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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: 2023 Youth Volunteers from IDAWA, Dallas County Conservation

> The Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation is a 50I(c)(3) non-profit organization.

> > SELWAYBITTERROOT.ORG



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LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

I was born and raised in Detroit. So, what do I know about Wilderness? Not as much as I'd like, but I learn more every year. Having been on nearly 25 volunteer projects with SBFC, I know that what brings us out there is our love of the open spaces, the solitude, the beauty, the comradery of eating with friends by the campfire, and the starry sky at night. I know that what matters, once you put on your pack and leave the trailhead, is "How far



is our hike today? How much elevation gain will there be? How is the weather looking? What's for dinner?" The people who lace up their boots and enter the Wilderness are hikers, backpackers, fishermen and women, hunters, etc. We have different reasons for going to the Wilderness, but what we all share is a love and appreciation for these wild places.

We know that not everyone embraces every provision of the Wilderness Act. I have three grandchildren under the age of 3½ and I can safely say that no one, at any age, likes being told they can't do something. But I think that what we agree on and what we gain is greater than what we disagree on. The benefits of having these Wilderness areas far outweighs the costs.

SBFC is committed to connecting people with Wilderness. We encourage anyone who has an inkling of an interest to come out on a trail project with us and see what it's all about. This is what I did I6 years ago when I signed up for my first volunteer project with SBFC, and the experience has had a huge impact on my life and who I am. Please consider joining us. Check out the opportunities at www.selwaybitterroot.org. Get in on the fun!

> JIM HEIDELBERGER **Board Chair**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"If you can get people out there, they will be hooked for life." This quote, paraphrased from the late Connie Saylor Johnson, often runs through my mind while thinking about our mission at SBFC. Our staff, Wilderness Ranger Fellows, and volunteers work thousands of hours in the wilderness each season. Keeping the landscape wild and trails open is incredibly important. But what's more important is connecting people to these places. Connecting people means getting them out there to experience it firsthand!



Visiting Wilderness can be challenging if you haven't been shown the ropes. Without the proper gear and experience, it can feel downright impossible. SBFC is breaking down some of these barriers this year by bringing local youth into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. We hope you're excited to read more about this initiative in this edition of the Wildest Place!

Our job is to ensure that anyone who wants to experience the Selway and the Frank can, and that we are leaving these places in better condition than we found them. It's not an easy mission, but it's one all of our staff and our board are thrilled to tackle with gusto and resolve.

Thank you for your commitment to these lands and those who work in and benefit from them. The world is changing fast on every front. More than ever, people need wilderness, and SBFC is working hard to ensure people can fall in love with the Wildest Place!

> **RYAN GHELFI Executive Director**

2024 VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

Join SBFC on one of our single or multi-day trips in the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness areas to maintain and open trails for public access.

Visit www.selwaybitterroot.org/volunteer to learn more and register!



MAY 1-7

Salmon River Trail: Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (*Project Full)



National Trails Day at Sheafman Creek: Selway

- Bitterroot Wilderness



South Fork Lolo Creek Trail: Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness



JULY 5-7

St. Mary Peak Lookout Trail: Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness



Middle Fork of the Salmon River: Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness



East Mayfield Women's Project: Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness

AUGUST 14-21

Garnet Creek Horseshoe Loop: Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness



AUGUST 28-SEPTEMBER 4

Sulphur Creek and Camptender Trails: Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness



SEPTEMBER 28

National Public Lands Day at Roaring Lion Trail: Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness



2024 WILDERNESS RANGER FELLOWS





JACK BOYLE

University of Notre Dame | Environmental Science & American Studies

MANHASSET, NY

Jack grew up on Long Island, NY, but spent ample time in Utah, traversing the Wasatch mountains with his family. He attended the University of Notre Dame and majored in Environmental Science. There he conducted limnology research and spent his summers collecting data in the North Woods of Wisconsin. Jack also became passionate about Environmental Literature, studying authors like Wallace Steiger, Barry Lopez, and Henry David Thoreau. Because of his interests in environmental art and science, Jack decided to participate in a year-of-service with an Americorps Conservation Corps. There he fought wildfires and did conservation work in Missouri and Montana. Jack credits this experience as the catalyst for his enjoyment of trail work and wilderness living. In the fall Jack will be starting his Masters in Environmental Science at the University of Virginia.



