

Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew 2019 Annual Report



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FROM THE SUPERVISOR



The Ketchum Ranger District has a world class trail system that I am proud to help maintain. My passion for trails is unwavering. As I look at our local community during the summer months, I know the work our crew completes helps drive our economy. I look forward to many more summers on the Ketchum Ranger District helping progress our already outstanding trail system.

The summer of 2019 is one to remember. The avalanche cycle during the spring of 2019 left expansive debris piles across our trail system. The crew worked diligently to clear the debris piles. There is still more work to be done in response to this avalanche cycle and we are currently writing grants and making plans to make lasting repairs to these affected trails.

Our ability to meet our trail users high standards would not be possible without our partners. They have supported this crew both financially and physically for the last four seasons without fail. During these trying times of federal support, we will continue to lean on them to make sure we have boots on the ground completing meaningful trail work that will continue to enhance our trail system.

This season we had an exceptional trail crew. Their work ethic and attitude has been outstanding through a rather tough summer of maintenance and project work. Having a six person professional trail crew on the Ketchum Ranger District is key to ensuring our trails remain resilient and enjoyable. Six crew members is an ideal number. In the spring we can work in three groups of two doing logcut. During our core season we routinely have two to three corps crews on the district. Each of these crews requires at minimum two Ketchum Trail Crew Members to ensure work is meeting our standards. While we are in the core season working with corps crews we also like to have at least two crew members performing maintenance throughout the Ketchum Ranger District. Any less than six crew members leaves us lacking during this busy time of the season.

Thank you to all our partners and donors who have helped ensure our Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew has the supplies we need, tools to do the job right, and a well staffed crew to meet the needs of our trail users.

Sincerely,

Justin Blackstead

Trail Crew Supervisor/ Ketchum Ranger District

STAFF



Justin Blackstead: Trail Crew Supervisor

Prior to coming to the Ketchum Ranger District in 2016, Justin spent five seasons on the McCall Ranger District Trail Crew and four seasons as an Idaho Department Of Parks and Recreation Trail Ranger. Justin enjoys all forms of two wheeled recreation and taking his family out hiking to look at projects.

Emil Harry: Trail Crew Foreman

Emil started his career on the Krassel Ranger District Trail Crew. From there he went into wildland fire fighting working on Snowslide Wild Land Fire Module and the Boise Hotshots. Reconnecting with his passion for trail work he worked for Boise Ridge to Rivers before making the Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew his home.

Sam Cuthell: Trail Crew Foreman

Sam has worked on trail crews for the Civilian Conservation Corps, National Park Service and the Forest Service. Currently studying Park and Conservation Management at Paul Smith's College he looks forward to a career in land management. In his spare time Sam enjoys finding the tastiest local foods to fill his belly.

Kya Goldschlager: Trail Crew Member

Kya has dabbled in trails for the last decade. A recent transplant to the Ketchum area this is Kyas first season with the Forest Service. Kya enjoys long distance bike travel, especially in new terrain.

Emily Rodrigue: Trail Crew Member

Emily spent the summer of 2018 on the SCA trail crew out of Challis Idaho. She decided to join the Forest Service to pursue a career in land management and community stewardship. In her spare time Emily enjoys skiing and outdoor culinary experiences.

Naomi Oberg: Trail Crew Member

Naomi is another fellow 2018 SCA trail crew alumni. She is currently pursuing a degree in Biology from Westminster College. When not working on trails she spends her time climbing, backpacking, and pool sharking.

Taylor Blea: Trail Crew Member

This was Taylors first season in the trails world. Currently studying Construction Management at Northern Arizona University he looks forward to working his summers during college on the Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew.

