NPS), Warren Pierce, Denis Symes, Jim Kullas, Steve Vittum, Ron Siple, James Freeland and Bob Doran. Missing: Cameron Stark (NPS)

This was our seventh year at “Rocky”. Again, we camped in the Moraine Park Group Site. It worked well for us as it is an easy in and out location.

The big challenge this year was meal preparation without Chuck the Cook from Johnson’s Corner. He had accepted another job and was not available. Johnson’s Corner was once again very supportive in supplying almost all our food needs.



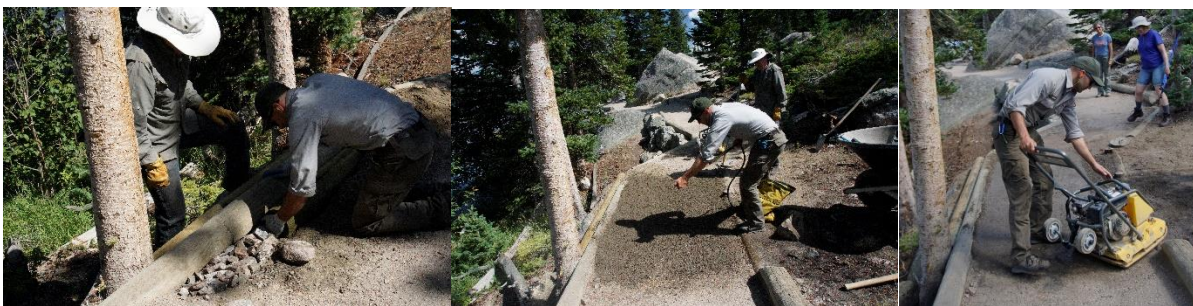
We were able to prepare the meals ourselves and we are all still alive. Ron Siple prepared several breakfasts, we all prepared our own lunches and Mary Wamsley, Warren Pierce and Bob Doran did dinner.

We were also visited in the morning by “Bruce” the Moose



Project Scope: Our work this year centered on the Sprague Lake trail in Rocky Mountain National Park, pictured above with the “Crew”. The trail is .9 miles around and at 8,700 feet elevation. The trail was made ADA compliant at project completion and suitable for strollers and wheelchairs. We met park visitors from all over during the project.

1. The foliage along the sides of the trail was encroaching and was trimmed back.
2. There were washouts along the trail that required excavating, rebuilding with new timbers and leveling.



3. The trail had several low spots that trapped water and created puddles. These were brought up to grade.
4. 12 failed support blocks on the boardwalk were replaced. The attached kick rails were loose as a result so replacing them secured the kick rails.



5. In total we replaced 5 handrails. 3 on the 1st bridge (about 38 feet) at the trail head and 2 at the north side bridge (about 12 feet each) amounting to 63 feet total. The 3 rails at the trail head bridge were both a lap joint & mortise & tenon assembly. The 2 other rails on the north side were just mortise and tenon assembly.



6. The bridge end caps were around 5 feet and were replaced on either side of the outlet bridge on the east end. The bumper logs that attached to the existing end caps had been flared out and were allowing tread loss on the outside corners of both bridge approaches. We added longer end cap boards to close those gaps.



Another Great Project with an Excellent group in a Glorious Location



TRAMPS Project Report
Trail Project – San Pedro Parks (SSP) Wilderness Area, New Mexico
August 2019

Mike Overby, (MSO 67), Project Lead

This was our 3rd project in the Northwestern New Mexico Wilderness Area of San Pedro Parks (SPP). Project team members included me, Jon Klingel (CJ 65), Allison Stout (MYC 80), Java Bradly (MSO 74) and Associates Mark Rivera and Piet Werbrouck.



As in our other SPP projects, we depended on the ongoing pack support from the Santa Fe Back Country Horsemen headed by President Joan Lattner and her loyal team.

Like in all other SSP projects, the Tramps team arrived at trailhead Sunday afternoon/night – amidst a huge thunderstorm and heavy rains. With over an inch of puddling water in campsite parking and tent area guys had to sleep in pickup truck beds, cabs and any dry spots to be found (what a way to start the project). Jon Klingel knocked on my pickup window early in morning with a hot cup of coffee – good recovery from bad night. “Jon the coffee-man.”

The camp site was a fairly short (3-mile pack in) and same location used for past 3 years. We again had a very nice cold spring to keep the beer almost frozen. Thanks to Jon, again, for digging it out as soon as we arrived.