SEAN COWAN

Gonzaga University | Applied Mathematics

SPOKANE, WA

Growing up in Western Washington, Sean found his love for the outdoors by hiking and mountain biking in the dense forests of the area. He also became passionate about protected land when he visited National Parks all over the West with his family. During high school, he loved working on trails in his backyard and neighborhood. Sean moved to Spokane, Washington when he became a student at Gonzaga University. There, he has loved learning new outdoor skills during his time as a trip leader for Gonzaga Outdoors. Currently, his favorite outdoor activities include mountain biking, skiing, fly fishing, backpacking, and whitewater rafting. Anytime he can get away from the craziness of college life, Sean finds peace in outdoor spaces with friends.



ROWAN GRASSI

University of Montana | Ecosystem Science & Restoration

FORT WORTH, TX

Over the past four years, Rowan has called Missoula and the surrounding landscape home. Having recently obtained a B.S. in Ecosystem Science & Restoration, he is excited to spend a summer with SBFC exploring and learning how to be a great steward to these beautiful public lands and wilderness areas. While he hasn't done trail work before, Rowan is an experienced backpacker and is no stranger to doing fieldwork in remote areas. When he isn't on the trail or in the lab, you can find him knitting, reading, biking around Missoula, and listening to loud music.



NATHAN GROOMS

University of Wisconsin-Platteville | Environmental Science & Conservation

OREGON, WI

Nathan is a senior majoring in Environmental Science and Conservation at UW-Platteville. Nathan grew up around the Madison area in Wisconsin, hiking and camping. Nathan worked three seasons in the Boundary Waters, a Federal Wilderness in Minnesota where he gained experience working in remote areas and developed a love of nature.



CLARINNE KIRK

Gonzaga University | Sociology & Journalism

SPOKANE, WA

Clarinne grew up in Portland, OR, where she spent her childhood hiking in the woods and camping along the coast. Clarinne loves hiking, running, backpacking, and finding any way to spend time outdoors. She is currently a student at Gonzaga University where she has been able to further her knowledge of the outdoors through working as a student trip leader. Clarinne has a passion for protecting the environment and is excited to learn more about wilderness preservation and be able to give back during her time as an SBFC Wilderness Ranger Fellow.



🔌 2024 WILDERNESS RANGER FELLOWS 🍳





IAN MCMANNERS

University of Georgia | Forestry

ATHENS, GA

lan grew up in northeast Georgia and has always been drawn to the wilderness. He has been backpacking all of his life and has spent many nights outside. He lives for nature and does not want to see it disappear. He wants his children and future generations to get to enjoy the beauty he has experienced outdoors.



SAMANTHA MOBLEY

University of Montana | Wildlife Biology

MISSOULA, MT

Sam is a recent graduate from the University of Montana with a degree in wildlife biology. She has been living in Missoula for 7 years and loves to spend her free time running, hiking, and skiing in the wilderness. Sam has a background in baking bread, brewing beer, biological field work, and trail work with the Montana Conservation Corps. Sam is very passionate about the conservation of our wilderness areas and looks forward to beginning her career as a steward for the wild lands she holds near and dear.



MARLENA NELSON

University of Florida | Food & Resource Economics

SAXONY, GERMANY

Marlena grew up connecting with the outdoors of New England, Germany, and Florida. Working as an outdoor guide during her bachelor's degree opened her eyes to the power of nature to shape individuals and communities. Three months of conservation work in Utah and Arizona inspired her to seek further opportunities to practice stewardship of wild landscapes. She is passionate about creating a world in which people and the planet can thrive.



CAROLINE NEWLIN

North Carolina State University | Forest Management

SNOW CAMP, NC

Caroline is passionate about the outdoors and has done outdoor work for years. In high school, she did trail work for her local park service and worked for a canoe and kayak company most summers. She has always wanted to visit Montana and Idaho, and this fellowship has given her that opportunity, while also learning about wilderness stewardship. She plans on hiking the whole Appalachian Trail one day, along with visiting all the national parks in the United States. Her hobbies include rock climbing, whitewater kayaking, backpacking, and gardening.



SAMUEL PHELPS

University of Mobile | Marine Science

FRANKLINTON, LA

Samuel's love for the outdoors started with hunting and fishing at a young age. As he got older, the labor side of preparing for upcoming seasons and occasional farm work fueled his passion and interest in conservation and land stewardship. Majoring in Marine Science and planning to continue his education in Forestry: Wildlife Habitat Management, Sammy desires to use his knowledge and experience to have a career conserving the beauty of nature. In his free time, Samuel enjoys hunting, fishing, and outdoor photography. He wants to use his time at SBFC to develop his outdoor skills and become a well-rounded advocate for the preservation of nature.



