



THE WILDEST PLACE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SELWAY BITTERROOT FRANK CHURCH FOUNDATION



FALL 2020

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JOHNSON**
2006 - 2018

The Wildest Place is the membership newsletter of the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation. With the support of members, local businesses, and generous grantors, the SBFC is committed to connecting citizens and communities to assist in the stewardship of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, and surrounding wildlands.

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The Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

SELWAYBITTERROOT.ORG

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FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Idahoans and Montanans love their Wilderness and wildlands. This summer saw the highest trails usage in years as COVID-19 redirected us to play safely in the wilds of Idaho and Montana. Shelves in outdoor stores were empty as outdoor enthusiasts bought up tents, bicycles, hiking boots, backpacks and kayaks. Next year will be the same.

This season SBFC was able to continue our commitment to wilderness stewardship by keeping many miles of well-loved trails open for us all.

We are also committed to expanding Wilderness education through the Wilderness Ranger Fellowship Program and the newly established Connie Saylor Johnson Wilderness Education Fund.

The Connie Saylor Johnson Wilderness Education Fund will provide ongoing support for wilderness education in the classroom or through on the ground experiences. Beginning in 2021, the Education Fund will provide incentive grants to incorporate Wilderness and natural ecosystems curriculum. We are pleased to announce that we have nearly reached our goal for this fund, and we are on track to provide our first grant in 2021. Contributions to SBFC can be directed to this fund.

Now, more than ever, we need your financial support to keep our Wilderness and wildland trails clear. Join us January 7-9 as we kick off the new year with our first virtual fundraising event, Mountainfilm on Tour. Grab a hot toddy, a couple of friends, and curl up on the couch for some adventure-filled and inspiring films. Watch for more details from us via email and Facebook. Every dollar raised from watching these films and purchasing raffle tickets will go towards wilderness stewardship in the 2021 season.

Thank you for your support, and I'll see you on the trail.

NANCY FELDMAN
Board Chair



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It would sure be an understatement to say that 2020 has been a year of change! Back in February we set a high bar for managing this change. Our top priority was to keep staff, volunteers, FS partners and our communities safe from COVID-19 infection.

This meant we had to change our tried and true national outreach recruitment and hiring practices and bring on only Missoula residents to fill professional wilderness staff and Wilderness Ranger Fellow positions. It meant we had to cancel nearly all 17 volunteer projects and replace them with one-day project models limited to Montana or Idaho residents only. We had to trim our normally robust wilderness skills training, and delay staff start dates for a month. We also had to reduce the usual number of our 14-week Wilderness Ranger Fellowship from 9 to 4 participants.

But embracing these changes allowed us to be successful. No one contracted COVID-19. Our staff and Fellows closed the season with good health, great attitudes and caring relationships. Our wilderness stewardship accomplishments include over 300 miles of trails maintained and over 5,000 volunteer hours. We provided an authentic wilderness experience to 4 Wilderness Fellows whose lives were changed by their weeks of immersion in the Frank and the Selway Wilderness areas.

These 2020 changes coupled with the great dedication of our FS partners helped us put together the resources we need to roll on into a successful 2021. I am looking forward to what the new year has in store!

A final note on change. SBFC Membership and Communications Coordinator Sue Webster retired in August after 6 dazzling years. At the start, Sue said she was hopeful she could make some meaningful change. Thanks to her vision and commitment to our wilderness mission, Sue helped SBFC grow into a dynamic organization. She set up a new database and best membership management practices. She saw us through a new logo and website, designed beautiful newsletters, and increased our community outreach and regional recognition. Sue grew our capacity to accomplish more wilderness stewardship. I'd call that meaningful change! My gratitude to her is as big as the Selway and Frank Wilderness areas!

SALLY FERGUSON
Executive Director



2020 SEASON ACCOMPLISHMENTS

5408 trees cut from trails

5072 hours logged by volunteers

527 drains cleared

307.55 miles of trail maintained

78 pounds of trash removed

73 campsites inventoried

40 feet of rockwork constructed

22 drains reconstructed

15 campsites naturalized

9 miles of trail corridor cleared and brushed

1.81 miles of tread repaired

“The Frank Church is a humbling 2.3 million acres of Wilderness where heat, lack of water, thunderstorms, fires, insects, and fuzzy maps can make life challenging. The beauty of this place takes a little longer to appreciate. I am continually amazed that at one time humans sought to ranch and mine in this land. With names like Hell’s Half-Acre and Devil’s Washbasin I guess you could conclude it was difficult.”

