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## National Smokejumper Association Trail Maintenance Annual Report for 2016

National Smokejumper Association Trails Committee

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# NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION

## TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016

November 2016



### 2016 NSA Volunteer of the Year

Jim “Doc” Phillips (MSO '67) has been selected as the 2016 NSA Trails Volunteer of the Year. Jim has been a stalwart of the program since near the beginning in 2001 when he first volunteered on the Blackfoot Divide project and served as chief cook and doc and has been an absolute unstoppable participant every year since, having volunteered for multiple projects every year, not only as our “doc” but also as cook and squad leader. His efforts have had him ranging from Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana all the way out to West Virginia and I think even had his sights on Maine for this year.

He graduated from Ronan High School, Ronan, MT, in 1961. He then joined

the US Navy, volunteering for the medical corps as a corpsman. Upon graduation he was assigned to the Fleet Marine Forces as a corpsman to the US Marines. Only the top corpsmen were given this assignment due to the extreme physical requirements and stamina attendant to this duty which came easy to Jim and he loved his Marines. They must have been very fortunate to have him as their doc, judging from the caring manner he tended his trail crew bros with their leg cramps, heat exhaustion, owies, blisters, and other health related maladies that he willingly treated, al-

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## VOY Cont.

ways checking with everyone at the conclusion of each work day, not satisfied with his responsibilities until getting a thumbs up from everyone, sometimes displaying a little disappointment when he didn't have the opportunity to crack open his well stocked and very heavy medical kit that he was never without. Hemorrhoids were infrequent, but that was one malady that he declined to personally treat other than offering the duty suppository which, it is alleged that on one occasion, was administered to one of the older crew members. When queried the following morning about how he was doing, the gentleman reluctantly responded, "It did not work and for all the good it did me I might as have stuck them up my butt!" Jim, needless to say, has a great sense of humor. On many hot, late summer days when trudging out of the wilderness after a week of hard work, at about the 7<sup>th</sup> mile of the 10 mile hike out, with morale slightly flagging, he would burst into song and the pace would pick up and all was once again well.

He started his fire experience as a member of several Hot Shot crews after returning home from the Navy. He then embarked on his jumping career which he pursued all through college and even after, as he began his teaching career at the Helena High School System after graduating from the University of Montana. Upon retiring from there, he then went with the Montana Department of Transportation for his second career.

Jim has been an integral part of the NSA Trails Program Committee and when our leader, Jon McBride, died just weeks before the 2010 projects were to begin, he stepped up and helped ensure that not only did those projects get completed but that all the after action details and reports were submitted on time. He continued in that role as Operations Director for several years after, ensuring quality and continuity were in good hands before embarking on other NSA trails program initiatives, one of which involved the Mann Gulch tragedy which he took on almost singlehandedly many years ago. Through his dogged determination and numerous years of visits to the site and many meetings with the USFS District

Office and Helena Forest Supervisor he won their support and endorsement for his dream of finally getting official recognition of Mann Gulch as a place that is to be revered well into the future. This is finally becoming a reality thanks to Jim's foresight and persistence to see it through.

Dr. Theodore Hesburgh, former President of the University of Notre Dame once said, "The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision". Jim most certainly demonstrated that, tirelessly and unrelentingly.

Not satisfied with just volunteering for multiple projects each year, last year Jim volunteered to take on the enormous task of organizing and leading the highly successful celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first smokejumper fire jump in 1940. This celebration also served as our national smokejumper reunion in conjunction with that iconic event.

As our NSA Trails Program Doc, Jim worked very hard in procuring and assembling our project medical kits for all trail crews to have on project, an undertaking that was several years in the making. He also took extra time and training to become crosscut saw certified which enabled him to conduct that training for district crews for work in the designated wilderness areas for the USFS.

Jim's untiring dedication and motivation to be a part of the NSA Trails Program has been vital to its continued and growing success from the initial two projects in 1999 to the more than 20 that are now routinely completed in the nation wherever there are former smokejumpers who have the ability and desire to participate in one of the most successful trail maintenance programs in the country. This carries on the tradition of giving back to the American public that wonderful experience to enjoy the great outdoors that we are blessed to have around us and to enjoy for years to come. Thanks Jim. You have been a huge part of this and we acknowledge and recognize you for being such a significant part of it. Our nation is better off for having citizens in it like you. And thanks also to Jim's dedicated wife Illa for sharing him through all these years. You too are a part of it all.

We'll see you down the trail.

## Program Summary for 2016 Fred Cooper (NCSB 62)

We had 19 projects in 9 different states with volunteers contributing 165 work-weeks of their personal work time plus an untold number of travel hours and personal money. Fifty volunteers were Associates with the remainder being Jumpers. Several of the volunteers worked on two or more projects. For the first time, we had projects in Maine and up-state New York. We are always looking for additional volunteers. Several of our crews have been short-handed and with additional requests for projects, we can always use more volunteers. When and where you can, recruit more volunteers.

A key to the success of the program are our Squad Leaders. We had 16 Squad Leaders this year (three led two projects each). Three of them were new this year. Many thanks for suiting up and taking on the challenge. We are always looking for new leaders, especially with new project locations each year. If you are interested and want to know more about being a Squad Leader talk to one of your past project squad leaders or contact me. Or better yet, if you are aware of a potential project, step in the door, be the squad leader, and let us know about it. We can guide you through the process.

It appears at least ten of the projects from this year will be repeats in 2017. In addition, preliminary contacts from Agencies indicate six new projects and locations for 2017.

## 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, non-reimbursable 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 Steve Carlson (IDC 62)

Once again it is time to reflect on our adventures from last summer. As you read through this report (you will read it all, right?) you will notice common themes throughout. The travel to and from, finding old friends, making new ones, sleeping in strange beds (some with mattresses, some on the ground in a tent), usually working in new areas, eating great food, generally fun projects being completed in the time allowed, and the sense of team pride as the week ended with a job well done.

Don't forget to thank your spouse for allowing you to make an attempt to return to the days of your youth. In some cases, your spouses even joined you for the fun. Without their support, we wouldn't have nearly as many participants returning year after year as we do.

If you get a chance to see or communicate with any of the folks who do the admin stuff for the Trail Crew program, be sure to let them know how much you appreciate their effort. You can bet they are spending a lot more time finding, funding, and getting materials ready for your project than you spend doing it. There isn't any magic helping them out, either. Go to [http://nsatrails.com/?page\\_id=114](http://nsatrails.com/?page_id=114) for a list of the folks who spend a lot of their time making sure you have a great experience each summer.

There are many heavy hearts in the organization this year because we lost a few of our longtime contributors. Some are mentioned in the reports. One in particular, Jim Phillips, was selected as our Volunteer of the Year. He died a month after he lead the Mann Gulch project. Jim wrote and submitted his project report to me after the prognosis that he had only a few weeks to live. That, sir, is dedication to the cause.

## 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 Ranger Station Mike Prezeau (MSO 67)

On July 28, 2016, the Bear Creek crew completed its fifth summer project at the historic Bear Creek Ranger Station, 20 miles south of Ennis, near Sphinx Mountain, on the edge of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. Our four-man crew's job has been to reroof two cabins and a barn, which together, with a small primitive campground and horse corals, comprise the old ranger station. This year, as in the past several years, the crew has consisted of Mike Oehlerich (MSO 60), Mike Prezeau (MSO 67), Bill Hutcheson (MSO 74), and Rand Herzberg (MSO 74). Tim Aman, who oversees the various cabins and campgrounds on the Madison Ranger District, has always worked with us, making sure we had all the materials and equipment we needed, and helping make the project a week to look forward to each summer. Hutcheson has always done double duty, cooking and working on the roof with everybody else. Herzberg always pitches in one night with a Dutch oven feast, this year featuring a pork roast with vegetables and a pineapple upside down cake. No one has ever lost weight at Bear Creek.

Our work each summer has followed the same pattern: setting up scaffolding, stripping the old shingles, removing the log side trim and ridge caps, laying down Weathershield, gluing and screwing on new log trim pieces, nailing down the new shingles in 5" courses (taking care to observe historic architectural

standards), reinstalling the ridge caps, taking down the scaffolding, and cleaning up the area. It's like a choreographed dance that we have all learned over the years. Good natured (usually) crap is heaped on anyone who misses a beat, and, frankly, anyone who doesn't, too. Nobody escapes the barbs, and nobody bites their tongue. It's been great fun.

We kept the crew small in order to keep out of each other's way and minimize the potential for accidents, as the roofs are all steep (12 x 12) and sometimes slippery. We used ropes, cleats, and roof jacks to minimize the potential for falling off the roofs, but there was still significant exposure, particularly on the roof of the two-story barn, which we completed this summer. Fortunately, Oehlerich, our 76-year-old senior member, scales heights like a Mohawk ironworker, and none of the rest of us has ever objected to him hogging the glory. After stripping off all the old shingles we can reach from the scaffolding, the next order of business is always to send Mike scrambling up to the peak to screw in eye screws to anchor our safety ropes. The height and steepness of the roofs notwithstanding, except for a sunburn or two, occasional slivers, and a few scrapes, we man-



The project about half done.



Randy Herzberg snapping a chalk line.



aged to complete our five-week project with no significant injuries.

Every summer the crew drives into Ennis for a meal and glass or two of wine at the Continental Divide Restaurant. We continued the tradition this summer, and the food was superb as always. On the drive home an antelope



Above: Bill Hutcheson splitting a shingle to finish the row.

tried to commit suicide on the fender of Herzberg's car, saved only by Herzberg's wine-enhanced lightning reflexes.

The weather was great this year, with only a few sprinkles here and there. We left the roof early one afternoon, as thunder was rumbling nearby, but the storm skirted around us and only reappeared briefly that evening after we were in our tents. We were on the roof each morning by 7:30, trying to work around the hottest part of the day.

We are proud of the work we have done, although job satisfaction has always only been part of the attraction. Wisecracking, comradery, and general tomfoolery has always been what has made the work enjoyable. On occasion Oehlerich and Prezeau have slipped into Ennis after work for a quick 9 holes of golf, and Herzberg has fished the nearby Madison River, but this summer those activities only consumed one evening. Mostly, perhaps because it might be our last summer together, we used our time after work to drink a beer or two and talk about old memories and old jumpers, some still with us and some not.

None of us knows if 2016 was the last time we'll see Bear Creek, but whether it was or not, we all feel fortunate to have spent five great weeks together on our good deal Bear Creek 4-manner. There wasn't any OT, but there are lots of good memories.

At right: The finished project.





## Bear Creek Trails

Robin Hamilton (MSO 69)

On July 30 six members of the Missoula class of 1969 and a young volunteer from Denver met in Ennis, Montana, had a fine dinner at the Blue Moon Restaurant in Cameron, then crossed the highway to Bear Creek Road and a five mile drive to the Bear Creek Forest Service Station. The station is at the base of the Madison Range and a trail head for spectacular Sphinx Mountain. This is the fourth cabin we've used as a base for our volunteer work and it is easily the most luxurious of all, including electricity and hot water on demand. All the trails we were scheduled to work were in the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, Beaverhead-Deer Lodge National Forest. The workers were Lon Dale, Dave Dayton, Fred Axelrod, Mark Johnson, John Boles, Robin Hamilton (cook and scribe) and Chad Hanson (Assoc.).

We worked two separate trails on the Bear Creek drainage: about three miles on the South Fork of Bear Creek and two miles on the North Fork of Bear Creek. Because I was the camp cook, I didn't have to make the daily hike to the job site. I did, however, clean the kitchen and left it better than we found it. I'm relying on photos and verbal re-

ports that significant labor was performed. The work was necessary maintenance on these popular trails. We (they) cleaned out water bars, enlarged drains, reset several water bars and replaced a few. We also removed rocks and cleared brush that was infringing on the trail. As has been the case on every project we've worked, we finished the assigned work sooner than the Forest Service people expected so we went fishing. Unfortunately, the weather was hot and dry and even the wonderful Madison River yielded very few fish. Chad Hanson, the young (compared to us) volunteer, caught a nice cutthroat in Cameron Lake. I am happy to report that in spite of the early hours, the heat, and the hard work, no one lost any weight. We hope to find an appropriate project for next year and a Ranger District that realizes that old guys can still work. This is a tremendous program and necessary because of the dearth of funding at the national level. I suggest some informational signs telling all the people who benefit from all this volunteer work what the situation is and who to thank, especially the local districts that set us up and make these projects possible.



Lon and John with Bear Creek Cabin in the background.



Dave swinging the picmatic.





John, Lonetree, Fred working on the trail.



