

THE WILDEST PLACE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SELWAY BITTERROOT FRANK CHURCH FOUNDATION



FALL 2023

FALL 2023

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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 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 boots on the ground work, public education, and partnerships.

EDITING: Caitlin Straubinger

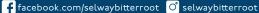
DESIGN & LAYOUT: Kelsey Selis

COVER IMAGE: SBFC Salmon-Challis National Forest crew working in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (Heather Pendleton, WRF; Jersey Hoover, WRF; & Alex Gordon, Lead Wilderness Steward)

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

SELWAYBITTERROOT.ORG







LETTER FROM THE ROARD CHAIR

Several years ago, I heard Ed Krumpe, one of our former board chairs, relay the following story:

While talking with Connie Saylor Johnson just after the Wilderness Ranger Fellows concluded their I4week fellowship, Ed said to Connie, "When the fellows come out of the wilderness, I don't think they come all the way out." To which Connie replied, "That's why we do it."



And that is indeed why we do it. Certainly, these eleven young women and men, from across the United States, have a profound immersion into the wilderness. Over the years, I have heard them refer to this experience as 'transformational,' 'life changing,' etc. While it is gratifying to hear about the personal impact this experience has on them, it is also an investment in the future of the wild lands that we value so highly. Many have gone on to careers with the Forest Service, environmental groups, conservation organizations, and other natural resource fields

The final week of their fellowship is a time for connection and reflection, as they regroup after spending their summers working across four different National Forests. This year, they also met with interested folks in Hamilton, Montana and Moscow and Grangeville, Idaho. A total of about 80 people attended their final presentations. The feedback here in Moscow has been terrific. Their end of the year reports were truly inspirational.

As Connie said, "this is why we do it." SBFC has taken the lead in training the wilderness leaders of tomorrow. We need committed and trained young people to step into careers that will help ensure that our wilderness lands will be available for future generations.

More information about the 2023 class of Wilderness Ranger Fellows can be found on our blog posts, which were posted throughout the summer and archived on our website at www.selwaybitterroot.org/blogs.

JIM HEIDELBERGER

Board Chair

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Significant desk hours are required as an executive director. It's unavoidable. In SBFC's world, however, I'd miss a great deal if I sat in a chair too much.

I spent time with seven different trail projects this season, from Sulphur Creek in the Frank to Bass Creek in the Selway and many places between. I never got to stay for too many days, but the experiences were enlightening. There is no better way to get to know our staff, fellows, and volunteers than working hard



without screens filtering our reality. At SBFC, our people are our lifeblood.

Folks in the field are the ones who understand the issues most intimately and who have the best ideas for overcoming them. Attempting to make organizational improvements solely behind a desk is a foolhardy exercise. Beyond that truth, pulling a saw is intoxicating and addictive, and I understand why people are drawn to spending months on end, year-after-year doing this work.

Bottom line: Our leaders are exceptional, our fellows are the future, and our volunteers are heroes.

On a personal note, this job is especially rewarding because of our mission and the lands and trails we are stewarding. The essence of this endeavor is to smell the sun hitting giant Ponderosas as the early morning light illuminates never-ending ridgelines. Our work helps to enable a present and a future where we can all experience the goodness of Wilderness. That is the world I want to live in, and I am grateful that my job pulls me into the Wild regularly.

Wilderness Forever and for Everyone,

RYAN GHELFI Executive Director

2023 SEASON ACCOMPLISHMENTS

17,900 TOTAL HOURS LOGGED BY VOLUNTEERS

100 CAMPSITES INVENTORIED

332 MILES OF TRAIL MAINTAINED

POUNDS OF TRASH REMOVED

8,360 TREES REMOVED FROM TRAILS

414 DRAINS CLEANED

27 CAMPSITES NATURALIZED

7 MILES OF TRAIL CORRIDOR CLEARED AND BRUSHED

4.5 MILES OF TRAILED RETREADED









2023 HITCH AND PROJECT SUMMARIES



BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

June 6-13: Upper Selway #4

June 6: Univ. of MT Wilderness Policy and Packing Course - Kootenia Cr #53, 10 volunteers

