

Twin Rivers BCH Annual Report 2013

2013 was another year with Twin Rivers members doing a wide variety of different activities.

Members participate in monthly meetings at Hellsgate State Park with Idaho State Parks, Corps of Engineers, Twin River Cyclist, dog owners and hikers attempting to provide a balance for all users to enjoy this very popular area. Living in Lewiston, it is an area where members can ride year around. This year we adopted one of the trail called Laurel Vista and maintain it.

Feb. 24th: We help our Annual Chili Ride hosted by Bob Kuther at his ranch near Clarkston, WA. The weather was perfect for the ride. The neighbors' horses even came to play with us. The potluck was varied this year with jambalaya as well as chili for the main dish. As usual, we had way too much food to eat.



March 1st Red Bird Beach to Earl Homestead Project

Jarren Flinders, Ed Doherty, Rod Parks, Matt Bake, Dave Favor and Bill Correll boated across the Snake River from Couse Creek boat launch and pulled into Red Bird Beach on the Snake River above Lewiston. There, we packed a trail sign and tools to the junction of Red Bird Trail and an old road that parallels the Snake River, south. After installing the sign, the crew was split up, Jarren, Dave and Matt working up river toward the old Jasper Earl homestead. Rod, Ed and I boated up to a beach adjacent to the homestead. The first obstacle was a forty foot mass of black berry vines. Ed and Rod attacked this while I cut a trail thru the thistle back to the beach and on up to the Homestead site. For noon we boated back down to a nice beach with a concrete table and shade trees, although it wasn't that warm. Back to work and in about two hours the upriver crew showed up and had a similar experience with a black berry patch. After exchanging horror stories of trail work for a bit we all hiked up to the Jasper Earl Homestead that was built in 1889. There's not much left of the old house but a few boards that are exceptionally wide. That's all I'm going to tell you of the old homestead. There is a historical sign, newly repaired, that tells of some other very interesting facts.



March 10th: Redbird Trail Clearing

We started out on our adventure with 15 riders and 18 horses and 1 mule, very good turnout for a trail clearing project. Two of our helpers had to turn back when their horses wouldn't cross the creek. (Not sure if this counts for pizza. We will need a clarification.) We were able to do a lot of clearing with loppers, hedger and a chainsaw. We had just the right amount of workers and horse holders. It was a GREAT group. We cleared trail on our way down to the river and met up with Rod Parks about a mile from the river. He had boated across at Red Bird, picked up nails from where the Fish & Game had burnt the old corrals and then started clearing up the trail to meet us. Matt Bake was nice enough to lend Rod a horse for the return trip down to the river. Bill Ward fixed us a very nice pot of soup at the river which we all very much enjoyed. We then remounted and headed back to our horse trailers. The trip out was very enjoyable, and nice to see all the hard work that was done on the trip down. I would like to thank all that came along and helped make this a very productive and enjoyable day.



March 24: Primeland Country Store Outdoor Show

We were invited to set up a booth promoting what we do as BCH. We were blessed with some real nice weather until the very end of the event, but luckily we had good help and got everything torn down and put up before the rain. The turnout was excellent. The horse and mule rides were again the most popular activity we helped with. Thanks' to Bob Henriksen for setting up a LNT camp and Karen Parks and Chuck Frasier for the Dutch Oven presentations and samples. Pat Bogar gets the award for the most circles in a round pen! Thanks to all the relief crew members that helped Pat out with a break once in a while. Pat & Mark Bogar and Bob Hough provided the stock. The only break all day long was during the dog races.

May 7-8: Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Elk Fence Repair Project

Tom Weatherly, the local land owner was loaded with help. He volunteering corrals, water, camp site; pretty much whatever we'd need, nice to feel welcome! The Elk fence has been in existence for many years. The intent is to keep elk out of private farm fields. As a source of funds, \$500, we agree to ride the perimeter of the fence, about sixteen miles, and clear trees off the fence and repair broken wire. This was a challenging project, as the terrain is very steep in places and we could not ride our stock along the fence, so we had to lead them at times.



May 18: Poker Ride

We held the ride at Fordyce Trailhead up Asotin Cr. on Umatilla NF and Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife property. What can we say! We had beautiful weather for rides clearing the trail the two weekends before the poker ride. When the big event was scheduled, we have rain, rain, and more rain. Not everyone got wet thanks to the chapter awning. It was a tossup when the riders got back. Do we get some food from the Asotin Fair Booster Booth or go stand by the fire and try to warm up. Thanks to Betty's crew and the Asotin Fair Boosters for making it an enjoyable day even though the weather was less than ideal.

