



Take a Hike!

The Newsletter of the Idaho Trails Association

The Idaho Trails Association promotes the interests of hikers through advocacy, education, collaboration and the care-taking of Idaho's hiking trails.

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ITA Kicks Off First Year with Two Great Trail Projects



Volunteer crew for the Duck and Hum Lakes Trail Project, Payette National Forest. Photo by John McCarthy.

The initial two trail projects of the Idaho Trails Association were a great success, to get some good work done on the trail and to begin building a long-lasting partnership for hikers.

The two service projects put 27 people on the ground, swinging a Pulaski, pulling a crosscut, digging a shovel, getting dirty and seeing their work make a difference.

The first project was maintenance work on the popular Duck to Hum Lakes Trail, in the proposed Secesh Wilderness on the Payette National Forest. Twelve people worked to cut out and repair the trail, camping at Duck Lake. Many people used the trail as we worked on it over an August weekend, including half a dozen families who walked by.

For the second project, fourteen people worked to re-open the Dan Ridge Trail in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness on the Clearwater National Forest, which had not seen maintenance in many years. The trail leads to spectacular views of the Bitterroots, the Great Burn and the heart of the Selway. The Selway-Bitterroot Foundation provided the leadership, project coordination, tools, pack support and cooking that made it easy for us to hit the ground running when we arrived at the trail, and we didn't stop working all week long. We cut out 394 trees, including many that were three feet in diameter, and brushed 3 miles of trail. It was a fantastic week of work with new and old friends, and we look forward to more partnership projects like this one in the future.

Both projects drew on people from their 20s to 60s, some with extensive past trail experience and some with no prior experience. All the participants shared a great interest in seeing Idaho's trails maintained and used. The participants also shared a great backcountry experience and enthusiasm, including the use of traditional skills and tools. While modern tools such as chain saws might be the most efficient way of clearing trails, the traditional use of cross-cut saws, pulaskis and other tools creates more "sweat equity," and proves that the maintenance of wilderness trails with non-mechanized tools is possible and enjoyable.

Another emphasis of ITA is collaboration, and the projects drew volunteer representatives from The Wilderness Society, Selway-Bitterroot Foundation, Student Conservation Association, Idaho Conservation League, Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Secesh Wildlands Coalition, Central Idaho Recreation Coalition, volunteers from the public and staff from the U.S. Forest Service.



ITA's 2010 trail projects were (1) Duck and Hum Lakes, Payette National Forest and (2) Dan Ridge, Clearwater National Forest.

This year's projects were made possible by a \$10,000 grant from the U.S. Forest Service Regional Offices in Missoula and Ogden. Work on the Dan Ridge rediscovery project will be continued next year. Additional projects on other national forests are in the works for 2011, including the Wewukiye (Wa-woo-kia) Trail Project near Warm Lake on the Boise National Forest. Some backcountry experience plus a lot of enthusiasm equals a great ITA project. See you next year!

John McCarthy

Generous Grant Makes Our Work Possible

Thanks to the generous support of the Boise REI store, ITA was just awarded a \$10,000 grant for one of our 2011 trail projects on the Boise National Forest.

The Wewukiye (Wa-woo-kia) trail is a new seventeen-mile trail that will connect Warm Lake, Tule Lake, Stolle Meadows, a Chinook salmon viewing platform, a historic cabin, and Vulcan Hot Springs. It will offer opportunities appealing to a wide range of recreationists that include hikers, mountain bikers and backpackers.

The grant will enable ITA to coordinate volunteer work on the project. For the first time, ITA will also be able to purchase tools to outfit our volunteers for this and other future projects. No longer will ITA have to rely solely on the Forest Service and other land managers for our equipment. The grant will also allow ITA to provide evening meals for our volunteers on the Wewukiye Project and reward them for their hard work.

Like the projects completed by ITA this summer, work on the Wewukiye Trail will rely almost exclusively on volunteers. We hope that you will consider volunteering for the Wewukiye Trail Project or one of the other trail projects that we are planning next year on a national forest near you.

If you would like to be kept informed about upcoming volunteer trail projects or ITA's events, please send us an e-mail. You can get in touch by sending an e-mail to info@IdahoTrailsAssociation.org

What's Next for ITA?

It was a great first year for the Idaho Trails Association. We incorporated ITA, secured "seed" money from the Forest Service to begin operations, and established new and fruitful partnerships with the agency and the Selway-Bitterroot Foundation. ITA made its public debut at the Boise Rec Fest, where many people stopped by and expressed great interest in the work that ITA is doing. Finally, we organized and cosponsored two very successful trail projects on the Payette and Clearwater National Forests.

The future for ITA looks even better. In addition to the Wewukiye Trail project, we hope to more than double the number of trail projects in 2011.