We were once again graced in having a great cook in Associate Piet Webrouck. As a member of Back Country Horsemen team, Piet had his horse and mule were with us all week – and delivered ice cold refreshments before our afternoon hike out. Also being able to carry tools from end of one trail to beginning of next trail was a great support. Every back-country TRAMPS team should be so blessed.

Our 2018 team had cleared a 6-mile loop trail that we were assigned to re-scout this year. As the heavy winter snow and windstorms left huge blowdowns - that scouting effort became a major “re-clearing project” of its own. The new trails cleared totaled an additional 8 miles. Total logs cleared this year was 225. What other team had more???

As has been usually the case in past, our team received rave reviews again from the Forest Service. Here is a note from the Region 3 District Ranger and former Jumper, Richard Nieto.

“My compliments to a "JOB WELL DONE" although you had to watch over "Dr Stout. In all seriousness the collective work done by you all is greatly appreciated by the agency and the publics we serve this trail system would not have been done this summer if it was not for your efforts. As a smokejumper from the class of MYL- 1987 -1995 this was the best times for me with the agency. Look forward to hosting you all again in the near future and once again thank you for your service.”

Yellowstone River New South Billings Blvd. Fishing Access Site

“What sounded like a horde of giant, angry hornets Saturday was actually volunteers with chainsaws clearing Russian olive trees off of a parcel of land south of Riverfront Park.” Quote from Sunday, January 27, 2019 Billings Gazette.



Four of those running chainsaws were former Smokejumpers. Chuck Hull (MSO 67), Robert Dayton (MSO 65), Jack Sterling (MSO 66) and Mike Penfold (MSO 58). Mike Penfold is the volunteer conservation program director for Our Montana. On another weekend Dan DeBar a former Hot Shot Crew member (Associate), Joe Sterling (MSO 73) joined us to again cut more Russian olive trees. There were several organizations that volunteered to help with the project: The Yellowstone River Parks Association, Our Montana, Friday Afternoon Paddlers, The Montana River People, Magic City Fly Fishers, Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society and National Smokejumper Association were some of the groups represented. In addition to the Russian olives removed there were several big dead cottonwood that were taken down in the area that will become the parking lot for the Fishing Access Site.



Yellowstone River Area Smokejumpers have a monthly coffee the 2nd Wednesday of the month at downtown Perkins if you are in the area you are welcome to join them, they meet at 11:30 a.m.

LOST HORSE (TWIN LAKES) BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

27 July – 3 August 2019

Bob Whaley (MSO 56)

This year's project found us on Montana working trails right on the crest of the Montana/Idaho border nestled up to the divide between the Bitterroot and Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests at about 6700 feet elevation. The crew included many of my old reliable's of Dennis Pearson,(MSO 62), Robert Cushing,(MSO 59), JB Stone,(MSO 56), Chuck Fricke, (MSO 61), Dick Hulla, (MSO 75) Jim Lee, (MSO 77), and Gary Lawley, (MSO 58).



We were also very fortunate to have Larry and Linda Cooper and their 5th-wheel rig, as our excellent cooks and who also did all the tedious meal shopping for the crew.

This was Linda's first foray on project and, hopefully, not her last; as she and Larry are a "well-oiled team" – not to be confused with a few past "well oiled" experiences that didn't turn out quite as well. Linda fit in like she was made for the job which we all definitely appreciated. And the Cooper Family contingent would not have been complete without the faithful company of "Missy", the fifteen-year-old Border Collie that has been on nearly every one of our pack supported "good deals" for the past 12 – 14 years. Only, this year she lacked horse and mule heels to nip at which set us somewhat at ease, since her usual rousting of the critters did cause some consternation when they were part of our encampment.

