

Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail

Progress Report

Winter 2020

Administrator's Corner



Photo Courtesy of Kristine Komar

Hamilton Montana Mayor Dominic A. Farrenkopf (center) with local youth opening the NPNHT Agent of Discovery game at Riverside Park in Hamilton.

Happy New Year! This is a great time to reflect on last year and anticipate what the New Year will bring. Every New Year brims with possibility, but 2020 is definitely going to be the year of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT)!

I'd like to show my gratitude to the hardworking people of the NPNHT.

To all who help us with creating the quarterly Progress Reports, from our inter-agency colleagues to our partners throughout the trail system, thank you! The work we do relies on partnerships and leveraging resources. I continue to be so inspired by the dedicated, passionate people who are all working toward a common goal—to create success for the NPNHT through re-opening segments of trail, and projects including heritage tourism as appropriate. There's never and "I" in Trail development. It's always a 'we game.'

We had a productive year in 2019! We were able, with help from our partners, to conduct educational and stewardship outings, trail maintenance, re-opening of three more trail miles, and launching our Agents of Discovery with our Partners, Ravalli County Museum, Travelers' Rest, Bitterroot National Forest, St. Mary's Mission and the U.S. Forest Service Washington office. We also launched our campaign for Next Exit History. If the saying is true, that "future generations will judge us for our actions today," then our work with all of you should make you proud.

Thank you for traveling the trail journey on this challenging and rewarding important path for trail maintenance, interpretation, and education. We appreciate your help in shaping an inspirational future for our future trail generations to come and for continuing to provide your warm enthusiasm and critical support for the Trail.

Here's to a beautiful and inspiring the best in ourselves and others New Year. To aligning with our true purpose for the NPNHT in 2020.

Sandra Broncheau-McFarland,
Administrator, NPNHT



Nez Perce
National Historic Trail

February
2020

USDA Forest Service Announces Challenge to Increase Focus on Problems Facing Nation's Largest Public Trail System

USDA Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen earlier this month emphasized the need to find innovative ideas to tackle the nearly \$300 million maintenance backlog on the nation's largest public trail system. Christiansen called on individuals and organizations to work with the agency to address trail maintenance and sustainability to improve access, keep people safe, and support local economies.

"In 2019, organizations and individuals contributed more than 1.5 million hours on the maintenance and repair of more than 28,000 miles of trail, and we are extremely grateful for their continued support and hard work," Christiansen told trail advocates during a meeting at Forest Service Headquarters. "However, we must find more ways to erase the backlog. We still have much more work to do, and this is our call to organizations and individuals to share with us innovative ideas and boots-on-the-ground help."

The agency hopes to expand its employee, grassroots, nonprofit and corporate support as part of a 10-Year Trail Shared Stewardship Challenge. Roughly 120,000 miles of the 159,000 miles of trails are in need of some form of maintenance or repair. Working within current appropriations, the agency has strategically focused its approach to trail maintenance, increasing trail miles improved from 48,800 miles in 2013 to 58,300 miles in 2019.

Christiansen shared the multi-layered challenge with agency partners visiting Washington, D.C., to attend the weeklong 23rd annual Hike the Hill, a joint effort between the Partnership for the National Trail System and the American Hiking Society. Hike the Hill helps to increase awareness and highlight other needs of the National Trails System. The National Trails System consists of 30 national scenic and historic trails, such as the Appalachian National Trail and the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail, both of which pass through lands managed by the Forest Service.

The agency manages about 10,000 miles of national scenic and historic trails that cross forests and grasslands. More than 32,000 miles of trail are in wilderness areas. The remainder range from simple footpaths to those that allow horses, offhighway vehicles, cross-country skiing and other types of recreation.

The trail maintenance backlog limits access to public lands, causes environmental damage, and affects public safety in some places. Deferred maintenance also increases the costs of trail repair. When members of the public stop using trails, there could be a residual effect on the economics of nearby communities. Recreation activities on national forests and grasslands support 148,000 jobs annually and contribute more than \$11 billion in annual visitor spending.

In addition to trails, the agency is working to address more than \$5.2 billion in infrastructure repairs and maintenance on such things as forest roads, bridges, and other structures that are critical to the management of agency lands and that benefit visitors and communities. The backlog on forest roads and bridges alone is \$3.4 billion.

To get involved with the Trail Challenge you may: Contact the nearest forest or grassland office to get more information on what they are doing locally. Join or organize a coalition of citizens and work with the agency to address the issues. Be mindful of how you use the trails by using Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly outdoor ethics standards.

For more information, email fstrailmanagement@usda.gov. National organizations or corporations can get more information about becoming a Forest Service partner by contacting Marlee Ostheimer, National Forest Foundation Conservation Partnership Manager, at 406-542-2805 or mostheimer@nationalforests.org.

