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## National Smokejumper Association Trail Maintenance Annual Report for 2015

National Smokejumper Association Trails Committee

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## TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015



### Volunteer of the Year Shelley Dumas

Shelley has been the volunteer cook for Tom Kovalicky's Sawtooth Crew for the past 6 years. She plans the menus, then purchases, stores, and delivers the groceries to the Sawtooth Crew encampment site, as required. She shows up a day early to get the kitchen area organized and leaves a day after the crew when the project term is finished. She cleans and stores supplies and kitchen tools for the next go-round. There is always food ready the evening before the crew's scheduled arrival for the early birds. She never hesitates to invite and provide for guests and sponsoring officials regardless of the time or day. She uses her own gear and vehicle when necessary to pull things together. She has a cheerful and playful demeanor and can easily hold her own with the jumper cadre. As a talented artist she makes signs for the projects where required and keeps the BEAN POT working. She frequently delivers Brownies to the job site as well. Her investment of personal project time per year appears



to be about 170 hours, probably more. The final touch arrives in the crew's snail mail boxes a month or two after the project with a personal note and couple of pictures of the recipient.

Shelley has had her share of adventures, besides being a trail crew cook. She has done some endurance horseback riding, lots of backpacking and some white water rafting. She worked for the Moose Creek Ranger District, Nez Perce NF, when it was the only ranger district entirely within the boundaries of a wilderness area. She gets her pet dogs from animal rescue. To fill the rest of her spare time, she just finished two terms on the Grangeville City Council, where she was a co-founder of a successful recycling program for Idaho County.

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### Base Abbreviations

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

## Trails Program Administrative Report

Fred Cooper (NCSB 62)

We had 20 week-long projects and a couple one-day projects in 8 different states this year. The projects had 137 volunteer work weeks of Smokejumpers and another 26 volunteer work weeks of Associates. A variety of projects were offered with 13 of them "drive-to" and 7 "hike-to." About a third each were what we describe at the three different levels of difficulty. This variety is offered to hopefully accommodate all of your appetites for differing types and difficulties of work. We had the MSO 69 crew return for a third year for a project allowing them the opportunity to swap stories amongst themselves. The MSO 67 to 69ers had a project for themselves this year although they got rained out a couple days early.

This year for the first time, due to Mike Overby's efforts, we had two projects in New Mexico. We have tried for several years to get a project in the Southwest, but this is the closest we have come (other than southern Utah) so far.

Plans are looking like we will have a wide variety of projects again for 2016.

Keep in mind that the National Smokejumper Association is a non-profit charitable organization registered under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Consequently, any 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 IRS is National Smokejumper Association and the assigned Identification Number is 81-0479209.

## Johnson's Corner Report

Stan Linnertz (MSO 61)

Smokejumper Day has become an annual, fun day at Johnson's Corner. It is a "show and tell" day for a few former Smokejumpers who have some pictures and items of interest for display to the customers. The most common question people ask is "What is a Smokejumper?" to be quickly followed with "Can we have another piece of cake?"

A big "Thank You" to Johnson's Corner Manager Joe Overstreet and the Regional Manager Gary Robinson, as well as all of the

rest of the staff for going the extra mile to make the day success. Johnson's Corner gave us 10% of food sales from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., which amounted to about \$800.00. There was some positive thoughts about doing Smokejumper Day again next year.

Also, a big Thanks to the Ron Siple (MYC 53) and Ray Carter (GAC 53), smokejumpers from the past, who came to shake hands, answer questions, tell true stories of past events and pass out Smokejumper Cake to Johnson's Corner customers.

We gave Chauncey and Christy Taylor, former owners of Johnson's Corner, each a bronze engraved Pulaski as a thank you for the thousands of dollars and support they have given the Smokejumpers over the last 9 years. On a sad note, Chauncey and Christy lost their 33 year old son to cancer late in the summer.

Johnson's Corner has once again agreed to supply food for three of next year's Trail Programs, the ones in Colorado, Utah and one in Idaho.

Also-Thanks to Chuck Fricke and Digger Daniels for their support for Chauncey and Christy.



Fred Cooper enjoying a cinnamon roll and a meal under some Smokejumper memorabilia at Johnson's Corner.

## Baldy Cabin Restoration

Mike Overby (MSO 67)

The Latir Peaks Wilderness Area in Northern New Mexico is one of the lesser-known, but majestic, Wilderness Areas in the US. It was the site for our TRAMPS project in Mid-September, 2015.

At over 11,500 feet elevation, Baldy Cabin was built in 1914 as part of first two Ranger Stations in Carson National Forest of New Mexico. Mostly abandoned over the past 30 to 40 years (other than outfitters and packer squatters), Baldy Cabin was designated for restoration in 2015 as a joint project between TRAMPS and Questa District of Carson National Forest. Carrie Leven, Questa District Archaeologist, led the Forest Service effort, and even provided much appreciated cooking duties.

The 6 person TRAMPS project team consisted of, Jon Klingel (CJ 65), Bob Smee (MSO 68), Glen Johnshoy (MSO 67), Tom Wilks (GAC 97), Mark Rivera (Associate), and myself, Mike Overby.

The project team was packed in and out by Angel Fire, NM outfitter, Nancy Burch (Roadrunner tours) and Forest Service Questa District employee Jerry Hardee. As can sometimes be said on some pack-in projects-- "if we only had one more horse!" Nancy and Jerry were able to get our big stuff in – but

team members had to pack in a lot of their own personal gear – up 2,200 ft. over the 5.5 mile pack in (UGG). Tom Wilks from Hawaii (and sea level home) said “what did I get into here?”

The big question – that was still pending at the start of project – to re-roof or not to re-roof? 500 sq. ft. of split shake shingles were ready to be packed-in, but the decision was made to delay that part of project until next year. What we were able to do was re-chink, stain the complete cabin, dig out an old out-house hole, cut/skin roof logs for a new out-house roof, build a new spring corral and some other small projects.

Mike and Glen scouted a nearby wilderness boundary line to see if fencing was in need of repair – which would have been done (had there been any fence to repair). Nonetheless, Mike and Glen had a nice back-country hike up the boundary line. They did find an over 50 year old wilderness sign (the trail for which had been abandoned many years ago).

Based on successful efforts this year, the Forest Service has asked that TRAMPS return in 2016 to tackle the remaining Baldy Cabin projects and possibly work on another 100 year old cabin restoration effort near the Taos Ski Area (only 200 yards off highway).



Left of ladder - Mike Overby, Alan Wonders (FS Volunteer),  
On Ladder - Carrie Leven, FS,  
Bob Smee, Mark Rivera (Assoc)  
Right of Ladder - Jerry Hardee  
(FS Volunteer), Tom Wilks,  
Glen Johnshoy, and Jon Klingel



## Big Sand Lake

Bob Whaley (MSO 56)

What's that old saying..."IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED, TRY, TRY AGAIN"?

Well we did and we succeeded. Last year we had the same task with massive nearly microburst proportion blow downs on that section of trail but were unable to finish it to the top of Blodgett pass on the MT/ID border in the time allotted. But thanks to whoever did such a great job filling in behind us last year or earlier this year, it was possible to finish the whole trail to the top.

We had many of the same suspects as last year with JB Stone (MSO 56), Bob Schumaker (MSO 59), Bob Cushing (MSO 59), Dennis Pearson (MSO 62), Joe Kroeber (MSO 62), Jim Phillips (MSO 67) and a new man to the crew, Phil DiFani (MSO 67). We removed about 30 more blow downs but not nearly the size as last year's monsters. The remainder of the project involved trail maintenance and improvement and massive brushing which was accomplished to within about a half mile back to camp which again, was about a mile above the lake and like last year, provided the packers' stock ample grazing, though water was scarce and they had to be taken upstream each day for watering. And no wolves were there to greet us this year. The hike in like last year was about 10 miles to that site. And once again, 6 miles to the top of the pass on day 4 and also very near on day 3 up and back, working both ways, made for several 10-12 mile long work days.

We never want to take for granted the excellent packer support from the North Idaho Back Country Horsemen which, with their outstanding lead organizer and packer-chef, Larry Cooper, included several new members in Cary Foster and his pup Roscoe who found just about every lap to worm his way on to; Dale Cooper (no relation to Larry) who regaled us around the campfire with his memorized cowboy poetry and harmonica pieces of the Old West. (His yodeling of reveille at 0530 was interesting.... but well done; Ed Enneking was back again and as usual was very instrumental in getting our gear in which involved going out and back in one day to finish the pack in, and he did it again when the situation required it. As usual, steady hand and

reliable packer, Joe Robinson was there assisting in all the chores and hauling our camp water along with the other pack help, without which it would have been a long shank's mare heavy haul for that precious commodity. And who could miss Joe "Jose" Thomas, JB's good friend and former squadron mate in the Air Force and his "guard dog" Rosie who joined the Cooper crew to make our camp experience memorable. I noticed Rosie's collar that had a UA logo. If you want to get Jose's undivided attention, just mention that the UA stands for the University of Alabama. Auburn University folks for some reason just don't seem to take too kindly to that. And I reluctantly mention Chef Larry's superb Dutch oven masterpieces which are too many to enumerate for fear of being overwhelmed with future Boss Man crew wannabes. And what a pack string we had this year, which I believe was in the neighborhood of about 20 head of horses and mules. Great sight and experience especially when Larry's dog Mitsie is on constant heel nipping and herding mode in camp. She never lets up!

Who knows what that stretch of trail looks like today after our Western Montana/Idaho area experienced near hurricane winds that blew through the area in August. Missoula was still cleaning up in early September from that near microburst storm. But what's that old adage about job security? A late summer swing through that area will tell. Our entire crew was outstanding as usual. Each participant added their own hard work and commitment to getting this done efficiently and safely however with a few aches and pains such as: Hips and feet, knees and heat, took their toll but we reached our goal. Maybe Dale could yodel that one at 0530!

The addition of Corey Swenson from the District was a big help, too, with his trail expertise and help in working and assessing priorities which worked out very well, even though his assistance to us was more of a collateral duty since his primary duty was measuring the distance from the Elk Summit trail head all the way to the top of Blodgett Pass, some 16 miles total. He was once again a valuable asset to the project. And we can never thank

Larry's wife Linda Cooper enough for all the coordination that she so ably provides during the planning and liaison that is so vital in pulling all these projects off each year. There are many more moving parts to this effort than one might assume. You are very much appreciated Linda.

During the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion banquet that was two days before our departure, one of the speakers said, "Why do these people want to jump out of perfectly good running airplanes?"

The following quote from Nevil Shute may help explain why some in our midst love to fly and jump: "To put your life in danger from time to time....breeds a saneness in dealing with day to day trivialities". AMEN!

This is the first year that we've been without the guidance and supervision of Katie Knotek who was promoted to a new position at the Seeley Lake Ranger District though she was in on the early planning phases of this "good deal". Fortunately, however, her replacement is no stranger to us with the temporary assignment of Anna Bengtson to Katie's position. Anna is most capable and has in a very seamless manner, taken the reins and is leading exceptionally well. I hope we can continue to work with her in the future. Congratulations to both ladies on their well deserved promotions. Thanks to all who participated this year. Your support and dedication to the

trails program is greatly appreciated and thank you also to the Selway Bitterroot-Frank Church Foundation and Executive Director, Sally Ferguson for once again funding this project. Your support and help in this work is vital to its success.

And I would be remiss in not acknowledging the following: Tom Vacura of VW Ice Co. who several days before our departure, once again offered the use of their ice storage facility for our perishables. Your generosity in this regard is solidly noted. The trail head greeters in Jerry Power, Dale Floerschinger and Roger Allen with the cold beer and Pepsis. It is always greatly appreciated and anticipated as we stagger out of the wilderness with heavy thirst. Boyd Birch at the MSO AFD came through again in not only ensuring that we had good crosscut saws but also helped us local NSA trail types receive our required first aid/CPR and AED training which piggybacked on the MSO jumpers training conducted by David Maclay Schute. Last but not least, a big thanks to Eric Antrim of Alpha Propane Co. of Victor, MT who, at the last minute, provided us with a much needed 5 gallon tank of propane for our cooks. All of these players contributed in their own way to the continued success of this great program which just reemphasizes my previous comment about all the moving parts. You are all greatly appreciated. A hearty thanks and happy trails to *y'all*. (That's for Dennis)



Camp headquarters, the cook shack.





Pack string, loaded up and headed out.



The crew coming home after a hard day on the trail.



The Crew: L to R standing. Joe Kroeber, Dennis Pearson, Phil DiFani, Bob Cushing, Jim Phillips, Corey Swanson (USFS), Bob Schumaker, JB Stone and seated left, Bob Whaley with Cary Foster's pup Roscoe.