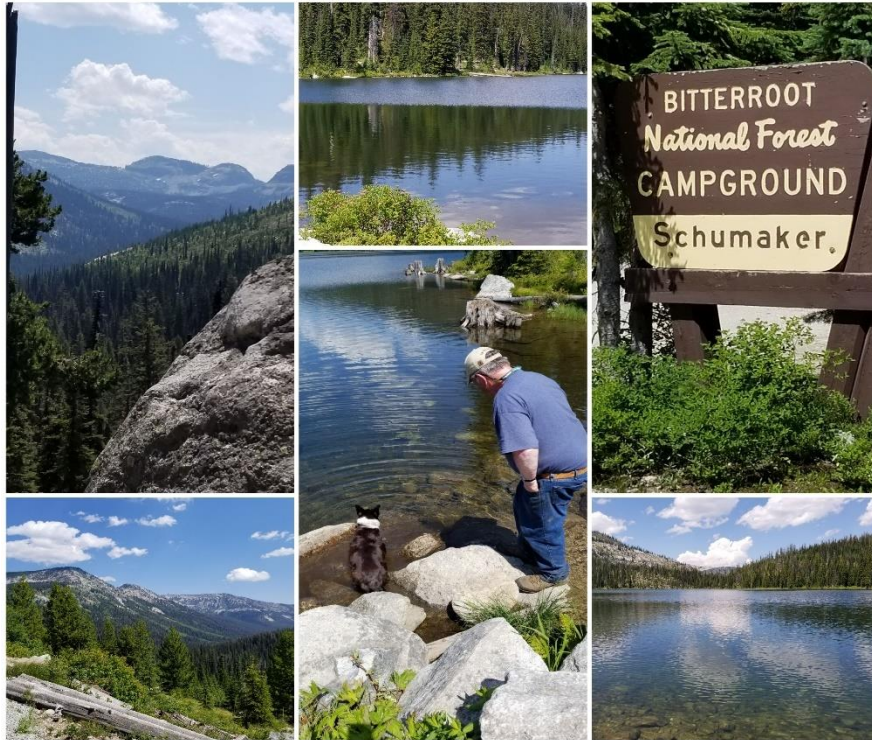
The assigned mission from our Bitterroot Forest liaison, Mark Smith, was right up our alley with significant trail maintenance, clearing many blow-down logs, waterbar work and a ton of back-breaking brushing. (Glad I brought my back brace!)

The trails included the Fish Lake Trail No. 128, 3.5 miles and removal of 24 logs and thick brushing; the Bailey Lake Trail, no. 293, 1.5 miles, and removal of 12 logs and

significant brushing, so intense that it took 2 days lopping and chain sawing very thick alder patches; the North Fork of Lost Horse Creek, trail no 59 which was straight up with the removal of 8 logs and much brushing but for the crew of 4 that completed that trail, the huckleberry reward was well worth it; even with the approximate climb of 4 miles straight up.



The last day found us up past Twin Lakes on a beautiful hike up the trail to Wahoo Pass which JB renamed “Wazoo”, and the junctions of trails 430 and 421 which crossed the pass and into the Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest in Idaho. There were only 4 logs to cut out but much brushing made for a relatively easy 5th day for the crew and permitted several who were facing long drives home, the opportunity to strike their tents and head on out later that day. I find, as squad leader, that my duties require reminding folks to take their medications considering the very senior status of most of the participants. In so doing, Jim Lee had to remind everyone that he appreciated the heads up and renewed his prescription to a week’s worth of antidepressants when he realized he was again on my crew! What a guy!



It should be noted that on Day 1, on the Bailey Lake Trail, we were hit with a late afternoon hailstorm the likes of which none of us had ever seen before, which ended our day. Back at camp a quick tent check showed good survival; and then we were hit again with another deluge and an accumulated 3 – 4 inches on the ground. Summer in Montana!

I would be remiss not to mention the cooperation received from the Selway Bitterroot-Frank Church Foundation Office of Sally Ferguson and her excellent staff in the Missoula office of Courtney Wall and Krissey Ferriter; and also Mark Smith of the Bitterroot National Forest and the help of Erika Strayer, of the Darby Ranger District and the use of the Lost Horse Cabin which served as an outstanding mess hall and meeting site for everyone. You all made the project not only a success, but for the most part very enjoyable.

There was an initial concern about the availability of potable water since there was none at the cabin where the Coopers set up the outside kitchen, and though there was a rumor that the campground had water that also proved to be false; so we all filled our 5-gallon containers and cubies, and hauled it all up with us, which proved more than adequate for the week.

The week before our project commenced, Dick, Chuck and I did a recon of the area to check out the cabin and a potential camp site for the crews' tents. Not finding anything ideal, Chuck went back up ahead of us Sunday and discovered the coral area just across the road from the cabin, which was perfect, flat and spacious, and as good as any we've probably ever had!

