

# SCNF Pre Season Partner Meeting

5/6/2024  
12:30pm - 2:00pm  
In-Person at SCNF SO and Teams Online

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**Attendees:**

- Idaho Conservation Corps (ICC) – Lisa O’Flaherty, Oliver Scofield
- Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation (IDPR) – Brian DiLenge
- Idaho Trails Association (ITA) – Alex Cravener
- Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) – Adam Hein, Macy Smith
- Pulaski Users Group (PUG) – Greg Travelstead
- Salmon Valley Stewardship (SVS) – Kate Yeater, Ari Pepper, Maggie Seaberg, Cheyenne Bradshaw, Jenny Gonyer
- Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation (SBFCF) – Krissy Ferriter,
- Student Conservation Association (SCA) – Tim Carroll
- Tread Lightly – Evan Robins
- Salmon-Challis National Forest (SCNF) – Becca Aceto, Gina Knudson, Eric Giebelstein, Bobbi Filbert, Ben Hathaway, Courtney Frost, Bryan Parker, Leslie Hamilton, Hannah Jacobsen (Bridger-Teton NF), Steve Larrabee, Diane Schuldt, Joel Shier, Lans Stavast, Natalie Teichert, Skeet Townley

## **Summary**

### **Intros and Leadership Update:**

Salmon-Cobalt and Leadore District Ranger Bobbi Filbert gave an intro, thanking the group for the fantastic work partners are accomplishing across the Forest. Bobbi’s FS background began on the Sawtooth National Forest as a wildlife biologist and most of the work there wouldn’t have been possible without great partners and partnerships. Bobbi also introduced Heather Degeest, the new SCNF Forest Supervisor and previously our Deputy Forest Supervisor, who is out of office but who has emphasized the importance of partners and what each uniquely brings to the table.

Budget outlook – FS funding seems to be feast or famine, and it feels like we’re coming out of a feast cycle. Congress likes to see examples of the work happening on the ground with appropriated funds. Our mutually beneficial partnerships help keep the FS relevant into our communities and showcase the importance of collaboration. Partners often know best what key challenges are, and can reach different constituents. Partners also do a great job telling the story and keeping the relevancy of the Forest Service and partners doing work on the Forest. Sharing stories of how we’re working together keeps us strong together.

Gina reminded the group that it’s public service recognition week and thanked Partners for the very important role they play in serving the public.

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**Agenda item:** Round Robin Partner Updates

SCA – 2023 SCA accomplishments included 14,500 hours of volunteer service, just under 50 miles of trails cleared, 75 acres of land improved, and several thousand feet of fence built/removed/replaced. SCA is proud to utilize the Indianola facility and keep members living in the area and spending money in the community. For 2024, SCA is moving towards program branch models (PNW is a program branch), so in addition to regular Idaho work, Tim is covering ID, WA, OR, and parts of MT, WY and UT. Idaho Corps members arrived May 5, with 2 returning people from last year working as leaders. SCA has a new partnership with the BLM this year, and regular programming with SCNF and NPS (City of Rocks).

SVS – Stewardship and monitoring program has 5 seasonals/interns coming on board, seasonals working on BLM monitoring and SCNF riparian/range monitoring and then SZ cheatgrass inventory surveys. One intern coming in June will be working with SVS's Reforestation Coordinator. Two interns will be multidisciplinary working with various SVS crews. For the Native Plants Restoration program, the project got its feet under it in 203 and is rolling along more efficiently in 2024, including more field work. Plant populations monitoring is just beginning around Lemhi/Custer County, with some new project sites including the River to the Ridges site along the Salmon River corridor to plant important pollinator species that connect the river upslope to ridgeline. There's a new SVS volunteer mailing list for those local to Salmon who want to sign up. For Conservation Education and Trails Stewardship, they're working in a community outreach capacity with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition in Lemhi County, which is a Gateway Community for the CDT. Have started conversations with the Mustang Inn in Leadore who are interested in hosting a community event during the peak time for CDT thru hikers. Trail stewardship program, with volunteer support, will be getting signs out on the Wagonhammer trail network this year to update and replace existing signs. Working on a new signage agreement to replace and update derogatory and offensive signage along the Salmon River Road in partnership with SCNF and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

IDPR – This year, every trail crew is coming up to SCNF for at least a few hitches. An ATV crew will be here for three hitches, one in Copper Basin plus two NZ sign hitches. Trail cat scheduled in Mackay area and Land of the Yankee Fork. Trail rangers are scheduled for two hitches already and began clearing trail last week up by North Fork and helping make corrections on GPS mapping. This year's big project is the North Fork of Big Creek bridge project in the Pahsimeroi Valley later in the summer in partnership with Tread Lightly, the bridge is being flown in by helicopter mid-summer.

