



## **2024 Wilderness Ranger Fellowship**

### **Position Description**

**SBFC Mission:** *The Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation assists the Forest Service in providing stewardship for the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses and surrounding wildlands through on the ground work, public education, and partnerships.*

**Start Date:** May 13, 2024

**End Date:** August 16, 2024

**Title:** SBFC Wilderness Ranger Fellow

**Term of Service:** 14 weeks

**Living Stipend:** \$5950. Prorated at \$425 per week

**Benefits:**

- As volunteers, Wilderness Ranger Fellows will receive a \$425 weekly living stipend, paid at the end of each month during their term of service.
- Housing will be provided in the form of a shared group camp site approximately 10 miles outside of Missoula during local trainings and days off. Amenities at the site include potable water, restrooms with heated showers, laundry facilities (pay-to-use), a fitness center, heated swimming pool, and wi-fi. Days in the backcountry “on hitch”, are of course spent backpacking and living in your tent!
- Federal mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.655/mile for personal vehicle use for work.
- A modest food budget will be provided for work projects for Wilderness Ranger Fellows. When meals are not provided, Fellows will receive \$80 per hitch to help cover food costs.
- Wilderness First Aid/CPR training and certification.
- 2 SBFC uniform shirts, work tools, and personal protective equipment.
- USFS Crosscut Certification
- Three weeks of trails & Wilderness training and 11 weeks of in-the-Wilderness, hands-on experiential learning, working and living in the Selway-Bitterroot and/or Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness areas and surrounding wildlands.

**Locations:** SBFC partners with all four National Forests that manage the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Areas: the Nez Perce-Clearwater, Bitterroot, Salmon-Challis, and Payette National Forests. Each WRF will have the opportunity to experience and work on several, if not all four, of the National Forests that we partner with. The Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Areas are collectively over 3.6 **million** acres, with the lowest elevations only 1,500 ft above sea level and high elevations reaching above 10,000 ft. Temperatures can range from 20 degrees F in the spring and fall at higher elevations, to over 100 degrees F at the lower elevations in July and August. Depending on location and time of year, entire projects can go by without precipitation, and others can have heavy rain multiple days in a row. Training will be located in the field, at provided camp sites, or in Missoula. When in Missoula, whether for training or off time, a shared group campsite is provided by SBFC. The final week of the program will be spent visiting the local communities surrounding the SBFC Wilderness complex, sharing your experiences from the season, and staying in the front country camping.

## **Position Overview:**

The SBFC Wilderness Ranger Fellowship (WRF) program provides an immersive experience in Wilderness Trails conservation and management through hands-on stewardship. Your fellowship will provide you with the opportunity to learn:

- 1) wilderness trails maintenance skills, wilderness campsite inventory skills, and real-world in-the-field decision making that public land managers require of their wilderness stewards;
- 2) the ability to safely and proficiently live, travel, and work in a backcountry setting for 8 or more days at a time;
- 3) from SBFC staff wilderness trail professionals, as well as USFS wilderness trail technicians;
- 4) alongside other WRF's as well as volunteers from the public, and;
- 5) to be an on the ground advocate for Wilderness access, education and protection through your words and more importantly, your actions.

In order to hit the ground briskly hiking, each WRF will be required to complete several hours (no more than 15) of online training provided by SBFC before their start date. These courses will cover the history and pertinence of the Wilderness Act, traditional tool use as it pertains to trail maintenance within Wilderness, the seven Leave No Trace Principles, and gear selection. In addition, SBFC wants to emphasize the importance of physical fitness for a season of Wilderness trail maintenance, and will provide recommended stretches and training plans to help physically prepare for an arduous season of backpacking with heavy gear and long days of physical exertion.

