

# Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew 2021 Annual Report



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## Season Stats for Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew 2021

**Miles of trail maintained: 257.35**

**Trees removed from trails: 1,033**

**Drains installed or cleaned: 633**

**Feet of trail brushed: 77,130**

**Feet of tread improvement: 20,195**



## Minor Projects

**This season the Ketchum Ranger District was able to concentrate on smaller projects that will have a long-term positive impact on the overall sustainability of our trail system. Below is a list of some of these projects, including but not limited to:**

- **Rock work on multiple stream crossings on Red Warrior**
- **15' armored stream crossing on Harpers**
- **200' tread work on Oregon Gulch**
- **20' crib wall on Eves**
- **New bridge on North Fork Hyndman**
- **Multiple retaining walls on Bear Gulch**
- **Reconstructed turns on Imperial**
- **Multiple new signs installed throughout the trail system**
- **10' retaining wall on Chocolate**
- **Rebuilt small bridge on Greenhorn**



## PK Pass/ Iron Mine Reconstruction

PK Pass/ Iron Mine Trail serves as a critical link to the Little Wood River drainage from the East Fork Road. This trail had not seen a concentrated effort from a professional trail crew to ensure its sustainability for multiple decades. This summer we worked with the Student Conservation Association to rework the entire trail to bring it back into a sustainable state.

In 2020, we applied for and received funds from the Great American Outdoors Act to hire a packer and the Student Conservation Association for a total of twenty working days with twelve skilled trail crew members. During this time we performed heavy maintenance on 11 miles of trail. Having a packer assist with transporting our tools and supplies significantly increased the productivity of our crews.

This project was a success, and if you have never been on this trail, we highly suggest you add it to your to do list for next summer! PK Pass/ Iron Mine makes for a great overnight backpacking adventure out our back door when you connect it to the Federal Gulch trail.



## Forbidden Fruit Extension and Reconstruction

This fall we were able to complete phase 1 of the Adams Gulch Adaptive Sports Enhancement Project. This phase including rebuilding the existing Forbidden Fruit Trail, a local favorite for our vibrant mountain-bike community. This trail was starting to deteriorate and needed more work than a hand crew could perform. At the same time, we extended the trail all the way to Adams Gulch Road, hopefully leading to reduction of near collisions on Eves Gulch while also providing a longer sustained flow-trail experience.

We hired Titus Trails to do this work and could not be more pleased with the end product. Their professionalism and attention to detail was tangible throughout the construction process. Thanks to Brian Vaughn, Jess Simon and Tristan Greaves, your work will be enjoyed for years to come.

This project was a product of passionate community members and partners coming together to work toward a common goal. Without the help of the National Forest Foundation, Wood River Trails Coalition, Higher Ground, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, and our local trail community, this project would not be the success story it has become.



# STAFF



Left to Right: Justin, Brianna, Emily, Lisa, Caroline, Benny, and Heather

## **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.

## **Benny Harken: Trail Crew Foreman**

Benny started with the Utah Conservation Corps, then landed his first Forest Service job working on the Tahoe National Forest. He then worked on the Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest in Colorado for two seasons.

## **Emily Rodrigue: Trail Crew Member**

This was Emily's third season with the KRD Trail Crew. In addition to performing her trail crew duties this summer, Emily was also managing a trail survey/visitor impact project for the Wood River Trails Coalition.

## **Caroline Van Hook: Trail Crew Member**

Caroline worked with Idaho Conservation Corps from 2013-2016 before joining the Sawtooth National Recreation Area Trail Crew in 2017. She has worked for the Ketchum RD Trail Crew since 2018.

## **Lisa Miester: Trail Crew Member**

Lisa got her start in trail work with the Student Conservation Association in 2018. She spent the following years with assorted trail and ecological restoration focused non-profits in Washington State.

## **Brianna Johnson: Trail Crew Member**

Brianna worked with the SCA in Tuskegee National Forest in 2017 before continuing trail work along the Appalachian Trail and in Upstate New York. She recently graduated with a B.A. in Biological Sciences.

## **Heather Johnson: Trail Crew Member**

Heather worked four seasons with different conservation corps, before joining the Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew in 2021. She is currently studying Field Ecology at Ohio University.

# Partners

**Wood River Trails Coalition:** This season the WRTC hosted numerous volunteer events on Ketchum Ranger District trails. This included rock and drainage work on Cow Creek, maintenance on Forbidden Fruit and Alden Gulch, and a Women's Only Weekend on West Fork of Trail Creek trail in partnership with Idaho Trails Association, and an assortment of other projects across the valley. The WRTC also started the Trail Boss program this season. This initiative helped local trail enthusiasts gain tangible skills and knowledge in sustainable trail building techniques with specialized training sessions and small group projects on the KRD. The program had six engaged volunteers this season, and the WRTC plans to continue the program next year.

One of our Trail Crew members, Emily Rodrigue, worked part time for the WRTC as a Trails Specialist this summer. Her project in that role was to complete an in-depth trail use survey across the KRD trail system. The data for this project was collected both with infrared trail counters and with an online survey. Counters were placed and moved strategically across the trail system, and trail users were surveyed at trailheads on almost every weekend this summer. The WRTC partnered with the Environmental Resource Center to utilize their summer fellows to help survey trailheads; this allowed the WRTC to collect more data and provided an on-the-ground research experience for the fellows. This project was a great success and will help us to learn more about use and preferences within our trail system.