## Bear Creek

Mike Prezeau (MSO 67)

After attending the reunion celebrating the 75th anniversary of Smokejumping, the Bear Creek crew, consisting of Mike Oehlerich (MSO 60), Mike Prezeau, Bill Hutcheson (MSO 74), and Rand Herzberg (MSO 74), departed from Missoula for what has become our annual TRAMPS trek to the Madison Ranger District of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Specifically, our destination was the Bear Creek Station, located approximately 15 miles south of Ennis. The Bear Creek Station is on the east side of the beautiful Madison River Valley, approximately 100 yards from the boundary of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, at the trailhead to Sphinx Mountain. This is a cherry 4-manner if there ever was one: crystal clear running water, electricity, indoor plumbing, and relatively easy access to fishing on the Madison River and golfing on a beautiful little course in Ennis.

The Bear Creek Station consists of several historic log cabins and a barn. Our project the last four summers has entailed re-shingling all of the cabins and the barn. The barn is the final structure to be reroofed. Because of its size and height, it will be a two summer project, with the second side to be completed next summer.

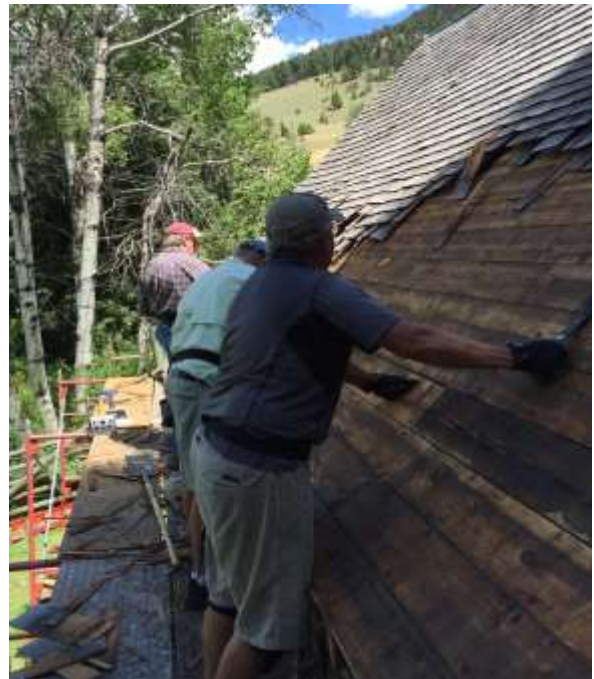
Once we got the old shingles ripped off, getting the many bundles of new shingles and other materials to the high roof would have been a laborious process, but Hutcheson designed a clever pulley system from an old wheelbarrow wheel, greatly simplifying that part of the project. Middle aged men (if that's what you call guys who are north of 65) shouldn't climb ladders with rolls of tar paper and bundles of shingles on their shoulders.

Monday was occupied with setting up the scaffolding, tearing off the old shingles (our least favorite part of the job), and screwing and gluing on the side trim pieces, manufactured out of long pine poles by Tim Aman, the district recreational officer. Tuesday, and the days thereafter, consisted of stapling down the underlayment, snapping chalk lines, nailing rows of shingles up to the roof peak, installing cleats and roof jack planks as we scaled the 12/12 pitch. Roofing like this requires teamwork, and there is no room for slacking or sloppy work. We have found that

unmercifully heaping crap on each other is the best way to insure adequate speed and quality workmanship.

The weather was generally favorable, somewhat cooler than in past years. We did experience several passing afternoon thunder showers, which helped lubricate the steep roof. A couple of times we were forced to retire early, but we generally made up for it by getting an early start the next day. On Wednesday night, we were treated to a particularly impressive light show, as lightning pounded the surrounding peaks and heavy thunder rumbled through the valley.

By Friday afternoon the new shingles had been installed, the scaffolding disassembled, and the old shingles hauled away. Herzberg retired to the river for several hours fishing, while Oehlerich, Hutcheson, and Prezeau hit the links, if that's what you call our brand of golf. As has become our annual tradition, after the fishing and golf we met in Ennis at the Gravel Bar for beers and then ate dinner at the Continental Divide Restaurant before driving back to camp. Saturday morning we broke camp and dispersed to our home bases, looking forward to next year's project.



L to R: Mike Oehlerich (barely visible), Tim Aman (District Recreation Officer), Rand Herzberg, and Bill Hutcheson





L to R: Mike Oehlerich, Rand Herzberg, and Bill Hutcheson.



The finished product.



The crew L to R: Mike Oehlerich, Mike Prezeau, Bill Hutcheson, and Rand Herzberg



## Bighorn Crag Trail Allen Biller (FBX 82) & company

The rising sun peeked over the forested ridge to the east, bathing the jutting granite crag above camp in a soft, yellow glow. Our camp, situated on the edge of a lush meadow beneath towering granite spires was our home for five days. A crystal clear mountain stream flowed out of the meadow and past camp, providing ample drinking water only 20 yards away. We were camped at the head of Big Creek in the Bighorn Crags area within the River of No Return Wilderness. It was time for breakfast.

Evening conversations around the campfire were as stimulating as the setting was spectacular. Topics included foreign travel, new and classic literature, silviculture, backpacking with pack goats, the adventures of a motorcycling wiener dog, and the origin of various smokejumpers' nicknames.

Heads out flips determined important issues of contention, like who got the remaining two meatballs. A forester's tape was used to measure the DBH (diameter breast height - ed. Really?) and circumference of each person's head. The smartest person present had the biggest head. A handful of jump stories were interspersed among the broader topics and some were even true.

Those participating in the discussions were Bruce Ford (MSO 75), Bill (Chickenman) Werhane (MSO 66), Doug Stinson (CJ 54), Kim Maynard (MSO 82), Tom Boatner (FBX 80), Irene Saphra (RAC 86), Allen Biller (FBX 82), and project leader Jeff Kinderman (MSO 75). Meals were expertly planned and prepared by Suzanne Potzsch. Hearty "Buckaroo" breakfasts and gourmet quality dinners, complete with both

appetizers and dessert were enjoyed each morning and evening around the campfire. Wine, fine bourbon, sipping quality tequila and micro-brew beer were enjoyed both before and after the evening meal. Beer in a blue can was enjoyed by a participant with less discriminating taste.

Forest Service wilderness ranger supervisor and mule-skinner Geoff Fast assigned projects and worked with us as did wilderness ranger Harrison Stone on the final day of his 10 day stint in the River of No Return Wilderness. Our pack-in to the work camp had a one-day delay, occasioned by lack of sufficient mules. It seems Geoff's critters took advantage of an unlatched gate to get an unscheduled walking tour about the country. He tracked them for some miles before resorting to an aerial search, but by then they had apparently decided there is no place like home and returned to their corral with travel bug assuaged.

We brushed trail, improved tread, built water bars, crosscut downfall and established an impressive trail "turnpike" in a marshy area, all while following the FS trail construction standards as detailed in the handbook. You know, "the handbook".

Packers with Bighorn Outfitters hauled our gear, tools and food into and out of the wilderness area, allowing us to walk in carrying only day packs. The temperature was cooler than normal and most days were blue sky days. The mosquitos were few in number and only two rainstorms visited us which just gave us an excuse to tell more stories while hunkering in the shelter of a spruce thicket.



<--Tom Boatner and  
Doug Stinson around  
the campfire.

Bill Werhane —>  
assessing intelligence  
of Jeff Kinderman.







The new turnpike in the woods.



Tom Boatner, Allen Biller and Jeff Kinderman with the misery whip.



Above L-R: Jeff Kinderman, Bill Werhane, Suzanne Poetzsch, Allen Biller, Bruce Ford, and Tom Boatner at the big flip for some of that awesome food.



The Bighorn Crags near the campsite.

At Right, L-R front row: Bill Werhane, Kim Maynard, Bruce Ford, Allen Biller. L-R back row: Tom Boatner, Doug Stinson, Jeff Kinderman, Suzanne Poetzsch, Irene Saphra.





Hogan's Cabin  
Beaverhead National Forest  
Bill Kolar (MSO 59)

Another successful project completed due to the fine outstanding cooperation and hard work put out by an extremely talented crew of gentleman and a lady. In order for any project to make it from concept, to planning and completion takes a tremendous amount of behind the scene logistics, communications, and cooperation from all parties involved, and last but not least is the personal commitment, sacrifice and expense that all volunteers are willing to do every year to make this program work.

A lot of time and effort is put in by NSA's Management team sorting through submitted projects from agencies we will eventually serve. Once a project is chosen the next step is assigning a qualified crew boss who is willing to take on all the responsibilities associated with a project's happy ending. Once a crew has been assigned, of which the most important one is the cook, the crew boss then needs to contact each individual by any means he can. In the case of Rod McIver (MSO 64), I finally had to resort to smoke signals to get his attention. All aspects of the project should be made available to each crew member such as what the project consists of, where is it located and how to get there, project start date, and emergency phone contact numbers for their family members. Any project changes prior to start date should also be made known to the crew. This is called good communications, which was the only valuable and useful tool I learned from 36 years of Forest Service duty. Other aspects of project planning is contacting the served agencies representative to iron out the finer details of the project such as: what tools and supplies will be required, and who will furnish them, arrangements for pack in projects, water sources, camping area, volunteer sign up forms and on and on this could go depending on the complexity of the project. The contacts for this project were John Ericson and Bob Hutton who were both employed out of the Wisdom/Wise River Ranger District.

During all this process I was constantly communicating with our cook Karen Connelly

(Associate) from West Glacier, MT. She so graciously volunteered to do all the purchasing of food supplies. Without her excellent experience and fine choice of food items we would have been stuck with hotdogs, beans and hardtack everyday if I was responsible for buying the food. My only concern throughout this whole process was that Karen was going to get hurt, sick or run off to God knows where and we would be scrambling for a new cook. My fears were over when she showed up on project with the rear bumper of her vehicle dragging over loaded with food.

Another aspect of project planning was coordinating with Jeff Kinderman (MSO 75) who is the Logistics Manager for NSA. Through him we acquired our tools, kitchen units, camp supplies and a good running chain saw. All these items are stored at the Missoula Smokejumper Center. This requires a trip for any crew boss to pick such items up as well as returning them in the same condition as received after project completion.

During all this time it's of great advantage to meet with the District Representatives on site to actually see, review, and discuss in fine detail what they expect of us in completing the project. In this case the assignment was to scramble up and down the slopes looking for suitable Lodge Pole material to construct 500 ft. of Jack-Leg fence around a 1930 vintage Forest Service Cabin called Hogan's Cabin. Required material needed was (102) 6 foot, 4 ½ -6 inch diameter posts and (204) 21 foot 3 ½ -4 inch rails. This was quite an undertaking. We were looking for mostly dead Lodge Pole. Although there was an adequate supply of bug killed trees, they were all too big. We spent the first two days scrambling up, down, and across hill sides trying to find the proper size trees to fall and cut to size. We had 3 saws pretty much going constantly in the expert hands of Richard Trinity (MSO 66), Chuck Fricke (MSO 61) and Rod McIver (MSO 64). Jack Atkins (MSO 68) and I (Bill Kolar) were the flunkies. Our job was to help locate the trees, help with trimming of branches once felled, help with the measurement of

the proper length for the post or rail, and then flag the material so we could find the stuff later on to load and haul back to the Cabin site. Just imagine trees scattered anywhere from 50 to 200 ft. apart on the forest floor amongst other dead downfall. Heck, we couldn't go back ourselves and find what we fell without them being marked.

Now we have all these trees scattered all over the hillside above the road from 50 to 300 ft. in a distance of maybe one mile. Our butts were dragging after all the saw work and we were not looking forward to carrying or dragging all this material down to the road to load onto a trailer. The Forest Service came to our rescue. We were able to acquire 3 AmeriCorps volunteers in their mid-twenties. They saved what was left of our energy by loading and hauling all the material back to the fence construction area. AmeriCorps volunteer members are part of a St. Louis based Emergency Response Team that are involved in various projects throughout the USA. They are a Nature Loving group of young adults that work on restoration of damaged water shed areas, combating invasive weeds, building and maintaining trails, fighting fires and have rendered assistance in our major natural disaster's such as tornados, floods and hurricanes. They have been working on projects in Montana since 2000.

On day 3 we finally begin the construction of the Jackleg Fence around the Cabin. The first couple of hours we spent having a friendly argument on how to actually read the plans and interpret the measurements for the spiking of the 21 foot rails shown on the drawing that were for a 5 foot jackleg post, and transfer that data on to our 6 foot posts. You would have thought we were building a rocket for a space launch. Better heads prevailed than mine, and we were finely on our way to begin. The 5 of us old timers began the task of notching the posts at the proper angle to form the Jack and laying out the jacks and railings around the staked perimeter. While this was in progress, we put the young adults to work digging two 3 foot holes through almost solid rock to plant posts to anchor a 12 foot long metal gate at the entrance to the cabin site.