MCC – Have been working for several years with GAOA funds and MCC expanded over Region 1 and Region 4. There's a MCC crew scheduled to be around Salmon all season. Their young people learn a lot working around Salmon in the steep, hot country of this Forest. They're looking forward to a fence removal project in the Jim McClure-Jerry Peak Wilderness. Adam is also connected with Bart Gamett (fisheries biologist) to do some work in Fall Creek and the Bellas to Broad trail. Lots of work planned for the Middle Fork Ranger District, too. Crew will be working into the middle of October in 2024. Looking big picture for MCC, their bread and butter has been mostly trails but they're getting more into fuels/forestry work and riparian/BDA work around Montana and a bit in eastern Idaho. They like allowing crews to gain experience in these unique program areas.

ITA – No staff changes with ITA from 2023. They have four SCNF projects this year, Waterfall Trail this Thursday, lower Pistol Creek, partnering with Two Wolf Foundation to work with female veterans on the Bluebunch Trail, and a hitch on the Middle Fork with SBFCF. All their 2024 SCNF projects will be wrapped up by the end of June.

SBFCF – They operates primarily in wilderness, but Krissy Ferriter does some non-wilderness work with volunteers. 15 different hitches on SCNF this year. SBFC expanding the number of interns, 15 coming in this year and will work across all four Frank Church RONR Wilderness National Forests. Over 20 volunteer projects this year - Most in wilderness keeping remote trails open, this year they'll be on the Middle Fork, East Mayfield, Little Loon, and Sulphur Creek. Also doing a program focused on trail management objectives, a new program for them in 2024. Starting a new youth wilderness program this year, none on SCNF but will be doing 5 different youth backpacking trips. The goal is to bring some of these to the SCNF and get local Idaho/Montana youth involved and into the wilderness. They will also have all staff based out of Missoula this year – a new, centralized model they're trying out.

PUG – Mostly focus on wilderness trail work on SCNF, Sawtooth NF, and Idaho DNR, Park Service. 5<sup>th</sup> season this year working on the Salmon-Challis. Five 5-day wilderness hitches – 3 with youth group and two with adult volunteers. Restoring remote, challenging trails that are hard for the agency to prioritize. Langer Lakes, Knapp-Loon trail, Cabin Pioneer trail. They have a partner group/agency sawyer training coming up in Ketchum for anyone who has a need to get people certified on crosscut or chainsaw. Contact Greg for more information. PUG also brings a youth crew to the Big Island of Hawai'i to do trail reclamation work, they work with the Flourish Foundation to make this possible.

Tread Lightly – Most of the focus this year will be on the North Fork of Big Creek project with IDPR. Bringing up a group of volunteers to get some good media out of the bridge project. Have a new master Challenge-Cost Share at WO level and a Region 4 agreement. 27 projects on the books this year, the Big Creek bridge project is their main Idaho focus this year. Evan wants to expand the Tread Lightly presence in this area.

ICC – One hitch on the SCNF this year on Pistol Creek with RAC funds. Internal ICC updates, most of the same partners but they're expanding their shoulder season work, spring crews began working in Feb and running through Nov with a fall crew. They also added an urban and community forestry program - \$4 million in Idaho to have local community crews in Treasure Valley area. Expanded partnerships to work with forest municipal orgs. Oliver Scofield is a new program coordinator. Expanding BLM partnerships as well, in Bosie, Twin Falls, and SE Idaho.

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**Agenda item:** SCNF Staff Updates

Ben Hathaway – MCC western wildlands group working heavily on the SCNF, YEP working in upper Carmen Creek, SCA on the CDT for five weeks, a week-long project with Natl Smokejumpers Assoc on Pierce Creek on the North Fork RD.

Steve Larrabee – New staffing in the recreation program: Mackay – two permanent FS employees and one new intern, all doing developed/dispersed recreation. Challis - Tim Hardin for trails, and a new trail employee, Chase Brown, starting the beginning of June. Through Youth Conservation Corps, local high school students will be doing work around Challis for various programs.

Eric Giebelstein – New SCNF wilderness program manager. Started in April and came from Virginia where he'd been working in the partnership world for 10 years helping lead Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards. Excited to see this robust group of partners, please keep in mind the capacity issue for pack support this year.

Becca reminded partners of the Box folder with safety resources, Risk Assessments, maps, Grants Calendar, etc. It has been updated for 2024.

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**Agenda item:** Safety and Communication Group Discussion **Facilitator:** Becca

The group discussed communication protocol in the event of emergencies in the field. For anyone who would like more of a conversation about best practices, this is a good thing to discuss with your SCNF POC so you're on the same page. In the past, the group has talked about moving away from checking in with Central Idaho Dispatch and doing internal check-ins. This will continue to be the Forest policy in 2024. Participants shared successes using InReach and SPOT satellite communication devices.

## ***Follow Up***

Please reach out at any point this season if you have needs, questions, or other items to discuss. Have a safe and enjoyable 2024 field season!