L to R: Mark Johnson, Dave Dayton, Fred Axelrod, Lon Dale, John Boles, Robin Hamilton, Chad Hanson



Standing L to R: Mark Johnson, John Boles, Dave Dayton, Fred Axelrod, Chad Hanson.  
Kneeling: Lon Dale



## Bonnors Ferry Trails Maintenance and Fence Project by Chuck Haynes (associate)

Once more into the breach, dear friends. The Bonners Ferry Ranger District hosted an eight-man crew for a week of trail work and fence building in the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The crew was composed of four former jumpers – Monroe (Spud) Dejarnette (MSO 49), Hank Jones (MSO 53), Dan Hensley (MSO 57), and Carl Gidlund (MSO 58), and four associates – Rich Apps, Bob Denner, Mike Jones, and yours truly. Bonners Ferry Recreation and Trails Program Manager Pat Hart met us at her office on the afternoon of June 19th and broadly outlined the work before us.

We then drove to our trailhead base camp and spent the afternoon setting up camp. The trailhead area had a vault toilet, picnic table, fire ring, corral for horses, three prepared campsites, and a large grassy parking area. The three of us with the smallest tents used the prepared campsites, while the others used the grassy area near the corrals. We also erected a 16'X18' canvas tent to store supplies, established the kitchen directly in front of the big tent, and gathered firewood. Having been warned that there was no water available, most of the crew brought water containers ranging from three to twelve gallons' capacity. We filled up at the ranger station on Sunday and only needed one resupply run, which was graciously provided by our USFS hosts.

Spud served as cook and kept us well-fed with a varied menu. Of course, nothing works perfectly, and we awoke Tuesday morning to a gift of liquid sunshine from above. Fortunately, we had a rainfly which we quickly raised and moved the kitchen under it, so that Spud could continue to churn out good meals while relatively dry.

The fence building part of the project began Monday morning when two Forest Service employees showed up with a pick-up truck filled with a dozen posts and 20 poles for a 50-foot long jack-leg fence. We drove up the road through the beautiful, heavily-wooded, diverse Kaniksu forest to the drop-off point and off-loaded the materials. Because of a last-minute conflict, Gary Quinn, who was our fence-building contact, was unable to be there on Monday, so we didn't actually start building the

fence until Tuesday. Our first task on Tuesday was to carry the materials and tools up the trail to the fence location. It was only about four-tenths of a mile from the drop-off point to the fence site, but the grade was steep, with the steepest part being about 100 yards long through ankle-deep mud. We each made the trip twice, since carrying two posts at once wasn't really an option. If I had tried to carry two posts at a time, they would have had to use one for my grave marker.



Chuck, Mike, Hank, and Carl aligning the top rail to a post frame.

The purpose of the fence is to prevent all-terrain vehicles from continuing up the trail and damaging a string of beautiful and serene meadows. The forest has several areas designated as non-motorized, primarily for protection of threatened and endangered species – both flora and fauna. In this specific area, they are trying to regenerate grizzly bear habitat. To allow hikers and horses through while stopping ATVs, the fence was built in two sections with a

36" wide pass-through. The fence was strategically located in a narrow strip between two stands of trees, to preclude circumvention. That meant that we were working in tight quarters on uneven, sloping ground. There were simply no flat surfaces in the general area. Thus, we were trying to run a fence in a relatively straight line, keeping the posts reasonably vertical, all without falling on our, uh, faces. Despite a few minor difficulties and do-overs, we succeeded in completing the fence Wednesday morning.

The trail maintenance part of the project included work on two trails. Monday morning, a crew of Forest Service people arrived with instructions plus pulaskis and shovels. The job was to clear Trail #53 (which started at our base camp), build water bars, and regrade sections of the trail which had suffered erosion damage. We built ten water bars before we came to a creek crossing about three-tenths of a mile down the trail. The creek bed was rocky, and we built something of a ford across it. As we were working on the ford, we were called back to camp to move materials for the fence project (see above). In the afternoon, we went back down the trail and built another 24 water bars over the next seven-tenths of a mile. On Thursday, we returned to that trail, improving several of the previously built water bars, building 21 more over a stretch of about a third of a mile, and regrading about 100 feet of trail with severe erosion damage.

The second trail ran east from the fence location. On Wednesday, two UFSF personnel, Brandon Glaza (a hydrologist and friend of Bob's), and Mike Berg (Brandon's assistant), joined us working the trail. After completing the fence, we worked our way east about a mile, up through Kelly Pass to a point where three trails intersect. We built 24 water bars, widened about 200 yards of trail through one of those serene meadows, felled or pruned trees that overhung the trail, and regraded four short sections of eroded trail. Bob (our only certified sawyer) felled a leaning snag at trail's edge. When we arrived at the 3-trail intersection, Brandon telephoned Pat to see which way we should go from there. She was surprised that we had gotten so far. In fact, she had hoped that we could reach that spot by the end of the week. So she asked that we return to Kelly

Pass and block an old trail which the Forest Service has decommissioned. The old trail had erosion problems which required continual reworking by Pat's people. It was also exceptionally steep and followed an alluvial fan. They had built the new trail to allow easier access to Kelly Pass while protecting the environment along the old trail, but some hikers and riders persisted in using the old one. So Bob felled two snags, and we dragged several others over to block access to the old route and direct people toward the new trail.

Pat came to camp Thursday evening to thank us for our efforts and give us tee shirts (with the Bonners Ferry RD Trail Crew logo). She said that we had upheld the NSA trail crew tradition of doing more than was expected. She assured us that she would plan accordingly next time, and we let her know that we'd enjoy coming back to work for her.

Friday morning, we ate breakfast, broke camp, and departed (accompanied by more liquid sunshine). A week of hard work, camaraderie, fun, and a sense of accomplishment -- all in a beautiful setting. My thanks to the crew and to the people who worked so hard to put this all together.



The finished product.





Home sweet home, the camp area.



Front row - Rich Apps, Dan Hensley, Hank Jones  
Middle row - Brandon Glaza, Bob Denner, Spud Dejarrette, Mike Jones, Chuck Haynes  
Back Row - Mike Berg, Carl Gidlund



## Hondo Cabin Mike Overby (MSO 67)

In 2015, the TRAMPS worked with Quest District of the Carson National Forest to begin restoration of Baldy Cabin - one of two 100+ year old original ranger stations in the Carson NF. Baldy Cabin is over 6 miles into the Latir Peaks Wilderness Area – and 11,000 ft. elevation.

In 2016, we began work on restoration of the other cabin on the Rio Hondo – called the Hondo Cabin. (Rio means river for you gringos). The cabins were fairly similar in size and construction – the huge difference being accessibility. Hondo Cabin is located just off the highway only a few miles from Taos Ski Valley. It rests on one of the few “wide spots” along the road next to the Rio Hondo.

The project team in 2016 consisted of former jumpers Mike Overby- Project Lead (MSO 67), Bob Smee (MSO 68), John Helmer (RDD 59) and Associates Mark Rivera, Alan Wonders, Ken Svlich, and John Willett. As last year, the project was supported by Questa FS District Archeologists Carrie Leven and Jerry Hardee. Bob, Alan and Mark were pro’s from earlier Baldy Cabin work. Ken and John Willett were college boxing team members along with John Helmer – all from the West (left) coast (of CA). John Helmer graced the team with multiple bottles of his personally developed “Smokejumper” red wine from Napa vineyards.

In this, the first year of the project, the goal was to replace existing cabin wood shingles with Split Shake cedar, repaint the outside, clear brush along roadway, and start a split rail fencing project to protect the cabin area from a nearby cattle corral area (no more patties in your camp site). Most of the work was completed – except that we ran out of Shake Shingles (who did that estimate?) and a late change on location of fence resulted in only a portion being put in (along with a nice gate). All poles and rails were skinned and are ready for future year installation (TBD).

Having worked on earlier TRAMPS shingling projects, Bob Smee brought needed skills to the team and spent a lot of time on the roof. Mark also spent significant time scampering back and forth hammering away. We planned well for safety by securing scaffolding and safe-

ty harnesses – which wasn’t really on our list until John Helmer saw pictures of TRAMPS on other roof projects.

Without a “formal cook” we did very well as the California 3 Amigo’s (John, John and Ken) woke extra early each day and prepared breakfast for all. Carrie also prepared dinners for all. Also without a coffee pot (which somehow got left out) – John and John improvised quite well with very good “cowboy coffee.”

The Forest Service has developed a longer term strategy with plans to locate another historic cabin in close proximity to Hondo Cabin and add camp sites, parking, water sources, etc. The goal is to finish adding bunks and stove so as to rent the cabin in the future (off grid facilities, fire pit and out house included).

Given the known lack of Forest Service funds for anything other than TRAMPS per diem, Mike made three grant writing attempts to national and local organizations in attempt to raise funding for materials (shingles, fencing, etc.). Surprisingly, two of the proposals were accepted and the projects were granted a total of \$6,500 for future restoration efforts. As the old saying goes, “it is like asking the Homecoming Queen to the dance – she can only say no.”



John Helmer skinning a fence post.





Mark and Alan removing the old roof.



Mark and Bob putting the new shingles on.



The crew: Alan Wonders, Mike Overby, Ken Svlich, John Willett, Bob Smee, Mark Rivera, John Helmer



## Horse Creek Trail Maintenance Perry Whittaker (MSO 71)

The project was located on the Salmon/Challis National Forest in the northeast end of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness (FCRNRW). The campsite is located in the upper reaches of Horse Creek at Horse Creek Hot Springs in Section 15, T. 25 N., R. 17 E., Boise Meridian approximately thirty-five (35) air miles northwest of Salmon, Idaho. Our camp was just outside the FCRNRW although the trail work lies within it. Wednesday, July 6 was spent driving to the campsite and setting up camp for the week.

The crew consisted of eight National Smokejumper Association (NSA) retired smokejumpers, one associate and a cook. Crew members included Tom Boatner (FBX 80), Phil Difani (MSO 67), Bruce Ford (MSO 75), Jeff Kinderman (MSO 75), Kim Maynard (MSO 82), Rod McIver (MSO 64), Irene Saphra (RAC 86), Richard Appis (Associate), and Perry Whittaker (MSO 71) acting as squad leader. This was a strong crew with many years of smokejumper experience and NSA trail projects under their belts.

Gourmet meals were prepared by Suzanne Mueller, (Cook/Medic) an excellent Dutch oven chef. The crew thoroughly enjoyed the meals during the week. Suzanne again went above and beyond the call of duty, we were blessed to have her on the crew. Every meal was a culinary delight and we looked forward with anticipation to the next meal to see what she had prepared for us. We ate like kings and know we could not have had a better cook! Suzanne worked like a trooper although it was rainy and very cold a couple mornings when it felt more like Fall than mid-Summer.

The project involved an estimated 12.5 miles of trail maintenance on the Horse Creek, Filly, Cayuse, and Reynolds Creek trails. A lot of the trail work was in mountainous terrain between 6,000 and 7,800 feet above sea level. July 7 and 8 was spent working an estimated 5.5 to 6 miles of the Horse Creek Trail No. 159 south of the Gattin Ranch and Filly Creek Trail No. 165. This work included removal of 78 trees from the trails using crosscut saws and tread work on approximately 325 feet of trail. A considera-

ble portion of the trails lie in areas that have been burned over by wild fire.

July 9 the crew had a very rainy day with some periods of hail. The day was spent on the Cayuse Creek Trail No. 166 where we cut and removed 81 trees. July 10 was another rainy day on the Cayuse Creek Trail where another 64 trees were removed. During the two days we opened up 3.8 miles of trail. There were so many down logs it was difficult to locate the trail in some areas.

July 11 the crew worked the Reynolds Creek Trail No. 158 from near the Continental Divide where water drains northwesterly into the Selway, northeasterly into the Bitterroot, and southerly into the Salmon Rivers. We worked 3 miles of trail removing 45 trees. Part of the day we were working in approximately 2 inches of new snow.



Our cook, Suzanne, hard at work.

It was fabulous having a natural hot springs near the camp to soak our tired achy, cold muscles in the evening. The crew bonded well and we had a great time telling and listening to stories about one another and other old smokejumpers most of whom were not present to refute or substantiate the stories. Evening camp fire stories are always plentiful and most interesting.



Many thanks go to Geoff Fast and Harrison "Harry" Stone, Wilderness Rangers on the Salmon/Challis, who worked with us daily providing guidance in regards to what they wanted and providing the crew with a great experience. Geoff knew where to set up camp making our experience more rewarding. It helps tremendously to have them work with the NSA crew to ensure the work product is satisfactory.

In summary, we cleared and improved an estimated 12.5 miles of trail. This included cutting and removing 290 trees from the trails and approximately 325 feet of tread work. Since all trails were within the FCRNRW, all saw work was done with crosscut saws or smaller hand saws. Congrats to the crew for completing this trail work without any significant injury. It is always fun being on these trail projects.