Comprehensive Plan (CP) Revision Update

The final draft revised Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT) Comprehensive Plan (CP) has been completed for all components. The final draft CP, Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be shared with Tribes, other agencies and the public to provide an update on the status of the CP. The next phase will be initiating the NEPA analysis for the carrying capacity of the Trail. Once that analysis is completed and a decision is made for the carrying capacity, the CP will be finalized and signed. The CP a strategic framework for integrated management of the NPNHT. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive decision-making tool. The revised CP does not amend existing Land and Resource Management Plans, authorize site-specific projects or activities, obligate funding, or initiate activities that commit Federal Agencies with jurisdiction to take specific action. Future Land and Resource Management Plans and site-specific project-level decisions will adhere to strategies contained within the CP. Future decisions will be subject to the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and agency-specific Code of Federal Regulations, policies, and Land and Resource Management Plans.

Planned CP Timeline:

- February 2020 Final draft CP is ready for internal NPNHT staff review
- Late Feb./March 2020 Share final draft CP and EA & FONSI (combined) with Tribes and then Other Agencies
- Spring 2020 Share final draft CP, EA and combined FONSI with Stakeholders and public
- Spring 2020 Combined Scoping and Comment period for the EA
- Summer 2020 Draft Decision Notice and Objection period
- Fall 2020 NEPA analysis (EA) for carrying capacity of the NPNHT
- Fall 2020 Final Decision Notice and Final Comprehensive Plan are signed

Sandra Broncheau-McFarland, Administrator, NPNHT

Chief Joseph Pass offers something for everyone this winter

For over 30 years, the Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club, a valley-based all-volunteer non-profit, has designed, maintained, and groomed the trail system at Chief Joseph Pass.

These trails typically have the earliest and best snow conditions for cross-country skiing anywhere in the area. Although donations are always appreciated, trail use is free to everyone!

Located near Lost Trail Pass at the southern end of the Bitterroot Valley, the Chief Joseph Ski Trail System provides almost 30 miles of groomed trails, 10-plus miles of trails designed and groomed specifically for classic-style track-skiing, and 19 miles of multiuse trails groomed for skate skiers.

The trails are groomed Thursday through Sunday as weather and conditions require and/or permit.

Those who wish to snowshoe are welcome on the multi-use trails as are those who ride Fat Tire bikes.

The multi-use trails are dog-friendly and used each winter for what has become, thanks to the Bitterroot Mushers, one of the West's premier dog-sled races.

Several years ago, the Club entered into an agreement with Lost Trail Powder Mountain downhill ski area to use their PistenBully snowcat machines to groom these trails.

The vastly improved trail conditions have attracted skiers from far and wide in numbers that now exceed 12,000 user-days per winter.

The Gordon Reese Cabin, built by the Club's volunteers, is still one of the best and unique warming huts for hundreds of miles in any direction. The hut is available for overnight rental through the Forest Service's rental program.

The Club meets on the second Thursday of each month (November through March) in Hamilton. Meetings are always open to the public and usually include an interesting presentations.

In coordination with area schools, the Club hosts ski lessons for kids. This winter will see the addition of ski lesson programs for adults. Check the Club's Facebook page for updates on ski lessons, all of which are free.

The Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club coordinates with several other valley non-profits, including the Bitterroot Backcountry Cyclists, the Bitterroot Mushers, and the Bitterroot Ridgerunners, to provide excellent wintertime recreation for valley residents and visitors.

Trail maps are available for free from several area locations including sporting goods stores.

By The Ravalli Republic and Mike Hoyt Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club



Gordon Reese warming shelter.

Photo Courtesy of Mike Hoyt

Update of Auto Tour 2 Brochure In Process

The long overdue process of overhauling the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT) Auto Tour brochure for the segment between Orofino, ID, and Lolo, MT, is in underway.

Staff from the NPNHT spent time this past summer collecting information and fresh images along this route. The draft text and photographs were recently submitted to our graphic design team with the Center for Design and Interpretation.

We distributed the first draft in late December 2019 to tribal cultural programs and numerous other partners for their review and input. A second draft was sent out for review on February 13, 2020. We appreciate constructive input and are looking forward to having this new brochure available for the start of the 2020 summer travel season.

We are also doing some minor updates to the other NPNHT Auto Tour brochures and anticipate printing them in the spring of 2020. If you are aware of any significant corrections to any of the brochures, please let us know ASAP!

Thanks everyone for your dedication and helping to provide the best possible information to NPNHT visitors. Every year we receive rave reviews about the brochures, and that is because of everyone who contributes to the end product.

Roger Peterson, Public Affairs Specialist, NPNHT

Ancestral Teachings Keep Hunters Connected to the Land

To some people, hunting is a foreign concept. In the era of readily-packaged meats easily purchased at a nearby grocery store, the need—outside the sport of it—might seem outdated.