June 20-27: Kootenai Cr #53

June 7-13: National Smokejumper's Assoc. - Nez Perce #13 & Flat Creek #7, 15 volunteers

July 7-9: St Mary #116, 13 volunteers

July 18-25: CatRock Ventures - One Horse Lakes #126, 5 volunteers

July 20-25: Bass Creek #4 August I-8: Rock Creek #580

August 1-8: American Hiking Society - Big Creek #II, 10 volunteers

September I-3: Hauf Lake #309, 8 volunteers

September 23: National Public Lands Day - Roaring Lion Creek #124,



NEZ PERCE-CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST

June 3: National Trails Day - Colgate Licks #1091, II volunteers

June 6-13: Boulder Creek #211 Area

June 18-22: National Smokejumper's Assoc. - So. Nez Perce Trail #468, II

June 20-27: Warm Springs #49

July 4-II: Eagle Mtn #206 Area

July 5-12: Cache Creek #501

July 5-10: Johnson County, Iowa Conservation Dept (IDAWA) - Friday Pass #45, 14 volunteers

July 18-25: Storm Creek #77

July 18-25: Poet Creek #502

July 27-August 2: Dallas County, Iowa Conservation Dept (IDAWA) - Tom Beal #7 & Wind Lakes #24, II volunteers

August 1-8: Elk Summit Area #939

August 1-9: Spook Creek #513

August 18-September 5: Fish Lake Mini Immersion, Wounded Doe #465

September 12-20: Cache Creek #501



PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST

June 6-14: Chamberlain #4001

July 5-12: Lookout Ridge #4061

July 18-26: Lookout Ridge #4061

August 2-9: Marble Cr #4062, II volunteers

August 15-23: Ramey Ridge #006

August 29-September 6: Cougar Basin #004

September 12-20: Ramey Ridge #006, Chamberlain #001



SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

June 7-14: Camptender #002

June 21-28: Camptender #002

June 21-28: Moscow Whisky Society & SB Backcountry Horsemen - Sulphur Creek #4046, 15 volunteers

June 21-28: Horse Creek Hot Springs - Cayuse Creek #6166, Reynolds #6167, Horse Creek #6159, 2 volunteers

July 5-12: Bighorn Crags #021

July 19-26: Horse Heaven #172

August 2-9: East Mayfield #4114

August 16-26: Pole Creek #4129

August 16-23: Upper Yellowjacket Creek #6038 Women's Project, 9

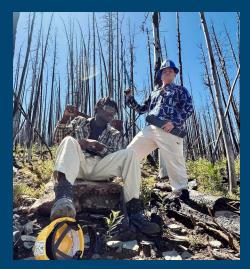
volunteers

August 30-September 3: Camptender #002



CENTRAL ID HIGH DESERT

May 12-14: White Clouds Preserve, 13 volunteers







A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR... 2023 SUMMER SEASON VOLUNTEERS!

Bitterroot National Forest

Kootenai Creek #53 (University of MT Policy & Packing Course)

Micah Daheim
Gillian Dorrance
Ethan Fink
Hannah Hornyak
Lukas Lindeman
Eva-Maria Maggi
Rhiannon Morgan
Jake Pintar
Kasey Swisher
Cormac Weichel

Nez Perce #13 & Flat Creek #7: (National Smokejumpers Association)

Linda Cooper
Larry Cooper
Jim Haynes
Steve Henry
Linda Hiatt
Geoff Hochmuht
Richard Hulla
Cristy Imus
Mark Imus
Joe Kroeber
Jeff Nerison
Joe Robinson
JB Stone
Larry Ukestad
Rodgers Wright

St. Mary #113

Stephanie Adams
Derek DeMattio
Karen Eldredge
Dorothy Finaldi
David Henning
Jackson Johnson
Daneel Kuzaro
Rachel Levitch
Mike Longbottom
Jay Maas
Mark Reinsel
Renee Snyder
Jim Traub

One Horse Lakes #126: (CatRock Ventures)