PROFESSIONAL/AGENCY PARTNERS



Season Stats for Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew

Miles of trail maintained: 276.2

Trees Removed from trails: 1,327

Drains Installed or cleaned: 483

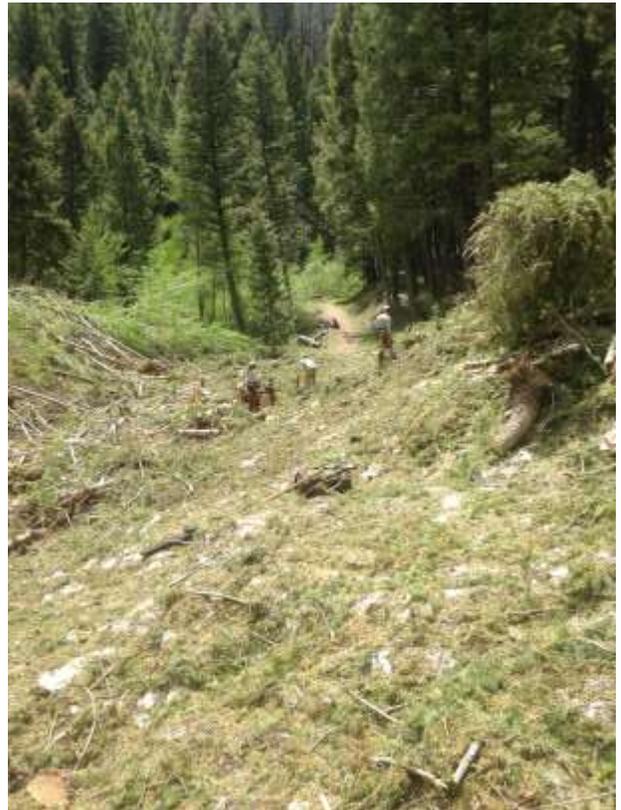
Feet of trail brushed: 130,714

Feet of tread improvement: 29,116



Avalanche Clearing

The spring of 2019 produced a massive avalanche cycle that had dire effects on many of our trails. The Ketchum Ranger District responded quickly and effectively to this challenge. During the summer we cut out 19 debris piles that completely blocked access to many of our trails. Additionally, some avalanches were unsafe to cut through so we worked with the Student Conservation Association to create sustainable re-routes around these safety hazards.



Major Projects

Osberg Bridge Removal

The third bridge on Osberg Ridge (#147) was severely affected by avalanche debris for the last three springs. The bridge had become a hazard for all users to cross. We used explosives to remove the bridge and then went in with an eight person SCA crew and the Ketchum Trail Crew to create a sustainable crossing.



Little Wood Trail Reconstruction

The Ketchum Trail Crew worked with Idaho Conservation Corp to do major trail maintenance to the Copper Creek Trail (#176) and Buckhorn Trail (#179). The crew was packed in for 5 weeks on an extended backcountry hitch where they re-treaded the trail, beat back the brush, built new grade reversals and repaired turnpikes.

Pioneer Cabin Bridge

The Pioneer Cabin Trail (#122) is one of the more popular trails on the Ketchum Ranger District. The footbridge near the trail head was rotten all the way through and falling apart, causing a major safety concern. The Ketchum Trail Crew removed the old bridge, built new rock abutments, dropped and peeled new logs and built a bridge that should last for decades.



Partners

This season we worked with Idaho Conservation Corps, Student Conservation Association and Idaho Trails Association on trails projects. Throughout the course of the season, we worked with 26 youth and young adults, teaching them trail skills, backcountry ethics, and instilled a hard work ethic with them. Ensuring we have a professional Ketchum Trail Crew to manage these crews is crucial to getting meaningful trail work accomplished with these programs.

Idaho Conservation Corps: We oversaw the work of a Basic Leadership Program with ICC in the Little Wood area. Working from Mormon Hill, we accomplished 12,071 feet of tread work and brushing over a 5 week backcountry hitch. The crew consisted of ten students ages 17-19 and two ICC crew leaders.

Student Conservation Association: The SCA joined forces with the Ketchum Trail Crew to finish the new tread at the old bridge site on the third Osberg Bridge. Then we moved them to Warfield and completed a 700 foot realignment around a hazardous avalanche debris pile. After those projects were completed they were hungry for more, so we did heavy maintenance on Barr Gulch as well as the upper reaches of Osberg Ridge.

Idaho Trails Association: This season we assisted ITA with an inaugural youth program. We had 5 high school students from the local area. Work was completed on the Baker Cr– Norton Cr trail. Additionally we teamed up with ITA and Wood River Trails Coalition to facilitate a women's only trail work weekend on Baker Lake Trail. 12 women donated 14 hours of their time to work hard on this iconic trail.