Standing: Bruce Ford  
Sawing L-R: Rod McIver and Irene Saphra



L-R: Phil Difani, Jeff Kinderman, and Rich Appis



Standing L-R: Geoff Fast USFS, Irene Saphra, Rod McIver, Bruce Ford, Tom Boatner, Perry Whittaker, Kim Maynard, Rich Appis Associate, and Phil Difani  
Kneeling: Jeff Kinderman



## Horse Camp

Nez Perce National Forest, Selway- Bitterroot Wilderness  
Bob Whaley (MSO 56)

As we completed our 18th year in the NSA Trails Program, the opportunity presented itself to revisit a project we completed in 2008 in the Nez Perce National Forest, Selway- Bitterroot Wilderness when we moved the entire corral from the Horse Camp Cabin site and pack shed across Pell Creek to its current site about a hundred yards or so up the hill. The status of the corral had deteriorated and required significant work to put it back in operational condition for stock. Many of the rails were missing and some posts were badly rotted out, all of which required replacing them with native materials which were abundant in the area which were felled, peeled and cut. I was once again fortunate to have many of my old reliables with JB Stone (MSO 56), Bob Schumaker (MSO 59), Dennis Pearson (MSO 62), Joe Kroeber (MSO 62), and Larry "Uke" Ukestad (MSO 67). Needless to say, one of our old standbys, Jim "Doc" Phillips, who has been with me on 14 of my last 17 projects, was sadly missing having departed us a short time before due to his affliction with stage 4 pancreatic cancer that took him off the jump list far too soon. Jim is greatly missed from an organization he truly loved and staunchly supported. He was a very key player in sustaining the program after we lost Jon McBride in 2010.

We were once again the beneficiaries of the North Idaho Back Country Horsemen with lead packer and chief cook Larry Cooper, assisted by the very capable hands of packers Joe Robinson and Ed Enneking who, in addition to the packing expertise, also helped with the cooking and many camp maintenance chores. As a squad leader, it is very comforting to be surrounded with this kind of talent when tackling a project. All you need to do is assess the job that has been assigned, and then turn the troops loose to figure it out, knowing that with minimal guidance it will be done correctly and well. As JB said on one occasion, when faced with one of the "challenges" in preparing one of the corral rails, "I've cut this SOB 3 times and it's still too short" and Joe was quick to agree! While we all worked in the hot corral most of the time, another item on the "to do" list was the repair

of the tack shed. It seems that a curious bear wanted to gain entry last fall and tore the door apart. Joe and Bob went down and with very limited materials and creative patchwork, they repaired the door better than before. With the very high temps in the corral, (estimated high 90s to 100 degrees) work was usually called about 1530 each day since those conditions presented not only a safety hazard but were approaching that old law of diminishing returns for efforts expended. Thanks to our "doc", Joe, he noted that the upper corners of the corral provided some shade at different times which helped in the heat department. It was nice to have Uke's size and heft which was appreciated more than once. There was an empty water tank in the lower corner of the corral that had a garden hose connected to a rail above it. Determined to trace it back uphill to its origin at the creek, Joe, our doc and supreme engineer, BS'er and chief hydrologist with meager assistance from sidekick JB, who was awarded the title of "Boy", traced its snaked path back uphill to its origin. After un-kinking it along the way . . . , Shazam!, the water began to flow, filling the tank. The completed project came in well under budget and in less time than a GS 4 or 5 could have dreamed. The tank was immediately initiated by Dennis (who never ever met a puddle he couldn't enjoy) in total immersion and a full Monte. Complete detoxification was begun immediately thereafter. This cold fresh water was very welcome during the efforts in the hot corral with frequent head dunks and water bottle filling.





On Thursday afternoon, we were greeted by Gail Renshaw and Katie Knotek who rode in to join us for that afternoon and Friday steak night. Corey Swanson from the USFS also joined us that day on his way in with a pack string to resupply a trail crew at the Seven Lakes area and spent the night with us. Corey provided additional guidance on what we could do to further improve on what we had done and as always, we definitely appreciate his professional input. He also said that time permitting on the last day he'd like us to clear a path through the boulders across Boulder Creek so that passage would be much easier on stock and people who make those crossings at both locations leading to camp and upstream at the trail leading to the Seven Lakes area. He rejoined us after his resupply for the Friday night steak night. This is always the highlight of the end of project celebration, particularly with the fine cuisine prepared by chef Cooper with the able help of chief salad maker Ed Enneking and steak man extraordinaire Joe Robinson, who somehow always gets everyone's steak done to perfection. Then, to top it off, Cooper presents his famous Dutch oven chocolate cake specialty for JB's birthday that we celebrate every year regardless of the fact that that it really isn't! Bob Schumaker's Grand Marnier was also parsimoniously consumed in about three nights and well enjoyed in addition to Cooper's smooth Tangle Ridge (which occasionally turns into



Lunch time at the cabin

L-R: Joe Kroeber, Bob Whaley, Larry Ukestad, Bob Schumaker, JB Stone.  
Photo by Dennis Pearson

stumble foot) that satiates our libations every year and can very nicely perk up a cup of hot coffee and open one's eyes to the early mountain dew.

When I visited Jim Phillips about a week before his passing, I told him I wanted something of his to take on the project. He left the room and came back with his green 2009 coffee mug that had something inside. I asked if I should I open it now or wait for Friday night? He said open it now. I removed the lid and inside was this small miniature bottle of Jameson Irish Whiskey. I nearly lost it right there knowing how much he enjoyed that libation from his little metal sipping cup. So, at the conclusion of dinner that night, I opened the coffee cup with the story behind it and carefully emptied the contents into his green mug and ceremoniously passed it around to the 12 participants for just a sip of the smooth, Irish elixir. Then I broke out the large 1 liter bottle of Jameson (distilled in Dublin since 1780) which was opened and shared for the rest of the evening. It lasted much later than the NSA crew who retired earlier as they needed to muster early the next morning to pack up and do the 9-10 mile hike out. From my tent, I heard a lot of laughter and conversation well into the night around the roaring camp fire. I distinctly recall one comment from Cooper loudly exclaiming..."damn... I could really get used to this Irish whiskey"! And speaking of campfire conversations, it seems that more and more they not only include jump stories but seem to evolve to health issues and maladies that frequently pop up relating to the "Golden Years". Many of these are those associated with memory recall and one of which reminds me of that famous quote by Ben Franklin; "Never put of 'til tomorrow what can be done today". To which I paraphrase..."Never do today what you can put off and forget tomorrow".

Once again Linda Cooper was there at the trailhead with Joe Robinson's wife Kathy to give us a royal sendoff. These ladies are much appreciated for all the behind the scenes coordination that they do to help in preparation for these "good deals" we do each year. They help us avoid many of the glitches that can happen in such projects when details are overlooked. Thanks, ladies. And having Gail and Katie was like old times, Gail with her excellent

camera work and Katie, just being Katie and joining us on the hike out where we were once again met by our trustworthy greeting squad of Jerry Power, Dale Floerchinger and Mark Stergios. Of all the many times these dedicated friends have met us through the years with cold beers and Pepsis, I doubt that any was more welcome than this year with the very hot hiking conditions experienced on that sweltering July 30<sup>th</sup> Saturday afternoon. On more than one occasion on the hike out, the comment was frequently exclaimed. . . "I sure hope the welcoming crew with the beer will be there!" And the timing could not have been better. They were there on cue and the packers including Corey and Gail who assisted in the pack out came in behind us very shortly thereafter. And I must say that with Cooper's stock, along with all of Joe, Ed, Corey and

Gail's, it was quite a sight seeing all those mules and horses all packed up coming down the dusty trail. It doesn't get much better than that. Thanks, everyone for another fun and sometimes challenging project. Hope we can all do it again next year.

Stay well and see 'ya down the trail.  
*Boss Man*

PS from Bob: It is good to report that Larry Cooper has completed his extensive month long cancer treatments in Spokane. He and Linda report that he is looking forward to the next phase of his post cancer adventures which will be as a continuing participant in the NSA trails program as lead packer and chef with the North Idaho Back Country Horseman efforts in perpetuating support for this vital part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness complex.



### **The Whole Crew**

Front row L-R: Corey Swanson (USFS Kooskia RD), Katie Knotek (USFS Seeley RD), JB Stone (with "birthday" cake from Cooper's Dutch oven), Joe Kroeber, Gail Renshaw.  
Back row L-R: Dennis Pearson, Bob Schumaker, Larry Cooper, Larry Ukestad, Ed Enneking, Bob Whaley and Joe Robinson.



## Lewis & Clark Descent Trail Fred Cooper (NCSB 62)

Crew: Jeff Kinderman, Squad Leader (MSO 75), Bruce Ford (MSO 75), Todd Onken (MSO 82), Mike Pepion (MSO 82), Rod McIver (MSO 64), Fred Cooper (NCSB 62), and Suzanne Mueller (Associate & Cook). Project dates were August 18 to 24, 2016.

Forest Service: Tori Arnsparger and Amelia Shields for two days and Mark Smith for one day. Tori and Amelia are on the Bitterroot National Forest (BNF) Trails Crew and Mark is the BNF Trails Manager.

The Ravalli Republic and a week later the Missoulian published a story of the project written by Perry Backus, Associate Editor of the Ravalli Republic. It can be accessed at: [http://ravallirepublic.com/news/local/article\\_ddce3170-69ab-11e6-adcb-4ffd86a36663.html](http://ravallirepublic.com/news/local/article_ddce3170-69ab-11e6-adcb-4ffd86a36663.html)

This project was advertised in March on our Trails Website to have boots on the ground the last week in June. However, the Forest Service had to go through a public scoping process seeking comments and have their Wildlife Biologist and Botanist review the site on the ground for potential adverse environmental concerns. We didn't get official word that the project was going to be approved until August 1. Sorry to those who had signed up for the project back in March.

We camped at Indian Trees Campground, so-named because of several scarred Ponderosa Pine trees in the vicinity. The Bitterroot Salish people along with other visiting tribes peeled away the outer bark of the pine trees in the spring to obtain the tree's sweet chewy cambium layer for food. Most of the scarred trees in the area were peeled between 1835 and 1890. The trees are believed to be over 200 years old.

Construction of the Lewis and Clark (L&C) Descent Trail has been in various planning stages for 15 years by several interested individuals and groups, including the Lewis & Clark Heritage Foundation. Many thanks go to the Foundation who provided a Lewis and Clark Trail Stewardship Endowment Grant to the NSA Trails Program for construction of the 3-mile segment of the Lewis & Clark Descent Trail. The Endowment is part of the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial Legacy Project.

The trail we constructed is "in the footsteps" of the Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery's 1805 route to the Pacific and is located where the Corps descended from the present day Lost Trail Pass area on the Idaho-Montana border down into the Bitterroot Valley. It is on the ridge between the East and West Forks of Camp Creek, paralleling and about a half mile west of present day Highway 93.

After camping in the Bitterroot Mountain range southwest of the "Divideing ridge" (dividing ridge) between Saddle and Orr Mountains on September 3, 1805 and awakening on September 4, the Corps of 31 men, Sacajawea and her baby, Pomp, and about 30 horses, "found everything frozen, and the ground covered with snow" descended down into the present day Bitterroot Valley. They travelled over the route where we built the trail and ate lunch in the vicinity of Indian Trees Campground. The Corps ended the day meeting and camping with 400 Salish Tribal members at present day Ross' Hole, about a mile from Sula, Montana. Saddle and Orr Mountains, the "Divideing ridge" and Sula are visible from several view-points along the trail.



Mark Smith of the USFS, posting the official Lewis & Clark approval notification.

Our crew was immersed in the history of the area. On Saturday evening, we were joined by several guests from the Bitterroot Valley, including Dale Burke, publisher and Riga Winthrop, one of the authors of the book, *Lewis & Clark in the Bitterroot*. Other guests were Kristine Komar, President of Bitterroot Cultural Heritage Trust, Margaret Gorsky, past president of LCTHF, and Rachael Gordon, Dale's daughter. Dale and Riga, in their way of thanking us on behalf of many who supported the project, presented us with autographed copies of their book. During the rest of the project we read various chapters of the book in the evenings, sharing our thoughts about what it must have been like when the Corps came over the Continental Divide, the Bitterroot Range, and down into the Bitterroot Valley almost to the day, 211 years ago. Of course this is when we weren't telling jump and fire stories because we had 126 seasons of fire experience amongst the six of us (I was the laggard with only six seasons).