Still, there are many people that to this day, choose to or must hunt to put food on the table. Others feel that taking animals themselves is a more ethical way to feed themselves and their family.

For Sandra Broncheau-McFarland, it is all these things and more.

“My father and family started me hunting as part of my culture being Nez Perce and Cherokee,” Broncheau-McFarland said. “It was tradition and necessity.”

Today, Sandra is Administrator for the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail, a job she has been at for 16 years. She grew up on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation, and her father took her hunting on their ancestral lands from the time she was just a baby.

“My dad always talked about the traditions of our tribe, about how the earth and all the plants and animals in it are to be cherished and protected,” Sandra said “We considered animals our kin.”

Sandra carries her father’s lessons from their ancestral teachings with her to this day. She says that many of the core ethics her people have held for millennia are shared by hunters from all backgrounds — from the overall respect for nature and wildlife, to the importance of a clean kill.

“My dad was stern about us not shooting if we could not make a good shot — we didn’t want the animal to suffer.”

After the hunt, they would pray or sing a song to thank the animal for giving its life for them. They would also use every part of the animal, partly out of utility, but mostly out of respect.

“Wasting of any kind is a serious offense and, we believe, is punished by sickness or bad luck in future hunts.”

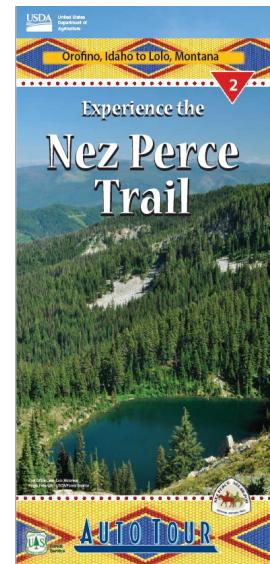
Of course, not everyone is raised in such a tradition. Sandra still acknowledges a unique affinity among hunters from all walks of life. She says that among dedicated hunters like herself, it is not about the trophies or putting food on the table. The affinity is about a shared philosophy and serving an important role in keeping ecological balance.

“Being hunters means belonging to a group of people intimately connected to the land,” Sandra says. “Together, we help to care for the land and keep populations in check.”

Collectively, hunters contribute more to wildlife management than any other organizations through self-imposed excise taxes on equipment and ammunition. These funds go to state fish and wildlife agencies which take on habitat improvement projects and other wildlife conservation efforts. To date, this accounts for nearly \$11 billion.

Today, nearly all of the 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands are open to hunting. To find your next hunting spot, visit our Interactive Visitor Map or call a forest or grassland near you.

Larry Moore, Office of Communication, USDA Forest Service



Sandra Broncheau-McFarland with a white tail buck taken during a hunt. Sandra and her family only eat meat they have taken from wild game like deer, elk, buffalo and turkey.

Photo Courtesy of Mike McFarland



Be Safe in Your Travels

The Staff of the NPNHT want your experience along the Trail this Winter to be a safe one.

Please take a few minutes to review the Trail's Safety and Ethics Website before you begin your journey:
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/npnht/ethics>

Also check weather reports and call ahead for road conditions at 511.

There are links to a number of websites from the NPNHT website.

The NPNHT Auto Tour Route includes a variety of road surfaces (paved, gravel, and dirt). Please be sure to consult a map before embarking on your NPNHT trip.

Many locations along all Auto Tour routes may not have cell phone coverage.

Remember to: Pay attention to wildlife awareness signs along roadways and always drive the posted speed limit.

Montana Tourism 2019: Nonresident Spending Down, Visitor Numbers Up

U.S. Forest Service photo, Roger Peterson



MISSOULA, MT – About 12.6 million nonresidents visited Montana in 2019 and spent around \$3.6 billion in the Treasure State, according to preliminary estimates by the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana.

The number of travelers visiting the state in 2019 appears to have increased slightly, up 2% compared to 2018. Despite the higher number of individual travelers, third quarter spending was down just over 1% compared to third quarter 2018. Slightly smaller group sizes, combined with shorter average stays in Montana resulted in around a 2% decrease in total spending compared to 2018.

Visitor spending during 2019 supported an estimated 40,700 jobs directly and more than 56,000 jobs in total. Associated with those jobs is over \$1.08 billion of labor income directly supported by nonresident spending. An additional \$602 million of labor income is indirectly supported by nonresident travel spending. These travelers contributed more than \$222 million in state and local taxes in 2019.

These figures will be updated this spring, with the most recent fourth quarter data from 2019 replacing the 2018 fourth quarter data used in these early estimates. This preliminary report can be found at <http://itrr.umt.edu/files/Prelim2019NonresExp.pdf> All information and reports published by ITRR are available online at <http://www.itrr.umt.edu>.