Also, it's always a benefit to have two former EMT-trained folks on crew, and Joe and Dick faithfully filled that role when one of us unfortunately tripped near his tent and jabbed his tent peg deep into his right hand, resulting in a trip to the Marcus Daly Hospital in Hamilton, four hours in the ER and ten stitches to repair the hand wound which the victim reports he has fully healed. Dick Hulla also provided excellent crosscut and chainsaw requalification to the crew in those specialties during the week, thanks Dick!

2019 NSA CA TRAMPS China Springs/Grizzly Creek Trail:
Klamath/Shasta-Trinity NF CA

Scott "Mouse" Warner (RDD 69)

NSA CA TRAMPS had been itching for a Back Country-style Trail Project for several years, to augment our wonderful 3 year "drive-in" Volcano Adventure Camp (for kids) work at Lassen Volcanic NP. It all came together for a marvelous "Trail Adventure"



600 foot Drop Grizzly Creek Falls (center) with Thompson Peak (Upper R), Snowfields, & Glacier (July 2019)

in the beautiful NorCal Trinity Alps July 10-16, 2019. The task was to open the northern access to the popular 600 foot 3-stage drop Grizzly Creek Falls; with Grizzly Lake above fed by a remnant glacier on the north slope of Thompson Peak - highest point (9002 feet ABSL) in the Trinity Alps. The area had burned in a 2006 wildfire: south of ridgetop Hunter Camp severely; which initiated thick Snowbrush

(*Ceanothus velutinus*) - also known as Tobacco Brush or Varnish Leaf, and numerous deadfall. Hapless hikers were forced to "swim" if not crawl through trail-choking brush, while horsemen and packers could not pass at all.

As a "Back Story" since 2015, NSA CA TRAMPS was unable to find volunteer trail work in USFS Region 5. For sure there was ample need, yet curious agency indifference at the Regional and Forest levels. Rather than pursue top down "chain of command" resolute CA TRAMPS turned to the "Good Old Boy Network." Time to turn to Murry Taylor, retired long-time smokejumper of note and forester steward of his well-tended 2nd growth forest property, just west of Scott Valley NW of Mt Shasta. Well-known by the Klamath NF, Murry had spoken highly of the can-do outlook of the local District Ranger - as had the California Smokejumpers.

So, with Murry as liaison, a July 2018 meeting was arranged with Salmon/Scott River Ranger District Ranger Ted McArthur, his Deputy, and Recreation Officer. In a quick order, a can-do meeting four "good deal projects" were up for consideration including several in the beautiful Marble Mountains Wilderness. After checking with the California Smokejumpers that the NSA CA TRAMPS were the "real deal", Recreation Officer Sam Commarto upped the ante with the much-needed China Springs/Grizzly Creek Project. Not for the timid, Sam and the NSA CA TRAMPS Squad Leader/Organizer reconed on 8/20/19 all in one day: 2 miles/1200 feet climb to the Salmon/Trinity Divide - Hunter Camp

to be the logical “dry camp” HQ; then down 1440 feet/2 miles to Grizzly Creek; then up Grizzly Creek for about 1 mile, say a 300 feet climb; then all the way back out to the China Springs Trail Head! A great irony indeed, in that the needed and daunting trail work was on the Shasta-Trinity NF; very remote for them, with their trail head 20 miles to the south down Grizzly Creek and the North Fork of the Trinity!

“Game On” 11 months later July 2019, with arrangements made directly with the Salmon/Scott River Ranger District-based (serves the entire Klamath NF, sometimes with assignments to other National Forests) Head Packer Ellen Andrews. She has plenty to do with 2 “Full” (9 mules) Pack Strings, 4-6 saddle horses, 3 other packers, two enormous horse trailers and trucks to haul everything, and the nearby home base ‘Bird Ranch’ on the upper South Fork of California’s Salmon River. And Ellen and her packers cut brush and pull crosscut saws too!

The Tack is the unique and special “Salmon River Pack Saddle” dating from the local Mining Days a century and a half back in time. These are stouter Saw Buck Saddles riding high on a stiffened “Half Breed” inner shell, with double Britches aft and a substantial single Chest Strap forward. Canvas Panniers (locally known as “Alfies”) and wooden pack boxes are smaller than seen in other parts of the world, top loads are a rarity, yet the loaded outfit nearly always sports covering Canvas - partial mantis. The Salmon River Saddle Outfit keeps the loads higher (out of the brush, rocks, and crowder logs), close in, stable, and allows the mules to breathe on the infamously steep Klamath NF. Remember horrific “Wooley Creek” Smokejumpers and Packers? Sure, glad the Ranger and Sam didn’t send the TRAMPS there!