Our strength and energy was daily supplied by the excellent meals served up by Karin,

and of course our bodily hydration was adequately resupplied each evening as we gathered around the camp fire, and of course the more liquid nourishment that was taken in produced bigger and better stories on to previous tales that were already questionable to facts and truthfulness. We had a fine upstanding individual visit us one evening by the name of "Digger" Daniels (MSO 61), and on our big steak fry night we had another invited guest Frank Fowler (MSO 52) from Dillon, MT.

Even with the help of the 3 AmeriCorps volunteers, by day 5 we knew we would not be able to finish the fence construction. We had at least another 1 ½ days of fence construction. On the day of our departure, we had 3 more AmeriCorps volunteers arrive along with Jack Sterling (MSO 66). They were on a project 8 miles to the west of us cutting and splitting 15 chords of firewood for a cross country ski warming hut. Due to the use of a gas powered splitter, they were able to complete their project one day early. This fine crew we left behind in the dust to finish the job.

I almost forgot, we also were assigned the task of falling 38 dead hazard trees that were around the cabin site. A few took all the technical skill and knowledge of Rod McIver and his excellent helper Richard Trinity. We would have destroyed an outhouse and cabin otherwise. That would have been one for the record.

Hey! They want us back next year to build some more Jack-Leg fence. Can't beat that.



L to R: Richard Trinity, Rod McIver





Spiking a rail to Jack-leg.  
Front L to R: Chuck Fricke, Jack Atkins  
Back: Sean



L to R: Chuck Fricke, Karan Connelly, Rod McIver, Bill Kolar, Zoe, Jack Atkins, Steve, Sean. Waiting for Karan's evening meal.



L to R: Sean, Richard Trinity, Zoe, Steve, Bill Kolar, Rod McIver, Chuck Fricke, Jack Atkins.  
AmeriCorps post planting for the Metal Gate installation.



## Losh Trail

Denis Symes (MYC 63)

John McDaniel (CJ 57) initiated the first NSA Trailcrew on the Monongahela NF in 2011. 2015 marks the fifth Trailcrew in the forest. This year's crew included Jack Atkins (MSO 68), Allen Biller (FBX 82), Rick Blackwood (CJ 79), Hank Brodersen (MSO 54), Dan Mitchell (RAC 78), Steve Nemore (RAC 69), and Denis Symes (MYC 63). Aiding us were Forest Service personnel Julie Fosbender and Brandon Olinger. Brandon and his chainsaw were most helpful in a number of instances.

This year's project involved rebuilding, improving, clearing, and building steps on steep portions of Losh Trail. The trail extends for about 3 miles from the Youth Leadership Association Camp Horseshoe up to a vantage point on the overlooking mountain. The trail was damaged by heavy rainfall and winds from several hurricanes and the Forest Service has been unable to restore it due to competing priorities.

Starting from the trailhead, a concrete-encased culvert was beaten into submission and removed, then a rock spillway built to channel water down to a stream. Alongside the spillway, a series of steps were built to allow safe footing on the steep hillside. The steps were constructed of 6X6 lumber cut into the hillside to provide level steps. Further along, another series of steps were hewn into

a mountainside and surfaced with flat rocks harvested from a stream bed. The trail was re-graded so the tread was level and not sloping side-hill. A number of fallen trees were also removed. The trail was brushed so campers could have ready access to it.

Hurricane Sandy caused general destruction of a "campfire ring" so that it was unusable. The crew felled leaning and intruding trees and brushed the area, making it available for campfires. Additionally, an old, half-mile long access road to a lower meadow was brushed and cleared.

The Monongahela is located in the highlands of West Virginia and is subject to violent and heavy rainfall as warm, moist air moves up the Atlantic coast from the Gulf of Mexico and ascends the mountains. Rainfall ranges between 45 and 60 inches annually, making tent camping unpleasant. The Forest Service arranged for the crew to reside at Camp Horseshoe in a cabin with hot showers and flush toilets! Meals were served in the camp kitchen and they were good!

Steve Nemore wants me to add "that nightly beer, wine and whisky drinking were moderate (Huh?), until the eve of departure (my head still hurts!). ....jumps stories began to repeat, personal lives revealed, and new jokes created."

L to R: Jack Atkins, Steve Nemore, Dan Mitchell, Alan Biller, Hank Brodersen. Rick Blackwood, Denis Symes



## Mann Gulch

Jim Phillips (MSO 67)

The enlarged story of how this project came about, because of its long history and convolutions, will have to be left for another time to be written. The short version of the project birth is that the NSA and the Helena National Forest are signatories to a recently written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) obligating the NSA for yearly maintenance in the designated historical area in Mann Gulch. This agreement was reached in deliberations between Fred Cooper (NCSB 62), Helena District Ranger Heather DeGeest and Helena Trails and Recreation Officer Roy Barkely.

I am a long time NSA trail program participant who by chance lives in Helena. So, it was because of proximity rather than proficiency that I was asked to form a crew and meet the first of many years of obligation attending to the Mann Gulch Historical area. The NSA Trail Program overhead team including Dave Dayton (MSO 69), Dick Hulla (MSO 75), Jeff Kinderman (MSO 75) and Chuck Fricke (GAC 61) were quick to add this project to the 2015 project list and Gene Hamner (MSO 67) and Steve Carlson (IDC 62) fanned the database and surprisingly, located six former smokejumpers that could tolerate me as a squadleader.

So it came to pass that Steve Straley (MSO 77), Jim Lee (MSO 77), Jim Thompson (MSO 63), Rich Trinity (MSO 66), John Driscoll (MSO 68), and Bob Dayton (MSO 65), signed on to clear USFS Trail #258 from Meriwether Canyon to Willow Creek and to give some attention to the memorial sites and social trail in the bottom of Mann Gulch. This remarkable group composed of a USFS-AFMO, engineer/contractor, stock investment officer, general surgeon, military officer, power company lineman and school teacher were augmented by Back Country Horsemen (BCH) and NSA Associate Fred Benson acting as lead packer with assistance and support from retired USFS & BCH members Bernie and Cherie Lionberger and Cindy and Steve Betlach (LGD 74).

The location and trailheads to access

Mann Gulch are such that the logistics of the operation demanded we split the crew into two saw teams: one each, beginning from either end of the trail. Team one boated down the Missouri to Meriwether Canyon in a USFS craft piloted by former MT-DNRC-IC Bob Lawrence; while the second team negotiated a 4wd track to the trailhead in Willow Creek. The strategy was for each team to saw toward one another and meet at Mann Gulch, spend the night, and then combine to attend to the social trail and memorial sites in Mann Gulch the following day. The packers were directed to drop gear in a saddle at the head of Mann Gulch for a spike-camp site.

There will continue on into the foreseeable future, good-natured theories about why the Meriwether saw team didn't reach the head of Mann Gulch at the same time as the Willow Creek boys. Being a intuitive squadleader, I concluded that the Meriwether saw team had encountered more downed logs than the Willow Creek Saw team, so I directed two sawyers with three bionic knees between them to continue on toward the Meriwether group to lend assistance and heap derision on them for their lack of punctuality, slowness of pace and their apparent lackadaisical attitude about hard work. The chastisement seemed to work reasonably well and both saw teams deigned to appear in camp on or about 1900 hours bemoaning the scale of work (90 obstructions removed from the trail), huge diameter trees and jackpots from hell. I should have gone along to investigate and verify the assertions but the libations for happy hour needed protection from marauding packers.

With food and rest the rehydrated crew revived sufficiently to tolerate a lecture and briefing on the events in Mann Gulch on August 5, 1949. Given the mission to place Smokejumper lapel pins provided by Dave Theis (RAC 83), on the memorial sites and to minimally arrest some of the associated erosion, the next morning as a crew, we spent a respectful and emotional time reflecting on the events sixty-six years ago. The crew can all attest that the number of coins, rocks and



flowers placed previously about the sites, reflecting a continued awe and reverence for the sacrifices made by the men memorialized in the gulch. The sites reflect heavy use and the NSA/USFS MOU prescribing regular maintenance of the historic area is an important step to assure that the memories of those who died there will not be degraded then neglected and forgotten.

Though the excited wind speed and dramatic temperature plunge was challenging, attention to duty saved us from hypothermia. The purpose of our mission kept us mindful of the blessings bestowed on us by those men who left us in 1949. So, too, did we recognize how wildland firefighters have benefitted from the lessons learned by the passing of those “pioneer smokejumpers”. We celebrated that it was, for a brief period of time, a distinct honor to bear the standard of the National Smoke-jumper Association and play a role as “keepers of the flame”.



Checking a cross  
L to R: Jim Thompson, Rich Trinity,  
Bob Dayton



L to R: Steve Betlach, John Driscoll, Jim Thompson, Robert Dayton, Steve Straley, Jim Lee, Jim Phillips, Rich Trinity



## Reece Cabin Don Whyde (MSO 66)

Crew: Dan Hensley (MSO 57), Gary Lawley (MSO 57), Bob Schumaker (MSO 59), Fred Cooper (NCSB 62), Jack Sterling (MSO 66), Don Whyde, Dennis Kissack (Associate & Crew Cook).

AmeriCorps: Whitney Movius (Idaho), Jenny Pilecki (California), Cameron McCoy (Ohio). Volunteers were based out of St. Louis Missouri.

Our crew gathered about noon at a parking lot near Chief Joseph Pass out of Wisdom Montana. The lot provides a gateway to Reece Cabin road. The road was gated and locked. In true form, old Jumpers do not like sitting around. We discussed various legal and nefarious means to open said gate when our FS contact arrived. Problem solved. The crew caravanned to the cabin. My first impression "This is a very nice private summer home!"

Reece Cabin is a Forest Service rental that is available during the year. It is rarely empty. The cabin sleeps 8, has a full kitchen, solar and propane gas lights, a gas stove for cooking, and a wood stove for heating. According to John Ericson, the Forest Service Project Manager, "The wood stove is fired up at first snow and never shuts down until the snow is gone." If you are a cross-country skier, this cabin has all the digs!

We moved our cook and the food supply into the cabin. Crucial items first is our motto. Dennis spent the last two projects deep in the Teton Wilderness and this had to be heaven. John Ericson went through a safety brief, showed us how to turn on the lights and gas and provided a summary of equipment available and what we would do. It was simple, cut, haul, and stack 15 cords of firewood. There were two sources, wood stacked in various locations around the area and snags. We had an ATV with a trailer, an additional large trailer, a gas powered splitter, and 2 chainsaws. An additional ATV and trailer plus a truck for towing the big trailer would be delivered on Monday. If there was time, paint the deck, fix a bench on the deck, and rebuild 3 benches at a community fire pit. Sounded doable. We also acquired a crew of 3 from AmeriCorps. That was a surprise.

First chore was to fill the basement of the cabin-about 4 cords. Lawley fired up the ATV

and trailer, the AmeriCorps crew loaded the trailer, Hensley, Whyde, and Sterling stacked wood in the basement, and Cooper and Schumaker set out marking trees for cutting. By days end, most of the reserve wood was stacked in the basement.

The crew enjoyed dinner at a real table, complete with spirits but missing the candles. Quality fare, quality atmosphere, and intellectual banter. Intellectual? Yes, and I'm sticking to it!

New assignments were divvied up Monday morning. Lawley and Hensley would operate the splitter, Schumaker stacked, and Cooper hooked his Jeep up to the trailer and started hauling wood, Sterling, Whyde and the AmeriCorps crew served various roles as sawyers, haulers, fallers, buckers and stackers. Everyone settled into the work and, other than relief at various tasks now and then, there was not much variation.

Around 10AM, Dick Hulla (MSO 75) and Jeff Kinderman (MSO 75) arrived to impart their chain saw expertise on whoever wanted to be trained. Hulla trained Movius and Pilecki and Kinderman trained Whyde, Sterling, and McCoy. It was a great opportunity to renew our saw certificates and learn from the best.

The sawyers dropped enough snags to fill a log landing and the splitters and haulers worked into the late PM hauling wood that was piled at various locations. By the time the crew quit, most of this wood had been hauled to the splitter.

The smell of hot strong coffee filled the cabin around 6 AM on Tuesday. That is an aphrodisiac for old Jumpers and we were belching and rearing to go early. AmeriCorps set to limbing and bucking into bolts those trees that had been cut on Monday. Cooper, Whyde and McCoy hauled the bolts to the splitter. These were dumped off at a crib where Jack Sterling cut the bolts to stove length. Hensley and Lawley kept that splitter smoking and Schumaker stacked. By 4 PM, it was raining hard and there was a lot of lightning around the area. That was it for the day. Lawley and Hensley prepared a drawing on what we might do with the benches at the community fire pit. We all looked at it and decided that it was a solid design drawn up on the back of a napkin.

