

FALL 2025

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BOISE OFFICE

322 E. Front St., Ste. 420F P. O. Box 1886 208.373.4381

WESTERN MONTANA OFFICE

I20 Hickory Ave, Ste. A Missoula, MT 5980I

The Wildest Place is the membership newsletter of the Selway-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 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: 2025 Wilderness Ranger Fellow, Raegan Dick, in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness

The Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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LETTER FROM THE ROARD CHAIR

The Selway Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Areas cover a space so vast it's sometimes hard for me to wrap my head around it. Spread across two states, they include multiple mountain ranges, massive forests, abundant wildlife, and spectacular canyons carved out by raging rivers. This summer I got to spend a lot of time hiking in the Bitterroot and while gazing westward I'm always blown away by how this wild, rugged landscape seems to go on forever. This is one of the many reasons we love this special place.

One of the goals of the SBFC board is to make sure we have geographic representation from the communities surrounding these two huge Wilderness areas. Having geographic diversity helps ensure that different perspectives are represented, but it also makes it challenging for us to get together in person. While it has never been easier to meet virtually, there is no substitute for meeting face-to-face and spending time together. A board that knows and understands each other is better able to collaborate and help advance the mission.

Last month we got together for our annual board trail work project. We met in the Frank Church Wilderness working on the Bear Valley Creek trail outside of Stanley, Idaho. Over the course of the weekend we were able to clear 4.5 miles of trail, cutting out more than I30 downed trees. I love the feeling of satisfaction you get while hiking out at the end of the long day on a newly cleared trail. Equally satisfying for me is getting to know my fellow board members even better (as well as their spouses, and their dogs!). We came together because we care deeply about this vast 4 million-acre space, but it's the quality time we spent in this tiny corner that will help us do the long-term work of maintaining access to this wild and wonderful place.

All that said, we are recruiting new board members! If this sounds like something you'd like to be part of, see p. 8 for more info.

SHAWN DONLEY Board Chair

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

How do you measure the success of a season of Wilderness work? Miles of trail maintained? Feet of corridor brushed? Hours of volunteer service? Number of youth participating in Wilderness Expeditions? At SBFC, we measure, track, and report on all of these things and more. Quantitative outcomes are essential to any non-profit organization.



Each metric tells a slice of the story. And every number holds a different meaning for each person reading it. Knowing what it takes to maintain a trail drainage feature in real life is needed to understand what it looks like to maintain over 1,000 of them in the course of a season, and importantly, what that does to the longevity of that particular section of tread.

The metrics are all part of a larger story. The person behind each unit of output, their reasons for being out there, engaged in these places, doing this workit means more than the work itself. The ways that working and being in the Wilderness can transform people is the most important "accomplishment".

The work that folks do on the ground is needed more than ever. There is an endless amount to be done across this landscape. The most important thing that SBFC does, in my view, is to create opportunities for many to volunteer and work seasonally, utilizing their hands, strength, ingenuity, grit, and resolve, all of which is required. Opportunities like these are in shorter supply than they used to be. It is our great privilege as an organization to continue fostering meaningful work in the Wilderness, season after season, with no end in sight. Wilderness work is like washing the dishes; once you finish, don't rest too long because more are coming

Read on in this newsletter to learn more about our 2025 season metrics and the people doing the work in the Wildest Place!

RYAN GHELFI Executive Director

2025 SEASON ACCOMPLISHMENTS

21,403 TOTAL HOURS LOGGED BY VOLUNTEERS

216 NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

304 MILES OF TRAIL MAINTAINED

POUNDS OF TRASH REMOVED

6,020 TREES REMOVED FROM TRAILS

30 CAMPSITES INVENTORIED

1,229 DRAINS CLEANED

30 CAMPSITES NATURALIZED

22 MILES OF BRUSHING

3,003 ROCK WORK (CUBIC FEET)