The NSA CA TRAMPS Camp Outfit, including provisions, tools, and other freight was estimated to be about 2100 pounds - not including water runs for the Hunter Camp “Dry Camp” up on the Salmon/Trinity Divide. A big pack job indeed for Ellen, and Packers Karen & Bett. Although short turns, it would take 3 rounds; plus, carefully making up the loads, hoisting up, tying down, unloading, and rigging up to do it all over again.

But before we hit the China Springs Trail to Hunter Camp on the Klamath/” Shasta-T” line, let’s backtrack to the late afternoon - early evening before the CA TRAMPS-hosted “Social” at nearby USFS Petersburg Fire Station. This was a chance for NSA and USFS to meet and greet before the work began. John Houston (Associate) Redding Fire Dept. Fire House Chef prepared younger brother Matt’s favorite spaghetti with a hearty special



[L-R] Mule with Salmon River Pack Saddle; Packer Karen, Matt Houston NSA, Packer Bett, Scott Warner NSA. Hunter Camp on the Salmon/Trinity Divide: Klamath NF/Shasta Trinity NF Line.

sauce as the main dish. This was the first of delicious camp food to be prepared and overseen by John on the 2019 NSA China Springs/Grizzly Creek Adventure.

Day 1 was a challenge as NSA CA TRAMPS entered new ground for the climb to Hunter Camp up on the divide to set up the base camp-HQ. The Packers and 8 mules gave it 110% that day with the foreseen 3 rounds - including H2O for NSA for a day or so. Talk about going “the extra mile” (and steep): Ellen, her packers, and the stout-hearted mules did not bed down at the Bird Ranch until 2300 hours!

Day 2 Bob Harris (RDD 75) and his TRAMPS contingent took on the dense and towering Snowbrush the first downhill half mile toward Grizzly Creek, starting just yards from Hunter Camp. With the wet & snowy 2018 NorCal Winter, the snowbrush had grown more than 3 feet since the August 20, 2018 recon, and had bent way over from the heavy snowpack! Ugly and challenging for the TRAMPS trail crew and passing pilgrim hikers - the latter astounded that the popular route to the Grizzly Creek Falls was being cleared! In some places, TRAMPS had to crawl to the base of the brush to clip with our trusty Trail Blazer (Nova Scotia) extension bypass loppers. The author saw problem-solving TRAMPS pass a 20-foot long Snowbrush stem up the trail for almost 50 feet to “daylight”, where the offending brush could be segmented and thrown downhill! By “end of shift” the 1st half mile of heavy brush had been cleared out 10 feet wide.

In the meantime, Bob Bente (RDD 88) led a crosscut saw crew downhill to take on extensive deadfall. Rec Officer Sam went along to certify Bente, who in turn would certify NSA CA TRAMPS. The saw crew made it all the way 2 miles down to Grizzly Creek and a bit upstream!

Day 3 was another “gut buster” with more snowbrush cut back topside; while the crosscut saw crew pushed upstream another 3 miles to Grizzly Creek Meadows. Other brush species and even oaks were clipped back as well along the Grizzly Creek segment, using the Trail Blazer Loppers and folding razor tooth hand saws. The stout 6-foot Simonds Bucking Saw pulled by “certified” (and experienced) sawyers took out numerous trails



NSA CA TRAMPS End of Project July 2019 China Springs/Grizzly Creek Trail Crew. [L-R] Bob Harris (RDD 75), Gene Hamner (MSO 67), Gordon Brazzi (RDD 66), Scott Warner (RDD 69), Matt Houston Associate, John Houston Associate, Arly Kisling (RDD 69), John Finnerty Associate, Gordon Whitehead (RDD 83). Top Jack Johnson Associate. Not Shown Bob Bente (RDD 88) - “Bolted” Earlier.

blocking deadfalls. Again, amazed Pilgrim hikers expressed gratitude the challenging trail was being cleared.



Day 4 was back “Down in the Hole” as NorCal loggers would say, with by day’s end the project essentially over. In fact, on the August 2018 recon, Sam and I felt it would take 2019 and 2020 to get to the base of Grizzly Creek Falls.