If you ever have the opportunity to sign up for a project when Suzanne is the cook, do not hesitate. We may have sampled Dutch Oven cooking on other projects, but she is tops. For every breakfast and dinner with few exceptions, the main course and desert was cooked in her Dutch Oven surrounded with petroleum-free briquettes. Main course examples included barbecued tri-tip with cheesy potatoes, barbecued chicken with potato salad and corn on the cob, jalapeno or blue cheese stuffed bacon burgers and baked beans, and beef tips over noodles with roasted broccoli and dinner rolls. Breakfasts included caramel apple one morning and on another morning blueberry French toast, all from her Dutch oven. Dessert examples were cheesecake with huckleberry sauce, bread pudding with whiskey sauce, berry crisp, chocolate layer cake, and apple pie.

With our evening beer we always had appetizers such as shrimp quiche, Italian stuffed mushrooms, spinach dip, various cheeses and crackers, olives, and pickled asparagus. Nothing went to waste for if there were left overs, they went into burritos for the next day's breakfast or lunch. If there was any desert left over, Jeff made use of it for breakfast (he doesn't eat deserts with dinner) and the rest of us used it in our lunches. Sorry Gary and Tom, she threw away the sample menus you guys prepared years ago.

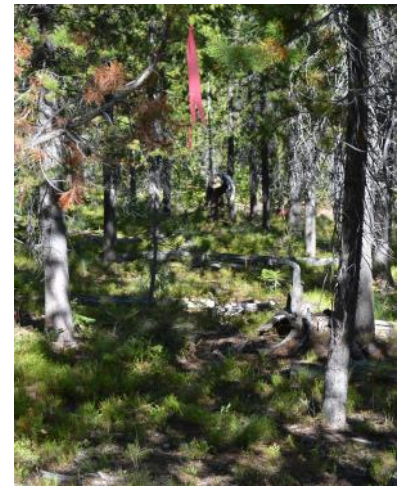
Rarely do we have a project where a new trail is built. This was a pleasant exception. We thought it might be a two-year project but with our skilled and experienced crew, we were able to clear a travel path and put in tread where needed in one year. The trail is classified as a Level 2 trail by the Forest Service. This means a clearing four feet wide, seven feet high, and tread about 12 to 18 inches wide. In many areas, thanks to Mark's expertise in laying out the trail, we were able to take advantage of several old skid roads and game trails. Other areas required considerable clearing of alder, brush patches, and grubbing a tread. The established trail is approximately 3 miles in length with an elevation change of 1,000 feet. Mark Smith, the Bitterroot NF Trails Manager walked the trail the last day with us, made a few modifications, and approved the work by putting up official Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Signs.

The plan for next year is that the NSA Trails Program will install Lewis & Clark Trail Interpretive Signs and other related work approved by the Bitterroot Forest. Lewis & Clark historians will determine interpretive design, placement locations, content, and pictures. Construction of the signs will be performed by an outside entity.

Todd, Bruce, Fred, Rod, Jeff, and Mike pause for a "Kodak Moment".







Above: Rod, Bruce, Todd, and Mike clearing downfall.

Upper Right: View before the trail was built. Note red flagging.

Right: The view after the trail was completed.



The crew with their visitors

Standing L—R: Fred Cooper, Bruce Ford, Kristine Komar, Todd Onken, Mike Pepion, Suzanne Mueller, Rachael Gordon, Riga Winthrop  
Sitting L-R: Jeff Kinderman, Rod McIver, Dale Burke



## Two Tales of Mann Gulch

### Tale #1

Jim Phillips (MSO 67)

On August 5, 1949, the Mann Gulch Fire was reportedly fanned by forty mile-an-hour winds. The wind velocity on the 2016 Mann Gulch Project we estimated was at least that. The wind was hard on hats but wonderful for Cindy Betlach, MSO-Assoc. when, with joy in her heart, she battled the wind with her kite, celebrated life and honored our fallen brothers in the gulch by flying her kite.

A kite-flying event over Mann Gulch was a small fun interlude in a busy and complex project schedule. The folks in the group picture on p.24: Fred Stanaway (Assoc.), Cindy Betlach (Assoc./Back Country Horsemen), Fred Benson (Assoc./BCH), Bob Reid (MSO 57), Steve Straley (MSO 77), Richard Trinity (MSO 66), Sharon Bruce (Assoc./BCH/Cook), Scott "Mouse" Warner (RDD 69), John Lambers (MSO 71), Bill Duffey (MSO 71), Bob Beckley (RAC 83) and kneeling Nancy Bare (Assoc./BCH/Cook), and Jim Phillips (MSO 67) all pulled together along with Helena National Forest trail crew members Marcus McDowell, Christian Boesdoffer and Alyson Visgauss to cut an eighteen inch bench trail from the head of Mann Gulch to the James O.

Harrison memorial marker. This new 5,180-foot trail, a hundred feet short of a mile, replaces an "ankle breaking" game trail and will become the official access route for visitors to visit the national historic site. It is an accomplishment of some significance given the levels of protection and preservation provided the historic site by its national historic registry, the USFS preservation plan and the Montana state historical office guardianship of the area.

Bob Beckley (RAC 83) provided saw training to seven NSA and three USFS employees. Six additional helitack folks scheduled for training were diverted to a fire and lost this opportunity for a first class primitive tool class from Bob. The training did afford our jumper trail crew the opportunity to assure that four miles of the historic USFS Trail #258 was clear of downfall from the Meriwether Ridge in the West to the Willow Creek Trailhead in the East. Bob also took the lead in creating a dry rock wall as a demonstration construct to stabilize the cross and monolith of Eldon Dietrich as an example of future site maintenance to protect and preserve the memorials.

Our crew was also benefit of Montana's



This is the pre-project feast, with the jumpers, associates, packers, and Forest Service folks.



great variety of weather. We luxuriated in one day of ideal temperature, shivered through a day of wind chill and 50 degrees and three days of 90 plus degrees. Montana even threw in some thunder bumps, spit some rain our way and flailed us with winds that pulled out tent stakes, tumbled the potty shelter and flapped the kitchen fly about the flower pocked mountain meadow in which we were camped.

One peculiar situation arose, the shame of which may stain the smokejumper reputation for the ability to ferret out stashes of beer. It seems Bob Reid (MSO 57), neglected to supply himself with beer for the project. And, assuming that the medicinal beverages being consumed by fellow crewmembers were carefully calculated personal purchases, he failed to discern that a case of hefeweizen had been allocated for them who forgotten to supply themselves of the king of rehydration liquids. The shame of course, is that one: Bob Reid failed to find fermented refreshment and, two: he compounded that offense by missing the opportunity to take advantage of a "free lunch".

The Sunday before the project, the Helena Area Backcountry Horsemen and the local smokejumpers hosted a barbeque at the home of lead packer Fred Benson and his wife Janet. Forty folks mingled Ranger Heather DeGeest who has the refined good taste of having a for-

mer smokejumper, Hans Oaks (WYS 04), as a boyfriend, was on hand to appreciate and thank folks for their volunteer commitment to the project. Helena NF "trail dog," grazed, sipped and watched as the project crew's plunder was placed, packed, balanced and weighed in the panniers and pack boxes for the mules by the packers. District Marcus McDowell, his wife Mallory and their two daughters also joined her in grateful acknowledgement of our efforts.

Not to be outdone by his Helena District Ranger, Bill Avey, Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest Supervisor, hiked into Mann Gulch with USFS Fire Staff Officer (and former smokejumper) Marty Mitzkus (MSO 99). They thanked the crew, shook hands and fist pumped the volunteers for their effort on behalf of the forest. My take on the situation was that Bill Avey, an old Hot Shot Crewman, really enjoyed being out of the office for a time to see volunteers on the ground. In all the planning and coordination for this project, the forest folks have been a wonderful group with which to work and the Mann Gulch Crew was benefit of hearing that treasuring of our work from both the Ranger and the Supervisor. It is a class act here on the H-L&C National Forest and we all should take pride in the team efforts to preserve and protect smokejumper-hallowed ground.



L-R: Jim Phillips and Rev. Bill Duffy at Eldon Diettert's marker.



L-R: Jim Phillips, Rev. Bill Duffy, ??, and Steve Straley working on the trail.

Tale Two  
Last Chance Back Country Horsemen Support Mann Gulch  
Fred Benson - LCBCH

June 19, nine LCBCH members and spouses attended a pre-appreciation – meet & greet with numerous retired smokejumpers, spouses, and Forest Service personnel for a barbeque with hamburgers w-fixings, salads and desserts. Several new friendships were started. There were jumpers from Helena, Livingston, Libby, Red Oak, IA, Redding, CA and Florida. The jumpers had various occupations, one was a retired surgeon, another a retired Air Force Colonel, several retired Forest Service employees and some from private industry.

Smokejumpers brought their gear - tents and clothes, and piled it in a garage near the smokejumper's camp kitchen. Hank and Jeni did an expert job mixing and matching gear while answering many questions from other LCBCH members and jumpers, going over the how's, whys, and why nots.

All of the gear was loaded into one trailer to keep it together for the next morning's trip to the Willow Creek Trailhead in the Beartooth Wilderness near Mann Gulch. There was a change in plans after the trailer was loaded; we would leave an hour earlier than planned, leaving Helena about 8:00 AM to take advantage of the cooler temps.

Monday morning, we arrived at Willow Creek about 9:30, unloaded the horses and mules and started to load our stock. The jumpers arrived about this time. Later, during the week, I heard how this group of horsemen impressed them with the lineup of trucks, trailers and stock. All LCBCH members were helping unload the trailer, move gear to the animals and helping load stock. Congratulations to everyone, you gave the jumpers a great send-off.

The trail was up and up with only a few twists. We followed the trail that earlier LCBCH had used to bring the monuments into Mann Gulch. Thanks to Dennis Milburn for showing us the way a week earlier. It helped to have scouted the trail first. LCBCH packed in five pairs of kitchen and cooler panniers, 6 pairs panniers packed with gear and camp tools. There was a second trip in back to the campsite. We packed in water in 2 seven gallon containers, 6 six gallon containers and 6 five gallon containers – about 70 gallons. Dur-

ing the week, I hauled another 56 gallons of water. We ended up using all but 8 gallons. I swore I was going to make 'em drink it since I hauled it in but to no avail.

We beat the jumpers to the top of the Gulch and dropped gear near the camp they thought they were going to – the LCBCH found a better site with lots of grass and fairly level spot for the kitchen and tents.

Monday and Tuesday there were eight jumpers, five associate members of the smokejumpers and three Forest Service employees in camp. Boy, did they drink water. Wednesday thru Saturday there were 13 campers. Every day I made a trip back to the trailer to get a load of water so we did not run out. Every trip out I tried to haul out what was not needed to reduce what would need to be hauled out.

The jumpers put in nearly a mile, approximately 5,180 feet of tread, following a game trail in the Gulch. Temperatures in the Gulch varied from 60 degrees in the mornings to over 100 degrees in the afternoon with the wind blowing constantly. Working this fast, I hauled two 5-gallon cubettes into the gulch so there would be enough water. I made another trip in Thursday afternoon with another pair of cubettes.

While the jumpers were working on the trail Tuesday morning, the Forest Service personnel were getting their Cross Cut Saw Certification. Several jumpers were recertified later in the week.

Friday weather did not look good, NOAA weather from Great Falls were talking about 70 percent of thundershowers. The last two miles into Willow Creek is considered impassable if wet. As campers we were preparing to spend another night at the Gulch if need be but Satur-



The pack string loaded and going up the trail.



day didn't present any problems; 'What! I worry. Nah.'

Joe, Scott, Bernie & Sherri, Hank & Jeni and Heidi were a welcome site riding into camp with their pack animals. Pat and Bud helped ride along for assistance if needed. Most of the gear was loaded while some needed a little repacking but it did go smoothly. Packing out Saturday morning Hank and Jeni did a great job consolidating some loads using top packs to get the remaining gear down from Mann Gulch with the available animals. Some of this gear was an empty LP tank, five Mattocks, two picks, two cross cut saws and a couple of other tools. I cannot say enough about these two accomplished packers who can teach many of us many useful tricks. There were 12 pack animals to get the gear out of the Gulch. I had packed about four loads during the week while getting water. This included empty water containers, space takers and jumper gear.

A word about our cooks, Sharon and Nancy did a fantastic job. They were excellent. No one went away hungry. The evening menu included chicken, pork chops, a Mexican night and steak. There was a new desert every night. Breakfasts were equally superb. Lunches were a make your own. I certainly did not lose any weight on this trip. They used charcoal for their four aluminum Dutch ovens. We used about 20 gallons of LP while on the trip.

Monday there were 9 riders with 11 pack

animals, Saturday there were 10 riders with 12 pack animals.

Summary numbers:

Skilled Packing Hours – 106

Trail miles not in a Designated Wilderness - 165

Actual hours to and from project – 72

Truck and trailer miles to and from Willow Creek – 1,644

Number of Stock used, 28 riding animals (including scouting party) and 27 pack animals.