9 MILES OF TRAIL 3 RETREAD









2025 HITCH AND PROJECT SUMMARIES



BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

April 23-30: Dwyer Smith #II4

June 4-II: Kootenai Creek Trail #53 (Volunteers)

June 18-25: South Fork Lolo #3II (Volunteers)

June 17-22: Boulder Creek #617 (Youth Expedition)

July 2-9: St Mary's #II6 (Volunteers)

July 17-20: Fish Lake #128 (Youth Expedition)

July 16-23: CatRock Ventures Volunteers: Rock Creek #580

July 16-23: Selway River #4 (and Salmon Mtn #12) (Youth Expedition)

July 22-24: Tin Cup #96

July 30 - August 6: American Hiking Society Volunteers: Hauf Lake #309

August 13: Baker Lake #234

August 13-20: Sierra Club Volunteers: Lappi Lake #324



SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

May 4-8: Stoddard #4169

May 26-31: Middle Fork River #4044

May 26-31: Norton Ridge #4220, Marble Creek #4222

June 4-II: Little Loon Creek #4004

June 18-25: Middle Fork #400I (with ID Trails Association)

June 28 - July 3: Langer Lake #4014, Ruffneck Peak #4014.1 (Youth Expedition)

July 27 - August 3: W. Fork Camas #4I28 (Youth Expedition)

July 30 - August 6: Ship Island Lake #4030, Bighorn Crags #402l: Women's Volunteer Project

August 29 - September 2: Pistol Lake #4229 (Youth Expedition)

September 12-14: Bear Valley Creek #4010 (Volunteers)



SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST

June 18-25: Stanley Lake Creek #640, Alpine Way #528

July 2-9: Trail Creek #453, Iron Creek Stanley Lake #640, Trail Creek Lakes #483

July 16-23: Redfish Creek-Baron Creek Trail #101, N Fork Baron-Sawtooth Lake Trail #478

July 30 - August 6: N Fork Baron-Sawtooth Lake Trail #478, S Fork Payette River Trail #452

August 13-20: Queen's River Trail #458, Pat's Lake Trail #494

August 27 - September 3: Ardeth Lake #482, South Fork Payette #452, Ten Lake Basin Trail #463, and Middle Fork Boise River Trail (Volunteers)



PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST

May 27-31: Big Creek #196, Goat Creek #053

May 27-31: Lower Big Creek #4196

June 29-30: North Fork Lick Creek #82 (Volunteers)

June 7-12: Chamberlain #00I (Youth Expedition)



NEZ PERCE-CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST

May 7-14: Boulder Creek #2II

June 4-II: Selway River #4, Sixty-Two Ridge #606

June 4-II: Bargamin Creek #502

June 18-25: Selway River #4, Mink Peak #438 (Youth Expedition)

June 19-23: Univ of ID Grad Student Volunteers- Bargamin #502

June 19-26; June 30 - July 7: Selway River #4, Bailey Mountain #619 (Mini-Immersion)

July 2-9: Cedar-E Moose #486, E Moose Creek #421, Big Sand Lake #4

July 1-18: Whisky Crew Volunteers: Bridge Creek #28, Big Sand Creek #1, Hidden Peak #10, Hidden Lake #9, Big Sand Lake #4, Frog Peak #906

July 9-12: Moores Lake #380 (Youth Expedition)

July 3-10: Gospel Hump Monitoring & Trail Work

July 16-23: Otter Creek #621, Highline Ridge #626, Copper Butte #602

July 16-21: IDAWA - Johnson Co Volunteers: Friday Pass #45, Grave Peak #905

July 17-23: IDAWA -Dallas Co Volunteers: Tom Beal #7, Wind Lakes #24

July 16-23: Bilk Mountain #517, Copper Butte #602

July 30 - August 6: Lake Creek #204, Jumbo Canyon #230

July 30 - August 6: Moores #312

July 30 - August 6: Gospel Hump Monitoring & Trail Work

August 7-10: Big Rock #693 (Volunteers)

August 12-17: Big Sand Lake #4, Little Dead Elk #5 (Youth Expedition)

August 27 - September 3: Spruce Creek #559

September 3-7: Gospel Hump Monitoring & Trail Work

September 10-17: Lost Horse #430

September 26-28: NPLD Big Fog Mountain #343 (Volunteers)

September 24 - October I: Main Salmon #96

September 25-28: Gospel Hump Monitoring & Trail Work



SCAN TO VIEW THE 2025 FIELD WORK MAPS





A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR... 2025 SUMMER SEASON VOLUNTEERS!

BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

KOOTENAI CREEK #53

Lisa Armstrong
Roger DeHaan
Lana Doherty
Caitlin Miller
Kacey Montgomery
Cora Montgomery
Ted Owens
Jeanice Boddy
Jeremy Rice
Dennis Sonnen

SOUTH FORK LOLO #311

Joshua Hubbard Stephen Lessard Jon Mathews Melissa Mills Jeanice Boddy Jefferson Turrittin Dave Yerigan

ST MARYS #116

Ella Mae Chacon Rusty Cooper Karen Eldredge Jen Elliott David Henning Mike Longbottom Grant Mandernach Laura Sims Renee Snyder (host) Jared Torres Lindsay Wancour Damian Wassel

ROCK CREEK #580 (CATROCK VENTURES)

Ellis Apollonio Richard Lara-Rodriguez Robert Larson Mohamed Sow Abiola Van O Soy Bruce

HAUF LAKE #309 (AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY)

Ed Duggan (packer) Clara Fawcett James Fawcett Wendy Lotze Jess Prekel Hannah Schutz Shane Ulrich

LAPPI LAKE #324 (SIERRA CLUB)

John Clarkson
Andrew Clarkson
Roger Dirosa
Christian Hagenlocher
Mary Elizabeth Holmes
Gail Koepf
Tyler Lawrence
Timothy Merchant
Julie Merchant
Sarah Waters

ST. MARY LOOKOUT HOSTS

Dave Ensner
Brian Kerns
Clare O'Connell
Jeff Padgett
Meredith Webster
Mark Wetherington

ST. MARY TRAILHEAD AMBASSADORS

Mike Longbottom Sheryl Olson

NEZ PERCE-CLEARWATER NATIONAL FORESTS

BARGAMIN CREEK #502

Lexi Aritt-Edwards
Benjamin Baber
Bert Baumgaertner
Michael Clare
Michael Decker
Jacqueline Mariani
Andrew Shearman
Emily Stuart
Abigayle Stucky
Austin Wetzel

BRIDGE CREEK #28, BIG SAND CREEK #I, HIDDEN PEAK #I0, HIDDEN LAKE #9 (WHISKY IN THE WOODS, CREW I)

Bert Baumgaertner Dennis Becker Jon Binninger (packer) Karl Englund Jim Heidelberger Will Root Seth Sjoholm Joe Strohmaier

BIG SAND LAKE #4, FROG PEAK #906 (WHISKY IN THE WOODS, CREW II)

Bert Baumgaertner
Jon Binnnger (packer)
Sarah Deming
Lovina Englund
Karl Englund
Mandy Grant
Jim Heidelberger
Casey Johnson
Seth Sjoholm
Ross Vandegrift
John Visger

FRIDAY PASS #45 & GRAVE PEAK #905 (IDAWA - JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA CONSERVATION DEPT)

Aubrey Ballantyne
Abigail Burns
Benjamin Clifton
Kenna Gage
Henry Harris
Charles Karam
Thisbe Lewis
Claire Locher
Kristen Morrow
Frances Owen
August Palmer
Robin Whitehead
Tage Zimmermann

TOM BEAL #7 & WIND LAKES #24 (IDAWA -DALLAS COUNTY, IOWA CONSERVATION DEPT)

Chris Adkins
Maura Ballagh
Marina Brightman
Stacy Dietch
Kaylie Hein
Elizabeth Holland
Jennifer Madren
Sarah McKeever
Austin McKeever
Zach Moss
Thomas Moss
Bob Myers
Kim Schreck