June 8-9: Wilderness Gateway Trailhead Project

The feed bunks in Loop D, the horse loop, at Wilderness Gateway along the Lochsa River were in real bad shape with the bottoms all broken and rotten. Bob Hough and Bill Correll approached the Clearwater NF and asked if we could repair them. These feed bunks have always been a maintenance problem so they asked if they could be filled with gravel instead of the wood bottoms. They agreed to this plan and the planning started. First the crew did some repair on several of the bunks and had to reset one of them on the bottom skids. The old bottoms were removed, and filled with gravel provided by IDT. This project was a real success thanks to Mark Bogar bringing his tractor to fill the feed bunks from the gravel stockpile. For those of you that camp at Wilderness Gateway, please remove any hay that your stock does not use and spread your manure before you leave.



June 15-16: Tin Can Ride

Seven TRBCH Members followed Bob Hough back in time about 85 years. Periodically Bob announces he's going to ride into the Shepherd's Tin Can Camp and invites any one to come along. From an old landing at the end of the haul road we pioneered further up the ridge face where we came out on a rocky ridge. We were on the top of a pretty steep canyon without a sign of a trail. In fact we never saw a trail. This canyon had its usual side draws which gave one a choice of slopes to slide down. "The man from Snowy river "didn't have anything on us. Leaving the horses we took a barely discernible trail to the ridge. There we read a plaque which was installed in 2007. It is titled "Shepherd's Tin Can Camp". And goes on to explain that the first name in the Velvet Tobacco can was DJ [Goldie] Goldsmith in 1928 and the second name was Delmar McMillan in 1942. From there we scrambled down the ridge and found the tobacco can stashed in the end of a rocky outcropping. After adding our names and taking pictures we headed back to the horses. Looking down the canyon and over the hillsides you can imagine the area crawling with sheep, an industry worth millions of dollars in its hay day. A lonely occupation for a shepherd broken only by bears cougars and the arrival of a packer with news and staples. This was a memorable day!

June 17-20: Kelly Cr, Packing Project

We packed four members of the North Fork Dist trail crew 12 miles up Kelly Creek Tr. #567 to Deer Creek. The trip was not without a few problems as the old forgot to tighten the cinch got one pack animal before we were out of sight of the trailhead. Next another pack animal wanted to go back, as it could see the person leading it was a green horn and had a lot to learn about mountain trails. A few tranquilizers for the horse and the rider and everything settled down and it turned into a great trip. The FS crew was happy to see their food and we were happy to get to Hansen Meadows where we camped and had plans to do some sightseeing the next day. Well, then the rain came and it liked the meadow so well that it stayed for two days with us. It is so much fun to pack up camp in the rain! The trip back to the trailhead and drive home was uneventful and the packing green horn is well on his way to becoming a veteran.

June 23: Dough Creek Cabin Adopt-A-Cabin Project

It seems like it is going to be one of those kinds of years where things just seem to happen. We had a crew of five to log out the trail to the cabin, do a little brushing and the usual things we do around the cabin. I think it was about the third tree across the trail that Rod pulled the starter rope out of the chainsaw. Everyone was upset other than Karen as she could see that she may not have to ride all the way to the cabin. Well thanks to some working up a sweat cutting a few trees with saddle saws we made it to the cabin. We washed windows, sweep the floor, put a new coat of stain on the deck, mowed fire breaks around all the structures, and cut thistle by hand. On the way down, there was a bear cub in a tree along the trail and mother bear was on the other side of the trail and not happy with us keeping her from her cub. It all worked out fine with no problems. The cabin is in real good shape other than almost all of the firewood for the cabin was burned up in a campfire outside. Thanks to everyone that worked so hard for the project.



July 9: A United Effort against Noxious Weeds

Rod Parks of Twin Rivers BCH called me and said they needed some help packing in a “weed crew” 10 miles up Kelly Creek on the Clearwater National Forest. He said that Jeff Halligan from McCall and North Central Idaho BCH would spearhead the project. This spraying project was going to be a united effort with the Wilderness Society, The Great Burn Study Group and the Forest Service. Their main problem was getting the camp in. When they contacted Jeff about the possibility of packing them in, the Backcountry Horsemen responded.

It was thought they needed at least 8 pack animals to pack in their TWO person crew. My original thought-“8 animals for 2 people-that’s more than the most glamorous elk camp!” I called Jeff and he said that Phil Foster from Kamiah and the North Central Idaho BCH would also help. We had only 6 pack animals but somehow we thought we could make it work or take 2 trips.

This could be interesting I thought! A semi retired packer, a retired warden and a retired office lumberjack representing the BCH coming together to help 3 different organizations, who sometimes may be at odds!