Dennis had steak waiting for the crew around 6 PM. A little beer, some wine and steak. It just doesn't get any better than that!

Wednesday morning the crew was gathered at the splitter and by 11 AM we had cut, split, and stacked a helluva lot of wood all laid out in neat rows. Sterling calculated 23 by his length, depth, and height measurement, Whyde figured about 20. Rain and hail at 11 AM mostly shut the operation down. Cooper and others began cleaning up the bucking and splitter site. By 1 PM, they hauled about 30 wheelbarrow loads of sawdust and scattered it. If we had a compactor and glue, we could have made wood pellets for a year! Jack Sterling broke out some tools from his truck and repaired the log crib.

Schumaker left at noon and Fred Cooper left about 3 PM. The remainder of the crew set to staining the deck. We had one gallon of stain. We completed the handrail and half the deck before running out of stain. Meanwhile, Sterling and the AmeriCorps group set to repairing a deck bench. It was quite remarkable, aesthetic, and functional what they did to that bench using just a chain saw and screws. In the back of Sterling's truck there are tools for every chore. No doubt he could build a footbridge across the Big Hole River if necessary. My greatest fear: "someone would ask him to do it!" It rained steady until about 5 PM that day. The crew discussed and we de-

cided to "pack it up" Thursday morning. We never did unveil the napkin with Hensley's and Lawley's master bench plan.

Thursday morning we cleaned up the cabin and Lawley and Hensley cleared out about 9 AM. Well, they tried to clear out. The AmeriCorps crew had locked the main access gate on their way out so no one could get out. Jack Sterling to the rescue. I don't know what he did but when Kissack and Whyde reached the gate around 10 AM, it was open and the chain seemed to be a bit shorter by 3 or 4 links! Before leaving, Dennis Kissack set to and constructed a new secure lock for the cabin door.

Sterling and Whyde moved on to the Hogan Cabin project just in time to catch Rich Trinity before he left. He was the last of that crew. Sterling and Whyde stayed on and helped build about 1/4 of a jack leg fence surrounding Hogan Cabin. We assisted a FS employee named Bob who knew a hell of a lot about building a jack leg fence.

I would be remiss in not praising the AmeriCorps crew attached to this project. These young folks were savvy, knew how to work and were good at it. There is no doubt they played an instrumental role in the success of this project. Well Done.

Thanks to the NSA crew. These are the best there are. Headed to the reunion and home. Safe travels and "See you on the Trail."



L to R: Cameron McCoy, Jenny Pilecki, Dennis Kissack, Jack Sterling, Dan Hensley, Don Whyde, Whitney Movius, Bob Schumaker, Gary Lawley, Fred Cooper

## Rio Medio Trail Mike Overby (MSO 67)

The TRAMPS invaded New Mexico in June, 2015 with their first project – on the Rio Medio trail in northern edge of the Pecos Wilderness Area in Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Six project team members were able to re-open the once blocked trail that provides access to deeper regions of the high-country of Pecos. The project was coordinated with the Santa Fe National Forest and Jennifer Sublett with the Santa Fe District.

The project team consisted of Jon Klingel (CJ 65), John Payne (MSO 66), Allison Stout (MYC 80), Mark Rivera (Associate), Ken Collins (Associate), and myself, Mike Overby.

The team was packed in with support from Santa Fe Chapter of Backcountry Horseman – and numerous volunteers coordinated by Chapter President, Debbie Spickerman.

The project began with Mike and Jon scouting the trail and finding over 275 down trees across the trail over the approximate 10

mile length to be cleared – with many within the first mile of the trailhead (how are we going to even create a camp??). In just a few days before the project was to start, Forest Service trail crews cleared the trail 2 miles into the wilderness – so we could get pack stock and our gear in – and wouldn't have to walk up the significant elevation climb every day to the trailhead campground – YEA.

New Mexico Pecos provided us its mid-summer weather in late June – with many inches of rain and hail (yes we could measure hail depth) on most afternoons. Regardless, we were able to work the trail over 5 miles and clear 150 trees – not all were as big as the monster in photo.

Next year the team will progress from end point for another 125 down trees (and hopefully) during a time without so much moisture. Oh well – that's why God invented rain jackets, rain flies and tents.



Bad news log, before at left, and after below.

Below L-R: Mike, Allison, and John in the "after" picture.



L-R: Mike Overby, Jon Klingel, John Payne, Allison Stout, Ken Collins, Mark Rivera



## Priest River Experimental Forest Project

Chuck Haynes (Associate)

With Terry Egan (CJ 65)

Priest River Experimental Forest (PREF) was established in 1911 by the US Forest Service to conduct research. Since then, numerous Forest Service, state and private forestry researchers have used Priest River to study a variety of subjects – from basic forestry principles to advanced examinations of forest ecosystems. Located within the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, PREF contains approximately 6,400 acres of mountainous forestland, with small areas of talus and alpine grassland. Within its boundaries is a diversity of forest successional stages representative of the varying ecosystems in the northern Rocky Mountains. There are two Research Natural Areas, Canyon Creek (977 acres established in 1937), and Wellner Cliffs (310 acres established in 2006). At the headquarters area, there is housing, laboratory space, and a conference building. Long-term data sets of daily weather (1911), tree growth (1914), snow pack (1937), and streamflow (1938) have been collected and archived. PREF became a monitoring site of the National Atmospheric Deposition Program in 2003. The site contains a variety of managed and reserve areas, a multitude of ecological site choices from wild to extremely disturbed situations, and all of the significant forest types and habitat associations of the region.

The facilities necessary to support PREF's research mission make this a real resort location for smokejumper projects. The lodge, built to house visiting scientists and other visitors, has five bedrooms with 2-3 beds each, three bathrooms, a living room (complete with fireplace and TV), a small kitchen, and a nice front porch. Most of the crew stayed in the lodge, although two preferred their personal RVs. We all took advantage of the front porch, gathering each morning and evening to discuss world events and socialize (translation: tell smokejumper stories and drink). There is also a dining hall where we feasted three times a day on the gourmet cooking of Jimmy Deeds (MSO 64). Jimmy reveled in the features of the large kitchen and kept us coming back for more.

The rest of the crew consisted of crew chief Carl Gidlund (MSO 58), John MacKinnon (MSO 57), Dave Blakely (MSO 57), Milt Knuckles (MSO 61), Allen Isaacson (MSO 63), Terry Egan (CJ 65), Bob Smee (MSO 68), and me. Hank Jones (MSO 53) and his son Mike (Assoc) were able to join us for one day, but circumstances prevented them from participating all week. Bob Denner, who is also an NSA associate, is the forester at Priest River. He gave us our marching orders and occasionally pitched in.

This was our sixth, and possibly last, project because Bob D. is retiring at the end of the year. Much of the work this year was repair and clean-up – little projects he wanted to have completed before he retires. Consequently, most of our work was in the immediate administration area, as opposed to previous years.



The fuel shed before work started.

Milt and Bob S. spent most of their time as carpenters. The fuel storage hut has two shutters which serve as windows. The shutters were rotting and sagging, so the carpenters removed and rebuilt them from scratch to original specifications. They also reconstructed framing around the shutters and the door to the hut, and with the help of several others, painted the entire building. The shutters and doorframe look great. The rest of the hut looks like a freshly painted building that needs to be replaced.

Dave and Terry did both carpentry and masonry work on Cabin #2 and on the lodge. The coal chute on Cabin #2 was in serious need of repair. Dave and Terry rebuilt the existing chute cover's framework to create a greater slope. They also did some masonry repair to the chutes' entrance into the basement and, with an assist from Bob S., reframed that entrance. The objective of this task was to make the coal chute more water/snow proof and prevent vermin from getting into the basement through that entrance.

Dave and Terry also worked on the steps to the porch at the lodge. The steps are flagstones cemented in place. Some had been dislodged over time, so Dave and Terry removed them, broke loose the crumbling cement, replaced it, and reinstalled the flagstones.

Carl and John spent much of their time in preservation activities, which, given their ages, is sorely needed. Sorry, I meant they worked on preserving the buildings, many of which date from the 1930s. They power washed the steps and porch of the building which houses the conference room, dining hall, and bunkhouse. Then they brushed on an oil-based preservative. This task has been regularly performed by previous crews, made necessary by heavy usage and extreme weather. It's time-consuming because of the position of the porch and the numerous balusters. They also cleaned and brushed preservative on the amphitheater benches. This is also an annual task, because those benches sit out in the weather. Carl and John were among the others who displayed their paint brushing talents on the aforementioned fuel storage hut.

Allen's primary job was assisting Jimmy with food handling and preparation. But he also pitched in on other crew tasks, such as power washing and preserving the mess hall porch and amphitheater.

My efforts, of course, were reserved for those tasks requiring the highest of technical skills. I spent most of the first day running a weed eater. Then I was tasked with filling holes created by rotting stumps. This required using that highly complex device known as the shovel to remove dirt from the front-end loader and insert it into the holes. Next, I was placed in charge of the Trash

Hauling Detail. This task required that I, with the help of others (John, Carl, Terry, Mike – depending on their availability), remove trash and recyclable materials (as identified by Bob D.) from the administration building and other locations, load them onto a pickup, drive them to a collection site, and off-load the material into the proper refuse/recycling bins. I also spent one morning helping Bob D., Hank, and Mike remove a wire fence from a meadow.

The whole gang (including Hank and Mike) spent one afternoon together mucking out the Benton Creek gauging dam. Water level and flow is measured with a recording device in the pond created by the dam. Silt accumulates on the upstream side of the dam, interfering with the device's readings. Our objective was to remove the silt and clear the passageway for the recording device's monitor. This task involved considerable spade work (again with the shovels). We opened the dam's gate, releasing water from the pond. Then we set up a pump upstream from the dam, attaching a 2" fire hose to blast loose the silt. Then we went to work with the spades. After a couple of hours, the settling pond was mostly silt-free. While the rest of us carted the tools back up the hill, Bob D. and Dave did some repair work to reseal the dam. Several members of the team also rescued about a dozen juvenile fish from temporarily-drained downstream ponds and returned them to the now-refilling dam pond.

On most nights, after another one of Jimmy's amazing meals, we assembled for happy hour on the front porch of the lodge before adjourning to the living room to watch DVDs provided by Carl. One was "A Fire Called Jeremiah," a Disney creation starring then-active smokejumper Cliff Blake (MSO 55). One night, unfortunately, our deliberations and ruminations on the porch were rudely disturbed by the unannounced arrival of a mystery drone that hovered overhead, lingered for a short while and then took off (perhaps induced by a rock-throwing exhibition by a crew member). Several railed against this unconscionable invasion of privacy and disturbance of the harmony of our beautiful sylvan setting.

As the week wound down, Bob D. led us on a narrative tour of the PREF. The tour began in the Administration Building's museum and continued outdoors in the nursery where

Director Denner explained the various tree plots and their relation to the mission of the PREF.

On the last day the crew worked together to take down a snag near Cabin #1. We rigged block and tackle to ensure the tree would fall safely in the intended direction. Bob D. made the cut while I manned the tractor which held the running end of the rope to give the snag a bit of a lean in the desired direction. Fortunately, we had plenty of supervision, and the tree was duly felled. Then Bob D. took a few guys up to the Gisborne Mountain lookout tower. Unfortunately, smoke from the Tower Fire (about 15 miles away), which had marred our view during the latter part of the week, obliterated their vista.

It was a good project, and we got a good deal accomplished, but the camaraderie is what really made it all worthwhile.



A couple of proud masons, Terry Egan and Dave Blakely .



The NSA crew, from bottom left, Hank Jones, Jimmie Deeds, behind them, Bob Smee, Dave Blakely, Bob Denner. Standing from left, Carl Gidlund, Allen Isaacson, Chuck Haynes, John McKinnon, Milt Knuckles, and Terry Egan.



## Sabido Cabin

Mark Johnson (MSO 69)  
Photos by John Stewart (MSO 69)

For the third year in a row, the “MSO 69ers” worked at a back country cabin in the Bob Marshall Wilderness in the Spotted Bear RD of the Flathead National Forest. This year’s project consisted mostly of two tasks: 1) repairing and reconstructing the corral and 2) oiling and staining the cabin, barn and out-house.

The trail head was at Swift Dam, along the Rocky Mountain Front, in the Lewis and Clark NF. We hiked 16 miles up Birch Creek, over the continental divide at Gateway Pass, then down to Sabido Cabin in the Flathead. Part of the challenge for us all was: *can we handle a 16 mile hike?* Despite a few blisters and sore knees, we made it!