-Carly Stinson, Wilderness Steward



MANY THANKS TO OUR

2020 SUMMER SEASON VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are truly the heart and soul of this organization. Even amidst a pandemic, these amazing people dedicated their time to supporting SBFC--brushing trail, moving logs, developing blisters from the cross saw, supporting lookout cabins and guard stations, and enjoying some ice cream on their breaks! We couldn't do it without each and every one of these incredible volunteers. From our wild hearts to yours--thank you for a wonderful summer season!

Val Armichardy
Levi Armichardy
Tucker Armichardy
Bert Baumgaertner
Bob Beckley
Clem Binniger
Flora Binniger
Hannah Binniger
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Richard White
Jim Wiebush
Mindy Wiebush

"Each year there is always something different, and this year took that mantra to another level, but there are also recurring themes that even 2020 couldn't prevent. Community, resiliency, respect and wonder for the Wilderness areas we temporarily inhabit--these themes were as in place as ever and for that I am thankful."

-Josh Page, Lead Wilderness Steward

"It will never cease to amaze me that Carly managed to make pancakes every morning in the time it took me to drink a cup of coffee. Between the wild strawberries and huckleberries it was an impressive morning routine."

-Justine Bright, Wilderness Steward

MOUNTAINFILM ON TOUR

SELWAY BITTERROOT FRANK CHURCH FOUNDATION

Raffle prizes include a rafting trip for two, a YETI cooler, a scenic flight into the Frank Church, a luxury lodge weekend, and more!

JANUARY 7-9, 2021

November Early Bird Tickets:
\$20 + 1 free raffle ticket

Ticket prices go up in December--
get them while you can!

Watch online from anywhere! Tickets and prizes are a great holiday gift for the outdoor-lovers in your life.

2020 PROJECT SUMMARY



NEZ PERCE-CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST

- June 23 – July 1:** Boulder Creek Trail #211 and Columbia Ridge Trail #205; general maintenance and campsite monitoring
- June 23 – July 1:** Lochsa Peak Trail #220, Lone Knob Trail #198 & Rock Creek Trail #2210; general maintenance
- July 7-15:** Dolph Creek Trail #486, East Moose Creek Trail #421, & Little Dead Elk Trail #5; general maintenance
- July 11-15:** Beaver Meadows Trail #77 and Storm Creek Trail #99; general maintenance
- July 21-29:** Shasta Lake and Seven Lakes; campsite monitoring & alpine lake water sample
- July 21-29:** Elk Summit Trail #4, Frog Peak Trail #906, Hidden Peak Trail #10, Hidden Lake Trail #9, Bridge Creek Trail #28; general maintenance
- August 4-10:** Colt Killed Creek Trail #50 to Packbox Pass; general maintenance and campsite monitoring
- August 4- 12:** Bridge Creek Trail #28, Big Sand Creek Trail #1, Swamp Creek Trail #22; general maintenance
- August 18-26:** Maple Lake Trail #939, Dolph Creek Trail #486, & East Moose Trail #421; general maintenance
- August 22-30:** Selway River Trail #4; campsite monitoring & general maintenance
- September 1-9:** Boulder Creek Trail #211 & Stanley Hot Springs; transect report, trail survey and general maintenance
- September 1-9:** Dolph Creek Trail #486 & East Moose Trail #421; general maintenance
- September 16-23:** East Moose Trail #421; general maintenance
- September 26:** Colgate Licks Nature Trail and Devoto Grove Picnic Area and Trailhead, National Public Lands Day; general maintenance and removal of rotting trail railings



NEZ PERCE-CLEARWATER NF VOLUNTEER CABIN HOSTS

July 8-November: Moose Creek Ranger Station and Shearer Guard Station: 14 volunteer cabin hosts completed 17-22 day hitches at two remote backcountry stations, Moose Creek RS and Shearer GS. Cabin hosts helped preserve historic structures, monitor forest activities, and promote wilderness ethics.



SALMON-CHALLIS NF PARTNER VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

July 22-29: Private Volunteer Club: SBFC staff led a group of 7 volunteers to perform annual maintenance on the Summit Trail #088, Pistol Lake Trail #087, & Upper Pistol Lake Trail #228. The crew worked on clearing downed trees, brushing the trail corridor, maintaining drains and repairing tread.



BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

- June 14-15:** Holloway Lakes #393; general maintenance
- June 14-15:** South Fork of Lolo #313; general maintenance
- June 23-30:** Blodgett Creek #19, Canyon Creek #525, South Fork of Lolo #313; general maintenance and campsite monitoring
- July 7-10:** Kootenai Creek #53; general maintenance
- July 11:** Saint Mary's Peak #116; volunteer project- general maintenance
- July 12-14:** Kootenai Creek #53; general maintenance and alpine lake water sample
- July 21-28:** Devils Washbasin/Elk City Trail #19; general maintenance, campsite monitoring, & trail blasting
- August 4-10:** Big Creek #11 & South Fork of Big Creek #; general maintenance
- September 12:** Mill Creek #36; volunteer project- general maintenance
- September 26:** Mill Creek #364, National Public Lands Day; volunteer project- general maintenance



BITTERROOT NF VOLUNTEER LOOKOUT AND CABIN HOSTS

July 6-July 27: Paradise GS Artist-in-Residence and Cabin Hosts In year two of SBFC's partnership with the OpenAIR program, the Artist-in-Residence position was awarded to Montana writer Rick White. He and I Montana volunteer were stationed at Paradise GS during July to check river permits, interact with the public, and maintain the property. During this time, White completed multiple essays on wilderness and the cabin hosting experience for publication.

July 16-September 10: Saint Mary Peak Volunteer Fire Lookout Program: Beginning in mid-July, 5 volunteers were packed in by the USFS to complete 7-14 day hitches hosting the lookout. Volunteer hosts greeted visitors and shared the history and significance of the site, maintained the lookout structure, cleaned the general area, and kept an eye out for local wildfires. The historic structure was closed to the public this year.



SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

- June 8-12:** Marsh Creek Trail#111; general maintenance
- June 24-July 1:** Halstead Trail #021, Ruffneck Trail #022, Langer Lake Spur Trail #014.I, Langer Lake Trail #014; general maintenance
- July 8-July 15:** Marble Creek Trail #222; general maintenance
- July 22-July 29:** Summit Trail #088; general maintenance
- July 22-July 29:** Summit Trail #088, Pistol Lake Trail #087, Upper Pistol Lake Trail #228; volunteer project- general maintenance
- August 5-12:** Waterfall Creek Trail #045, Gant Ridge Trail #028; general maintenance
- August 19-26:** Clear Creek Trail #022, Bighorn Craggs Trail #021; general maintenance and campsite naturalizing
- September 2-9:** Marble Creek Trail #222; volunteer project- general maintenance and noxious weed monitoring
- September 16-23:** Salmon River Trail #6162; general maintenance

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



This is the tenth installment of interviews collected from our past Fellows. Established in 2009, the SBFC Wilderness Ranger Fellow Program provides a high level of training and guidance for university-level students who have coursework in wilderness, environmental studies, or recreation management.

KRISTINA SCHNECK - WILDERNESS RANGER FELLOW - 2013

COLLEGE CREDENTIALS

B.S. Environmental Science and Policy 2013, St. Edward's University

WHAT EXPERIENCES STOOD OUT TO YOU THE MOST DURING YOUR TIME AS AN SBFC FELLOW? MOST MEMORABLE, OR MOST POIGNANT?

Overall, I just had the best time backpacking in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness--cutting out SO MANY trees, eating all the food, working in burn areas, and swimming everywhere. And the solitude! I remember making a public contact at a lake 11 miles back and telling Adam Washebek, USFS Wilderness Ranger, who said "Wow you guys saw actual people?!" To me, the sheer size and the opportunities for solitude that you have in big remote wilderness areas like the Selway-Bitterroot or the Frank is so special. Unfortunately, it's becoming much harder to find.

WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU LEARNED DURING YOUR TIME IN THE FIELD WITH SBFC?

There were a lot of sufferfests slogging a heavy backpack uphill for miles and I remember it being a summer of blisters for me and a couple of other interns. My supervisor at the time, Kenzie Carson, taught me how to prevent and take care of blisters and I still use the moleskin donut technique all the time (thank you Kenzie!) That's more of a technical, practical skill. That being said, within that practical skill lies a lesson about taking care of your health, so as a leader you can help other people take care of themselves, too.



WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER PATH SINCE YOUR TIME WITH SBFC?

I went on to work seasonally on the San Juan National Forest in Colorado as a wilderness ranger, on trail crews, and timber crews from 2014-2019. In total I worked eight seasons including my time on the San Juan, with SBFC and on other forests. I am now the Lead Wilderness Ranger on the Columbine Ranger District for the San Juan National Forest. In my district we manage part of the Weminuche Wilderness, the largest wilderness in Colorado, and the Hermosa Creek Wilderness, the newest wilderness area in Colorado.