This week, "I got to live my dream" – I couldn't have been happier. Thank you all. I do appreciate all your work, support and help.



The Saw Team: L-R: Rich Trinity, Steve Straley, and Scott (Mouse) Warner.



L-R Fred Stanaway - Associate, Cindy Betlach – Associate, Nancy Bare – Cook & Associate, Fred Benson - Associate (red hat), Bob Reid, Steve Straley, Rich Trinity, Sharon Bruce - Cook & Associate, Scott "Mouse" Warner, John "Doc" Lammers, Jim Phillips (kneeling), Bill Duffey, Bob Beckley.



## Rio Medio Trail Mike Overby (MSO 67)

The Pecos Wilderness Area and Santa Fe National Forest was the location for a follow-up project in June 2016 that was started in 2015. The objective was to finish opening a trail, abandoned for decades, in the Wilderness. This final segment led to the divide at 11,000 + feet elevation and the tree line.

Participating in this year's project were former jumpers Mike Overby (MSO 67), Jon Klingel (CJ 65), Doug Wamsley (MSO 65), Allison Stout (MYC 80) and Associates Mark Rivera, Alan Wonders, and Ken Collins.

The 2015 effort pushed the trail through to the 6-mile point and we believed that all we needed this year was to do a simple scouting trip to locate a good camp site at around mile 7 or so. WRONG – the scouting trip resulted in locating so many down logs, new since last year, that 2 pre-project trips were required to open the trail again for the packers (Back Country Horsemen of Santa Fe). One down tree was nick-named the “tunnel tree” as it crossed the trail with over a 6 ft. clearance to the tread. Since it was un-cut-able with our small scouting crew and on a very steep slope – we just limbed it and made a tunnel passage for the stock.

The crew was supported again this year by Chef Boyardee Ken from Santa Fe. Ken was able to create some original recipes that highly exceeded standard TRAMPS fare. Beer was in good supply and we managed to not have any to carry out.

On the final day of the project after nearing tree-line and the end of our trail work, it was noticed that some white metal pieces were hidden under brush about 30 yards off the trail. Upon further investigation, we found the remains of a Piper Tri-Pacer airplane. Apparently, as the trail had been closed so long, the current Santa Fe Forest Service staff was not even aware of its existence. Later research showed the plane had crashed in 1962 and the pilot with two broken ankles and head wounds had crawled downstream until he was found and rescued by Forest Service personnel. We were relieved not to find any body parts.

On the way out, the packers had a wreck, rolling one horse (unhurt) down off the trail. A snag in an old burn had fallen across a

switchback cutting the trail in two places. It had been cut in the pre-project clearing to open the trail but the stump was still there above the trail and it was a pack-bumper. The horse that rolled caught its pack on it and lost its balance. Mark and Jon returned after the project with a peavey and a pulaski. They were able to free the stump and roll it down and clear of the trail. Job complete.



Doug Wamsley and his new friend, the burro.



Mark Rivera with the crosscut saw.



L-R Alan Wonders, Mike Overby, Allison Stout, Doug Wamsley, Jon Klingel



## Snyder Guard Station

Terry Egan (CJ 65) and Carl Gidlund (MSO 58)

You know that old saying about variety? Well, this project was one of the “spiciest” in NSA Trails history.

First, the setting: Snyder is about five miles from the Canadian border and was designated a ranger station in 1908, the year the Pend Oreille Forest was created. Then it was part of the Kootenai Forest and later changes put Snyder in the Kaniksu National Forest. It’s now in the Bonners Ferry District of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, a combination of three forests, the Coeur d’Alene and portions of the Kaniksu and St. Joe.

The guard station sits on the banks of the scenic Moyie River and was placed on the National Register for Historic places in 1982. It’s a complex of eight buildings including a residence, two log cabins, a cookhouse, an office/warehouse, two corrals, a machine shed, a pavilion, and a garage. During the summer months it’s a popular spot with tourists who rent the residence and/or cabins or pitch a tent. Because of the heavy influx of tourists, the project began on May 22 and ended on May 27, just before the Memorial Day weekend.

The Gang: Coordination of our project (and much more) was accomplished by the district’s long-time trails boss, Patricia “Pat” Hart. The NSA crew consisted of squad leader Carl Gidlund (MSO 58) of Hayden Lake, ID, Hank Jones (MSO 53) of Coolin, ID, John MacKinnon (MSO 57) of Helena MT, Terry Egan (CJ 65) of University Place, WA, Rich Appis (Associate) of Spokane, WA, Phyllis Geddes (Associate) our cook from Missoula, MT, and her great-granddaughter and assistant cook, Lakeisha Geddes, also from Missoula.

Now for the “spice”: We began by prepping the interior of the ranger’s residence for a complete coat of paint. While some of us moved and covered furniture, others began painting the ceiling. We were shortly joined by two *professional* painters, also volunteers, and it was quickly evident that we were just slowing them down. We then moved to the warehouse/dispatch office and began removing cedar siding from the second floor that had been attacked numerous

times by persistent woodpeckers.

At noon, the group broke for a potluck lunch with 50 members of the Bonners Ferry Ranger District who were also doing “mend and make” on the guard station for the day, including building a shower house and clearing trails. Over lunch, the NSA crew had an opportunity to swap jump stories with John Aaron (MYC 83) who is on the district timber management crew. That afternoon we finished removing the cedar siding. When the crew realized it was five o’clock in Turkey, we grounded our tools and repaired to a cabin porch for philosophical and intellectual discussions.

The next day we drove a mile to the Moyie Crossing Campground to help a pair of district trail crewmen install two posts that would become part of a gate to control campground access. We also performed trail maintenance on this campground. We then returned to Snyder and yet another bountiful meal prepared by Phyllis and Lakeisha.



Back row L-R: John MacKinnon, Rich Appis, Lakeisha Geddes

Front Row L-R: Carl Gidlund, Hank Jones, Terry Egan, Phyllis Geddes

The third day we painted preservative on the site’s two 1920’s-era log cabins and sanded picnic tables and benches. After another of Phyllis’ western family lunches, we got together for a group picture at the cookhouse, hosed down the pavilion, and then helped the district

crew put siding and roofing on the shower house.

On Thursday, we reassembled furniture and furnishings in the ranger's residence, dug a 2' by 2' hole in front of it, installed a steel donation station and cemented it in place. The crew again worked on the roof and siding of the washhouse, knocking off around Miller time. The next morning, after cleaning and packing up, all hands departed around 0800 to make room for the campers who had rented the residence and cabins for the Memorial Day weekend.



Hank and Rich removing shingles.



Hank Jones and Terry Egan dig a hole for a donation station



Hank Jones and Rich Appis apply preservative stain to log cabins.



Rear: Hank Jones, Terry Egan, Rich Appis, Carl Gidlund  
Front: Phyllis Geddes, Lakeisha Geddes, Pat Hart



## Rocky Mountain National Park Warren Pierce (CJ 64)

Our crew arrived at the Moraine Park Campground in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) on Sunday June 12<sup>th</sup>. After we had the camp setup we hung out around the camp fire with adult beverages telling lies that were told years before. But we knew they were almost true and had no embellishments whatsoever. This was our fourth year at RMNP and the fourth year we were supported by Johnson's Corner with great food and Chef Chuck Orona.

Our crew consisted of Bob Doran (Associate), Stan Linnertz (MSO 61) Camp Boss and Cook, Joe Lord (MSO 56), Jim Klever (Associate), Chuck Orona (Associate) Chef, Warren Pierce (CJ 64), Ron Siple (MYC 53), "Doc" Siple (Associate), Ryan Siple (Associate), Denis Symes (MYC 63), Steve Vittum (MSO 71) Doug Wamsley (MSO 65).

Monday morning, we met our Trail Boss, Jesse Miller, completed the required paper work, received our safety briefing and then headed to Fern Lake Trailhead for our hike to the project area. I guess they like the way we build turnpikes because this is the third year we have built them. Our first task was to remove the old turnpike and then start the process of diverting water and digging the ditches for the placement of the logs. After much measuring and leveling the logs were pinned and then the fun really began. We learned the art of swinging big and little sledge hammers making big rocks into little rocks. Luckily, we had two young guys, Doc and Ryan Siple, (Ron's grandsons) who seemed to enjoy this kind of work so the older guys gladly let the boys enjoy busting rocks. Although it was tough not to jump in and offer our help and words of wisdom we didn't want to embarrass or stifle their enthusiasm. Busting rocks continued off and on for several days until our turnpike had a solid foundation and then it was time to find a good dirt source for our turnpike. Finding dirt is not as easy as it sounds in the Rocky Mountains but dirt was found about one mile away (really just about 300 yards away). After three days we had the turnpike completed.

Wednesday night was steak night and

we welcomed our RMNP friends Lindsey Lewis, Volunteer Program Manager, Kevin Soviak, Acting Facilities Manager, Doug Parker, Trail Supervisor, and Jesse Miller, Project Supervisor. After dinner Lindsey gave each of us a blanket, in honor of the 100th year anniversary of the National Park Service, for our week of service. It was evident our guests enjoyed the food and drink but I'm not so sure about all of the stories they had to endure.



Joe Lord on his last project.



Thursday, our last day, (RMNP guys work four ten hour days) we restored a horse trail west of Moraine Park Campground. Little did we know that learning how to make big rocks into little rocks would, again, be useful. We also learned our two young trail hands really liked to push a wheelbarrow full of gravel up hill to our project site. These two young hardworking guys were really great to have in camp. They also liked to fish so much that they would fish in a heavy downpour and

miss dinner in hopes of getting a few trout.

Friday morning, we enjoyed Johnson's Corner famous cinnamon rolls for breakfast. As we broke camp and prepared to head home we had no idea that would be the last time we would see Joe Lord. Ten days later Joe died suddenly. All of us who have been on any of the twelve projects with Joe knew him to be "somewhat" politically incorrect, funny, and a great friend. Camp won't be the same without Joe.



Chuck Orona cooking another great breakfast.



L-R: Jesse Miller, Steve Vitum, Doug Wamsley, Doc Siple



Left to Right: Chuck Orona, Joe Lord, Ryan Siple, Doc Siple (cowboy hat), Doug Wamsley, Stan Linnertz, Denis Symes (one knee down), Steve Vitum (Orange shirt), Warren Pierce, Jim Klever, Ron Siple, Jesse Miller (Park Service), Bob Doran



## East Fork Blacktail Creek Bridge Barry Hicks (MSO 64)

The project started on July 31, 2016 and included the following folks: Bill Kolar (MSO 59), Jack Atkins (MSO 68), Chuck Fricke (MSO 61), Jan McLaren (MSO 71), Dick Hulla (MSO 75), Barry Hicks (MSO 64), Tom Blunn (Associate Cook), and Gregg Hulla (Associate). Also on the project were Tyler Grover (BLM employee), Carl Hamming (BLM employee), and Ed Coon (BLM supervisor). Having the help from the BLM allowed us to complete our primary project in short order. It also allowed us to take on an additional 8.3 miles of trail maintenance that took us over a saddle at 9200 feet in elevation (deep breath).

The primary project was to build a foot bridge over the East Fork of Blacktail Creek using native materials. Thanks to a design by Bill Kolar and the know-how of Dick Hulla in using a grip hoist we were able to complete the project of building a foot bridge 44 feet long in two days. We actually had the full crew on the bridge so we know it will hold a lot. (See picture)

The food was outstanding as usual with Tom Blunn cooking. I might add that Tom did a great job of handling all the food duties and

I really appreciate Greg Hulla for most of the photos. Jack Atkins provided a special after dinner drink that was hard to stop sipping. After two drinks I began to feel a need to relax more than normal.

We had two visitors including Pete Bengeyfield (retired hydrologist from FS) who told Kolar he needed to move the bridge 10 feet downstream (just kidding about this) and Frank Fowler (MSO 54) who brought us 2 gallons of ice cream and home grown raspberries for dessert.

The support from the BLM was outstanding and there is a chance that we were able to recruit a couple of potential jumpers.

I thought this was the end of the report but then I received a note from the BLM person in charge who was not available during the project. He indicated that the bridge developed a crack (possibly from all of us standing on it) and it had to be shortened and moved downstream after all.

We all still felt very good about our project accomplishment in spite of the change. We are looking forward to working with the BLM again in the future.



L-R: Dick Hulla, Bill Kolar, Carl Hamming-BLM, Chuck Fricke, Tyler Grover-BLM  
Front Jack Atkins, Picture by Hicks



L-R: Chuck Fricke, Bill Kolar, Dick Hulla doing the work with the saw





At Left: The bridge

Upper left: Tom Blunn cooking up another fantastic meal.

Above: L-R: Jack Atkins, Dick Hulla, Barry Hicks, Jan McLaren relaxing after another hard day.