We understand the cabin was built in the 1930’s by sheepherders who grazed sheep in the mountains during the summer. A few years back an NSA crew was at the cabin to reroof it. It’s a small cabin! Three of the crew slept in the cabin on bunk beds and the other three slept in tents. We didn’t have a designated cook, so all had a hand in cooking and cleanup. Food was great so nobody lost weight on this trip!

The fence is jack-leg type, the crossed-posts needed to be straightened or replaced. Many of the rails needed to be replaced. The swinging gate needed to be braced. We were able to salvage some of the material, but also had to harvest posts and rails from downed or standing dead lodgepole pine, putting to use

our cross-cut saw skills!

Work on the swinging gate included fixing the braces, straightening posts, and attaching the rails. It took two days to finish the corral. We also rebuilt the hay crib.

Mark and Dave worked on the fence, swinging a 2 lb. sledge which was a challenge! We oiled the old cabin logs and they really soaked it up!

We also constructed a hitch rail near the cabin, attempted to rat-proof the outhouse floor, repaired the floor of the deck on the cabin, bucked logs to fill the wood shed with fire wood, and just for fun, built a bench, which now sits on the deck of the cabin.

Lon, Keith and Fred showed some pretty decent improvisation and carpentry skills on a bench that now sits on the cabin porch!

An unexpected highlight of our days at Sabido was interacting with a group of boys (ages 9-18) and sponsors from a boy’s ranch in Eureka, MT. They backpacked into the area and camped at a nearby outfitters camp. Hearing we were ex-jumpers, the lead counselor asked if we would tell the boys about smokejumping. Of course telling stories is our favorite pastime and we were pleased to oblige! We also let them try out the cross-cut saw. To show their appreciation, the boys brought us a huckleberry cheesecake!

A great project at a very special place: the Bob Marshall Wilderness.



Mark and Dave working on the jack-leg fence.



Lon, Keith and Fred building a bench.



Dave applying oil to the cabin wall.



Teaching the youth to how to use the cross-cut saw.  
Keith is instructing, and Mark is holding down the log.



L to R back row: Dave Dayton, Mark Johnson, John Stewart  
Front row Fred Axelrod, Lon Dale, Keith Beartusk

## Caldwell Lakes Trail

Scott "Mouse" Warner (RDD 69)

Throughout the 75 years of Smokejumping when jumpers think California, it is all about blast furnace heat, big timber, snags, head-high brush, steep rough ground, yellow jackets, and poison oak.

Well, the 2015 NSA California Volunteers "dropped" into the "Good Deal" Caldwell Lakes Trail Project, just a dozen air miles west of Mt Shasta - "Another California": cool, mixed-conifer open timber stands, light brush not even up to 10-inch White boot-top level, high elevation glaciated gentle ground, and no pesky insects nor noxious plants.

This is the high elevation "Trinity Divide", separating the Sacramento River to the east flowing south to the Golden Gate, and the Trinity River to the west flowing to join the Klamath River and the Pacific Ocean. Winter storms swirl in the "Eddy's" dropping enormous amounts of long-lasting snow to water the unique far northern Trinity Divide to feed high energy streams, lakes, wet meadows, and fens (bog-like openings with flowing water.)

The Trinity Divide Ultramafic Geology of dun-red even yellow-colored ancient earth mantle some 450 million years old, interspersed with green serpentine, and more recent granitic intrusions, is unique in the world, being formed first by tectonics, then repeated glaciers to round nearby peaks such as Mt. Eddy (9,025 feet) and China Mtn. (8,542 feet) and to create cirques and lakes, mile-long stringer meadows, wet meadows, and fens. Yet within sight just to the east, lie the younger volcanic Cascades formed by eruptions within the last 3 million years, dominated by Mt. Shasta at 14,180 feet of "only" 1 million years of age.

Because of the diverse Ultramafic Geology with unique mineral content limiting conifers to be smaller and compose more open-grown forests, plus the glacial epochs, the far north Trinity Divide is species rich when it comes to vegetation. The "Enriched" Conifer-Type, even at the higher altitudes, includes Ponderosa Pine, cousin Jeffrey Pine, Western White Pine, Lodgepole Pine historically called "Tamarack" in California, Incense Cedar, Douglas-Fir, White Fir, Red "Silver-Tip" Fir, Mountain Hemlock, sometimes Port Orford Cedar, and

rare Brewers Spruce. Brush is of relatively low density and height for California, with Pine Mat Manzanita, Huckleberry Oak, Green Manzanita, Prostrate Ceanothus, and "Mahala mat." Also present is Bear Grass, which is actually a Lilly! Here and there surfacing "basement rock" perches water tables to create abundant springs, wet meadows with grasses, sedges, and forbs, and the fens with eerie Darlingtonia - the insectivorous California Pitcher Plant.

Into this unique paradise the 11-strong California National Smokejumper Association (NSA) contingent "dropped in" (OK, drove) to the Tamarack Flat Base Camp at just under 6,000 ft. Tamarack Flat is a mile-long stringer meadow with scattered Jeffrey Pine and Lodgepole Pine, bounded by timber, one of the forks of Parks Creek flowing right near camp, and views of surrounding high mountains. Even "old guys" could have jumped into soft-landing, hard to hang up Tamarack Flat! Maybe next year!

Indeed the 2015 Caldwell Lakes Trail was a "Cupcake Assignment", albeit "marketed" with slight hyperbole to lure in volunteers traumatized from past NSA ordeals down in the North Fork of the American River (Tahoe NF).

This time no helicopter long-lining of 2 tons of gear down into a nearly 3,000 foot deep canyon with former smokejumper soaring "Eagles", now aging "Sparrow Hawks" [as old smokejumper and ski buddy Lee "Hardrock" Jensen (MYL 69) used to say], slipping miles downhill to a Spartan base camp. No jack-strawed deadfall, no post wildfire head-high flourishing brush, no heat, bugs, nor poison oak. No pack strings (although as NSA California patriarch Spud DeJarnette (MSO 49) observes, "Mules are more human than helicopters") hauling the camp outfit and tool complement out of the North Fork, followed by old smokejumpers, who after a week of vigorous trail work felt reduced from even Sparrow Hawks to small forest floor ground birds. By comparison, the 2015 Caldwell Lakes Trail Project was an "It doesn't get any better than this" good deal.

The Caldwell Lakes Trail reroute and maintenance are part of the very sensible



Parks Eddy Watershed Restoration Project [NEPA-National Environmental Policy Act Process] taking place in 2015 and the next few years. In the formerly mixed ownership landscape of more than 20,000 acres in 2 major watersheds it is accessed by road and was selectively-logged by the USFS and timber companies in the 1950s with practices of yesterday. Now most of the 2 watersheds belong to the American public, via land trade and 3rd party purchase with conveyance to the USFS. Restoration comprises road closing, decommissioning, and needed road maintenance, with wet meadow protection, as well as dedicated trails for foot, horseback, and off-road vehicles. The Parks Eddy Watershed Restoration is very practical, reasonable, economical, and achievable in a timely fashion project, having a clear benefit to water quality while allowing for a range of uses by the American public.

The improved Caldwell Lakes Trailhead at the foot of the professionally decommissioned eroding road segment lies just 1.5 miles (by auto) from the NSA Base Camp.

Our tasks were the following: Segment 1 - 1.25 miles of brand new trail construction rerouted to replace the decommissioned old road, Segment 2 - 0.19 mile of pruning and thinning encroaching conifers along a skid trail, Segment 3 - a new double switchback of 0.17 miles entailing brushing, tread work, and rock rolling, Segment 4 - 1.5 miles of trimming brush and conifer limbs, and clearing a half dozen deadfalls on the existing trail to Caldwell Lakes.

The last 0.75 mile of existing steeper trail near the Caldwell Lakes did invoke some NSA volunteer grumbling and using project organizers names in vain. That's OK. Former soaring Eagles, now Sparrow Hawks, can be forgiven that the march of time has erased the comparative memories of the straight up-and-down Idaho Salmon River Breaks, Wooley Creek on the Klamath NF in NW California, and the Gila NF Mogollon Mountains down in New Mex!

Given the inevitable passage of time for "Soaring Eagles" of days gone by, from April to July Trail Scouts and Project Organizers Arley Kisling (RDD 69) and Scott "Mouse" Warner, accompanied by sidekick Jack Russell Terrier Ben (at 14 years old), conducted 4

recons to plan the work and assist the USFS on the ground. Local area resident Arley knows the country well, conceiving and promoting the Caldwell Lakes Trail work to our NSA Trail contingent and contributing to the Parks Eddy Watershed Restoration NEPA process as a public member with his insightful "review and comment."

Arley and "Mouse" made many fire jumps together in their rookie year. Arley made his career with the local Shasta-Trinity (and Mendocino) NF in fire, timber, and helped construct the original Pacific Crest Trail in the 1970s-80s. After some 7 years with the smokejumpers, forester "Mouse" went to the "dark side" with the timber industry. Canine JRT Ben is a veteran of many NSA CA Trail adventures.



L-R: Spud DeJarnette and Murry Taylor enjoying a steak dinner.

Among the other members of the 11-strong NSA contingent with a range of ages from 86 to 27 was Co-Organizer Spud DeJarnette who was the provisioner, Base Camp Boss, and cook. Civic-minded Spud got the NSA CA Trail "Chapter" up and running in 2008 and was an early NSA Board Member. Jim Anderson (MYL 74) came down from Washington State, was his jovial, good-natured, hard-working self. Johnny Culbertson (FBX 69) came up from Santa Barbara with his decades of volunteer trail know-how and organizational experience - recently seeing through a decade-long effort to resurrect the 1910 Franklin Trail on the Los Padres NF. John Helmer (RDD 59) came from the East Bay area with his expertly welded extension pruning saw to meticulously

prune and thin trailside conifers. His college classmate Ken Svilich (NSA Associate) from Long Beach and is definitely “one of us.” Steve Meyer (MYL 73) served as diligent trail stalwart, camp outfit and provision transporter, and crew “Morale Officer.” Murry Taylor (RDD 65), noted smokejumper sage and author, finally joined the NSA CA Trail contingent in 2015 after enduring years of recruitment effort and sardonic harassment by “Mouse”. Nobody is better on a Pulaski for sustained periods than Murry, who also cannot be bettered in campfire banter. Matt Houston (NSA Associate) was the “kid” of the crew at just 27. He is a good-natured, hardworking “Down’s kid” who is always part of our informal NorCal-PNW Good Samaritan including old smokejumpers, his big brother John Houston, a City of Redding CA Fireman, and like-minded others. Matt and John are sons of our departed jump buddy Everett “Doc Sam” Houston (MYL 71). First in the chow line with his “hollow leg”, Matt is simply the best. Tom Romanello (FBX 88), another crew youngster in just his early 50s, was a cheerful hard worker at all of the many requested tasks and an excellent camp wit. Not a complaint was to be heard during and after base camp set up “camp mouse” duties (with Andy Anderson), including a 1st class latrine installation (complete with seat!), putting up kitchen sun, rain, and wind tarps, and emergency KP. And on the trail while others wheezed, Tom just kept on going.



Ben, Scott and Matt at Upper Caldwell Lake.

During the reconnaissance and planning phase it was reasonably estimated we “Sparrow Hawks” would need 3.5 days to do the 1.5 miles of new trail. We made it in 2 days plus pioneering the switchback! Our contingent did enjoy the efforts of USFS Mt. Shasta-McCloud Trail contingent Steve Nasser and Dennis, who the prior week had swamped the new trail segment “P-Line” of

understory trees and branches and staked the orange-flagged and painted route co-engineered by the USFS and NSA. Then they let the NSA forge ahead with trail pioneering, widening, and tread work. As with progressive fire line building methodology, Steve and Dennis followed up with a final trail meeting USFS national trail standards.

We even collaborated on engineering the 1,000-foot long double switchback, mixing “Mouse’s timber industry perspective of “fit the route to the terrain” with USFS sensible national standards of “keep the grade down and locate the trail where it will last on good, stable ground.” By the 5th and last day, NSA had met the original goals of pioneering and widening the new trail segments and brushing back the existing trail all the way to Upper Caldwell Lake, including clearing the deadfalls (bucked out by hand with a 30-inch Fanno “Bull Saw”). Pretty good for “Sparrow Hawks!”

What made the Caldwell Lakes Project so good was working right alongside the Mt. Shasta-McCloud Management Unit with NEPA input, putting together administration and documents, project recon, and the actual work. Stacy Smith, Land & Special Uses Officer (who wrote the many-paged NEPA document in her “spare time”) helped get the NSA Caldwell Lakes Trail Project in motion, even though the Management Unit had been without a Recreation Officer for some time. Despite the staffing gap, we were able to assemble relevant documents and project planning, along with NSA Missoula Trail Coordination help.