HOW HAS WHAT YOU LEARNED WHILE BEING A FELLOW INFORMED YOUR CURRENT POSITION?

My experience as a Fellow provided me with a solid foundation for my career so far, especially because I've continued working in wilderness. I still do most of the things I did as a Fellow, such as logging out trail, campsite rehabilitation, public contacts, and trail work. Now I also do the managing and planning for the summer season in addition to the boots-on-the-ground work. Most of all, I think working with SBFC showed me the power of the wilderness community and how important it is to have strong partnerships. I really value that community aspect and try to model that experience, especially now I am on the government side of things and see how badly we need people on all sides to protect the American wilderness as an enduring resource.

ANY ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS?

I always try to remember to have heart and balance humility with ambition. Find a mentor, remember that you can always learn more from others than you can teach them, and stand up for yourself and your beliefs.

WELCOME OUR NEW BOARD & STAFF TO SBFC!

BOARD MEMBER - BOISE, ID MICHAEL WAZENRIED



Michael Wazenried lives in Boise but is originally from western Montana. Although he spent the first twenty-some years of his life as 'outdoorsy,' it was two seasons with a youth conservation corps that instilled in him a greater appreciation for being outside that went beyond recreational hiking and camping. These experiences led him to pursue a career in archaeology. Since graduating from the University of Montana, Missoula, with an MA in anthropology/archaeology in 2010, he has been conducting cultural resource investigations for private, state, and federal outfits in Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. He is currently working in the sage-steppe desert of eastern Oregon and loving every moment.

FUN FACT:

"I have lived in over 25 different places (including apartments, houses, closets) over the last 20 years. Though the most memorable one was a converted grain silo/artist complex/fire hazard called the Ceretana in Missoula, Montana."

BOARD MEMBER - MISSOULA, MT STEVE KIMBALL



Steve Kimball is the Local Government Forest Advisor for the Montana Department of Natural Resources in Missoula, Montana. Steve retired from the Forest Service where he served in positions all over the United States. His positions included Natural Resource Staff Officer on the Payette National Forest, Wilderness-Rivers Program Manager in the USFS Northern and Alaska Regions, Idaho National Fire Plan Coordinator, and District Ranger on the Salmon-Challis, Green Mountain, and Tongass National Forests. Steve lives with his wife and daughter in Missoula and has three adult sons. He loves all things Wilderness and enjoys hiking, sea kayaking, and serendipitous discovery.

FUN FACT:

"I was on a Forest Service float trip down the Main Salmon to discuss wilderness management. On the last morning a jet boat pulled up to inform me my wife was delivering our son at the Salmon hospital. By raft, truck, and plane I frantically made it back to Salmon, only four hours late. I wanted to name him Frank but was overruled."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER - BOISE, ID ALYSSA PEARSON



Alyssa Pearson was born and raised in Boise, Idaho, where she now serves as Community Engagement Manager at the Boise headquarters office. She grew up spending her time in the Boise foothills and backpacking in the Idaho backcountry. Alyssa earned a BFA in Film Production from Chapman University in Southern California. She has spent her time from then on making films, hosting local festivals, and exploring the wild lands in her backyard. She also serves as Foodfort Producer for Boise's annual Treefort Music Festival. Alyssa is a committed advocate for conservation and stewardship of wild, public lands.

FUN FACT:

"While I love hiking, my feet do not, and I have a knack for getting blisters (one time the actual size of my fist on the bottom of my foot!). As such, I have developed an extensive Blister Prevention Method, which I would be happy to share with those in need. Pro Tip: always keep some baby powder handy!"



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Selway-Bitterroot Foundation INC
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REMEMBER THE SELWAY BITTERROOT FRANK CHURCH FOUNDATION IN YOUR ESTATE PLANS

We hope you will consider the Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation in your estate planning. Memorial gifts and bequests are placed in a special fund so that these gifts can permanently support wilderness protection in the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness areas.

We welcome your inquiries about bequests and other kinds of giving. Please call or email Sally Ferguson, 208-871-1906, sferguson@selwaybitterroot.org.

If you wish to make a provision in your will, we suggest the following general language:

"I give, devise and bequeath to the Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, a Montana non-profit corporation (Federal tax ID# 27-2868220) located at 322 E. Front Street, RMRS Ste. 401, PO Box 1886, Boise Idaho, 83701, the sum of \$_____ or _____% of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate [or \$_____ if specific amount]."