Daphne Espinales Fernandez Cameron Hogan Jeton Hoti Abiola Van Osoy-Bruce Jordan Yaw Kwarteng

Big Creek #II: (American Hiking Society)

Jacob Camp Elise Clement Shannon Loehrke Melissa Mills Steve Schick Jacob Sirk-Traugh Hattie Spring Jeremiah Su Lindsey Voegele Sky Weir

Hauf Lake #309

Briana Bienusa Luke Hayduk Heather Petitt Mark Reinsel Caryn Rouse Kyle Scharfe Anne Marie Scott Meredith Webster

Roaring Lion Creek #124: National Public Lands Day

Amanda Bauer George Corn Brent Hildebrand Ainsley Kee Daneel Kuzaro Becky Paull Eric Paull Grace Schwenk Ada Scott

St. Mary Fire Lookouts and Trailhead Ambassadors

Ed Duggan
Dave Ensner
Brent Hildebrand
Brian Kerns
Mike Longbottom
Patrick McCarron
Clare O'Connell
Sheryl Olson
Gordon Schofield
Deb Sostillio
Meredith Webster

Salmon-Challis National Forest

Sulphur Creek #4046 (Moscow Whisky Society & SB Backcountry Horsemen)

Bert Baumgaertner Susan Briggs Heather Donesky
Karl Englund
Lovina Englund
Mandy Grant
Jim Heidelberger
Casey Johnson
Jason Johnstone-Yellin
Cai Johnstone-Yellin
Blake Simmons
Seth Sjoholm
John Visger
Dan Waugh
Marja Waugh

Cayuse Creek #6166, Reynolds #6167, Horse Creek #6159 Kavoos Kaveh Alex Pio

Upper Yellowjacket Creek #6038

Lisa Armstrong Milena Arthur Karen Eldredge Joanie Fauci Lori Fortin Robyn Griffiths Britt Heisel Diane Maxted Melissa Pinney

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

Colgate Licks #1091-National Trails Day

Jeanette Ahrens Becky Catnull Jen Elliott Anna Ferriter Sarah Graham Luke Graham Liam Graham Eamon Graham Imogen Graham Cormac Graham Mark Reinsel

Southern Nez Perce Trail #468- National Smokejumpers Association

Dennis Baird Lynn Baird Jim Cammon Gary Dobbins Craig Gehrke Patricia Hart Richard Hudson Ivar Nelson Dan Pierson Allison Stout Larry Swan

Friday Pass #45-Johnson County, Iowa Conservation Dept. (IDAWA)

Kristen Morrow
Francis Owen
Jason Bies
Sadie Frisvold
Kate Richards
Joanna Galluzzo
Cianna Grier
Adam Schaefer
Vivian Tomek
Lucy Kulbartz
Ivy Hendrickson
Amelia Marquardt
Frederick Gaul
Vivian Shields

Tom Beal #7 & Wind Lakes

#24- Dallas County, lowa Conservation Dept. (IDAWA)

Ben Amenson Emma Beeman AlaynaCather Jaylon Day Ella Forsyth Ayden Frisk Addison Happ Max Havlik Jay Jones Zach Moss Bob Myers

Castle Butte Lookout - Artist in Residence

Erin DiGiovanni

Moose Creek Ranger Station and Shearer Guard Station Cabin Hosts

Valerie Armichardy
Tucker Armichardy
James Artz
Daniel Born
Chance Chacon
Sam Chacon
Ella Mae Chacon
Annick Dixon
Ryan Dixon
Brad Donaldson
Cindy Donaldson
Jen Elliott
Ginny Elliott

Jim Elliott
Julie England
Ellen Hall
Stan Hall
Fred Hebert
Bill McGlynn
Veronica Metcalfe
Tom Strong
Meredith Webster
Larry Whiting

Highway 12- Adopt a Highway Cleanup

Julie Fodor Jim Heidelberger Heather Pettit

LHRS - Living History Day

Ginny Elliott Barry Hicks Jane Holman David Kay Judy Kay Tom Keller Helen Kettle Bill Moore Mike Oliver Diane Pettit Willis Doe