L-R: Carl Hamming-BLM, Barry Hicks, Bill Kolar, Dick Hulla, Jack Atkins, Chuck Fricke, Jan McLaren, Tyler Grover-BLM, Greg Hulla-Associate





## Wilderness Canoe Base Jim Cherry (MSO 57)

We were off to a memorable start as we gathered in Eagan, MN by plane and auto on Wednesday evening. Lightning flashed all around and overnight the Twin Cities were left drowning in 10-12 inches of rain. The next day, however, as we drove along the north shore of Lake Superior the sun broke through in all its warmth and glory, offering us a fine, fall day. Our crew of 17 arrived at our destination at Wilderness Canoe Base in late afternoon, moved across the waters of Seagull Lake and into our cabins and then dined on burgers and brats followed by a social hour, introductions and a preview of the work ahead.

Friday, our first day of work, we split our crew between two job sites. One group drove to the East Bearskin Guard Station to tackle a couple of jobs for the USFS. Associates **Steve Pera**, **Lee Dybvig** and **Peter Rudrud** would sling paint brushes to stain this well preserved log cabin built during the CCC days while **Richard Trinity (MSO 66)**, **Chuck Sheley (CJ 59)**, **Roland Pera (MSO 56)**, **Jim Cherry (MSO 57)**, **Jim Grubs (CJ 63)**, **Dave Shultz (MSO 61)** and **Dan Tinnel (Hot Shot Associate)** swung Pulaski, pick, and shovel to rebuild a hillside stairway from the parking lot to the cabin. Mission accomplished!

The other half of our crew remained at WCB to handle meal preparation (a Thanksgiving style turkey dinner with all the trimmings). That kitchen crew of associates **Judy Cherry**, **Dottie Shultz**, **Susy Tinnel**, **KG Sheley** and **Don Rudrud** did a magnificent job. **Jim Elliott (MSO 69)** and associate **Bill GeMeiner** worked in the cramped quarters of a Yurt that was under construction, measuring meticulously the multiple angles for cutting insulation for the ceiling. True to our workday routine, we knock off at 4:00 p.m. for a social hour before dinner. We don't believe in "all work and no play".

Saturday saw all of us staying at WCB but dividing out to a variety of jobs depending on one's interests and skills. The Yurt crew added Lee which helped with the measuring but increased the crowding. Don, Jim C and Peter tackled a welcome area and installed a timber border around a sign and picnic table

area (not an easy task because of the boulder field underneath). Chuck, Dan and Steve just couldn't give up on the Pulaski and were intent on building more timber stairs into some hillside trails. Richard, Jim G, Dave and Roland made up the firewood crew all the way from felling to hauling and splitting. The end result of that came when one of the crew decided that was too much work and donated anonymously a commercial wood splitter to WCB. A wonderful gift!

Now you need to understand that this group has a tradition that began years ago when the first 'coed crew' came into being. It is tradition that the ladies just 'disappear' for a day. Saturday following breakfast... 'poof'... and they were gone. However, by dinner time they had returned bearing gifts of pies, ice cream and special beverages along with stories of their adventures (mostly of shopping and dining at delicious locations). It was good to have them back.

Sunday was a day for R & R. After all, we aren't getting any younger and our bodies appreciate a day midway to heal a bit... and besides, it was a rather drizzly day. We had



East Bearskin Cabin paint crew  
L-R: Peter Rudrud, Lee Dybvig, Steve Pera

Jim E and Jim G depart due to prior commitments. We were just pleased they were able to join with us for part of the time. Following a brunch we gathered around the piano and had some worship time together with the Pera brothers at the keyboard. We are a fine sounding crew and it was good to have this time of thanksgiving together in the beauty of the north woods. Now it was time for some exploring around the area. The Chik Wauk Museum was high on the list and nearby. It holds a wonderful history of the Gunflint Trail and its line-up of interesting characters that pioneered the area. Others canoed, fished or took a trip into Grand Marais. You can be certain that everyone was back in time for our traditional meal featuring Iowa Smoked Chops. Mmmm! Following dinner, we gathered in the lounge to hear from Whitney Vogel, one of 4 women who made the trip from WCB to Hudson Bay this past summer as a fundraiser for the camp. The 'Journey 4 Renewal' made the 1,239 mile canoe trip and raised over \$100,000 in the process. Fascinating slide show and story! To learn more go to <http://www.journey4renewal.org/>

Monday and it was back to work. We were joined for the day by Jim & Rebecca Wiinanen, former staff members of WCB who wanted to help us with some of the work. Also joining us was Paul Hill, CEO of WAPO, the parent organization that operates WCB and camp director Emma Harness. This is the second year we have been able to enlighten Paul on the importance of doing 'firewise' work and, as a result, the camp is now certified as a Firewise Community member through meeting a variety of standards that are aimed at decreasing the fire threat and increasing firefighter access and safety. Much of our crew began thinning areas near high value buildings while others continued on the Yurt project and constructed a couple of bunk bed units that will be used in the Yurt. Since it was a bit of a drizzly day it was a good time for a mixed crew to take care of winterizing the windows in Pinecliff (the main lodge and dining area) to make it more comfortable on those days this winter when temperatures can reach close to -40 degrees. Several other bunk beds were taken apart and remodeled to better fit the size of the mattresses being used. Having learned that WCB has been serving Hmong youth who have settled in Minnesota, Chuck Sheley provided an educational presentation

during the evening that helped camp staff understand the connection between smokejumpers, the CIA, the secret war in Laos and how the Hmong came to the USA following 1975.

Tuesday we sent part of our crew to Loon Lake Lodge to open about 200 yards of lakeshore trail and to drop a couple of trees that threatened buildings. The trail was completed but the windy conditions prevented us from dropping the trees. This was a 'good neighbor' effort to lend some expert assistance to someone else along the Gunflint Trail. The rest of the crew finished work on thinning the forest around the high value buildings and on the interior insulation of the Yurt and completing the bunk bed construction.

Wednesday morning was our departure following an early morning breakfast with the camp's signature cinnamon rolls accompanying a full breakfast menu. We ate well the entire time. We already have the dates for next year's return set for September 7-13, 2017. Mark your calendar and watch for details to come.



East Bearskin Cabin stair crew  
L-R: Jim Grubs, Richard Trinity, Dave Shultz, Dan Tinnell



A special thanks to the WCB staff that made our time together possible and pleasant...Bill and Kristin Middlesworth, Scott Franke, Whitney Vogel, Carissa Simmons, Paul Hill, Emma Harness.



At Left East Bearskin Cabin  
 Kneeling L-R: Jim Grubs, Dan Tinnell  
 Standing L-R: Jim Cherry, Richard Trinity, Dave Shultz, Poland Pera, Steve Pera, Lee Dybvig, Chuck Sheley  
 Above: WCB welcome area  
 L-R: Whitney Vogel, Bill Middlesworth, Peter Rudrud, Don Rudrud



WCB crew photo  
 Front row (L-R) Roland Pera, Chuck Sheley, KG Sheley, Dottie Shultz, Dave Shultz, Bill GeMeiner  
 Back row (L-R) Peter Rudrud, Don Rudrud, Judy Cherry, Lee Dybvig, Susy Tinnell, Dan Tinnell, Steve Pera, Richard Trinity, Jim Cherry



## Pretty Prairie Trail Gary W Stitzinger (MSO 65)

Our Smokejumper Trail Crew hiked or rode horseback the seven miles into the Pretty Prairie Guard Station for another crack at maintaining a trail loop thru a very extensive 10 year old burn. We drove in the 30 miles to Benchmark, via dirt road, from Augusta, Mt. We definitely made an impression with the locals upon our arrival and hasty departure from Augusta enroute to the trail-head. During a brief stop by us, an accidental activation of our car alarm had many folks running from the deck of the "adult day-care center" (local pub) to parts unknown. Few of us trail types were involved.

Those that were involved in the trail project were Dick Hulla (MSO 75) our leader, Larry Wright, Grant Godbolt, and Joe Chandler (all MSO 71), Mike Pepion (MSO 82), Bill Thomas (MSO 75), Jim Scofield (MSO 66), Rod Mclver (MSO 64), Jim Snapp and Gary Stitzinger (both MSO 65), plus our esteemed cooks Nancy Mclver and Kathy Elzig (Associate members).

This was again a major hiking to/from project reopening a loop trail up Pretty Prairie Creek, down Goat Creek, and connecting to the South Fork of the Sun River trail. We all got reacquainted with the "cross-cut saws in wilderness" ethic. The trail traverses huge areas of standing dead lodgepole pine which will continue to blow over as root systems rot. With the arrival of afternoon gusting winds or rain squalls, we were definitely watching out for each other.

We probably walked some 54 miles total, getting to and from the cabin, and around the loop trail (14 miles gps verified) over the six days. The four of us over 70 years of age can attest to the distance and the effort. We endured lots of rain, wind, heat, cold, hail, nearby snow, and each other, over the six days. The prediction of snow at 4000 ft. elevation didn't sit well with us sitting at

Standing L to R: Bill Thomas, Larry Wright, Joe Chandler, Dick Hulla, Roderick Mclver, Jim Snapp, Kathy Elzig, Nancy Mclver.  
Kneeling L to R: Gary Stitzinger, Mike Pepion, Grant Godbolt.

5000 ft. Our new river shelter/tarp blew down several times but nobody got hurt. We just had to continue our stories and thirst quenching in the rain. Not a problem!

Of course we cut thru a lot of downfall. The loop is largely open to travel now but will unlikely stay that way. We worked with two very nice 2-man crosscuts, two great 1-man crosscuts, axes, pulaskis, and a great pry lever that Grant Godbolt fashioned from a tree trunk. It's the "Godpole".

Larry Brandvold was our packer in and out along with pack animals provided by Mr. Hulla, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Godbolt. Another packer (USFS?) escaped before I learned his name. Nancy and Kathy kept the great food coming our way and our whining to a minimum. And it's gospel when Nancy says "bring a bag for your brew" or you'll be freestyling down the whitewater trying to recover it.

Memories? You bet! The scantily clad lady adventure runner that ran past us on day 2 that got lost in the downfall. The arrival, albeit late, of Rod Mclver back in camp and on horseback, on our 14-mile day. And get Mr. Hulla's rendition on how difficult it was for him to oversee and participate in a big mileage trail project with a bleeding ulcer and eventually a torn esophagus. That brother is tough!

Hope I qualified again as a crosscut sawyer. My status as an emergency horse trailer driver is still in question.





## Crocker Pond Project Jack Atkins (MSO 68)

Our eastern NSA crew had worked on the Monongahela National Forest for the past 4-5 years. The crew was interested in a new venue. With that in mind, contact was made with the Forest Supervisor of the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) in Campton, New Hampshire. Copies of our 2014 and 2015 Trail Reports were provided to the Forest Supervisor and to each of his district rangers so that they could see what we were capable of and what we had accomplished in the recent past. Subsequently, a project was offered to us on a portion of the Androscoggin District of the WMNF situated in the state of Maine. 47,000 acres of the WMNF are located in Maine.

Our crew consisted of Daniel Mitchell (RAC 78), Allen Biller (FBX 82), Rick Blackwood (CJ 79), Hank Brodersen (MSO 54), Steve Nemore (RAC 69), Phil Petty (MSO 68) and Jack Atkins (MSO 68). The Forest Service had reserved the entire Crocker Pond campground for our exclusive use complete with sanitary outhouses, potable water, picnic tables, and a bear-proof trash container.

The project initially consisted of relocating part of a trail and covering it with 3" - 4" of a sand/gravel mix to make the trail handicapped accessible. We had the use of a mo-

torized wheel barrow with a dump body to haul the sand/gravel mix. Unfortunately, this mechanized wonder broke down on the second day. The crew also completed the framework for a foot bridge along the same trail.

The next day our efforts were redirected to felling four trees, sawing them into approximately 20 foot lengths, and peeling them for use as a border around a tent pad. Once installed, the tent pad was filled with the sand/gravel mix.

The project was initially supervised by Assistant District Ranger Justin Preisendorfer. Later, three other USFS employees, Travis Pellerin, Matt Schomberg and Brian Campbell, assisted our crew. The District Ranger, Jennifer Barnhart, paid us a visit and thanked us for our work. We enjoyed working with these FS personnel.

We were indeed fortunate to have good weather during the entire week with only about two hours of a light rain. No bugs other than a few house flies and plenty of easily accessible firewood. The crew is to be commended for tolerating the meals prepared by their novice cook, Jack Atkins. Nobody got sick; nobody got diarrhea; and everybody lived to "work for food" another day.



The Crew L-R: Phil Petty, Hank Brodersen, Jack Atkins, Rick Blackwood, Dan Mitchell, Allen Biller, and Steve Nemore



Rick Blackwood on his Tonka Toy.

## Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum Tommy Albert (CJ 64)

When we started the museum project to save an important part of Smokejumping history, there were more than a few skeptics. This includes some who worked restoring the badly rundown buildings. But, hey, the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum is alive and well. The outcome could have been different except the story of Smokejumping captivates all who visit.

Currently we do not have the funds to formally advertise so we have to rely on word-of-mouth and highway signage. Even so, more than 4200 visitors took the base tours this last year and the numbers continue to climb each year. A tour bus operator had some idle time on their tour and stopped by the base. They were so impressed that it will now be included as a promoted stop on their tour. This will inevitably trickle down to other tour groups.

Wish we could video tape a sampling of the tours so that you could hear and see the enthusiasm, interest, and excitement our story (Smokejumping) provokes. If you have some time on your hands, it is a kick being a tour guide. We are always looking for volunteers and it doesn't matter where you jumped, the story remains the same. We have comfortable accommodations, including RV hook ups for those of you who would want to participate. Truthfully, it is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. You can sign up or get more info at: [www.siskiyoumokejumpermuseum.org](http://www.siskiyoumokejumpermuseum.org) or call Wes Brown at 541-592-2250.

The base hosted the 2016 Gobi Reunion, dubbed the *Last of the Mohicans*. It was a very successful reunion. We had 96 Gobi jumpers attend. There were only 400 who crewed the base in its history starting in 1943 through 1981 so we were very pleased with the turnout. Attrition is catching up and with no new blood... 2021 is a long way off, but, never say never.

The base has hosted the annual Submariners meeting the last two years and they plan to use the grounds and facilities for subsequent meetings. They are an interesting bunch to say the least. We do not have the corner on "war" stories. Some of their experiences make the hair on the back of your neck stand up. How they get men to do what they did is beyond me.

The Triple Nickel Battalion (555<sup>th</sup> Air-

borne Battalion) Plaque dedication will take place at the Museum next summer (Date to be determined). As you will recall, the all black airborne battalion was brought out to the West Coast during WWII and trained to parachute to anticipated fires from Japanese incendiary balloon bombs. The Japanese hoped to cause catastrophic forest fires in the western US. The effort failed primarily because the jet stream winds that carried the balloons across the Pacific occurred in the winter months.

The ceremony will be attended by dignitaries from State and Federal governments and congressional parties. And, if you are a runner, bring your cross-country shoes and participate in the annual Moon Tree (5 and 10 K) Runs that will be held the same weekend. This event honors Stuart Roosa (CJ 53) who was the Command Module pilot on the Apollo 14 Moon Mission.

We continue to support present day firefighters temporarily stationed here during periods of high fire activity in southern Oregon / northern California. The firefighters enjoy the nice grounds and facilities when not actively fighting fires or providing logistical support. It's fun having them and they enjoy the historic setting.

You have a standing invitation to visit the museum. You will be pleased you (your family and friends) made the trip. It is a wonderful tribute to Smokejumping and Jumpers from all eras. You don't have to wear your Whites, but bring your memories. Be forewarned, you may experience a surge of adrenalin when the siren goes off...



Dave Laws  
(RAC 66)  
giving visitors  
the tour.

Ed: My wife and I took the tour last winter. I will attest to all the above. My wife even enjoyed it.



Salmon River Campground  
(AKA Crooked Creek)  
Compiled by Neil Rylander (MSO 61)

The assignment: To replace about 900 feet of rail fence at Campground during 4<sup>th</sup> of July week. Bad timing!

Suspects volunteering for this project: Wild Bill Yensen (MYL 53), Gary Stitzinger (MSO 65), Gary Cardoza (MSO 74), Digger Daniels (MSO 61), Robin Embry (GAC 85), Steve Carlson (IDC 62), Gary Lawley (MSO 57), Neil Rylander (MSO 61), Tom Kovalicky (MSO 61) and Shelly Dumas (Chef/Associate).

The following write up was provided to me by Robin Embry and covers our experience very well, so I copied it! :-). Thanks, Robin!!

I think what I will remember most about our project for the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) this summer was that we were in line for a “first ever” in 16 years. While many people enjoy “firsts” of any kind, we were bound and determined Not to be the crew that had the honor of this particular first – not getting our project finished!

Oh, we had our excuses lined up just in case: Sitting out our first day of work due to a schedule miscommunication, equipment failures and broken tools the first day, the work site was in a packed campground with quiet hours in effect over the holiday weekend, not to mention that one of our star workers and a key player (George Cross MSO 74) was MIA. Wild Bill Yensen FINALLY ran out of stories we hadn't heard, got distracted taking pictures,

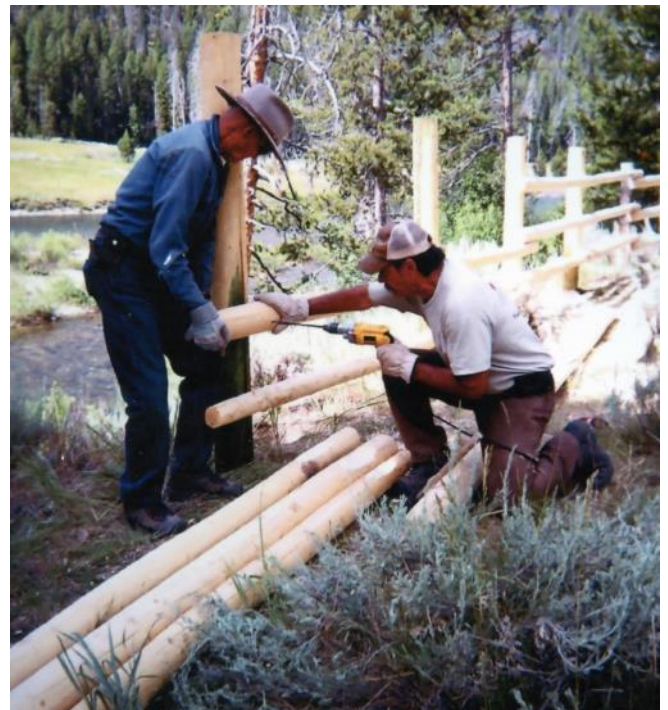
and nobody else could match the pace of that nail-driving machine!

We got to break in a rookie FS “handler”, Jerry Cowen. (This requires devoting a precious crew member to the task of sticking to the handler like glue, murmuring calming words into his ear at critical moments, explaining how what he was “seeing” was a well-oiled, ultra-efficient, marvel of fence building ingenuity and progress, NOT a bunch of ragtag, hard of hearing, ne'er-dowells just sitting around eating watermelon on a picnic bench while re-engineering the project yet again.) Lastly, it was hard not to be distracted by the array of cookies, watermelon, cake, cantaloupe, cherries, and other fine snacks which were delivered to the work site every day (in case we weren't getting enough to eat already!) by our esteemed cook, Shelley Dumas.

I (Robin) believe it was at the end of the second workday when morale was at its lowest point. We had easily torn down the old fence, but were getting stymied digging out the old rotten fence posts or trying to dig new



L-R: Jerry Cowen, Digger Daniels, Steve Carlson, and Gary Lawley line up a post.



L-R: Wild Bill holds a rail so Gary Cardoza can drill it.

ones with an auger that broke in every hole. We had 50 more holes to dig on the other side of the campground and still had all the rails to put up with just two days left to do it.

Our de facto straw boss, Digger Daniels, (who is hereafter referred to as “he who knows ALL”) was pretty sure the digging would be better on the other side, and decided we should dispense with digging out the old holes and lay out new post holes and a new fence line just off the old one. This might give the auger a chance to work and aid our cause for the following day. Despite Digger's cheery optimism, the damage to morale was already done and the crew struggled to see how we would ever finish.

It's about this time out fearless leader, Tom Kovalicky (or “Tom Sawyer” as I like to think of him) pulled me aside and laid out a plan to fire up the crew..... Tomorrow, at end of the day, I will insist the project can't be done. I will paint the sorriest picture of fence rails rotting on the ground forever into eternity, small children falling into post holes dug out – but not filled by posts, women and children sliding down eroding riverbanks to their watery graves for lack of a rail fence, and our names in the history books as “THE FIRST SNRA CREW WHO COULDN'T FINISH THEIR PROJECT”. “I want you to insist it CAN be done. We must paint two pictures, one of failure and one of success and place them side by side – I know which one the crew will pick.....”

Digger somehow got wind of this plan (he does know ALL) but I noticed he still hedged his bet that evening by setting a small corkscrew into a glass of dirt, dousing it with Maker's Mark and setting it alight to please the auger gods before he went to bed.

The next two days went like clockwork: The post digging crew worked like madmen, the auger cut through the dirt like butter, Wild Bill remembered another story or two and got back to driving nails, our “handler” had a nervous breakdown and had to go calm his nerves with a three day drinking binge (just kidding, Jerry), two young FS pogues of indeterminate age but greater strength and energy joined in the ruckus on the last day, the rail crew finally found their rhythm and started hanging rails like their lives depended on it. The golden fence nail was driven with an hour to spare on

the last day of our project.

And so it was another year of no great firsts, just a bunch of hardworking, fun loving, retired jumpers getting' stuff done, as usual.

Digger's Thoughts:

Kovalicky does a great job on getting accommodations for us year after year!

Robin tickling Gary L's ear with a weed while he was trying to catch a nap.

Wild Bill still hitting the nail almost every time in driving nails home to the posts – he still has it!

The 3 G's (Gary, Gary and Gary ;-)) they had the class, knowledge, humor, and stamina to carry the whole crew.

Robin – she still owes me for 3 years rent on the planer saw.

Steve – his talent with cowboy poetry – both readin' it and writin' it is purtn'eer professional kinda like.

Neil – you know enjoys being on the crew – he works his butt off.

Overall, the positive attitude that the crew had under some adverse conditions, that threatened to cause us to not finish the job. And finally, of course, that great watermelon that we ate!

Shelley's thoughts: Condensed to keep to 2 pages. Sorry Shelly!!

Shelly was presented with an old slightly rusted blue and white pot from another age that the auger dug up. She was happy with her new “flower pot”!

Tom's Thoughts (also condensed)

A great big “Thank You” goes out to Terri and Hans Carstensen (Owners of Club Med, aka

Shelley Dumas, our esteemed chef, with her usual smiling face.





Crooked Creek), Jay Dorr the SNRA Trail Boss, Jane McCoy's Tackle Shop, and our project coordinator Jerry Cowan. Tom is looking forward to the next rock driving obstacle course. He also appears to be losing sleep over Digger's investment in the Guatemala Shoe Factory and even suggests he is a

"corporate raider"! Strong words considering he'll likely face Digger next year!

Neil: I had to sleep in a king size bed that week. Tough duty, but somebody had to do it! Shelly quietly led me to my room asking me how old I was. She, I think, thought I was the oldest guy .



← L-R: Neil Rylander, Bill Yensen, Gary Stitzinger, and Robin Embry encourage a rail into place.

→ Neil Rylander and Robin Embry discuss a critical point in the game.



This is the crew picture, taken at the Stanley Museum, and dedicated to Jim Phillips.

L-R: Gary Stitzinger, Steve Carlson, Doug (Digger) Daniels, (Wild) Bill Yensen, Robin Embry, Gary Cardoza, Tom Kovalicky, Gary Lawley, Neil Rylander.

## Bowery Guard Station

Doug (Digger) Daniels (MSO 61)

The crew was initiated by Ron Stoleson (MSO 56) in 2001 and has had a project every year since then in the Stanley, ID area. It is known as Stoleson's Crew or "The A Team". Most of the members of the crew have been on the crew for several years. This is the only year that Ron has not been the crew leader. He was gone on an excursion in Northern Europe with family and friends, but plans to rejoin the crew next year. The current projects are being done in anticipation of making more use of the Bowery in the future for trail and recreational access and maintenance.

Over the years, the barn, wood shed, and guard station residence have deteriorated and need substantial repair. Mice have taken over the barn and it requires relining inside with mouse proof screen at the corners and a new tight layer of plywood interior siding. The barn is used for storage of tack for the livestock used to maintain the area trails and the mice have been ruining the tack. The threat of hantavirus is also a major concern. The woodshed, built in the 1930's, needs a new roof and major rebuilding. It is presently being held up mostly by the wood and junk piled inside it. The guard station residence needs new exterior stain and paint, repair of cracks and woodpecker holes, and repainting of the roof shingles.

The crew begins arriving on Saturday, July 11 with me, Digger Daniels, Belgrade, MT



L-R: Digger Daniels and Bill Ward doing a little carpentry.