UPCOMING Events:



March 15-21, 2020—Professional Trail Builders Association Sustainable Trails Conference, Bentonville, AR

March 20-22, 2020 - Epates Pow Wow, Lapwai, ID

April 18, 2020 - Redheart Memorial, Fort Vancouver, WA

May 18-21, 2020 - 2020 National Trails Workshops Ghost Ranch, NM

June 6, 2020 - National Trails Day

June 13, 2020 - National Get Outdoors Day, fees waived at U.S. Forest Service sites that require a fee, (check with local units)

October 26-30, 2020 - National Trails Workshop in South Carolina



News From the Nez Perce Trail Foundation



Bears Paw mountains of north central Montana.

This trip afforded the opportunity to explore the campsites that the Nez Perce prisoners occupied from 1877 to 1885. Rich in history, we explored and documented the areas and routes from Ft. Leavenworth, Baxter Springs, Quapaw, and Tonkawa.

Matt Nowak, NPTF Membership Director and retired Forester who served at Ft. Leavenworth, guided us to the actual site along the Missouri River. Indicative of their presence, we drove along Nez Perce Way and Chief Joseph Loop framed by the old pecan trees. A low-lying area, it is not hard to imagine the challenges they faced with yearly flooding, disease, and an inhospitable climate during that time.



The Nez Perce were shipped further south to Baxter Springs by rail. The railroad line still exists, as does most of the original town that was frequented by Chief Joseph and his people. They arrived here with several young casualties whose tiny bodies were buried beside the old tracks. Local historian Larry D. O'Neal graciously spent the day with us sharing the local museum exhibits and more local sites related to Joseph's Band. Charlie Moses, Jr. and wife Margaret presented Larry with a beautiful Pendleton blanket to honor his work and dedication in preserving the history of the Nez Perce while in exile. (photo left)

We visited the riverside park near Baxter Springs, KS, where impending yearly floods had invaded the peaceful, modern-day picnic grounds and forced the closing of the park. The Nez Perce had camped here, just outside the town. A kiosk describing the history and story of the Nez Perce still stoically stands amongst the overgrowth and isolation.

Again, moved to another location by the U.S. Government, the prisoners were placed alongside a meandering stream just east of Quapaw, OK. The camp was situated in a prime area, but the main water source was continually contaminated by livestock. Sharing the area with the Modoc exiles also proved to be challenging, as they had occupied higher ground without that issue. Again, Joseph asked the government to be moved again, this time to a valley nearby with cleaner water. This was to be their last camp in Quapaw before moving west towards Tonkawa, OK.

Finally, the remaining survivors were moved by wagon 170 miles west to an area near Ponca City, OK. A small rectangular area was designated as their new home, with abundant game, water, and crop-growing capabilities. Now known as Tonkawa (the Tonkawa Tribe occupied the area after the Nez Perce departure to the Northwest and hence the name), it was thought to be a more suitable location for the exiles.

Just south of Highway 177, a modest cemetery is located containing the remains of many of the Nez Perce who passed away while at this last location. No grave markers exist except for a central pink granite memorial. It is said that mainly children and elderly rest here, and also the son of William Clark *Halax tuuquit* (Daytime Smoker) and a Nez Perce woman. Further down the road, the Tonkawa Tribal Headquarters is found, and we visited with the representatives there. They have been maintaining the cemetery for years and keep it in immaculate condition out of respect.

When the Nez Perce were finally allowed to return to the Northwest, they were escorted northward to the closest railway station at Arkansas City, KS. At this location, they boarded the train that eventually delivered them back to the Northwest, their homelands, and the non-participants in the war. But that is another story to be told. This summer holds further exploration of the routes home; chapters that are so necessary to be included in expansion of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

Participants in this profound journey to Indian Territory included Jim and Bette Zimmerman, Charlie and Margaret Moses, Jr., Matt Nowak, Larry O'Neal, and Karen Heagen.

Jim Zimmerman, NPTF President and Karen Heagen, NPTF Historic Research Coordinator

A Journey to Indian Territory

This past October 2019, the staff of the Nez Perce Trail Foundation (NPTF) conducted their annual B.O.D. meeting in Leavenworth, KS. They also met with city officials to discuss the development of a memorial in town, as the exiled prisoners of the 1877 war and flight of the Nez Perce spent time at Ft. Leavenworth, KS, after arriving from their capture site at Snake Creek near the



L-R: Larry O'Neal, Margaret Moses, Bette Zimmerman, Jim Zimmerman, Charlie Moses, Jr., and Karen Heagen visit the Nez Perce kiosk site at Baxter Springs, KS.

Photos Courtesy of Karen Hagen NPTF



Charlie Moses at the Arkansas City, KS, railroad yard.

Photos Courtesy of Karen Hagen NPTF

News From the Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club

In 2019, the Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club (NPApHC) completed its fourth year of Trail Clearing work on the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail. This year in 2019 the NPApHC cleared and reopened approximately 1.5 miles of trail from the intersection of Forest Roads 107 and 500 to where the trail intersects the 500 road near the Devils Chair (see attached map right).