Although not formally to “national standards” of “8 & 8” [8’ W X 8’ H] (or is it “10 and 10”?), the Trail from Hunter Camp to the base of Grizzly Creek Falls was now “wide open” to foot and equine traffic in just one 5-day NSA CA TRAMPS Work Party!

On Day 5, most of the Tramps tidied up the previously horrific top half of the trail down to Grizzly Creek; while Sam took Bente and a fine fellow from the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) back “down in the hole”: all the way to Jorstad Cabin on the North Fork of the Trinity River. Sam’s objective was to properly “codify” the newly minted crosscut saw certifiers to certify others. PCTA Chapter Chair Jim Richter is a fine fellow who looks after the Pacific Crest Trail passing through the Angeles NF. A retired Materials Engineer, Jim has developed a clever leverage device from 4-foot-long x 13/16” diameter Titanium stock weighing only 4 pounds, with machined at opposite ends a pointed spud and an etched handle. With engineer knowledge of leverage, movement, momentum, and gravity, deadfalls of significant girth and length were rocked out their “beds” and ushered off the trail via gravity and human power. Amazing!

Day 5 ended with the traditional & celebratory “end of project” dinner, with thick, hand cut on-site “headliner” prime rib steaks. John Houston Redding Fire Dept. prepared and oversaw the special dinner and all other camp food on the projects, along with full day’s work out on the trail. We benefited from the “Fire House Chef” perspective with innovative, easy to prepare, rib-sticking camp grub. John helped with coming up with the menus and even some of the provisioning: adding to the NSA CA TRAMPS tradition of “no excuse for bad camp food.”

The China Springs/Grizzly Creek Trail Project was arduous enough to cut into “around the campfire” antics and libations. Volunteers worked hard, were tired, and settled into bedrolls on the early side.

Day 6 was poignant for some with breaking camp, packing up, and 2 rounds of the Pack String to get all the freight out to the China Springs Trailhead on the Klamath NF side. mid-morning, Ellen came in with Packer Dan who had been down on the Mendocino NF on a fire with the “first string” of fine mules. Given more work and time the “second string” of mules will also be first rate. After all, they put in 3 rounds of 2 miles/1200 feet up and down on day 1 and, kept us in water in the interim. Enough just can’t be said of

Packers Ellen, Karen, Bett, Dan, and the mules, not to mention Recreation Officer Sam Commarto.

With a 20-minute lead ahead of the 2nd round, The Houston Brothers, good Jump & trail buddy Gordon Brazzi, and "Mouse" headed down the trail together as a denouement to the China Springs/Grizzly Creek Adventure. In front loyal, younger Associates - sons of departed Jump Buddy Everett "Doc Sam" Houston (MYL 71); "back in the string" old Smokejumpers - one a singular, resilient, fun-loving personality and the other with the back-in-time campaign hat and cross cut saw over the shoulder. It was what the NSA nationwide TRAMPS program is all about: Good works for the public, good times, with good people. As always, more and new NSA volunteers are welcome - you don't want to miss out!

Lassen Volcanic National Park: Volcano Adventure Camp

Scott "Mouse" Warner (RDD 69)



Around the Campfire May 2019. [L-R] Bottom Row: Jim Richardson LVNP, Pat O'Bannon (RDD 70), Bob Harris (RDD 75), Matt Houston Associate, Gordon Brazzi (RDD 66), John Houston Associate. Mid Row: Arly Kisling (RDD 69), Steve Meyer (RDD 73), John Finnerty (Associate), Dan Greenwell & Ashley (LVNP), Jack Johnson (Associate). Top Row: Bill Wharton (Associate), Murry Taylor (RDD 65), Bob Bente (RDD 88).

NSA CA TRAMPS returned in 2019 for a 3rd year to get the VAC (Volcano Adventure Camp) for kids up-and-running in the Spring and take-down in the Fall. NSA, LVNP (Lassen Volcanic National Park), and LPF (Lassen Park Foundation) have come to know each other well - benefiting from working together for a great cause. At the late July 2019 Volunteer Appreciation Day, Park Superintendent Jim Richardson and Facilities Maintenance Gary Mott explained Spring in particular is a frenetic time in that the Park Scenic Highway needs to be plowed of heavy winter snow pack, numerous campgrounds opened and supporting sophisticated water systems put into action and, the VAC activated for up to 1000 young summer campers. "Without the NSA, we couldn't get it all done."