Steve Meyer smiling on the trail.

Midway through the actual work, after a day of showing the new Recreation Officer Rebecca Cooper the Parks Creek - Mt. Eddy area, Stacy and Becky joined us for dinner and the campfire. The next day, Manage-



ment Unit District Ranger Carolyn Napper joined us on the actual trail in an unannounced hands-on visit, what the British call a “walkabout”, the most effective management style of all.

NSA Tamarack Flat “Camp Life” was certainly memorable. Smokejumper drift streamers were thrown and hauled up into surrounding trees for atmosphere. The Base Camp was the best ever with green grass, plenty of space, sheltering trees, a nearby cold and gurgling stream, and adjacent open ground for dispersed bedding and comforting starry skies. We should have put out the old-time florescent orange ground-to-air signal panels “Double LL” - communicating All OK.

The varied food was great with Spud producing fine camp grub from his previously printed menu! All from scratch, supper main courses of Chili, Chicken, Hamburgers, Pork Loin, and the Steak grilled-over-coals finale. We also had the now traditional campfire Dutch oven “Smokejumper Packsaddle” (bacon, potato, onion, beer) that dates back 50 years to Redding Smokejumper Rookie Camps. There was home sourdough starter to give the morning pancakes a lift along with eggs and bacon/sausage to bulk up “Sparrow Hawks” for a day of trail work. The food was so good 16- pound JRT Ben lived off of offered scraps from soft-hearted NSA Trail Volunteers, refusing to touch his “Kibbles and Bits”, or even his favorite “Little Champions.”

There were plenty of pre-dinner appetizers like salty snacks and home-cured olives, washed down by a variety of “amber liquids”, and even wine from John Helmer’s grapes made into memorable vintage by a top-notch vintner. Post evening dining bottles of “darker stuff” later appeared to be passed around the campfire.

As in the Smokejumper days when we were “Soaring Eagles”, campfire musings ranged from banter, reliving the jumper days, teasing and “hoo-raw”, hilarious stories, the occasional joke, commentary on history and contemporary life, to limited “splitting of the atom” philosophical discussion. The latter was quite curious, because in the past these practical, problem solving smokejumpers rarely demonstrated interest or capacity for abstraction!

Political discussion was minimized upon the private request of a former “Soaring Eagle” with a tendency toward anarchy. With the greatest of irony, the few political discussions that did ensue were initiated by the very “Avian” wishing to limit First Amendment Rights! Was the now “Flap and Glide” sometimes “Perch and Dive” Raptor baited, or did he set himself up with too many hard landings with head trauma from poor parachute landing rolls? Were libations involved? Are smokejumpers both young and old “inveterate characters”?

A first-time memorable campfire event, which is hoped not to be repeated, was a Kan-



Ken Silvich and John Helmer, more smiling faces on the trail.

garoo Court convened for a “no-show” volunteer. The NSA California Trails and Restoration contingent has diligently, since the 2008 inception, built a good roster of volunteers, yet suffered from persistent last minute no-shows. Perhaps the “gut busting” North Fork of the American River has had something to do with it. Project organizers personally check in with volunteers the last 10 days to the eve of the push-off. Indeed things sometimes do happen. Advance notice is all that is requested. Belittlement, coercion, and campfire recitations of creative excuses have probably backfired. One “inveterate character” even pronounced no-show offenders with the resurrection of the Old West Rancher term to describe under-performing bulls! This pejorative was sometimes employed back in the distant past at the various Smokejumper Bases. In this “Don’t Offend Anybody Age” other more sensitive and mitigating measures have been tried with mixed success. Over-recruiting seems to be the answer.

Yet lo and behold, in a particularly egregious situation the very invoker of the Old West Rancher term for under performance was a next-to-the-last-day 2015 no-show! Although a close friend and colleague for 45 years, a mid-week Kangaroo Court was held in the name of “Smokejumper Justice.” Albeit conviction was never in doubt, a

semi-proper “in absentia” Kangaroo Court proceeding was convened. One volunteer had a law course in college, another with consistent concern for the downtrodden, gave a defense lecturing on “Prescriptive Law”. And there was no shortage of overly enthusiastic prosecutors! In the end, the convicted must “wear” his own pejorative term until Thanksgiving 2015 - 2400 hours (reduced from New Year’s Eve 2015 - 2400 hours) and, show up in 2016. To his credit, the thoroughly contrite convicted (not to be named) cheerfully accepted his fate, bravely looking forward to joining the 2016 NSA CA Trail & Restoration Project and the inevitable harassment.

Indeed the Caldwell Lakes Trail Project was an “It doesn’t get any better than this” good deal. The NSA CA Trails & Restoration contingent hopefully looks forward to a return to the excellent Parks Eddy Watershed Restoration Project, Tamarack Flat, and working with our new friends of the Mt. Shasta-McCloud Management Unit, Shasta-Trinity NF. For 2016 there would be plenty of good work to be done, good food and libation, good times, and hopefully no Kangaroo Court! New NSA volunteer recruits are always welcome. Come join us for the 2016 NSA CA Trails Project in another “Another California!”



L to R: John Helmer, Ben, Scott Warner, and Andy Anderson admiring their work.



## Dixie Forest Project

Wild Bill Yensen (MYL 53)

We had a short crew this year because of the MSO Reunion. Two of the regular crew could not come to both due to the distance they had to travel. Dave Hemry (MYC 64), who lives in Alaska, and Mike McCracken (CJ 60), who lives in New York both had to pick one to attend so they went to the reunion. Two other regular members could not come because they had to care for their wives, Charley Brown (IDC 56) and Jimmie Dollard (CJ 52).

We met at the bunk house in Pine Valley. First to arrive was Stan Linnertz (MSO 61) and his brother Dave (Assoc.) who came along to help Stan drive. He did the same last year and was a big help working with the rest of the crew. They came from Colorado with the food that was furnished by the fine folks of Petro Truck Stops that bought out Johnson's Corner Truck Stop. We appreciate the food and help greatly. Next to show up was Tom Wilks (GAC 87) who lives in Hawaii but has a son who lives in Cedar City. He comes to the project and spends time with his son in one trip from the Islands. Then Doug Wamsley (MSO 65) came in from Denver and I came up from St George. The last to show was Digger Daniels (MSO 61) who came down from Montana.

The work for us to do was to scrape and paint the Heritage Center building and put in

cement bases for new barbeques in the camp ground. The weather was a big factor as it rained the first two days and the materials for the cement work had not arrived. We struggled to scrape and paint in the rain.

The Forest Service had a good cement mixer with an engine that would not run. Digger and Tom looked it over, cleaned it up, gave it a new rope, a bit of sanding, fixed the gas line, and it started on the 8th pull! That made the cement work (new bases for the bar-b-ques) much easier and we got it done in good shape.

The forest service had a barbeque for us and the Ranger came up to see us and our work. We had to have the barbeque in the local fire house because of rain. This was the seventh project on the Dixie Forest.

We all had a good time as the bunk house is very comfortable and we had beds to sleep in, indoor plumbing, showers, refrigerators and all those comforts we appreciate. As usual the food was great and Stan did a good job preparing it. We all enjoyed a few cool ones and the comradery that all smokejumper feel for each other. Our average age was a little over 70 this year. This just shows that experience and skills are the important things. We all had a good time and went home on Saturday.



Seated L to R: David Linnertz, Stan Linnertz, Doug (Digger) Daniels  
Standing L to R: Doug Wamsley, Tom Wilks, Wild Bill Yensen

## Minnesota Wilderness Base Canoe

Richard Trinity (MSO 66)

Marv Lindseth (Assoc.)

Jim Cherry (MSO 57)

There we were... a crew of 23 jumpers and associates signed up and eager to head off for our projects... but the USFS wasn't able to come up with a suitable project for these eager beavers. Not to worry. We had our meals, lodging and meaningful work lined up with Wilderness Canoe Base for yet another year. While some drove directly to the camp located at the end of the Gunflint Trail that begins in Grand Marais, MN others gathered the day before in Eagan, MN after flying and driving in from far distant points. An evening of fellowship, a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast prepared us for the long drive north and a week of work and fun together in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Our work was varied and easily adapted to the physical ability and skill level of all our crew members. Included were tasks such as replacing footings on an elevated deck/stairway, replacing deck boards at one of the cabins, construction of canoe racks for 2-28' canoes and a 34' canoe, construction of a movable map table, construction of steps that climb a hillside, a lot of fire-wise work around buildings to increase their resistance to wildfire (the camp had lost 40 of their 60 buildings in a wildfire in 2007 after the fire jumped a half-mile of open water). The kitchen and some winterizing of the main lodge also enjoyed the benefit of our skills. The lodge and the camp's sauna will long be kept warm with the firewood that was cut, split and stacked.

As has been the case each year, the ladies in our group disappeared for a day of shopping and dining in Grand Marais. We chose to structure our week with day one as our arrival, days two and three as quality work days, day four (Sunday) as a free day for resting, recreation and touring the area. Days five and six we are back at our work with day seven as our departure. It's a schedule that really works for us... and we got everything done. Needless to say, we were a group of happy campers and the camp was exceedingly please with all we accomplished.

Camp project participants (*What they did and what they liked about the project*)

**Ron Thoreson (CJ 60)** Firewood Sherpa, deck footings, fire-wise brushing—"Meeting other people."

**Ken Root (RDD 57)** Firewood Sherpa, deck footings, woodworking—"Reminiscing about the three week honeymoon at the camp many years ago. Thank you NSA for the WCB work."

**Ginny Mangum (Assoc)** Cleaning, winterizing, went shopping in Grand Marais—"Being outdoors in a beautiful setting. Interacting with amazing participants."

**Terry Egan (CJ 65)** Fire-wise brushing—"Professionalism and working as a team without a specific leader. Shopping in Grand Marais."

**Mitch Long (Assoc)** Canoe racks, deck footings/bridge, splitting firewood—"Smokejumper stories and group interaction."

**Dave Shultz (MSO 61){no "c"}:** Cove steps, canoe racks, fire-wise brushing—"Camaraderie and association with other people (Ron's stories)."

**Jane Collins (Assoc)** Fire-wise brushing, shopping in Grand Marais—"Being outside in the woods, physical activity, meeting other people. Shopping in Grand Marais."

**KG Sheley (Assoc)** Trail work, fire-wise brushing, cleaning, — "Working together and getting along with other good workers, hard physical work, shopping in Grand Marais."

**Stan 'Clancy' Collins (MYC 67)** Splitting firewood—"Conversation with new jumpers and meeting other interesting characters."

**Dave Readinger (Assoc)** #1 Swamper extraordinaire cutting firewood, fire-wise brushing—"Hearing the 'thud' of a big falling tree hit the ground, seeing Ken Root wear a Duluth Pack."

**Barbara Root (Assoc)** Fire-wise brushing, food kitchen—"Getting to know new people doing worthwhile projects. Visiting old haunts (honeymoon), shopping in Grand Marais."

**Lee Dybvig (Assoc)** Cabin deck repair, deck foundation—"Camaraderie, evening conversation BS, new friends."



**Don Havel (FBX 66)** Fire-wise brushing, hazard tree—"Running the chain saw and good food."

**Dan Tinnel (Assoc)** Scouting/fire assessment, fire-wise brushing—"Conversation with other firefighters, listening to stories."

**Susy Tinnel (Assoc)** Fire-wise brushing, kitchen—"It's great—all of it, nice setting, pleasant companionship, shopping in Grand Marais."

**Jim Durdan (Assoc)** Deck foundation, map table, canoe racks—"Being out in the woods, meeting nice people."

**Chuck Sheley (CJ 59)** Fire-wise brushing—"Socialization, a soft bed."

**Marvin Lindseth (Assoc)** Deck foundation, map table, canoe racks—"Good conversations with new friends."

**Judy Cherry (Assoc)** Fire-wise brushing, firewood, kitchen cooking, shopping in Grand Marais—"Camaraderie, laid-back peacefulness, hard work. Shopping in Grand Marais."

**Richard Trinity (MSO 66)** Cutting firewood, fire-wise brushing, window washing—"Conversations with friends, providing desired service."

**Jim Elliott (MSO 69)** Deck foundation, Cove steps, schlep lumber, repair compost pit (bear damage)—"Happy hour and meal talk were the best!"

**Paul Hill (Assoc)** Fire-wise assessment/planning—"Hanging around with the guys."

**Jim Cherry (MSO 57)** Camp-wide building fire-wise assessment, general assistance—"People enjoying each other in work and conversations."



L-R: Dave Shultz, Marvin Lindseth, Jim Durdan working on canoe racks.