But our common goal of reducing or eliminating noxious weeds in our forests was our driving force and made it a very worthwhile endeavor.

We met Bev Dupree, of the Great Burn Study Group, who coordinates most of the activities in this area at the trailhead that first night with the “weed crew” and a trail crew. A good time was had by all as we devoured Jeff’s Dutch Oven chicken dinner and told stories around the non-campfire circle!! Meeting and getting to know the crews that we are helping are always the highlight of these trips. They are sincerely thankful to the volunteers.

Daylight brought the reality of putting together the packs of what seemed an unlimited amount of gear. Two items immediately stood out!!! A 70 (Seventy) lb. stove and a cooler full of bugs. Now I have never packed bugs before but do understand the procedure where these bugs can dine naturally on some of these noxious weeds and help greatly in their demise. But they are still BUGS!!! The 70# stove was a different manner. It was donated to them but it was also about 90 degrees out and they would only be out until mid August!! We would have to allocate almost one pack animal to just stove and tent (a donated 14x16).

We did manage to get the nearly 1000# of gear on 6 pack animals. Most top packed and some looking like a balancing act. There were several adjustments made along the trail but perhaps that just made the trip more memorable. My horse was colic the first 5-6 miles but after some treatment, that turned out OK. Even lost a shoe but that’s happened before!

And when we reached Hansen Meadows and the camp site, it made it all worthwhile. One of the most beautiful campsites I have encountered. Water, grass, views and true serenity. Immediately I knew I would be coming back!

We did pack up about 20# of bagged garbage that had been left there previously, evidently for our unannounced pickup, and after relaxing for a couple of hours, we started back!

The trip down went without a hitch. By the way have you ever noticed that the lead rider on a very dusty trail (and about 90 degrees) becomes pretty hard of hearing when discussing trail conditions? Evidently he had the lead to avoid us getting lost!!!! Oh yes- the joys being trail boss!!!

A great time was had! Yes- hard work, but good camaraderie, lots of trail chatter, and meeting new friends, and that is what it is all about! A great example of 4-5 organizations getting together and trying to maintain the trail systems and environment that we all cherish!

And now I can say that I have now been involved in packing BUGS. And a nice 20-25# stove will most likely be on the gift list for this crew!

The crew will be spraying for 30 days. I sure hope they do not burn out that stove!!!

Jeff and Mike packed the crew back out a month later and the wood stove had not even been used! They were not the happiest packers as they had to walk out in 100 Degree temperatures as there were so many supplies that never got used.



July9-13: Kid's Kamp

This was the 10th Anniversary of hosting Kid's Kamp. We settled on limiting it to twenty five youths after having over thirty last year. We old members just cannot keep up with that many energetic participants. This year was very successful and we had no major accidents or injuries. Just the usual skinned knees and stepped on toes. Daily horse rides, LNT training, gun safety, trail brushing and lots of fun and games. Again, we owe a big thanks to the Washington State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife for providing a fantastic site to hold the camp.



July 29-Aug 2: Dry Diggins Lookout & Horse Heaven Cabin Archeology Study

We were hoping that by July 29th all the trails in the Seven Devils Wilderness would be cleared. In checking with Cathy Conover, FS in Riggins, we could see this was not going to be the case. She had a Montana Conservation Crew working on the Boise Trail from Windy Saddle to Horse Heavens and they had cut over 500 trees and were only about two thirds there. The good news was the trail was cut out to Hibb's Cow Camp for our first two nights out and part way to Horse Heaven.

We had a beautiful ride to Hibb's with fantastic weather. Tony King, Wallowa Whitman NF Zone Archeologist, was along to evaluate the Dry Diggins L O, which he did on our second day, for restoration and preservation of the lookout. Day three we loaded up and headed for Horse Heaven Cabin. We knew there would be some work cutting our way there, but we also knew we had a young fit FS employee to run one end of the crosscut, a real blessing. We cut trees with a hand saw or threw out all the small trees and only had to

use the crosscut on three trees. We packed out a torn and tattered 16X20 tent and frame for Cathy that had been left at Hibb's Cow Camp from the previous hunting season. We were very happy that the day went so good. Then the really good news came up the trail to meet us. The Montana Conservation Crew (MCC) had finished clearing the trail to Horse Heaven Cabin from Windy Saddle Trailhead, so we were home free for a great ride home with no more trail clearing.