During the long NorCal Winters, Redding area NSA CA TRAMPS take the VAC effort very seriously in planning/operation sessions at several local brew pubs. Prime considerations are crew recruitment, labor-saving methods and devices for aging

volunteers to place & erect the 10-large & heavy wall Tents, along with 80 Cots & Cabinet assembly. Then there are the extensive NSA CA TRAMPS camp outfit and tradition of good food and good times - with the project finale of the NSA-hosted "end of project dinner" for our LVNP & LPF friends and NSA Volunteers & friends. Over winter "amber liquids" there was even worry of how to keep the now 3rd year VAC effort fresh and innovative.

Smokejumpers thrive on unforeseen adventures: delighting with little or no notice of finding themselves anywhere in the American west from the Arctic Circle to New Mexico to parts in-between, to meet any challenge to come. **Numbing Routine** is the real threat, even for the NSA CA TRAMPS!

2019 Spring May 7-11 VAC Project , Spring May 7-11, 2019 VAC Roster: Scott Warner (RDD 69); Bob Bente (RDD 88); Bob Harris (RDD 75); Jack Johnson Associate Lassen NP & Lassen NF; John Finnerty Associate LA County Helo Pilot; Arly Kisling (RDD 69); Bill Wharton Associate; Gordon Brazzi (RDD 66); Murry Taylor (RDD 65); Steve Meyer (MYL 73); Pat O'Bannon (RDD 70); John Houston Associate Redding Fire Dept; Matt Houston Associate; Frank & Judy Cocu Associates Queensland Australia.

Workday 1 was reminiscent of past Smokejumper Retread training sessions: good to see old and new friends while engaging in familiar activities. As in the refresher sessions of yore of PT tests, training units, & practice jumps; there was the "done it before" VAC tasks of loading, transport, unloading, and placement of the tent components and, getting the enormous & heavy tents up. These tasks were very familiar and rigorous - complete with wry humor and a bit of sarcasm. Just before the end of the first workday,



recognition set in that with great effort we were ahead of projections but, the tents were heavier than ever with many more to go. And then there were cot & cabinet loading, transport, unloading, assembly, and placement.

At that moment the golden unforeseen occurred. The VAC gate had been left partially open, with occupants of a large motorhome looking for a place to bed down. In a response to a polite "regrettably, you can't stay here; I should have closed the gate", came a familiar yet hard-to-be sure accent from both a smiling and kind man and lady - "Quite OK, we will give you a lift to the gate." Instantly a bond developed - fun loving Australians and Smokejumpers & Associates! "Oh, just go ahead and stay here for the night while the gate gets closed."

Then after an 'amber liquid' (or 2), "Let's see if the cook has plenty for dinner." Later around the campfire basking in good cheer with new 'down under' friends, "Would you stay on to help us with the cots?" "Of course, and for sure we will submit to the necessary NSA Registration Form."

The next day of hard work and good cheer was enhanced by our new friends from “The Antipodes.” With renewed energy NSA TRAMPS forged ahead with tent raising and tie down. Working with NSA Steve Meyer, Australian Queenslanders Frank and Judy Cocu assembled nearly 80 Cots in just 1 Day! ‘Smokejumper Material’ indeed! Delicious and hardy camp grub dinner for all, followed by around-the-campfire camaraderie, libations, and storytelling all came together to end a perfect day.

The following morning, we collectively enjoyed a requested Volcano Geology presentation by Lassen Park Guide Shanda Ochs who did an excellent job. The now geologically enlightened TRAMPS work party then went right back to it to get the VAC up-and-running for up to 1000 youth campers for 2019.

No amount of gentle persuasion could entice our ‘down under’ friends to stay on for the traditional end of project dinner; given their planned “Antipodean Antics” would take in the glorious American West of the Tetons, Yellowstone, Glacier Park, along with the many locales in between. So many miles and weeks of travel adventure ahead, so time to push off: despite the alluring aroma of dry-rubbed, slow cooked, smoked pork ribs 4.5 hours on the grill with another 6 hours to go. Talented “Fire House Chef” NSA Associate John Houston (Redding Fire Dept.) had arrived the day previous with little brother “Matt the

Katt” to ramrod the end of project dinner with “headliner” smoked pork Ribs.