Payette National Forest: Marble Creek #4062

Cody Fleenor
Glenn Florence
Michelle Florence
Eric Herrera
Samantha Herrera
Thomas Klein
Bill Lewis
Torrin Reed
Samantha Scott
John Twa
Brian Watkins

Bonus Project-White Clouds Preserve:

Christine Cole
Nancy Feldman
Murray Feldman
Tammy Feldman
Anna Ferriter
Mark Ferriter
Thomas Ferriter
David Kendrick
Elizabeth Kendrick
John Lloyd
Carolyn Lloyd
Matthew Waltz
Matthew Wells

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHTS

VOLUNTEER NAME: KAREN ELDREDGE

WHEN WAS YOUR FIRST VOLUNTEER PROJECT WITH SBFC?

It was the St. Mary Peak Trail project in 2017. I've now participated in eight projects with SBFC.

I heard about the St. Mary Peak project at a

Mountainfilm event in Boise and liked the idea of hiking to a destination- the lookout- and thought it would be a good way to explore a new place with new people.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?

I love being in the outdoors, exploring new areas, and meeting different people. The camaraderie on these projects is wonderful. Volunteering has made me realize that these trails don't just suddenly appear and there's work that goes into it. I feel more appreciative of our trails!

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING WITH SBFC?

I'd tell people to just go out there and do it! Maybe start with a one-day or weekend project and get a feel for the process, the tools, and what goes into it all. It's so rewarding and transforming! You're doing something good, giving back, meeting fun and like-minded people.

FAVORITE MEAL?

Anything with lots of veggies (stir fry!).

MEMORABLE PROJECT?

I volunteered on a Bighorn Crags trip in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness in 2019 and didn't know what I was getting into. We went to Ship Island Lake and it was so beautiful! I loved the area and we had a great group (we worked with current SBFC Program Director, Josh!). We got to explore different lakes and it was a very special place. I returned to the Crags this year on the Women's Trip!





VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHTS

VOLUNTEER NAME: MILENA ARTHUR

WHAT PROJECT(S) DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN THIS YEAR?

Upper Yellow Jacket Creek Women's Project in the Franch Church-River of No Return Wilderness. This was my first trip with SBFC!

WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO SPEND YOUR TIME VOLUNTEERING WITH SBFC?

I greatly value SBFC's mission and the work that they do. Personally, it gives me great joy and hope to know that there are other people who value wilderness areas and access to wilderness through trails. Idaho has many, many, miles of trails and I know firsthand that Idaho's trails need all the help they can to keep them maintained! SBFC has some great volunteer projects to choose from!

DID YOU HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE WITH TRAIL WORK BEFORE VOLUNTEERING WITH SBFC?

One of the summers while in college I worked on a Forest Service trail crew out of Idaho City, Idaho. I told myself that summer, "this trail crew job will be the best job I'll ever have." To this day, it was the best job I have ever had. That summer we worked on rerouting trails, so the tools of choice were Pulaskis and McLeods. It was super cool to have this experience with SBFC to learn how to use the crosscut saws and to work on my sawyer skills.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?

Being around like-minded people of all ages who have the same passions and desire to cherish and protect our wilderness areas for years to come. I learned so much!

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING WITH SBFC?

If you love spending time in the outdoors, then go for it! You'll learn a ton. I really appreciated the mentorship and specifically the saw instruction from the seasoned crew leads and volunteers. It was so inspiring to be surrounded by such strong, capable, and energetic humans all working to accomplish the same goal. The sense of camaraderie is the best. The SBFC crew and those who believe in and value maintaining trails is a great community to be part of.

FAVORITE MEAL?

Veggie teriyaki stir fry and rice.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SHARE?

The women's project was an unintimidating option and a unique opportunity to "get my feet wet" and to refresh my trail work abilities, as it has been years since I have done any major trail work. It was a great way to build up some confidence and learn new skills in a supportive environment. I hope to do way more trail work in the future, on local trails and beyond. What a great community to be a part of!