2024 WILDERNESS RANGER FELLOWS





COLBURN REEVES

Auburn University | Natural Resource Management

DECATUR, AL

Colburn was raised in North Alabama and enjoys days spent climbing, hiking, scuba diving, or even just hammocking. Anything to get him outside, as he feels most connected and at home when in nature. He is currently at Auburn University pursuing a degree in Natural Resource Management, and is excited to be spending his summer with SBFC to get hands-on experience in stewardship.



EMMA STATTLEMAN

Bates College | Biology & Environmental Studies

DULUTH, MN

Emma is currently a senior at Bates College majoring in Biology and Environmental Studies. She grew up in Duluth, Minnesota. Emma was inspired to apply for this position after spending last summer as part of a snorkel crew based out of McCall, Idaho. Emma enjoys running, hiking, and nordic-skiing and is looking forward to learning more about backpacking and wilderness stewardship this summer.



NATHAN THOMPSON

Colorado Mountain College | Sustainability Studies

DENVER, CO

Nate grew up camping and exploring the Mountain West with his family. He attended Colorado Mountain College, where he completed programs in Outdoor Education and Sustainability Studies. He feels deeply drawn to Wilderness, where he can challenge himself and find purpose. Nate loves to ski all winter and spends his summers biking and backpacking. Along with his passion for outdoor adventures, he enjoys discovering music, reading, and watching hockey.



BAILEY UNDERWOOD

University of Montana | Wildlife Biology

MISSOULA, MT

Bailey grew up a military brat and moved around a lot. Despite frequent change in her childhood, her love and appreciation for nature was a constant. Bailey's education and work experience in wildlife conservation has taught her the importance of balance within nature. Bailey looks forward to exploring the wilderness areas near her new home base through the SBFC Wilderness Ranger Fellowship program. Although new to trail work, she is excited to learn about responsible stewardship of wild places. She believes that respect towards the land is respect to all who inhabit it.



TOM URMSTON

University of New Hampshire | Wildlife & Conservation Biology

Annandale, NJ

Tom has always had an interest in the outdoors, specifically wildlife. During the summer of 2023, Tom was a Trail Ambassador for the Hunterdon County Parks Department, where he worked with fellow Trail Ambassadors to accomplish trail maintenance, outdoor concert preparation, and instructing clients on proper canoe and kayak techniques. Tom is thrilled to spend his summer as a 2024 SBFC Wilderness Ranger Fellow.

YOUTH WILDERNESS PROGRAM

This year SBFC is incredibly excited to announce the Youth Wilderness Program!

The Youth Wilderness Program is about immersing teens in Wilderness. We are dedicated to cultivating in youth an appreciation for Wilderness, public land, and public service, fostering the next generation of Wilderness stewards. Through experiential learning and hands-on conservation work, we will provide the resources and leadership for Idaho and Montana youth to safely explore and steward the Selway and Frank.

Our goal is simple: for youth to fall in love with Wilderness so that they become advocates for life. Youth will connect to the landscape through multi-day backpacking trips, in which they will learn backcountry skills and ethics, the history and meaning of Wilderness, and complete meaningful stewardship projects to improve trail conditions, increase accessibility, and preserve Wilderness character. Our hope is that every participant gains confidence in their abilities, and develops a deep, life-long commitment to Wilderness recreation and conservation.

For years we have partnered with organizations to bring in youth from out-of-state, like lowa and New York. While we are excited to continue these traditions in 2024, this new Youth Wilderness





Program focuses on serving the youth of Idaho and Montana. We are starting small by focusing on the communities that surround the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, but we have plans to double our capacity and service area by 2026, so that we can serve those surrounding the Frank Church Wilderness as well.

This season we are excited to lead youth on four Wilderness expeditions - two on the Bitterroot National Forest and two on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. The program is open to teens, ages 13-18, who live in Idaho or Montana. In addition to these four and six-day expeditions, we will coordinate at least three single-day service projects, partnering with local schools to introduce their students to Wilderness stewardship. To remove barriers to participation, we are offering our programs free of charge, and will provide key pieces of gear for youth to borrow.