Upon arrival on May 13th, WRF's will receive three weeks of training led by SBFC staff and professional Forest Service Wilderness & Trails managers. Training topics may include all of the following (with WFA and crosscut certification being mandatory):

- Wilderness First Aid/CPR certification
- USFS Crosscut Bucking certification
- Fundamentals of trail maintenance to various specifications
- Wilderness Act of 1964 history and significance

- Conducting Campsite Inventory and Solitude, Primitive and Unconfined Recreation (SPUR) Monitoring
- Leave No Trace principles and ethics
- Backcountry packing/nutrition/travel/navigation/communication
- Introduction to horsemanship and stock packing
- Leadership development, crew dynamics and interpersonal communication

For five hitches, from early June until mid-August, WRF's will typically operate on the hitch schedule of 80+ hours. This means you will work 8 consecutive days, living and working in the backcountry, followed by 6 days off. Hitches primarily consist of performing a variety of different trail maintenance needs, and at times, backcountry campsite inventories and SPUR monitoring. Crews will vary in size from 4-12+ people depending on the needs of the project. Crews will be led by an SBFC Wilderness Trails Crew Leader and/or a United States Forest Service Wilderness Trails Technician. Being predominantly in Wilderness, trail maintenance will be performed using traditional tools such as hand saws, loppers, ax's and crosscut saws. *The physical requirements of living and volunteering in such large Wilderness complexes are arduous.* Many days will require backpacking with tools (60+ lb packs at the start of some hitches) 10+ miles, and performing physically strenuous activities all day such as pulling saws, swinging axes at trees or pulaskis at dirt, and moving large boulders, trees and dirt from the trail.

WRF's typically participate in at least one SBFC volunteer project. This is a special opportunity to practice wilderness leadership skills by providing support to youth and adult volunteers from the surrounding communities and even other states. WRF's are expected to fully assist in volunteer guidance, food preparation and all safety protocols.

WRFs may have the opportunity to participate in a mini immersion where you'll spend two consecutive hitches immersed in the Wilderness with your days off spent in the field between hitches. This is a rare opportunity to spend up to 19 uninterrupted days in the Wilderness, away from all the trappings of modern civilization.

### **Minimum Required Experience, Education & Qualifications**

- Education beyond a high school diploma is not a requirement, but our Fellowship position was built to fit into as many college summer schedules as possible, and college students are encouraged to apply.
- Must be at least 18 years of age at the start of the season.
- Ability to commit and be present for the entire term of service of 5/13/24-8/16/24.
- Coursework/experience in conservation, land management, sciences and related is encouraged but other disciplines and backgrounds are welcome.
- Effective communication skills and ability to be open to new experiences.

- Willingness to live in a backcountry setting out of a tent without Wi-Fi and cell service for 8 or more days at a time. Opportunities for “mini immersions” could lead up to 19 consecutive days in a backcountry setting.

Physical requirements:

- Ability to hike 10+ miles a day for several days at a time, in difficult terrain with a 60+ pound backpack including hand tools.
- Ability to lift up to 35 pounds repeatedly and use hand tools.
- Willingness to work long, physically-demanding hours in all weather conditions.

While SBFC has some group items such as bear vaults and water filters, the vast majority of gear (tents, backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, work boots, stoves) is the responsibility of each individual to obtain before the start of the season. SBFC will provide consultation for WRF’s on items that have worked well for participants in the past.

**Please Note:** This position description describes the general nature and level of work you will be required to participate in as a Wilderness Ranger Fellow. It is not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required. All Wilderness Ranger Fellows may be required to perform duties outside of their normal responsibilities and duties as requested.

**For more information and to apply:**

Please visit the SBFC website: <https://www.selwaybitterroot.org/fellowship>

Contact SBFC Program Director, Josh Page [joshpage@selwaybitterroot.org](mailto:joshpage@selwaybitterroot.org)

**Equal Employment Opportunity Statement:**

Wilderness benefits everyone. The 1964 Wilderness Act was passed “...to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness” (section 2a). SBFC provides access and equal opportunity to diverse groups of staff, volunteers, and other participants, while continuing to identify and reduce barriers to being involved in our organization and programs. We encourage applicants of all backgrounds to apply.