MINI IMMERSIONS: AN ESSENTIAL WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

BY RYAN GHELFI AND JOSH PAGE

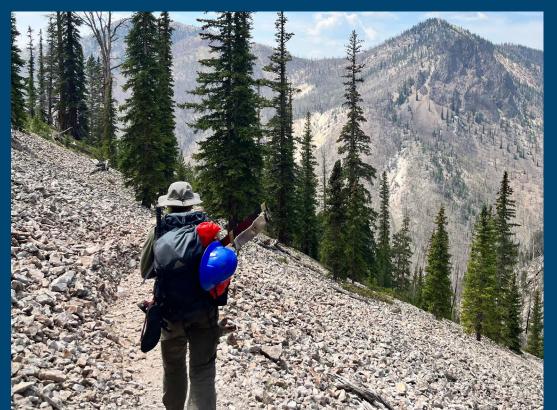
RYAN:

The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is acclaimed for its vast expanse, encompassing I.2 million acres. However, what does this immense scale truly signify on the ground? Recently, the SBFC trail crew working on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest had the opportunity to explore this question.

Our four-person crew embarked on what we call a "Mini Immersion:" two consecutive hitches in the field, totaling 2I days immersed within the wilderness. Their journey began at Wilderness Gateway with a rigorous I8-mile hike to reach Fish Lake Guard Station. From this base, their work began on the Wounded Doe Trail, a path in dire need of maintenance, particularly in terms of brushing and log removal.

Had our crew attempted to clear the Wounded Doe Trail during a conventional hitch, their progress would have been significantly impeded. The considerable time spent on driving to and from the trailhead, coupled with long hikes to reach the target trail, would have consumed over half of the 9-day hitch. It is only through the Mini Immersion approach that we can effectively tackle trails situated 30 miles from the nearest road, exemplified by the Wounded Doe Trail.

Despite frequent rain, the SBFC trail crew exhibited remarkable resilience and accomplished the full clearance of the Wounded Doe Trail to its junction with Rhoda Creek. This marked a crucial step in improving the interconnected network







of drainage level trails, ultimately leading to the centerpiece of this Wilderness, the Selway River.

While logistics and work accomplishments are key reasons for building mini immersions into the SBFC rotation, what's even more critical is the categorically unique experience our young people can have when they are fully immersed over a three-week timeframe.

Our Program Director, Josh Page, knows first-hand about the benefits of Wilderness immersion. Read on for Josh's perspective!

JOSH:

REVENUES:

Administration -

Fundraising -

Having been on scores of hitches, it is remarkable how quickly time goes by on a 9-day trip into the Wilderness. With an average day of work constituting 10 hours or more (not including camp chores or meals), there isn't much time or energy left to unwind and take in the Wilderness around you. In contrast, a Mini Immersion, with its provision of days off in the backcountry, allows the Wilderness experience to continue instead of resetting, creating the opportunity

to engage the Wilderness without an agenda as soon as you open your eyes each morning on your days off.

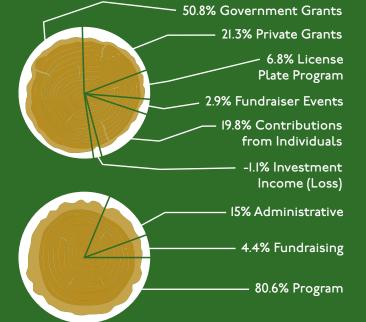
These recovery days present the opportunity to relax in a hammock with a good book, venture to a nearby hot spring for a rejuvenating soak, or ascend a peak to gain perspective and a deeper understanding of the land in which we are embedded. Even if only for a brief period, these experiences can make a wild place feel like home. It is an experience too few people get to have in this day and age.

My first season of Wilderness Trails work was six months of uninterrupted time in Northern California's Wilderness Areas. Though it represents a mere fraction of my time on this earth, it is one of my life's most inspiring and transformative seasons.