**Idaho Mountain Dirt Bike Riders Association:** Our local off-road motorbike club has worked diligently to log out our motorized trails for decades. This season, they went above and beyond to ensure our trails are open to all users. Their consistent availability to respond after wind events and storms to re-log out our motorized trails is remarkable. This generous group donated their time and equipment without asking for anything in return but a thank you when you see them on the trail.





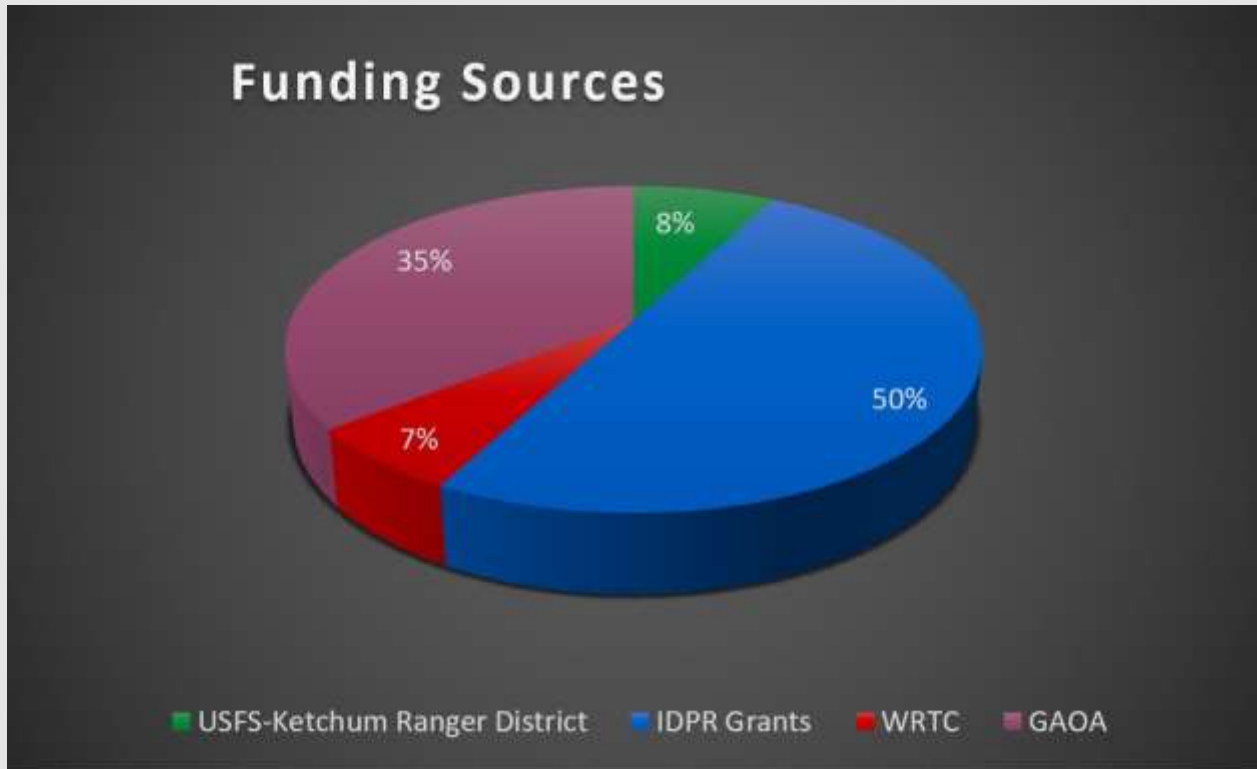
# PROFESSIONAL/AGENCY PARTNERS



student  
conservation  
association



# FUNDING



**Budget: \$151,860**

Trail Crew Wages: \$96,609.53

Youth Corps: \$40,000

Packing: \$11,000

Materials and Supplies: \$4250.47

**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), National Forest Foundation (NFF), 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 Ranger District Trail Crew. This season we received funds from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) for the PK Pass Project. These funds are single use and will not be available next season.

## NEXT SEASON'S GOALS

- Adams Gulch Adaptive Sports Enhancement Project, Phase 2. During this phase we will be rebuilding the bridges in the Adams Gulch drainage and reconfiguring the parking layout. Currently, the bridges in Adams Gulch are too narrow for adaptive cyclists to use. In addition, during the floods of 2017, the bridges fell prey to the rising waters. The plan is to install new bridges that are a bit farther above bank full while also creating a safe crossing for all our valued trail users. The Adams Gulch Trailhead has seen a rise in use over the last five years, escalating the immediate need to reconfigure the parking lot and upgrade the single-vault toilet to a double.
- We plan to continue to complete the smaller projects around our district. Our base trail infrastructure is starting to turn the tide to sustainability. Over the last decade, we have been focused on rebuilding after fires and floods, and as a result, many small projects had to be put on the back burner. We are excited to start plugging away at the projects that may have seemed lesser in importance overall, but are the little things that keep our trail system in tip-top shape, such as rebuilding retaining walls, installing new trail signs, and hardening existing trail surfaces.



Photo: Max Benz