To get this program on the ground, we need your help! Please share this opportunity with every Idaho and Montana teen you know! You can contribute to our spring Youth Gear Drive, and donate to SBFC, so that every youth has the chance to fall in love with Wilderness.

YOUTH WILDERNESS PROGRAM

Logistics

Four youth Wilderness expeditions will be conducted in 2024. Crews of six youth crew members, led by the youth program director and a Wilderness Ranger Fellow, will embark on multi-day backpacking trips that incorporate experiential learning and hands-on stewardship projects.

Idaho, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest

- Ages 13-15: July 16-19 Gospel Hump Wilderness, Moores Lake
- Ages 15-18: July 30 August 4 Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, Cove Lakes

Montana, Bitterroot National Forest

 Ages 13-15: August 13-16 - Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, Little Rock Creek

Ages 15-18: June 18-23 - Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, Big Creek Lake

Learn more about the youth program and apply online: www.selwaybitterroot.org/youth.

Benefits

Youth crew members will:

- Explore the vast and beautiful Wilderness, and deepen their connection to the land.
- Learn how to backpack and hone their Wilderness skills, such as wildlife and fire safety, navigation, and knot tying.
- Learn the meaning of Wilderness and the Leave No Trace principles.
- Give back to their community by engaging the land on Wilderness stewardship projects.
 They will learn to use traditional hand tools, like hand-saws, Pulaskis, shovels, loppers, and crosscut saws.
- Earn certifications for completing 32-36 hours of community service.
- Challenge themselves, both physically and mentally, by stepping out of their comfort zones.
- Be exposed to possible careers in conservation and natural resource management.
- Meet new people and make lifelong friends!



YOUTH GEAR DRIVE



Youth Gear Drive

The recreational opportunities that Wilderness provides are transformative to anyone who ventures up a trail. Most of us who live in the Rocky Mountain West are fortunate to live close to one or more Wilderness areas, and have had lifechanging experiences that keep luring us back for more. However, many would-be adventurers have not enjoyed the wild splendor of our public lands. Access to Wilderness is something that many of us take for granted, but there are in fact many barriers, especially for youth, to hiking and camping. Chief among these hurdles is expensive backpacking gear. To reduce barriers and increase accessibility, we need to provide backpacking gear to all youth participants who can not afford it.

This spring, we are holding a Youth Gear Drive to build a "gear library" for our youth participants to borrow for free. We need your help to make sure every teenager who wants to participate, can do so, regardless of means. Please consider donating any used backpacking gear you have lying around the house. If you want to contribute but do not have used gear, you are welcome to donate new gear or make a cash donation. We ask that all donated gear is in good working condition. See below for details:

Gear Needs

- Backpacks (70L+)
- Lightweight tents (I-2 person)
- Compressible sleeping bags (<30 degrees)

- · Foam sleeping pads
- · Hiking boots of all sizes
- Rain jackets and pants
- Any other reusable backpacking gear, such as dry bags, bear canisters, stoves, etc...

Where to drop off gear:

You can donate your gear by dropping them off at the following locations from May 6-May 12!

- · Boise: Mother Earth Brewing
- Grangeville: Northwest Insurance Agency
- Moscow: Hyperspud Sports
- · Hamilton: Bob Ward's
- Missoula: Bob Ward's

You can also bring gear to one of our Gear Drive events!

- Hamilton: Bitter Root Brewing, Friday May 24, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- Missoula: Imagine Nation Brewing, Wednesday May 8, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

If you can't make it to one of these events, please let us know! We can do our best to arrange a gear pickup with one of our staff or board members.



2024 SBFC STAFF BIOGRAPHIES





WYATT DAY

Wilderness Trail Crew Leader

NEZ PERCE-CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST

Wyatt Day is a mountain man deluxe. He was raised in the Bitterroot Valley adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness where he has spent plenty of time working and playing. With his dog, Cowboy, usually at his side, he has packed mules, maintained trails, performed weed control, led horseback rides, guided hunters, and has done a good deal of exploring, from the Frank Church to the Bob Marshall Wilderness. He earned a B.A. and a B.S. in Environmental Studies at the University of Montana and hopes to spend his life working for and in the Wilderness. Whether horseback or on foot he enjoys contemplating wildness itself.