This year's work on the Trail was very difficult and challenging. The trail was very overgrown with trees and shrubs and had numerous large trees (2-4 feet in diameter) that needed to be sawed and cleared. But once the trail was cleared, the trail tread was very evident with a majority being 2-3 feet in width and 6 inches to 1 foot in depth.



Photo Courtesy of Emmet E Taylor Jr.

Given the difficulty of the overgrowth and downed trees, it took the NPApHC more time per mile than in previous years. The NPApHC did the regular 4-day camping and work on the trail but had to send a contingency of works up on two additional trips to finish the section completed this year. The NPApHC was very determined to finish this section as the annual Appaloosa Horse Club - Chief Joseph Trail Ride goes through this area in early August of 2020.

The first hitch occurred August 15-18, 2019. This hitch included 12 adults and 6 youth NPApHC members. This included 4 sawyers and multiple trail clearers. An important part of the trail clearing process is to ride horses on the

cleared trail to work up the trail tread and make sure all branches and such are cleared sufficiently. The club brought up 6 horses and road the cleared trail 3 times. Nez Perce Historical Trail markers were posted throughout the newly cleared trail.

The second hitch was on Sunday October 6, 2019 and included 3 members. There were 2 sawyers and 1 trail clearer. This hitch was particularly challenging in that there between 2-6 inches of snow on the ground.

The third hitch was on Saturday October 19, 2019 and included 2 members.

Emmit E Taylor Jr., Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club

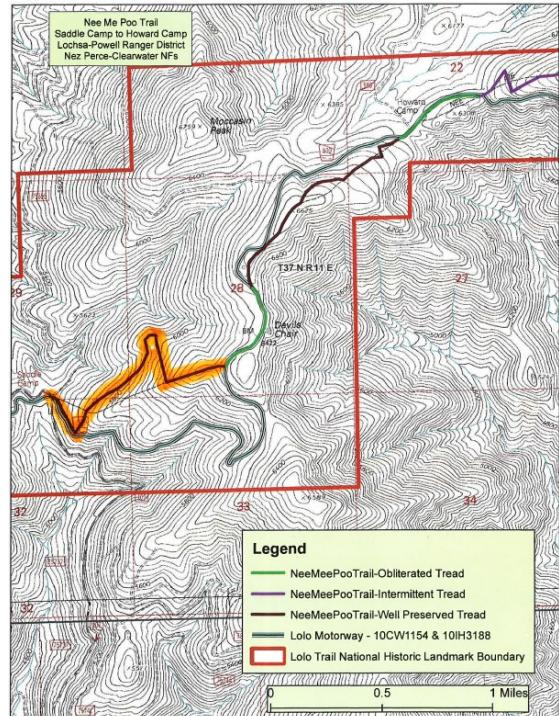


Photo Courtesy of Emmet E Taylor Jr.



News From the National Park Service: Nez Perce National Historical Park

Nez Perce National Historical Park invites you and your family to explore the new exhibits in the Cultural Walkway at the Clearwater River Casino and Lodge this winter. Park curators, in collaboration with casino staff, created exhibits that highlight the partnership between the National Park Service and the Nez Perce Tribe. Items on display are exclusively from the Nez Perce Tribe's collection and most have never been seen before. The exhibits include cornhusk bags, beadwork, children's toys, rodeo-themed objects, and more. The new exhibits will be on display until November 2020.

The Park's cultural resources staff shared their knowledge with the public in November at Caring for Your Collections Day. Visitors learned techniques to safeguard their family heirlooms, photographs, textiles, and books. The event also offered visitors the chance to see items from the museum vault up close.

Thirty artisans from across the northwest showcased their art to more than 350 visitors at this year's Beadwork Bazaar. More than a two-decade long winter tradition at the Park, Beadwork Bazaar treats visitors to a wide selection of traditional and contemporary Nez Perce art including jewelry, paintings, sculptures, clothing, and much more. Each year, the event provides visitors a wonderful opportunity to find a one-of-a-kind holiday gift with a unique story. Thank you to the artists and visitors who continue to make this tradition a success year after year.

Each month this winter, guest speakers have presented topics related to change and western influence on the Nez Perce people at the Spalding Visitor Center. The series wraps up with Trevor J. Bond's presentation about the journey of the Spalding-Allen Collection on Saturday, March 21, from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. PDT.

The New Year has brought three new staff members and the Park would like to extend a warm welcome to Museum Tech Lynne Pinkham, Chief of Interpretation; Laura Law; and Biotech Mary James. We would also like to thank acting Chief of Interpretation Heather Boothe and Maintenance Worker Tanner Rien for their time spent at the Park this past year.