Most of the crew working on the trail.

Front (L-R) Lee Dybvig, Jim Elliott, Marv Lindseth, Judy Cherry, Barbara Root, Ken Root, KG Sheley, Jessica Reese. Middle (L-R) Susy Tinnel, Dan Tinnel, Jim Cherry, David Readinger, Ron Thoreson, Jane Collins, Mitch Long, Kristen Middlesworth. Back (L-R) Richard Trinity, David Shultz, Stan Collins, Don Havel, Terry Egan, Ginny Mangum, Jim Durdan, Bill Middlesworth, Andrew Shay



## Bowery Guard Station

Neil Rylander (MSO 61)

Once upon a time this trail crew rookie “volunteered” to author this article. So here goes..... Lead by the “ole trail boss” Tom Kovalicky (MSO 61), our crew of 10 assembled at Bowery GS, at the end of the road on the East Fork of the Salmon River, for a fun, but sweat producing week of installing barbed wire fencing in 90+ degree heat. The lucky participants were Chuck Fricke (MSO 61), Robin Embry (GAC 85), Doug “Digger” Daniels (MSO 61), Steve Carlson (IDC 62), “Wild” Bill Yensen (MYC 53), Gary Cardoza (MSO 74), Shelley Dumas (Assoc. & Cook), Gary Stitzinger (MSO 65), and me. I know all you reading this are already filled with envy, but, as they say, “somebody had to do it”. Cool nights, but not reaching the risky bet of 32 degrees.

Shelley’s truck broke down a couple of miles before camp, but Robin rescued her and all the food, which was in her truck.

Ed Cannady of the USFS appeared just in time for supper at the end of first day with the added materials and tools needed for the job, although Digger brought his own handy supply. Fortunately for us we had one chain-saw approved ex jumper on board in Robin, (Yea Robin!) or else we might still be there. I, for one, was introduced to a whole new occupation, that of helping dig post holes and stringing about a mile of barbed wire fence.

Evenings were the “Once upon a Time” stories which others had heard repeated more a just a few times, it seems! :- ) Beer and other more serious libations were no strangers to the bunch seeking shelter from the sun under a cargo chute canopy erected with good teamwork, the first day. I sat in wide eyed wonder at stories by Wild Bill and Digger. I really want to hear again from Cowboy Poet, Steve, recite the poem “Snowville” at least twice next year for sure! All that, and one entire week out of cell phone range from the rest of the world. It doesn't get any better than that!

Chuck’s Thoughts: I have been involved since the beginning in 1999 when there were

two crews of 9 that went out. My most cherished memories are the many wonderful new acquaintances from throughout the jumper community and many locations I visited that I would never journeyed to without the nudging of the Trails Crews. Those that have not participated are missing a great opportunity to connect with their past and missing meeting wonderful comrades.

Tom’s Memory of Events (The Bet): (Slightly edited for flow): The very first night of the Project there was a moment of panic when Digger Daniels proclaimed, after consuming some 5 cans of Loud Mouth, that we would experience extreme freezing conditions every night that we camped at the Bowery GS! Well, that couldn't go unanswered for sure! So Tom announced that we could not experience even one night of freeze! Well, Digger, consumed by the thought of winning big bucks, suggested a VERY large sum and the offer was quickly accepted and matched! Then Robin wanted in and doubled down the HUGE bet, now up to about one dollar each! Digger, who's mind may have been altered by the high test brew upped the cost of playing poker with these two. The parties then all agreed.

Due to the size of the bet, the funds were turned over to Shelley for safe keeping. (Her truck was still broke down and she couldn't get away, so the money was safe. Well, the weather was delightful and nary a crystal of ICE appeared for the next 5 nights. Finally, Shelley was summoned to bring the cash to a meeting ordered by the Directors of the Royal Order of the Purple Circle to be held by the campfire after midnight. The winnings were meted out and it was announced that Robin and Tom were going to invest in a new shoe factory in Guatemala! Digger, very generously pulled out 20 cans of Hand Brewed LOUD MOUTH and the Party commenced into the night. Digger was told he'd get the first pair of shoes. And.....NO S%&\*, THIS REALLY HAPPENED!





L-R: Gary Stitzinger, "Digger" Daniels, and Tom Kovalicky finish a new post.



A new "H" brace ready to go.



L-R: Chuck Fricke, Ed Cannady, and Gary Cardoza get rocks out of their hole.



Hanging out under a canopy, again.  
L-R: Robin Embry, Steve Carlson, Digger Daniels, Tom Kovalicky, Wild Bill Yensen, Gary Cardoza, Gary Stitzinger, Chuck Fricke, and Shelley Dumas.



Back L-R: "Wild Bill" Yensen, Robin Embry, Steve Carlson  
Front L-R: Gary Stitzinger, Neil Rylander, Chuck Fricke, Tom Kovalicky, Gary Cardoza, Doug "Digger" Daniels



Don't tell anyone that there really is a hot tub!  
They will all want to come!

## Bowery Guard Station Snow Let-Down Fence

Ron Stoleson (MSO 56)

On Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup> we gathered together for another week of work in Idaho on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) at the Bowery Guard Station, almost 30 miles up the East Fork of the Salmon River. We had worked at the Guard Station two other years, putting in a log fence around the station, putting up signs at trail heads and doing trail maintenance work up the canyon. It is one of our favorite spots because of the scenery and the availability of a natural hot springs with tub close to camp.

Our job this year was to complete some fence rebuilding, a project that had been started the previous week by Tom Kovalicky's crew. The fence enclosed an administrative horse pasture used by the Forest Service during the summer months. It was constructed so that it could be laid on the ground during the winter months (snow let-down) so there could be free movement of wildlife in the area. During the previous winter, a moose calf had died after becoming tangled in the fence. We also built a fence within the horse pasture that would protect a sensitive plant (*Primula inca*) from the grazing horses.

Digger Daniels (MSO 61) from Belgrade, Montana was already at camp having worked on Kovalicky's crew. Stan Linnertz (MSO 61) and Chuck Orona (Assoc.) were the first newcomers to arrive, after spending two days on the road traveling from Colorado. They brought the cooking gear and the food, most of which was again donated by the Johnson's Corner Truck Stop. Although under new ownership, the truck stop management decided to continue with their support to our trail projects in Utah, Idaho and Colorado. Their support is very much appreciated and the Bill of Fare was as good as in years past. Larry Nelsen (MSO 56) of Missoula, Billy Ward (MSO 63) from Garden Valley, Idaho, Doug Howard (MSO 64) from Twin Falls, Idaho and Gary Hendrix (Assoc.) from Helena, Montana filled out the crew.

Later in the early evening of Sunday, we were all very pleased and honored that Deb Peters showed up at camp. She had been our Forest Service liaison (baby sitter)

for many years before being promoted to a new office position. She took annual leave to work with us, this time as one of the crew. Her Forest Service replacement was Ed Cannady, a hard working member of the SNRA staff who lives in Ketchum.

While everyone was setting up camp, we had an incident occur that comes under the heading of "what could possibly go wrong". Bill Ward had his tent all assembled on the banks of the East Fork River and was ready to stake it down when a down-canyon wind came up and blew the tent into the swift-flowing river. Several crew members took chase and after a lot of splashing and running through the brush, they caught up with the now soaked tent about a hundred yards down-stream and brought it back where it was hung out to dry. In the meantime, Bill pitched another larger tent he had brought along just in case. The rest of the evening was uneventful.

After breakfast on Monday, we all did the requisite paper work (volunteer agreements and Job Hazard Analysis) before getting started on the project. A Ute ATV was brought in to distribute fence posts, wire and wood stays along the proposed route for the fence. While that was being done, several of the crew began the tedious task of constructing hundreds of wire loops that would be used to easily attach and detach the fence from the posts. Work was also begun on digging holes and setting poles for corner braces.

The old fence had to be removed and the metal stays detached with some of the wire coiled and moved to the junk pile. Staples were pulled and carefully collected for disposal. Smooth wire was used for the bottom strand of the three-wire fence. New metal fence posts were driven and the fence rapidly took shape. By Thursday afternoon, the major work had been completed and we could relax that evening with dinner guests from the SNRA.

Joining us for a "Surf and Turf" meal were Deputy Area Ranger Barbara Garcia and Range Technician Beth Bratlie. Barbara has



visited us the last three years. She and Beth's presence this year was especially appreciated because of the long distance they had to drive. Also visiting were Jay Dorr and his wife Patti. Jay packed us into our first project on the Sawtooth in 2001 and has favored us with a visit every year since. Jay and Patti stayed overnight and took a canyon hike the next morning before returning home.

Friday was spent finishing off the inner fence line and policing up the area of any

scrap wire, staples and stays. Mission accomplished! The weather throughout the project had been great with only a few scattered showers. As usual, evenings at the 6,200 foot elevation in the East Fork were cool. Friday evening brought quite a few showers but Saturday morning turned nice and everyone had another great work week on the Sawtooth to reflect on while driving home.

We look forward to working with Ed on the Sawtooth SNRA again next year.

At Right, R-L: Larry Nelsen, Digger Daniels, and Deb Peters setting a corner post.

Below, Back Row L-R: Doug Howard, Stan Linnertz, Ron Stoleson, Chuck Orona, Deb Peters, Doug Daniels  
Front Row L-R: Bill Ward, Larry Nelsen, Gary Hendrix, Ed Cannady.



## Prairie & Goat Cr. Trails

Bruce Ford (MSO 75)

On the bright, sunny morning of June 21, a crew ramrodded by Dick Hulla (MSO 75) assembled at the Benchmark trailhead west of August, MT. It included trail workers (all MSO): Manny Haiges (58), Rod McIver (64), Jim Snapp (65), Joe Chandler (71), John ("Doc") Lammers (71), Larry Wright (71), Bill Thomas (75), Mike Pepion (82), and me, Bruce Ford. A pile of grub was purchased and accompanied by a pair of most excellent cooks, Kathy Elzig and Nancy McIver, both Associate members. Richard Hildner (MSO 67) and his wife Suzanne came in the next day. Suzanne is an M.D., so this crew, at least, didn't have to rely on the usual jumper witch doctors to bind up its wounds and dispense dubious diagnoses. The Hildners also proved to be a very go-get-'em 2-person saw team.

Hulla and Larry Brandvold, a retired local FS employee, brought stock to pack in all the solid and liquid paraphernalia that accompanies these enterprises.

Our task was to clear the Prairie Creek and Goat Creek trails, which form a 12-mile loop off the South Fork of the Sun River in the Bob Marshall Wilderness on the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

The Ahorn fire roared through the area in 2007, creating a misery whip aficionado's dream: lots of sawing and very little of that peasant work, grubbing in the dirt resurrecting water bars or pruning pesky brush.

A 7-mile hike got the crew to Pretty Prairie cabin, which served as our headquarters for the week and was well guarded by our Chief of Camp Security, Cruiser (Manny's golden lab). We split into Prairie and Goat Creek crews to work the loop from each end, and the latter bunch faced a daily, 4-mile hike each way along the river just to get to the mouth of Goat Creek. And yes, they did some minimal whining about that.

This was just before the big heat wave, but working in a mostly shadeless old burn brought back some memories of toiling on sunbaked slopes of, say, the Salmon River. But once we got the saw rhythm going, we started munching through a lot of downfall. This being in the Sun River Game Preserve, we scared up numerous elk and found a

large wolf paw print in the mud.

Somewhere about midweek, the main hand-pumped water filter got stiff, so we disassembled it and discovered that the ceramic filter was in small to medium-sized fragments. This occasioned some discussion about the elk wallows upstream, the giardia incubation period, the timing of the big smokejumper reunion, and the fact that taking the Flagel cure precludes one from drinking alcohol during treatment.

By Wednesday evening, with only one workday left, the Prairie Creek contingent was feeling pretty glum about the prospects for finishing the project, as we had gotten barely over two and a half miles in three days. It didn't sound like the Goat Creekers were doing much better, given their long commute. Then Hulla, Chandler, and Thomas marched into camp from the wrong direction, having walked the entire circuit. They brought the happy news that most of the remaining trail was in high, largely unburnt country, and that we could easily finish the following day!

The last day was just finish-up and re-doing some sections in which we had relaxed standards in the interest of covering more ground. It also entailed a hike into cooler, scenic high country with a magnificent view of the peaks along the Rocky Mountain Front. Our final, Thursday dinner was a gut-busting feed of steaks, grass-fed beef compliments of Larry Wright. As usual on these deals, probably no one lost any weight, but hopefully converted a little adipose tissue to muscle.



The cooks, Nancy and Kathy, learn to pull the cross-cut, as Bill and John encourage them.





Rod McIver doing it the old fashioned way, with a pulaski.