APRIL ELING

Wilderness Trail Crew Leader

BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

April grew up in Eastern Kentucky. After graduating high school, she moved to Utah and spent a year with a conservation corps doing trail work, invasive species removal, and more. She then spent four years as a wildland firefighter with the Forest Service in Arizona, California, and Montana. Now, she's wrapping up her college degree in Kentucky, where she also worked as a backcountry ranger. She loves Wilderness because it represents nature in its truest form and provides mental and physical well-being to all who access it. She is passionate about maintaining these places for ecological health as well as optimal access for all people.



ROBBIE ELSON

Assistant Trail Crew Leader

Robbie drove to Missoula from their hometown of Cleveland, Ohio in 2023 for their crew member season with the Montana Conservation Corps, which they spent working on the Continental Divide Trail in Idaho and the Rock Creek Wilderness near Missoula. Robbie is excited to get back to working trails and spending every possible moment outside. On an off-hitch, you can find them volunteering at the Roxy Theater and sketching outside.



JOE FERRIS

Wilderness Trail Crew Leader

NEZ PERCE-CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST

Joe is from Omaha, NE and gained experience working wilderness trail crews in the Boundary Waters. He is passionate about public land and is working towards a career in conservation. He spends his free time riding bikes, sauntering in the woods, and fretting about the ephemerality of being.



BERKELEY LOPER

Wilderness Trail Crew Leader

SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

Berkeley has spent the first 25 years of her life beep-bopping around the Western US. Originally from Seattle, she went to school in Salt Lake City where she spent her time taking dance classes and playing in the Wasatch Mountains and nearby desert. Her first experience with fieldwork was with the Montana Conservation Corps in 2019 and after working trails and outdoor education jobs in Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming she is stoked to be back in Missoula and returning to the place where it all began: the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness! On her off time, you might find Berkeley skiing, biking, trail running, crafting, and offering glitter (plastic-free!) to strangers on the trails.



2024 SBFC STAFF BIOGRAPHIES





PHOEBE MATHER

Wilderness Trail Crew Leader

SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

Phoebe moved to Missoula, Montana in 2019 to finish up her degree in Geoscience and GIS at the University of Montana. She has been stewarding wilderness seasonally ever since with SBFC, Wild Montana, and the Forest Service. She started out her trails career with SBFC as a Wilderness Ranger Fellow, which led to her career in the Forest Service as a Wilderness Ranger in the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness, and on a trail crew/packing in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Needless to say, she is overjoyed to be circling back to where it all began for her with SBFC!



EMILY MURPHY

Packing Apprentice

SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

With dreams of chasing snow, Emily initially moved from Texas to Montana in pursuit of becoming a ski patroller. During her time in Texas, she enjoyed volunteering with state parks, natural areas, and horse stables while working full-time in the ethical research department at the University of Texas. In the past few years, Emily has spent her time in Montana working with the Forest Service in various roles. If you happen to catch her outside of work, you'll likely find her painting postcards, skiing, wandering museums, biking, reading, or dabbling in a new hobby that's captured her interest.



ST. MARY TRAILHEAD VOLUNTEER AMBASSADOR

Help SBFC build a community of responsible wilderness trail users!

N WHAT

To educate trail users about trail safety, responsible trail use, and Leave No Trace principles at one of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness area's most popular trailhead!

Saturdays and Sundays in July and August. 3-hour or full-day shifts.

No experience necessary! Training will be provided. www.selwaybitterroot.org/volunteer

HOP ON BOARD WITH SBFC!

SBFC's Board of Directors stretches from Missoula to Moscow to Boise. Representation from counties on the eastern side of The Frank Church-RONR Wilderness are underrepresented on our Board, and we want that to change. Have a passion for Wilderness, and a commitment to maintaining access to those areas? Consider learning more about our board, what we accomplish, and what is entailed in being on the board of SBFC. Contact Jim Heidelberger, Board Chair, at jimheidelberger@gmail.com.

Blaine-Custer-Lemhi Counties



2024 Annual Sponsors



















PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE LEGACY OF WILDERNESS

YOUR DONATION SUPPORTS:
Wilderness stewardship for the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness areas and the SBFC Wilderness Ranger Fellow Program.

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

\$30	\$60	\$120	\$240	\$600	\$

Send gift with this form to: SBFC Foundation - PO BOX 1886 Boise, ID 83701



Monthly and one-time payment options are available on our secure website: selwaybitterroot.org/donate				
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Gift Amount:	THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFT			

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.