Kelly Kincaid. Administrative Assistant, Nez Perce National Historical Park



Photos Courtesy of the National Park Service



News From the National Park Service: Big Hole National Battlefield

Winter has officially set in and the visitor center at Big Hole National Battlefield is operating on winter hours of 10 am. – 5 p.m. Wednesday –Sunday. The road to the lower parking lot and trailheads are now closed and access to the lower lot and trails will be by walking, snowshoeing, or cross country skiing only.

While spring and summer may seem a long way off, we are busy preparing for the upcoming season. Dates for our eleventh annual Coyote Camp have been set for May 18-May 22, 2020, and tentative dates for the Summer Speaker Series programs are weekends starting July 4 through August 23. We will be looking for cultural demonstrators who are interested in participating in Coyote Camp and/or the Summer Speaker Series. Housing, mileage, per diem, and honorarium will be provided. If you are interested in being a part of either (or both) of these exciting programs please contact the Park for an application at (406) 689-3155 or e-mail:

BIHO_Visitor_Information@nps.gov. All applications must be received by March 1, 2020.

To help provide the best experience possible while protecting the site, we hope to bring on both interpretive and maintenance summer seasonal(s), Student Conservation Association interns, volunteers, and multiple youth for our Youth Conservation Corp. Check out our Facebook site at <https://www.facebook.com/> for additional information and updates as they happen. For this winter, new to our Facebook site are videos posted for Museum Monday, Trivia Tuesday, Wildlife Wednesday, and Trail Thursdays. We are also now on Instagram! Check us out at <https://www.instagram.com/bigholenps/>

On the maintenance side... staff is performing winter snow removal duties, winter monitoring of the Parks critical systems, and are in the planning stage for the upcoming spring and summer projects. These projects include structural fire upgrades to facilities, snow retention system for park visitor center and housing, rehabilitation of several Park housing units and upgrading windows, and boundary fence replacement.

If you are looking for something to do this winter stop in and see us!

Leslie Lula, Park Guide and Jimmer Stevenson, Maintenance Lead Big Hole National Battlefield



Photo Courtesy of the National Park Service



News From the Forest Service

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Lolo Pass Visitor Center

For those who love snow, Lolo Pass has been a great place to be this winter. We kicked off the new year with a Full Moon Event on January 10. Visitors were treated to fresh snow, a live band, nature crafts, and plenty of holiday fun. (*photo right*)

We wrapped up January with a Family Snow Day Event on January 26. This family event was a joint effort between the Forest Service and some amazing partners: REI Missoula, Missoula Nordic Club, Missoula Snowgoers, Missoula Parks and Recreation, and the West Central Montana Avalanche Center. The event encouraged families to get outdoors, enjoy their public lands, and try new winter activities together. The weather cooperated and provided fresh falling snow, helping to entice many families outdoors. (*photo right*)

In February, we will be kicking off our Winter Brown Bag Lunch Speaker Series. We will be bringing in speakers to highlight some of the great work being done on the Forest, creative collaborative projects, research, and interesting local history. Stay tuned for details about more events in the future. (*photo below*)

For the most up to date information about happenings at Lolo Pass, call the visitor center at (208) 942-3113 and follow them on Facebook at [bit.ly/FB-LPVC](https://www.facebook.com/bit.ly/FB-LPVC). Lolo Pass Visitor Center is currently open 7:30 a.m.–4:15 p.m. (PST), Thursday through Monday.

Hope you will join us!

Buffie Cerutti Stewart, Manager
Lolo Pass Visitor Center
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest



U.S. Forest Service photos



U.S. Forest Service photo



New Faces Along the Trail:

The Bitterroot National Forest's new Stevensville District ranger is no stranger to the valley.

Steve Brown's roots run deep in the Bitterroot. He was 20 years old when he first moved West and fell in love with the wild places he found in the surrounding mountains and the people who called this place home. Brown recently turned 44.

"When we moved back to the Bitterroot in 2003, I came on a six-month temporary contract with the Forest Service," Brown said. "I made the decision then that I wanted to live here even if I had to swing a hammer to do it."

It took five or six years of temporary positions before he finally got a permanent job with the Bitterroot National Forest. When Forest Supervisor Matt Anderson asked Brown if he was interested in the ranger's position at Stevensville, he told his boss that this was already his home.

"I told him that I had determined a long time ago the Bitterroot is where I wanted to live," Brown said, while sitting at his kitchen table at his home on Illinois Bench Road. "For that reason, I had little to no interest in moving somewhere else to become a ranger, but I was very interested in becoming a ranger here."

"This is the community that I'm vested in," he said. "I feel like I've kind of grown up here. ... I feel like this is where I found myself and this is where I belong. I can't imagine a better place to spend my career."

Brown was officially named the ranger in November after serving as the interim for several months.