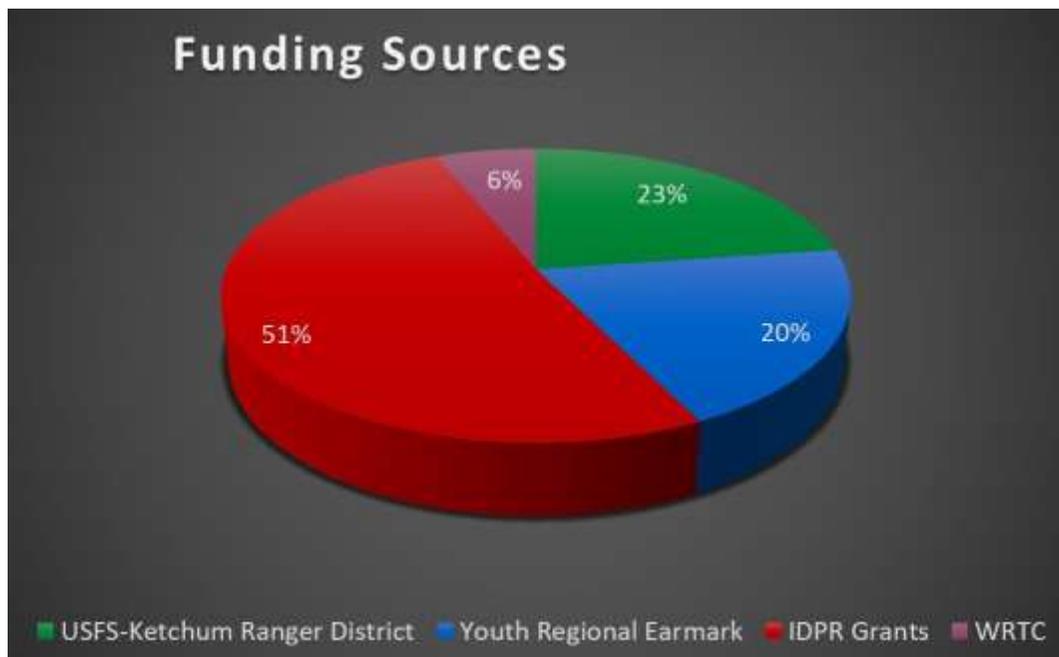
Volunteers

Wood River Trails Coalition: All of our volunteer events during the summer of 2019 were facilitated by the WRTC. Executive Director Sara Gress worked with members of the Ketchum Trail Crew to ensure work was done safely. Projects included collecting rocks for the Pioneer Cabin Bridge abutments, basic maintenance on multiple trails, heavy maintenance on the newly constructed Alden Gulch Trail, and a rake out of Forbidden Fruit. Throughout the summer a total of 131 volunteers worked 471 hours on the Ketchum Ranger District.

Idaho Mountain Dirt Bike Riders Association: Our local off road motorbike club worked diligently to log out our motorized trails throughout the season. This resource is vital to our crew to help with keeping our trails open. Their consistent availability to respond after wind events and storms to re log out our motorized trails is remarkable. Throughout the season they donated their time and equipment for over 200 hours.



FUNDING



Budget: \$134,339

Trail Crew Wages: \$62,899

Youth Corps: \$61,413

Materials, Supplies and Packing: \$10,027

100% of our budget goes directly to boots on the ground and tools in the dirt. This efficient use of funding ensures that Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) and the Wood River Trails Coalition (WRTC) are funding meaningful trail work on the Ketchum Ranger District. Continuing to lean on outside funding sources is imperative for the future of the Ketchum Trail Crew.

NEXT SEASON'S GOALS

- Re-build Rooks Creek Trail: We hope to increase sustainability of this iconic trail while not decreasing its technical nature. We are hoping to secure funding for a 5 week hitch with one of our partners.
- Re-Build Porcupine Trail: This trail has been affected by fire, flooding and avalanches and is due for a major overhaul. We will be working with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Trail Cat to rebuild the ATV section and will be spending 2 weeks of crew time in the backcountry cutting out avalanche debris.
- Continue Little Wood Heavy Maintenance: The Little Wood Drainage has not had significant trail crew presence since before the Beaver Creek Fire. This season we made a large dent in back logged maintenance on Copper Creek and Buck Horn, but there is still plenty of work to do. We plan to work with one of our partners to spend another 5 weeks in the drainage focusing on Long Gulch, Little Wood River Trail and the backside of Federal Gulch.
- Explore options for a connecting trail between Eves and Rooks: Originally slated for this summer, with the amount of avalanche debris early season this project was put on hold. Barring any natural disasters we hope to finish a Categorical Exclusion and secure funding for this new trail project. The ground this trail traverses is challenging and the feasibility of this new trail construction is still not determined but we will get out there and actively pursue all options.