BIG ROCK #693

Olivia Hinds Daniel A Lynch Jacqueline Mariani Rod Parks

BIG FOG MOUNTAIN #343

Brian Bannan Nhorma Chacon Jordan Hamilton Maya Nash Celia Peirce Heather Petitt Chloe Runs Behind

CASTLE BUTTE LOOKOUT - ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Kelsey Dzintars

MOOSE CREEK, SHEARER, AND FISH LAKE CABIN HOSTS

Val Armichardy Levi Armichardy Tucker Armichardy Sarah Bates Sally Blevins Chance Chacon Sam Chacon Ella Mae Chacon Margaret Cheney-Hepner Chris Chouinard Ryan Dixon Annick Dixon Cindy Donaldson **Brad Donaldson Bruce Dunlop** Ginny Elliott Jim Elliott Jen Elliott Ken Grover Fred Hebert Charles (Chuck) Hepner Judy Hull Bill McGlynn Dave Riffle Laura Sims Meredith Webster Larry Whiting Debbie Young

SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

SHIP ISLAND LAKE #4030, BIGHORN CRAGS #402I (WOMEN'S PROJECT)

Shannon Anderson Therese Anderson Lisa Armstrong Samantha Birch Jeanice Boddy Lori Fortin Samantha Fremont-Smith

BEAR VALLEY CREEK #4010 (BOARD OF DIRECTORS)

Shawn Donley
Jim Heidelberger
Chris Lundy
Chuck Mark
Ted McManus
Susan Robertson
Jamie Robertson

PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST

NORTH FORK LICK CREEK #82

Ted McManus Julie Skidmore

SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST

ARDETH LAKE #482, SOUTH FORK PAYETTE #452, TEN LAKE BASIN TRAIL #463, AND MIDDLE FORK BOISE RIVER TRAIL

Steve Alexander Jordan Hamilton Leslie Loper Joel Rardin

TRAIL SCOUTS (VARIOUS FORESTS)

Shawn Donley Chuck Mark Meredith Webster



2025 YOUTH WILDERNESS PROGRAM



The second season of the Youth Wilderness Program is in the books, and thanks to an incredible cohort of youth, their trusting parents, generous donors, and dedicated staff (including the inaugural Youth Wilderness Expedition Leader) and Wilderness Ranger Fellows, the season could not have gone better! This year, 49 teens from Idaho and Montana volunteered their time, sweat, and good humor on one of ten expeditions in the Selway-Bitterroot, Frank Church-River of No Return, and Gospel Hump Wildernesses. Collectively, the youth served over 1,500 hours of community service, clearing almost 50 miles of trail!

Youth Wilderness Expeditions focus on crucial wilderness stewardship projects. However, it's not all about saws and Pulaskis. Our youth volunteers, eight of them returners from 2024, learned about

"These types of trips always make me remember how much work goes into making these trails accessible, and I always feel like my respect grows for people who do this."

"Wilderness means a place for solitude, for peace, and for a slower life. Wilderness is where I feel most myself, and where I have made my best of friends." the Wilderness Act, Leave No Trace principles, wildlife safety, backcountry navigation, local flora, and more.

In addition to the summer expeditions, SBFC staff spent time this spring visiting 23 schools across Idaho and southwest Montana, teaching over I,100 students about Leave No Trace, the meaning of Wilderness, and ways to become involved in their local wilderness areas.

We are proud to continue the Youth Wilderness Program into 2026, and because of generous community support, we will continue to offer this program free of charge for participants. We look forward to reaching even more youth as we continue to grow the program, hooking more youth on wilderness for life!





"The more I find myself out here, the more I realize how lucky I am to have these opportunities and experience all of this. I am becoming increasingly more grateful for these spaces."

"I was torn between not wanting it to end and my desire for a shower."