He takes over the reins at a time when the Bitterroot Forest is trying a new large-scale approach of addressing land management in a plan that would consider the entire Bitterroot Front, from Sula north to Florence. The agency unveiled the concept to its proposed "Bitterroot Front Plan" in a series of meetings over the last month.

The meetings, meant to serve as a starting point for gathering information on what the public wants to see happen along the expansive area, left many in the public and the agency with more questions than answers. Brown said that's something he plans to address.

"It is a process that we're figuring out on a fly," Brown said. "I think it's one that has a lot of potential, but it's different enough that it's left some people feeling skeptical."

Brown is used to being at the forefront. With the graduate degree he earned in remote sensing and satellite imagery analysis, he worked on a project to validate the detection and monitoring algorithms for large wildfires that were eventually used to do the first satellite mapping of wildfires in 2000.

Since then, he's served as the program manager of the Northern Region's Geospatial Group. He has worked in Montana and Idaho conducting vegetation surveys in support of the region's vegetation mapping program.

In 2017, he served as the incident commander for the Regional Post-Fire Incident Management Team that coordinated the regional response to the historic fire season that year. Brown said those experiences will be valuable as the Bitterroot National Forest works to develop its new process to put together the Bitterroot Front Project.

"I've always enjoyed the challenge and puzzle of trying to figure out something new and make it work," Brown said. "I think that's why I was always intrigued by remote sensing and geospatial science. There is always something new in the field, especially in the Forest Service."

"There's not a long history of 100 years with someone being able to say this is how we do it," he said. "It was more like, 'Hey. Can you figure this out?' For most of my career, I searched out ways to find the answers to the questions by using technology that helps us do our work better. I see this new approach that we're trying here on the front as being very similar to that. It's something where I don't have many people to lean on and ask, 'Hey, what do I do next?'"

Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor Matt Anderson said he thinks people are going to enjoy working with Brown.

"He has a natural leadership style," Anderson said. "He's a great listener, has a solid work ethic and has demonstrated an ability to get work done on a landscape level. Steve's been working at a regional level most of his career, and this position will allow him to bring that larger perspective to Stevensville, a place he's called home for the last 20 years."

Brown lives on a small farm northeast of Stevensville with his wife, Amanda, and daughter, Shaelynn. The family has a herd of 30 lowline Hereford cattle that Brown's daughter has worked to build since she was a young girl. When he's not working, Brown can be found out custom haying, riding his Morgans in the Bitterroot's backcountry or chasing elk high up in the Sapphires.

Brown said he was "incredibly excited" about this opportunity.

"For me, this was an incredibly easy job to walk into," he said. "Almost from day one of walking into the Stevensville office, it felt like I belonged there. I know people in the district and the forest. I've spent 20 years roaming around this landscape, so I knew that. I knew the people in the community. It just felt right from Day 1."

"I want folks to know I'm willing to work with to help the forest and the community be successful together," Brown said. "I want them to know what they hear from me, they can trust. They aren't going to hear one thing from me one day and something else another day."

"My goal is when I retire from being a ranger when I walk out the door everyone in the district and the community says, 'Man he was the best ranger we ever had.'"

By Perry Backus Ravalli Republic

Wiswell serving as new Recreation Specialist for Wallowa-Whitman National Forest



Sam Wiswell is a new addition to the Recreation program of the Wallowa Mountains Office of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Sam started the position in late October 2019 and is primarily focused on managing the wilderness and recreation special uses programs while also providing support to trails and developed and dispersed recreation. Prior to arriving on the Wallowa-Whitman, Sam worked on the Ashley National Forest in NE Utah and the Custer-Gallatin National Forest in SW Montana, serving in various rolls across wilderness, trails, and developed and disperse recreation. He is eager and excited to be supporting both the Forest and local communities in NE Oregon and western Idaho in managing recreational opportunities in this spectacular area.

Sam was born and raised in Jackson, WY, and graduated from University of Wyoming in 2017. In his free time, he enjoys getting outside, running, skiing, biking, and backpacking. He also enjoys spending time outdoors, listening to live music, and volunteering as a skiing and running coach. He has been cross country skiing since he could walk and is an avid trail runner and mountain biker in the warmer months.

Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Hires Executive Director

The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation announced December 5 that it has hired Sarah Cawley as executive director to lead the national nonprofit organization.

Her position will begin January 2 at the LCTHF's headquarters in Great Falls, M. She will fill a position that has been vacant for several months.

During the last three years, Cawley was the executive director of the nonprofit Sawtooth Interpretive and Historical Association, Stanley, ID. She oversaw the Association's Redfish Visitor Center and Stanley Museum. She worked closely with the U.S. Forest Service to provide educational and outdoor experiences for the public visiting the 756,000-acre Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

Lou Ritten, LCTHF president, said Cawley will be a strong advocate for increasing public education and involvement in the story of the 1803-06 expedition. The 50-year-old LCTHF is the national steward for promoting the story of the explorers through public education and recreational opportunities, and preservation and enhancement of the 4,900-mile Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail through 18 states and along the Ohio, Mississippi, Missouri, Snake, and Columbia rivers.