To accomplish this goal, ITA will be spending time to establish new working relationships with district rangers and other land managers throughout the State of Idaho. ITA will also be purchasing a tool cache for our 2011 projects, including pulaskis, shovels, crosscut saws, leather gloves and other equipment so that we can outfit our own projects.



Babette Munting, one of our volunteers and Eric Melson with the Selway-Bitterroot Foundation clearing out the Dan Ridge Trail in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. Photo by John McCarthy.

During the off-season, the Board of Directors will also be hard at work developing and finalizing a three-year strategic plan. While strategic planning sounds boring, developing a strategic plan to guide ITA's growth and activities is critical to securing financial support, prioritizing projects and ensuring ITA's ultimate success.

While ITA was successful at organizing or cosponsoring two trail projects this year, this work was accomplished entirely through volunteer support or organizational partnerships with the Forest Service and the Selway-Bitterroot Foundation. In order for ITA to grow and expand our efforts to become the care-taker of Idaho's hiking and backpacking trails, we will need to build our capacity to do so. Within the next two years we hope to hire an executive director to implement the strategic plan that the Board will be writing during the off-season.

Finally, in the coming years we hope to begin offering membership events, including organized outings, skills

trainings and social activities. While ITA is currently focused primarily on trail stewardship activities, one of our objectives is to promote an appreciation of Idaho's backcountry by cultivating a sense of community amongst Idaho's hikers and backpackers.

Tips for Safe Hiking During The Hunting Season

Fall can be a rewarding time to go hiking in Idaho's backcountry. After Labor Day weekend, many people curtail their outdoor recreational activities for the remainder of the year.

Before you head out for some fall hiking, keep in mind that some Idaho hunts begin as early as August 30th. Here are some tips to help keep you safe when hiking during hunting season.

1. **Check the hunting regulations.** Even if you don't hunt it's easy to find out if there are any open hunting seasons where you are planning to hike. Hunting regulations are readily available on the Idaho Department of Fish and Game website. Check the regulations for the game unit where you are planning to hike. If there are any open hunting seasons in your location take extra precautions to ensure your safety. <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>
2. **Wear orange.** Hunter orange is not just the color of the Boise State Broncos—it's the universal color for hunter safety. Wear bright orange clothing, hats, jackets, etc to keep yourself from being mistaken as big game. Avoid wearing white or dark colors, which can be mistaken for the flash of a tail or the body of a game animal.
3. **Make noise.** Wear bells or other devices that make loud noises that cannot be mistaken for game calls. Hunters might not appreciate the fact that you are scaring away the deer and the elk, but you will stay alive.
4. **Use established trails.** Sticking with established trails will reduce the likelihood that you will come into contact or conflict with hunters.
5. **Tell someone where you are going.** Whether or not it's hunting season, always tell a trusted friend,

neighbor or family member where you are going hiking and when they can expect your return.

A Few Words About Membership

You know that times have changed when a new organization like the Idaho Trails Association has more fans on Facebook than official members.

When we finished this newsletter, we had 160 fans on Facebook and only 28 official members. Even then, all of our “official” members gained their worthy status by volunteering six or more hours of volunteer service for our trail projects or other organizational work. We currently have no dues-paying members.

It’s not that anyone hasn’t asked us about becoming a dues-paying member. Rather, ITA is currently an all-volunteer organization without the capacity to accept donations and track members in some kind of a database.

But do not fret. ITA has a plan for growth that includes not only an official membership program, but we also hope to hire staff that can give our current and future members the attention that they deserve.

For now, stay tuned by signing up for our e-mails and newsletters. Oh, and don’t forget to become a “fan” of ITA on Facebook!

Idaho Trails Association on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/IdahoTrailsAssociation>

To sign up for our e-mails and newsletters send us an e-mail with “Subscribe” in the subject line.

info@IdahoTrailsAssociation.org

Volunteers

We owe a debt of gratitude to the volunteers who contributed their personal time to assist in our two trail projects as well as other organizational work. Each of the following volunteers has been conferred a free, one-year

membership for contributing six or more hours of volunteer service to ITA.

*Jenni Blake
Jeff Halligan
Sally Ferguson
Lisa Gerloff
Eric Melson
John McCarthy
Zac Crist
Mike Medberry
David Hayes
Sam Hescock
Jerome Cebula
Scott Acker
Katie Knotek
Brenda Bielke
Clem Pope
Jon Binnerger
Dylan McCoy
Hannah Binnerger
Babette Munting
Sarah Walker
Cheryl Goodman
Brad Brooks
Bob Barry
Cassie Kess
Jim Heidelbergger
Lynne Nelson
Jim Wiebush
Diane Pettit*

We would also like to thank the Northern and Intermountain Regions of the U.S. Forest Service and REI for their generous support.

The Idaho Trails Association, Inc. is a non-profit organization under Idaho State Law.

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