[L-R] Frank Cocu Associate Australia, Scott Warner (RDD 69), Shanda Ochs LVNP Park Guide, Judy Cocu Associate Australia

The well-attended NSA hosted dinner with LVNP and LPF guests was a culinary adventure (“pulled ribs” on tasted garlic bread, grits, lemony-spicy cabbage salad, & Dutch oven peach cobbler) followed by more “around the campfire” good cheer. It was time to celebrate, since CA TRAMPS had completed the daunting work assignments with the

always-there-when-needed support of the Lassen Park Facilities Maintenance personnel.

Among the others (all “good ones”), since 2017 LVNP Dan Greenwell has been with NSA from the beginning: literally “showing us the ropes” with tent raising and the intricate tie down of supporting lines. After 12 years at Lassen Park with deep snow and the spectacular volcanic landscape, our “southern good ole boy” friend from the Long Leaf Pine Woods around Pensacola FL, transferred mid-summer “back home” to the Florida Everglades NP. NSA CA TRAMPS wish him well and will miss Dan with his work ethic, multi-talent problem solving abilities, and wry wit delivered in that special Florida Panhandle-South Alabama accent.

The 2019 Oct **1-5 VAC Project** at the request of Lassen Volcanic NP, was the second NSA CA TRAMPS Fall Tent Take-Down - a different kind of effort. In 2018 we made every effort to do a good, clean, orderly job of dropping, carefully folding, and tying tents (with check for incurred summer damage) by labeled tent platform position; carefully disassembling cots and stowing in individual cases; and folding the canvas cabinets. We realized back then the careful work would facilitate the following VAC 2019 Spring opening. Indeed, that proved to be the case.

2019 Fall VAC Roster: Scott Warner (RDD 69), Bob Bente (RDD 88), Spud DeJarnette (MSO 49), Bill Wharton Associate, Gordon Brazzi (RDD 66), Bob Harris (RDD 75), Jack Johnson Associate LVNP & Lassen NF, Murry Taylor (RDD 65), Steve Meyer (MYL 73), Ken Svilich Associate, and John & Matt Houston Associates

So, for Fall 2019 the tidy effort with attention to detail was repeated - which will pay off May 2020! Patience was required, duly noted for aging TRAMPS, “fast is slow and slow is fast”: relevant “words of wisdom” from legendary Alaska Smokejumper Base Manager Al Dunton. Out of necessity, we have come up with some clever and simple procedures and devices - with more in mind. Back at the July 2019 Lassen VNP Volunteer Appreciation Day, it was acknowledged VAC “camper” attendance has developed to the point that 4 more tent platforms will be constructed Summer 2020, with 4 more tents to follow. With 14 total tents, along with additional cots & cabinets clearly more and younger NSA TRAMPS volunteers will be needed!

Fall in Lassen Park is a pleasant time of year - yet autumn in the Southern Cascades carries a hint of urgency for de-commissioning VAC for the Winter, since rain and snow can come at any time. Early October 2019, CA TRAMPS got the job done in good order, even with a diminished roster and some volunteers need for early departure. A high point was the 1st workday lunch, thoughtfully provided by the Lassen VNP education folks. Many thanks to VAC “Ranger” Trixine Peart and new Education Director, Tammy Boyce for organizing the lunch for CA TRAMPS in the comfort of the covered Osprey Pavilion.

Octoberfest was the theme for the 10/5 “End of Project” dinner since the month was appropriate and it was an opportunity to celebrate our German ancestors: a very large ethnic group contributing so much to the USA. Home smoked pork chops; potato mash with mustard sauce, crispy kraut, and apple sauce laced with cinnamon comprised the Octoberfest dinner. Four different kinds of excellent Octoberfest beer were on offer. NSA and friends with Lassen Park and friends were in attendance on a quite cold night. Again, good cheer “around the campfire” was the finale to a fun night. TRAMPS were delighted that Park Superintendent, Jim Richardson joined in and bunked at VAC.



Around the Campfire VAC Fall 2019. Post Octoberfest Dinner with the Osprey Pavillion in the Background. [L-R]. Scott "Mouse" Warner (RDD 69), Bob Harris (RDD 75), Murry Taylor (RDD 65), Steve Meyer (MYL 73)

So concluded the 2019 NSA CA TRAMPS Lassen NP Volcano Adventure Camp "Adventure" in Two Episodes. The 2020 Return is not far off. For the future we truly need more NSA Smokejumpers to augment current "Old" NSA Smokejumpers and our Loyal Associates (who are the best!).