"The sum total of Sarah's work experience, education, and enthusiastic personality is an excellent fit with our organization," Ritten said. "She is the type of creative, hardworking leader who will help us increase public awareness and participation in the Lewis and Clark story."

Cawley is a 2016 graduate of the State University of New York. She majored in environmental education and interpretation, and minored in recreational and visitor management.

In her position with the Sawtooth Association, she oversaw a lecture series, historical festivals, oral history projects, fundraising, retail operations, membership, and a seasonal staff of eight employees.

She also has experience in previous positions in New York and Massachusetts in developing educational interpretive programs and leading outdoor adventures for adults and school children.

Cawley became interested in the LCTHF through her curiosity about the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

"I've been intrigued by the explorers and what there is to learn about them beyond the historical signs that we see along roadsides," she said. "I've backpacked parts of their trail and studied such topics as the botany and Native American cultures they reported about in their journals. Their story is an important part of our country's history that all Americans should know about."

Margaret Gorski, a past LCTHF president and chair of the 7-member search committee for the position, said committee members were particularly impressed by Cawley's enthusiasm for helping people of all ages grow their appreciation for the Lewis and Clark story. Also impressive, Gorski continued, were Cawley's understanding of how to develop and maintain partnerships with federal agencies and citizen groups, as well as Native American tribes along the National Lewis and Clark Trail. "We are excited to have her join us and are looking forward to her leadership," Gorski said.



Partnership hires Interim Executive Director and Advocacy and Policy Coordinator

The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) Board of Directors has approved the hiring of an Interim Executive Director and an Advocacy and Policy Coordinator to lead the Partnership during a nine-month transition period before a permanent Executive Director is appointed.

Both actions were based on recommendations from the Transition Task Force, which has been working for nearly a year to prepare for the retirement of Executive Director Gary Werner on February 9, 2020.

Karen Crossley of Madison, WI, (*photo right*) will serve as Interim Executive Director, beginning on January 21, 2020. She has extensive experience in nonprofit organizations, management, and fundraising, and has served as an Interim Executive Director for two Madison based organizations – Sustain Dane and The Foundation for Madison's Public Schools. Karen will work closely with the Board in managing financial activities, staff and contractors, coordinating activities of the Trail Leaders Council, preparing the organization to move its offices to Washington, D.C., and assuring that the organization is aligned with its existing Strategic Plan, among other duties.



Photo Courtesy of PNTS



In addition, former PNTS Board Member Kathy DeCoster (*photo left*) who recently retired as Vice President and Director of Federal Affairs at The Trust for Public Land, has agreed to serve as a contractor and coordinate the Partnership's work on advocacy and policy issues from January 21, 2020 to mid-September, 2020.

Kathy will keep the PNTS Board and Trail Leaders Council up to date on federal policy issues, work with the Advocacy & Policy Committee, represent PNTS at Congressional hearings, and help maintain and strengthen communications with our federal agency partners.

Both Crossley and DeCoster were involved in planning for and participating in Hike the Hill, February 8-13, 2020, in Washington, D.C.

“We are delighted to have both Karen Crossley and Kathy DeCoster joining our team of trails professionals,” said Liz Bergeron, Chair of the Transition Task Force. “They bring the exceptional experience and expertise that we need during a time of transition and immense change.”

“We appreciate Gary Werner’s willingness to work with Karen and Kathy and share his extraordinary expertise as he winds down his decades-long leadership of the Partnership,” said Barney Mann, PNTS Board President. The Task Force expects to begin a search for a permanent Executive Director immediately after Hike the Hill aiming toward a September 2020 start date.

Additional updates can be found at the PNTS website: <http://pnts.org/new/pnts-leadership-and-headquarters-update/>

Maci MacPherson to Manage Travelers' Rest, Fort Owen and Painted Rocks State Parks



Montana State Parks welcomed Maci MacPherson as the new Park manager in October of 2019.

MacPherson grew up going to state parks in Montana and Oregon, which strongly influenced her career choices. Before joining Montana State Parks, Maci worked at a number of National Parks around the West, gaining extensive experience in interpretation, tribal relations, and community partnerships.

MacPherson has a B.S in Fish and Wildlife Management from Montana State University and a M.S. in Science Education from Oregon State University.



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Winter Along the Nez Perce National Historic Trail



Castle Geyser, Yellowstone National Park
National Park Service photo, Jacob Frank



Chief Joseph Scenic Ski Area, MT
U.S. Forest Service photo, Roger Peterson



Henrys Lake, ID
Bureau of Land Management photo



Moon setting over the Bitterroot Mountains
U.S. Forest Service photo, Roger Peterson



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