The more time people spend in Wilderness, the better off the Wilderness and our communities will be. These mini-immersions are an ideal way to facilitate that connection, and I will always advocate for more time immersed in Wilderness.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY (FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 2022)

Government Grants -\$372,735 \$156,567 Private Grants -\$46,218 License Plate Program -\$21.352 Fundraising Events -Contributions from Individuals \$145,021 Investment Income (loss) -(\$8,007)\$631.767 EXPENSES: **Program** \$461,119



Notes on Financial Statements:

SBFC is a nonprofit tax-exempt organization under 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code and uses accrual basis of accounting. If you have any questions about this information, please contact Ryan Ghelfi, Executive Director, rghelfi@selwaybitterroot.org.

\$86,031

\$24,620

\$571,770

THIS TYPE OF PLACE

BY CONNOR ADAMS







There is a story common across this planet – the mythic hero who is called to adventure far outside the realm of their everyday life. The first step in this hero's journey is often an extended period in wilderness, far away from the norms of society, a place where they have to thrive using only what they brought with them, on their back and in their head. They return a changed person – a messiah, an earth-shaker, or at the very least possessed of new and influential wisdom.

I have always been fascinated by these tales. After ten years of working and living in the Wilderness areas of the Northern Rockies, I feel like I have a better understanding of this part of the hero's journey. This story is old, but to this day, there is something inside us that yearns to know that there's a primeval place on the planet, free from the corrupting influences of civilization, a sort of proving ground for our souls and our self-concept. So far, it's still out there if we need

it. I have returned from my time in the mountains with some valuable lessons, and it is my privilege to share the three currently most dear to me.

In 2020, one of my Fellows spoke to the board about the agony of our first day – the nine-mile hike into Horse Camp. He remembered vividly the feeling of dread at mile six, when it was time to pick up his pack again, and the very clinical thought that came into his head: "Well, I can either pick my pack up and keep going, or I can lie down and die. I guess I'll keep going." I've always thought that sums it up pretty succinctly: Wilderness teaches you what you're capable of, and even more importantly – that you're always capable of so much more than you thought.

When you make a bad decision over 50 miles away from definitive care, the potential consequences can feel like they hang a bit heavier. Decisions made in Wilderness often have demonstrable and tangible

consequences, and you are often the only one responsible for your well-being. Everyone ought to be reminded that it's important to be able to accept blame – to stolidly reap what we sow, but equally important to learn from those consequences and use that knowledge for personal empowerment. Wilderness is both deeply humbling and deeply empowering, and the flavor of humility and empowerment given to you out there is unlike any you can get in our everyday world.

I think I'm not alone when I say I find the omnipresence of available daily distractions nearly irresistible. It's an open secret that many of us are so afraid of the content of our thoughts and the possibility of being left alone with them, that we'd almost always rather focus on something else to avoid any chance of a confrontation with our inner mental

landscape. For me, Wilderness is the only place where those distractions are not only unavailable, but they even seem far less tempting. When I'm out on hitch, I actually absorb the contents of a book. I take revitalizing naps and don't feel guilty about the wasted time. I savor my snacks. I lie in the sun and I listen to the birds. In short, Wilderness is a place where you can finally learn how to do nothing, and how to enjoy it.

Hanging up my hiking boots (professionally speaking, at least) is fairly heartrending. The mountains of the Northern Rockies have been the primary ingredient of my very lifeblood for a long time. But all heroes must, at some point, open up room on the page for other stories and move on to the next phase in their journey. At least I've got a backpack full of lessons I can take with me.

ABOUT CONNOR:

Connor has been a wandering Wilderness person for almost a decade. After some years overseas and a thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail, he made his way to Montana and immediately fell in love with the wild places of the Northern Rockies. He has worked in The Bob Marshall Wilderness, the Gros Ventre Wilderness, and spent five years with SBFC in the Selway Bitterroot and Frank Church. Though he is moving on from Wilderness field work, you'll definitely still be able to find him in the mountains.





2023-2024 Annual Sponsors

















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Wilderness stewardship for the Selway-Bitterroot and the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness areas.

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\$150

\$400

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\$____

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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.