2025 YOUTH WILDERNESS EXPEDITION MEMBERS

FISH LAKE

Leighton Thomson Ailie Campbell Aurora Cook Stella Smith

Felix Pott Raymond Archibald

BIG SAND LAKE

Dilan McKenzie Chevy Woodworth

PISTOL LAKE

Brooke Andes Quintin Rawlings **Emery Stevens** Elly Powell

Quentin Cox Enid Wannamaker

BIG CREEK Noah Romberg

Orin Campbell McKenna Vaughan Timothy and Melanie Merrell Aidan Andresen

BOULDER CREEK

Ayden Olson Declan Crockett Oliver Long Cecilia Lujan Carmen Andrews

THREE LINKS

Aden Taylor Robert Larson Kaden Loughman Ezra Cleveland-Lyons

LANGER LAKE

Macy Stegner **Hudson Coshow** Wyatt Stone Rose Adams **Bridger Gaudry**

MOORES LAKE

Teagan Parkinson Ella Mae Chacon Jenna Mendenhall

Beckett Hagans Lillian Camin

UPPER SELWAY

Hickory Glass Liam Graham Robert Bratton Kestrel Butler

SLEEPING DEER MOUNTAIN

Toby McBride Allegra Seyler Olivia Long Cypress Chojnacki

THANK YOU TO THE 2025 YOUTH WILDERNESS PROGRAM SPONSORS & DONORS















































SBFC RIVERS PROGRAM &



At SBFC, we open pathways for people to discover and steward the largest wilderness complex in the Lower 48. This summer, that pathway led us to the river, where we found new ways to carry out our wilderness mission on and near the water.

In the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. it's safe to say that the Middle Fork and Main Salmon River corridors see the greatest use, and are where there is the greatest upside to ensuring stewardship is happening. This occurs through on-the-ground work of Wilderness and River Rangers, as well as at the launches for each river, where thousands of eager boaters pass through each summer, and where Wilderness education opportunities are the greatest. There may be no more important stewardship activity along the river than educating people about why wilderness is special and how to take care of it. For these reasons, SBFC said yes this spring when we were asked to help steward the river corridors in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness via hiring four river checkers and two river rangers. We are grateful to our river crew, who worked in tandem with Salmon Challis National Forest staff, helping to caretake these marquee Wild and Scenic Rivers.

We are grateful to share words from Ben Sholar, one of our 2025 river checkers primarily based out of Corn Creek this summer (the put-in for the Main Salmon). Ben was a ray of light to the river program, and we were thrilled to have him serving as an outstanding wilderness steward in the Frank.



JOIN OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Do you call Boise, Salmon, Blaine County, or Lewiston home and care deeply about wilderness? The Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation is seeking new board members from these areas who share our commitment to wilderness stewardship and access.

If you're passionate about protecting and connecting people to Idaho and Montana's wildest places, we'd love to hear from you!

Learn more or express interest by contacting SBFC's Board Chair, Shawn Donley, at shawn.donley@gmail.com

EBB & FLOW: A SEASON ON THE SALMON

BEN SHOLAR, SBFC RIVER CHECKER

As smoke settles gently over Corn Creek, the river season naturally wraps up. It's hard to find the words for the immense gratitude I feel toward Corn Creek and the many pockets of community I was fortunate enough to experience during my time as a River Checker. I will put it plain and simple: Thank you. Thank you to the group that gave me their grandmother's homemade cinnamon roll at 7:00 in the morning. Thank you to all the people who invited me into their campsites with open arms, to share a beer in the evening, exchanging stories and simply being present. Thank you to the lovers of wilderness for caring about public lands. Thank you to everyone who sat through my extremely long regulations talk and laughed at all my cheesy river jokes. Thank you to each outfitter company for showing unmatched kindness and welcoming me into your groups as if I had known each of you for years. Thank you John, Brian, and Codi for being great people and caring about the corridors in which we say goodbye to all the folks launching. Thank you Brendan for visiting me that one Friday. Thank you to SBFC for providing

such a great opportunity. Thank you to every person who came through Corn Creek this season.