Well, Mother Nature could just not leave things be. We got camp set up at Horse Heaven, let the stock out to graze, and started dinner. Shortly, the threatening storm arrived. First strong winds that tore our tarp down, then the hail and more hail and more wind! We re-hung the tarp, then all stood under the tarp holding on with our hands to keep it from blowing away again. Luckily Tony started a fire just as it started raining and with the strong wind it did not go out. If this was not enough fun, next we had a lightning strike about 150 yards on both sides of our camp. We took a look out to see if any of our stock was gone or had been struck by the lightning. Luckily all were fine and standing with their tails to the storm. After about an hour of hail, it finally switched to rain and the wind slowed down. We were able to get some heat from the fire and quit shivering before we went to bed. Jim had to go look for his tent before he could go to bed as it had blown away in the storm.

Tony finished his evaluation of the Horse Heavens Cabin and we started for home after thanking the MCC crew for doing such a great job. I will shorten up the story and just tell you that the newly cleared trail did not even last 24 hours. There were over 50 new trees across the trail. We had lots of experience jumping logs, cutting trees and putting the crosscut saw on and off. It took us eight hours and fifteen minutes to ride the twelve miles, but we did make it.



Aug .9-16: Eagle Mountain Trail Clearing

We made plans to meet at Horse Camp for lunch and then head on to our campsite below Fish Lake Saddle. The ride to camp was beautiful and fantastic weather. Everyone was pretty well set up for the night when a micro burse with rain came through our camp and had everyone scrambling. In less than five minutes over a dozen trees come down. One fell across a portable corral with stock inside and one fell about twenty feet from Matt and Dan's highline. They had to run for their lives as a tree fell right where they were putting a tarp over their gear for the night. Jerry Lane moved his tent, after he caught up with it, into the middle of the meadow 150 feet from any trees, but he did not seem to care about his stock, as he left them in harm's way. Luckily there was no permanent damage to anything. Dinner was eaten watching it rain. It took us an hour to ride to Fish Lake Saddle and start work the next morning. Trail #206 is a Trail Class 3 so we planned to clear all trees to eight feet wide and ten feet high. The work area was from Fish Lake Saddle to the Junction with the Trail to Lower Two Lakes. We worked until around 2:00 pm and then most headed back to camp. Rod Parks, Jerry Lane, and Billie Havens rode on to the Wounded Doe trail to check out how much work was needed. The crew cut two trees with cross cuts that came down in the storm near camp. We were happy to find out that we had done the worst stretch while we had a full crew. Of course during Saturday Dinner we had a hail storm that left enough hail on the ground that we buried some beer in it and had ice cold beer after the work on Sunday. Right on cue, it started raining during dinner again, but it was very mild compared to the other nights. Monday we moved camp to Lower Two Lakes and evaluated the last stretch of trail to clear. Tuesday Morning we all headed out fresh, after a day of no cutting, and had the final stretch cleared by noon. Back to camp for a day of relaxation, fishing and a swim in the lake to rinse off the sweat and dust from the trail as there appeared to be very little rain the closer we got to Two Lakes. Wednesday several members rode to Upper Two Lakes for some relaxation and fishing. Steve Cooper and Rod Parks logged out the trail to Lower Two Lakes. A fish fry was added to dinner that night as the fishing was really good! Thursday we rode by Stanley Butte and camped in Surprise Creek. Friday we loaded up for the ride home on Trail #220, Lochsa Peak, and back to Wilderness Gateway. Wouldn't you know it, as we were getting close to the trailhead we started coming across limbs on the trail. You guessed it, out comes the crosscut saw several times. We finally get back to the vehicles. A long day in the saddle and then the drive home. If you want to experience some extreme weather, just take Bob Hough along with you on a pack trip.



Nov. 30: Gate Closing Fun Ride

Our annual Ride from Fordyce Trailhead before the roadway gate is locked until April. The weather was fantastic this year. We have not always been so lucky! As the riders crested the hill they were confronted with a heard of over one hundred elk that did not stay around very long. The trail tread was a little greasy in places and we had a horse do the “Bambi Shuffle” and a face plant. The horse or rider was not hurt. Sounds like another pizza for next years’ November Meeting.

2013-14 School Years: Core Explorer Class

Mark Bogar was contacted by a Lincoln Middle School teacher in Clarkston WA and asked if we would be willing to teach a class with seventh graders teaching outdoor skills. We saw this as a fantastic opportunity to work with youth and demonstrate LNT principles. A class room setting is challenging, but the feedback from the students has been great. When we agreed to this, we thought it was once a week for eight weeks. We now have signed on for four different groups of students for a total of 32 weeks.

Twin Rivers Back Country Horsemen				
Year	Volunteer Hours	Total Miles Driven	Trail Miles Cleared	Volunteer Dollar Value
2013	2270	10200	67	\$88,940