L-R: Joe Chandler, Mike Pepion, and Richard Hildner enjoy the view.



L—R: Richard Hildner, Joe Chandler, John Lammers, Suzanne Hildner, Bruce Ford, Bill Thomas, Dick Hulla, Mike Pepion, Larry Wright, Rod McIver, Jim Snapp, Kathy Elzig, Nancy McIver



Trail Creek Cabin, aka  
Taken to the Woodshed  
Harold Hoem (MSO 57)

The Crew:

Boss Man.....Dan Hensley (MSO 57)  
Sidekicks.....Harold Hoem, Jim Hagemeyer  
(MSO 57), Gary Lawley (MSO 57)  
Chef extraordinaire.....Jimmy Deeds  
(MSO 64)  
FS support.....Julia Barton, Jim Costello  
and Bill Springstad  
Project Purpose: To build a woodshed for the  
Trail Creek Cabin, a 1920's Forest Service  
historic log building.

Immediately after the smokejumpers' 75<sup>th</sup> reunion, this wild bunch headed off for the mountains south of Bozeman up Trail Creek.

A little creative re-design toned down the original sky-scraper, capable of withstanding Armageddon, to a more human-scale shed, good enough for a Montana winter. The process involved a mix of Frank Lloyd Wright's organic architecture and a lot of just plain Rube Goldberg tacking together. We know we ended up with the organic bit, judging from the B.S. that flowed around the work site and campfires. Jimmy Deeds famous cast-iron cooking stoked our energy to the max.

In between the constant chatter about who did what when, and what are they doing now – those old '57 Missoula jumpers -- nails got pounded and the shed rose.

The Forest Service support was fantastic. Julia kept us supplied with tools and materials. Jim and Bill were great carpenters part time.

For us, the work involved a steep learning curve (i.e. how does this saw work, anyway? Is it measure once and cut twice or visa versa?). After three days, we more or less had it done – even some of the tarpaper went up, and just in time. With a couple of days to go, it started to sprinkle. If any of you can recall what the rainy season in Vietnam was like, that's what we were getting a taste of. Overnight an inch of rain fell. Returning from his home in town, Jim Costello had to park his truck at the bottom of a steep hill, walk a half mile up to our site and calmly suggest

that we get the hell out of there. Explanation: We were in that part of Montana where dry ground quickly turns to gooey mud in the rain -- deep gumbo.

The orderly fashion in which we built the shed turned into "Get-Jimmy's-stuff-packed -- just throw it in the truck and let's get out of here."

Most concerned was Gary, who had earlier managed to scrape up the steep hill in his Volkswagen Jetta, grading out obstructing rocks with his oil pan. So the evacuation began, Gary thinking it might be wise for him to be first down the steep and exposed route, belayed from behind by a towrope attached to the front of Harold's Silverado. How did Harold get talked into that?! Dan was more than a little worried that this low-slung sedan in the lead would sink in up to the doors and none of us would get out until the next dry spell, or a helicopter or dynamite lifted the Jetta out of there.

Harold thought, "If Gary goes over the edge, guess who's tied to him?!" They slipped down, trying to get traction with positive thoughts, until they reached the bottom. It should have been better then, right? Wrong. The road led across a soggy bog and a narrow passage over a swollen stream that was ten feet below them.

What had begun as an architectural experiment ended up as a road test for Harold's Silverado, Jimmy's Ford pickup, Hagemeyer's Toyota Tundra truck, Gary's Jetta and Dan's Subaru Outback. The Jetta was up first. All hands shoveled mud and laid down a pad of sage brush, willows and cardboard, and somehow they pushed him across the chasm. Next came the Silverado. No problem. As each survivor got across, he witnessed the gauntlet run by succeeding vehicles. Indelible in the brain is the fierce look of determination on Hagemeyer's face as he gunned it, truck tires spinning, mud flinging. Everyone thought he was going over the edge until he pulled out of it. Hensley in his Subaru followed, then Jimmie and his Ford pickup, loaded with pots, pans, and grub. It was like watching the escape scene in "For Whom the

Bell Tolls” where Ingrid Bergman makes it, and Gary Cooper gets it.

The crew thought they had it made by then, but the Jetta leaked oil like a ruptured pipeline – pretty fitting since Gary’s in that business. It took him two days and 500 bucks to get the car fixed in Bozeman. Dan’s Subaru shimmied like belly dancer. A local mechanic removed a garbage can worth of gumbo packed in the undercarriage. After this road test, that poor old road looked like it had been hit by a B-52 strike.

“Tired of the everyday life? Want to get away from it all?” Our jumper crew, without half trying, proved they still had a thirst for danger and an appetite for...Suspense.

We had a great time, including that unforgettable escape. As Fred Brauer (MSO 41) used to say, “It was a good deal.”



Dan Hensley, Jim Hagemeyer, and Harold Hoem contemplating next steps.



Project getting started.



Making progress, as Jim walks by.



How it looked when the rain set in.



Jimmie Deeds doing the Dutch oven thing.



R-L: Dan Hensley, Harold Hoem, Jim Hagemeyer, Jimmy Deeds, and Gary Lawley.



## Rocky Mountain National Park Doug Wamsley (MSO 65)

Sunday, June 14, 2015 was move-in day at the Moraine Park campground and the beginning of our third project in “the Rocky.” This year’s crew consisted of: Warren Pierce (CJ 64), Bob Doran (Associate), Ron Siple (MYC 53), Jim Klever (Associate) and Ron’s grandson, Bill Ruskin (CJ 58), Steve Vittum (MSO 66), Rich Hilderbrand (MSO 66), Stan Linnertz (MSO 61), Joe Lord (MSO 56), Doug Wamsley (MSO 65), and Carlos “Chuck” Orona (Associate) and Chef d’Cuisine who organized and prepared our great food.

The first order of business was the erection of the dining tent, provided by Ron Siple. The tent was a life saver since June weather in the Rocky changes drastically about every 15 minutes. Most of the assembly process was directed by Doc Siple who was the only one who seemed to know what to do. We failed to note the exact dimensions of the structure, but it would seat approximately 110.

Sunday evening, we enjoyed happy hour and Chuck’s “meet and greet” dinner which has become a Colorado tradition. A good opportunity to catch up on what everyone had done over the winter. We were also glad to welcome back our original Colorado squad leader, Rich Hilderbrand. Rich had missed a couple of year’s projects when work reared its’ ugly head.

Monday morning, we were joined by our Park Service liaison (i.e., the Boss) Zephyr McConnell. Zephyr was with us for the third straight year and is everyone’s favorite crew leader. The Park’s trail organization is on a 4-10 work week so our project was Monday through Thursday.

Our first task was to work on the restoration of an historic cabin at Lake Irene on Trail Ridge Road. The 1920s’ cabin is quite a large structure which had served a number of purposes in its’ nearly 100 year life, most notably it was the mess hall for a CCC crew that worked on the building of Trail Ridge Road in the 1930s.

Our part of the restoration was replacing the ends of the log rafters which extended approximately 36 inches beyond the roof line. Weather at 10,000 feet had rotted the rafter

ends, which required sawing off of the rotted portions of each of the 23 rafters and drilling a hole about 12 inches into the remaining good wood. Each rafter was then matched with a new end piece which had a corresponding hole drilled in it. Fiberglass rebar pieces were cut to size and served as a dowel to join the new ends to the rafter. The joint was secured with screws and heavy duty adhesive. With a lot of shaping and a little paint the new ends looked as if they had always been there. Why, you may ask were there an uneven number of rafters? Joe Lord, our Chief Engineer, says there is an explanation that would take three days to explain.

The restoration work was interesting and certainly worth doing, the only drawback was that the cabin was a 30 mile commute from our campground which required going over the Continental Divide. Trail Ridge Road is one of the most scenic high altitude roads



Stan and Chuck fixin’ the vitals for the crew.



anywhere, but after three days of over and back in heavy traffic we were ready for a break.

Our last day was spent rebuilding a washed out portion of a trail. Raising the trail with log structures filled with gravel (Turnpikes to us National Forest people) and providing for drainage was more like our usual trail project work. It was fun and a good workout moving all of the material in wheelbarrows some 200 plus yards from the trailhead.

Once again our excellent meals were provided by Johnson's Corner. The "Corner" also donated all of the food for the Dixie National Forest project in Utah in May and for a July project in the Sawtooth Recreation Area in Idaho. This along with an annual cash donation has made the company a most valuable

resource in the support of NSA trails projects. Should you be traveling on I-25 near Loveland, Colorado make it a point to stop in to the Corner, have a good meal, and say thanks for the support.

Overall, the project was a success, worthwhile and a good time. There was one unhappy note. After the project Zephyr McConnell sent us an email letting us know she was resigning to pursue other career opportunities. For the past three years she was a good natured and patient crew leader. She made it fun and she will be missed by all. We broke camp on Friday morning and headed home, most of us to get ready for the Missoula reunion in July. It was a good year!



L—R: Doc Siple, Doug Wamsley, Joe Lord, Bryce Klinkowski, Jim Klever, Jenna Mulligan



L—R: Bill Ruskin, Doug Wamsley, Rich Hilderbrand, Warren Pierce, Ron Siple, Joe Lord



Rear L—R: Stan Linnertz, Chuck Orona, Doc Siple, Ron Siple, Luke Lemke, Jim Klever, Doug Wamsley, Bill Ruskin, Steve Vittum, Rich Hilderbrand  
Front L—R:: Zephyr McConnell, Warren Pierce, Joe Lord, Bob Doran

## Woodworth Trail

Dave Dayton (MSO 69)

This was a project done for the Missoula Parks and Recreation and the University of Montana trail program on April 9, 2015. The trail head is located at base of Mt. Sentinel off of Woodworth Ave. We were to build switch backs, construct new trail, water bars, tread work, and close off old steep trail sections. We started at 8 AM and finished at 10:30 AM. I missed the start of the job due to the fact that I was rear ended at a stop light on the way to the job site. The person that made contact with my car was a fellow teacher that I had taught with at Hellgate High School. We had an 8 to 5 time frame, but as jumpers will do, we finished the job well before the afternoon hour. It always is a good day when you can get together with a group of jumpers. For me it

was a chance to meet a few jumpers that I did not know.

This was a new venture for the NSA trails program with a new partner. We will be looking forward to doing a project with them in 2016.

Members of the crew were Kim Maynard (MSO 82), Mike Owen (MSO 69), David Dayton (MSO-69), Andy Hayes (MSO 79), Dave Custer (MSO 71), Joe Chandler (MSO 71), Todd Onken (MSO 82), Doug Houston (RAC 73), Jeff Kinderman (MSO75), Bill Thomas (MSO 75), Bruce Ford (MSO 75), Greg Lee (FBX 73) and Ethan Richards who is a random non jumper who just showed up.

Sad to say, no pictures were taken to document the effort

## Editor's Note

Steve Carlson (IDC 62)

Another year of fun, frivolity, hard work, and tall tales has come to an end for the National Smokejumper (NSA) Trails Restoration and Maintenance Project Specialists (TRAMPS) volunteers. It's then left to the crew leaders to either assign the task of writing up their story, or doing it themselves. The Trails Admin folks do some information gathering and report writing in order to pacify our benefactors. You know, the US Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and National Park Service (NPS), and others who are the folks who accommodate our presence in order to improve and sometimes create facilities on their property. Then someone else gets to gather (hopefully) all the reports from the above mentioned folks, and put them together in a presentable manner, which is the document you are now looking at. That, of course, would be me.

I made every attempt to leave the report authors touch in the stories. I did make a few spelling, punctuation, and grammar corrections, if for no other reason than to prove to my high school English teacher's ghost that some of it did, in fact, stick. There were a some places where I added a few words for clarity and continuity for those non-jumpers who may happen to stumble upon this docu-

ment. I reformatted some stories in order to fit them to the pages, and to have a consistent look and feel throughout. I used as many of the submitted pictures as possible, if they showed the project, some folks doing it, and of course, a group shot.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank those folks (husbands, wives, significant others, etc.) that we left at home while we went off for a week (closer to two, counting travel for several of us) to seek new adventures with a bunch of old cronies. We certainly do appreciate them letting us participate in these projects.

There were a few projects that wives participated in, and we thank them for that. Hopefully, as they shared the work, ate the food, and sat around the evening sessions, they could see what the attraction to this stuff is for us.

Many of us have several years of trail crew under our belts, but there are always a few first timers who for whatever reason became attracted to this effort. We welcome you and thank you, and hope you found it a worthwhile experience and will continue next year.

As a point of interest, this is the first time I didn't get a report or pictures via snail mail.

And a big "Thank You" do my daughter in law, Crystal, who proofread this entire document and caught several "oopsies".