(MSO 61) and Neil Rylander, Vancouver, WA (MSO 61) driving over from the Salmon River Campground project done previous week. The Bowery project is a short 60 mile drive from Stanley, 30 miles down the Salmon River to the East Fork of the Salmon and then 30 miles upstream (south) on the East Fork to the end of the road and the Bowery Guard Station. Neil made a more adventurous trip of it .... after having a flat tire, he drove past the turn off to the East Fork and went into Challis (35 miles) to get a new tire. They didn't have one so he decided to go to Salmon to get one (another 60 miles). On the way back, he blew another tire and finally limped in to camp on his emergency use only spare.

On Saturday, Deb Peters – our FS crew leader for about 12 years came over to camp with us and to help out until Tuesday. Although she now has a permanent office job with the FS, she always takes time off and joins us for a couple of days. Stan Linnertz (MSO 61) also arrives on Saturday with 2 new associates – Brett, his son, and Kyle, his grandson. They bring all the groceries from Johnson's Corners Truck Stop, and the cooking gear. By Sunday the remaining members of the crew arrive and set up camp. They include Roland Pera, Wichita, KS (MSO 56), Larry Nelsen, Missoula, MT (MSO 56), Gary Hendrix, Helena, MT (associate), Doug Howard, Twin Falls, ID (MSO 64), Bill Ward, Garden Valley, ID, (MSO 63), our FS crew leader is "Animal Ed" Cannady from Ketchum, ID. Ed has been our FS crew leader on several past projects at the Bowery.

After a great dinner prepared by Stan, Brett, and Kyle (The Linnertz Boys) we finished the day with after dinner drinks and stories of our past jumps and projects. We retired under clear starry skies and woke to a heavily frost covered landscape. The early risers – those who froze out during the night – had a roaring campfire going and coffee brewing. Conversation around the fire was mostly about "are there any extra sleeping bags", and "damn it was cold last night", etc. Ed found several extra sleeping bags in the guard station and Bill and Roland found new inside accommodations. Bill in a



tack room in the barn that they cleaned out and finished today and Roland moved into the “bunkhouse” with Stan & Digger. Brett and Kyle used some of the extra sleeping bags.

Monday started with Ed donning a moon suit and liberally spraying down the barn interior with a 10% chlorine mix while the rest of the crew formed a “bucket brigade” line and emptied the firewood and junk out of the woodshed. Later in the day, we were working in 3 loosely knit crews with Ed, Bill, Brett and Kyle on the barn; Larry (Nelly), Doug H., and Neil prepping the residence for painting, and Roland, Gary, Deb, and I tearing the roof off the woodshed and starting the rebuilding process.

On Tuesday, more of the same, but Deb had to leave to go back to her real job. Deb took Neil’s flat tire with her to town to send back later with Carol, the recreation specialist who will be over on Wednesday. Neil was greatly relieved to know he would have a real tire to drive on. It froze again last night as it would nearly every night this week. No more complaints on being too cold – and we’ve stockpiled plenty of wood from the woodshed next to the campfire ring. There’s a roaring fire every morning and again at night. Afternoons are hot – like 85 degrees, and we rehydrate with watermelon every day at 3:00. Rehydration time comes again at 5:00 and goes on thru the next hour or so while the crew takes turns walking upriver to the hot tub for a refreshing soak.

On Wednesday Carol comes over from Ketchum to review our progress and to show the regional forester, Kate, from Twin Falls around the area. She also brings Neil’s tire back. Wednesday is our traditional guest



L-R: Bill Ward, Doug Howard, Digger Daniels, Brad Linnertz, Roland Pera, Kyle Linnertz, Gary Hendrix, Stan Linnertz, Neil Rylander, Larry Nelson

night but we find out that due to a memorial for a fellow worker in the Ketchum FS Office, no one will be able to come over. Kate is able to stay and talks about her thoughts on the future of the FS in the area. After another great dinner – steaks /shrimp, Neil opens a bottle of Makers Mark, throws the cap away, and starts a traditional game from Kovalickey’s crew called “I never ....” Everyone that can’t say the same takes a drink. Example, Gary Hendrix – who did not jump says “I never jumped out of an airplane.” Got it? Everyone takes a turn until the bottle’s empty.

The next morning is foggy for a few of us – coffee helps clear it up. By afternoon, progress has been good enough that we decide to do some structural repair to the barn roof where a tree fell on it a couple of years ago. Ed will go get some additional supplies to make the repairs. The paint crew is ready to start painting the roof, but discover the paint is the wrong color and the shingles are so deteriorated that they need replacement. Ed agrees – maybe that’s next year’s project.

Ed brings premix back, we pour a footing and on Friday we jack the roof into position, set and fasten the new support post – good as new!!

In the meantime Roland, Gary and Bill finish repairs on the woodshed, put the new roofing material on and Brett (a flooring contractor) uses the remaining plywood to install a new floor in the woodshed. After thoroughly cleaning up of the project area, we call it done. “Animal Ed” seems very pleased with everything that has been done.

In celebration, Doug Howard, Brett and Kyle Linnertz climb to the top of the ridge above camp (2000’ + vertical).

Saturday morning everyone packs up and heads home.



L-R: Neil Rylander, Digger Daniels, Stan Linnertz, Doug Howard, Bill Ward

## DIXIE

Doug (Digger) Daniels (MSO 61)

Five veteran members of past “Dixie” crews arrived at Pine Valley Guard Station (Utah) on May 1 to tackle this year’s project of constructing a new storage shed for maintenance equipment. Our cook, Stan Linnertz (MSO 61), and associate member Chuck Orona arrived first with all the food supplied by Johnson’s Corner Truck Stop. Johnson’s Corner has provided the food for this crew and two other projects for over 5 years and it is always top quality and prepared and served by Stan and Chuck with excellence. Chuck is the Managing Chef for Johnson’s Corner. Doug Wamsley (MSO 65), our legal staff member of long duration arrived next, also from Denver, followed by Tom Wilks (GAC 87) from Hawaii, a crew member for the past 3 years. Lastly, I (Digger MSO 61), arrived at about 3 p.m. Everyone was well settled in and catching up on the past year’s happenings while Stan and Chuck were preparing dinner when the bunkhouse door opened and four young helitack students wandered in asking which bunks were theirs? A bit surprised about our unannounced company, we shuffled our previously selected sleeping locations and accommodated them in the east end of the bunkhouse. There were 3 guys and a gal and they would be attending helitack training school in St. George and commuting back and forth to Pine Valley.



Laying the framework.

L-R: Chuck Orona, Doug Wamsley, Tom Wilks, Digger Daniels.

Fortunately for them, we had anticipated a bigger crew when Stan and Chuck had

packed groceries for our crew. The helitack crew just grinned when they found this out. We had our turn to grin when we informed them that training to be Certified Dishwashers would be an after-hours extension of their helitack crew training. It all worked out well and at the end of the week they were all sworn in to the “Royal Order of the Purple Glove” as Certified Dishwashers.

The Dixie-Pine Valley smokejumper trail crew project was originated in about 2007 by (Wild) Bill Yensen (MYC 53), who then lived in nearby St. George. Wild Bill was the crew leader for every project until this year. He has moved to the Boise area and with his advancing age, did not want to drive so far. Wild Bill is well known for his story telling abilities and the crew feared that we would have long periods of embarrassing silence without Wild Bill around to fill in all the gaps with his stories. Fortunately, the members of the crew, with assistance from the “adopted” helitack crew, were able to maintain a level of conversation and story telling that fairly well filled our waking hours. Although we shared many stories that had seldom been told before, some secretly longed to hear Wild Bill’s stories “just one more time”.

On Monday, we began sorting thru the parts and pieces of the pre-cut shed that we were to assemble while we awaited the arrival of our USFS Coordinator, Wil Gilbert. We had worked with Wil on previous projects for the past 4 years or so. He was starting his first day’s work of the season and had to sign papers, etc. at the St. George USFS Offices. He arrived at about 10 and we then had to sign papers, get our usual F.S. briefing, and finally get a set of plans and start fumbling thru the parts of the shed to sort them out for assembly.

Doug Wamsley, Stan and Chuck sorted the building materials from the trailer into meaningful piles staged to be used in the sequence that they would be needed. Tom Wilkes and Digger worked on laying out the footings so the floor beams could be laid out and the floor constructed. After many trials and changes, due to roots, boulders and improper use of the Pythagorean Theorem (10-yard pen-



alty!) the 2-man crew was near mutiny but held together to get this task done. At the end of the first day, we had the floor in place and leveled and the materials staged for orderly construction.

Day 2: After being rained out for about 2 hours the next morning, we started building the walls and setting them up. In spite of several more short duration rain showers, by the end of the day the shed was nearly framed and some of the walls had been sided.

Day 3: Was occupied by completing the siding and assembling the roof trusses.

Day 4: we set the trusses in place and made final adjustments to the roof framing, using a come-along and several B F hammers to square everything up so the precut roof panels would fit into place. The actual work was too complicated and filled with controversy to tell in this short report, but everything finally purt'near fit, close enuf for government work", and it was nailed home. Lunch on Thursday was special, attended by Joe Rechsteiner, the District Ranger, and Nick Welenziack, our FS Administrative Coordinator, as well as Wil our FS field Coordinator.

Joe mentioned that the FS personnel all looked forward to the week when we were there because we always completed an important project that they needed to have done. They were pleased with the way the current

project was going and discussed a potential project for next year.

Day 5: Friday, our last day. We put the roof trim, building trim and rolled roofing on – and then it rained us out. We gathered our tools, put the FS tools and materials in the shed, and called it a project. Only minor items remained to be done.

As is our tradition, we went to the local steakhouse for dinner so we could pack up for an early start home on Saturday. Wamsley grabbed the check and treated everyone.

Saturday greeted us with an inch of fresh sloppy snow as we departed.



The walls are framed.  
L-R: Doug, Chuck, Tom Digger.



Standing L-R: Digger, ; Digger, Tom , FS Ranger Joe Rechsteiner, FS Coordinator Nick Walenziak, Kneeling: Doug W, FS Recreation Coordinator



Got it Purtnear dun!  
L-R: Chuck, Stan, Digger, Tom. Doug

## Scarface Mountain Trail Bridge

John Pietras (MSO 73)

To organize the first ever trails project in New York's Adirondack Mountains, I contacted the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Region 5 director, Bob Stegemann (FBX 79). As a former jumper, Bob enthusiastically greased the wheels and in a short time I had a list of 18 projects to choose from. The front country project chosen would involve removal and replacement of 48 feet of old cribbing and elevated walkways and replacement of two 20-foot bridges.

Jack Atkins (MSO 68) and Phil Petty (MSO 68) arrived Sunday afternoon. As much as we wanted to rough it we made do with flush toilets and hot showers at the camp site. Once camp was set up we went right next door to the internationally famous Tail 'O the Pup Outdoor Bar-B-Que. We took advantage of the great food, pitchers of beer, and live music. We decided that the waitress had heard enough jump stories when they started to turn off the lights.

The 12-minute hike into Ray Brook on Monday morning only involved carrying in a few hand tools. This was because our DEC liaison, Steve Guglielmi, had arranged for all the materials to be packed in prior to our arrival. Seeing Steve packing in four 4 foot 6x6's at a time on his back brought back wonderful memories of pack outs of the past.

We quickly agreed that none of the old cribbing was worth saving, so we set about tearing it apart. By Tuesday we had enough replaced so we were able to spread out and specialize. Phil had brought a four foot crowbar from home and was only too happy to head up the demolition. I offered Jack the job of making bridge girders, attaching foot treads and putting up the hand rails. He jumped at the opportunity to do those jobs when I told him they involved a lot of screwing. I concentrated on engineering and helping Jack and Phil any way I could. Much of what had to be done involved heavy work in an alder swamp. We were very fortunate to have two 18-year-olds, Sebastian Seubert and Hunter Hintenlang, who were in the area on vacation from Florida, volunteer to help the first three days of the project. These

young men always found something to do without being asked. We could never have completed all the project without their help. We agreed that they would make great smokejumpers. The Adirondack Park Agency informed us that no pressure treated sawdust was to touch the ground in the wetland. Lucky for us Phil is a magician because somehow he made the sawdust just disappear.

Our camp ran the full gamut from Phil's backpacking tent with a sleeping bag on the ground to Jack's canvas McMansion, complete with bed, tables and who knows what else. After evening meals the stories were great and it was a pleasure to top it all off with one (or two) of Jack's "cowboy cocktails".

Even though there were only three of us, we finished the project by early Friday morning. It just goes to show what a few jumpers can accomplish when they get down to work.

There are plenty of other projects here in the beautiful Adirondack Mountains including rebuilding a 40-foot bridge in the same area. I hope we can get a good crew together for next summer.



Phil Petty tearing out the old bridge.





Clockwise from upper left:

John Pietras building the new cribbing.

Jack Atkins sill screwing.

Jack still . . . Right.

The finished product with Jack, Phil and John admiring their handiwork.