Above all, I found that humanity thrives on the river. I truly believe it is the water that binds us and the trails that unite us. Sadness simply ceases to exist in a place like Corn Creek, even if for a brief moment. For me, there is no greater pleasure than witnessing the happiness, excitement, and sense of wonder our public lands provides for everyone. What a beautiful time it was to be here.

2025 SBFC RIVERS STAFF

BEN SHOLAR River Checker

BRIAN WHITE

River Checker

River Checker

JENNY PAULSON River Ranger

JOHN HARDEN

River Checker

MICHAEL SCHMIDT River Ranger





2025 WARREN MILLER WILDERNESS SKILLS AWARD

The SBFC Warren Miller Wilderness Skills Award is a peer-to-peer award given to the SBFC Wilderness Ranger Fellow who best displays the characteristics and qualities of the late Warren Miller, a legend in traditional tools and in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Warren worked in the Selway-Bitterroot for over 20 years, stationed in the backcountry on the only all-Wilderness ranger district in the country, at places like Moose Creek, Shearer, and Lost Horse Guard Stations. During his career, he became an expert with traditional tools and crosscut saw filing, helping to keep these skills alive into the 2Ist century. His unwavering dedication to the wild lands and the work of stewardship was unmatched. We honor Warren's memory by selecting a Wilderness Ranger Fellow as the "Warren Miller Fellow" each year.

The Wilderness Ranger Fellows were asked to nominate a peer to receive the award based on the following criteria:

- · A passion for traditional tool use
- Eagerness to learn and a strong work ethic
- A genuine curiosity about Wilderness lands and values
- Self-motivation and a willingness to go above and beyond

We are thrilled to share that Raegan Dick is the 2025 recipient of the Warren Miller Wilderness Skills Award! Raegan came to SBFC from Michigan, where she is in her third year at Michigan Technological University, studying Forestry & Wildlife Ecology. Raegan's peers had this to say about her:

- "Raegan brings lots of curiosity and humor to a crew, and shows lots of interest in learning and mastering new skills while bringing all members of a crew together in a fun and uplifting way."
- "Raegan has a great attitude; she always looked out for everyone and the cohesion of the group."
- "Raegan is an amazing person to have on hitch. She cares so much about the work and learning more."

The Warren Miller Fellow receives as their award a handmade single-bit ax from SBFC Board Member, Nick Hazelbaker. Raegan was excited to put hers to good use!

We know that Raegan will be a great advocate for wilderness in all her future endeavors, and are so grateful for the time and energy she gave to SBFC this summer!





SBFC NAMED "OUTSTANDING GROUP OF THE YEAR"

We're honored to share that the Idaho Transportation Board recognized SBFC as the Outstanding Group of the Year for Region 2's Adopt-A-Highway program!

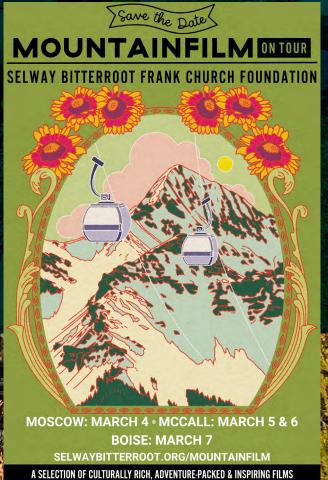
Since 2014, SBFC volunteers have cleaned a two-mile stretch of Highway I2 along the Lochsa River, one of the main gateways into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. This year, our team expanded its efforts to include a new section on Highway I3 near Grangeville.

The award was presented to longtime volunteer and SBFC board member, Nick Hazelbaker of Harpster, who coordinates our cleanup efforts.

We're grateful to everyone who has joined a highway cleanup day over the years... you help keep the path to wilderness beautiful!









SBFC Business 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

\$60 \$120 \$240 \$600 \$1,000 \$	
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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.