

Advocate

Protecting the Sawtooth National Recreation Area

A Letter to Members from Our President

Dear Members and Friends,

When I was elected President of the Society ten months ago, Gary O'Malley, our new Executive Director, and I identified three key goals for 2010. In addition to ongoing work on existing programs which support the Society's mission, such as negotiating and pursuing funding for scenic easements in the Sawtooth NRA and educating landowners about the content and importance of the area's Private Land Regulations, we hoped to:

- Increase the Society's visibility and membership - particularly in areas outside the Sawtooth Valley where many regular visitors and users of the Sawtooth NRA reside;
- Expand member involvement in Society programs and affairs, especially in leadership roles; and
- Increase and strengthen our partnerships with other entities which positively impact the Sawtooth NRA for the benefit of all who live or visit there. I believe we have made important progress in all three areas.

To foster membership growth and increased visibility, we held three outreach/development events, two in the Wood River Valley and one at Smiley Creek, attended by over 150 people. In 2010, we hope to host similar events in Boise and Twin Falls. The Society also received very favorable media coverage in two new publications: the Twin Falls Times Mirror and Sun Valley Magazine. I have no doubt these efforts contributed to our new member growth and rekindled interest and enthusiasm among long-time supporters.

In May we held another Sawtooth Vision 20/20 Workshop in Stanley,

bringing a number of new participants into this on-going undertaking, and in August the Society's Annual Board Meeting was, for the first time, opened to all members. In addition to providing some very constructive feedback, these steps resulted in both new ideas and additional individuals to help implement the actions recommended in the 20/20 Long Range Plan and other Society activities.

At the Annual Meeting, we also agreed to expand the Executive Committee from four to seven members. We now have the talent and experience of Bob Hayes as Immediate Past President, Hans Carstensen as Vice President - New Initiatives, Michael Humphreys as Vice President - Lands Programs, Reuben Perin as Vice President - Member Development, Patricia Young as Secretary and Keith Reese as Treasurer. Working with Gary, I believe our expanded Committee will provide the leadership, resources and expertise to make the Society's programs more successful than ever. And, to further enlarge our leadership team, we plan to add four very capable and energetic new Board members this winter.

The number and scope of our partnerships, working to carry out various aspects of the Society's mission, grew as well.

- Two new motorized trail rider groups are joining our pilot program to establish authorized, appropriate, and clearly identified OHV trails in the Pole Creek area. These actions would also close unauthorized user created trails and increase education and enforcement on OHV trails where riding is not appropriate.
- The Trust for Public Lands has linked

with the Society to hopefully help secure permanent scenic easements on large and highly visible land parcels in the Stanley Basin.

- The City of Stanley and the Stanley-Sawtooth Chamber are working with the Society to establish an improved permanent year round trail for hikers, bikers, skiers and snowmobilers from Stanley to Redfish Lake; to construct a new, user friendly Visitors Center in Stanley; and to increase affordable housing in and around Stanley.
- And, we welcome our newest partner, Sun Valley Adaptive Sports, with whom we are working to improve opportunities for those with disabilities to enjoy the Sawtooth NRA's recreational facilities.
- Existing partnerships with other important entities such the Forest Service, Idaho Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and the Sawtooth Interpretive & Historical Center also continued to grow in new directions.

Finally, I am gratified to report that, despite the economic challenges faced this year, we expect to end 2009 in a substantially stronger financial position than a year ago. For this, I sincerely and gratefully thank our supporters as well as each of you. Without your continuing support, and the financial resources thus provided, the Society would not be able to carry on, much less grow, our efforts to protect, preserve and enhance the Sawtooth NRA for everyone.

Paul Hill

Paul D. Hill, President

SAWTOOTH SOCIETY®

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The Sawtooth Society is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that was established in 1997 to protect the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

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Hans Carstensen,
Vice President-New Initiatives
Michael Humphreys,
Vice President-Lands Programs
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Project Milestone Reached

Recently, the Sawtooth Society approved its 100th Project Grant for the reconstruction of the Big Smokey Trail to the tune of \$5,000. Since the inception of the partnership with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation in 2000, the Sawtooth Society, through a disciplined process involving a number of our members, has now provided over \$500,000 in projects throughout the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. If you would like to be involved in this process or know about projects that might benefit from it please contact Gary O'Malley at gary@sawtoothsociety.org.

Amy Klinger accepts the Sawtooth Society check for a new EKG Machine



Chief Andy Gunderson accepts a grant on behalf of the Sawtooth Valley Rural Fire Department for six new emergency radios

Partnership with Sun Valley Adaptive Sports Established

The Sawtooth Society values its many partnerships and would not be nearly as effective in leveraging its resources without the dedication and excellent alignment of work with a variety of organizations. We are very excited that over the last few months we have joined forces with Sun Valley Adaptive Sports. Many of you are already familiar with Sun Valley Adaptive Sports as they are nationally recognized for their creative and leading edge work with individuals who have a variety of disabilities. Adaptive Sports has successfully launched and managed a number of high-quality programs that are safe and fun; enabling participants to enjoy the freedom and

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Amanda Walton delivers a moving testimonial for the opportunity for all to enjoy the Sawtooths

A Rousing Good Time Was Had By All!

Hosted by Reuben and Susan Perin, at their spectacular Goat Creek ranch, 160 attendees joined to make the 2009 *Sagebrush Soiree* one of the best ever! From Trudy's Catering, the music by Headwaters, to the energetic auctioneering by Joe Hutchins, all the elements came together flawlessly.

The thanks must go to our members, many of whom contributed so much in the way of energy, talents and resources to pull it off! A special thanks to those who contributed the dozens of auction prizes, bid upon them, provided refreshments for the evening and helped with all the set-up and decorations. Karen Keiski, the event coordinator, also deserves our appreciation for bringing it all together!

In addition to great food and the high energy of good friends getting reconnected over one of the many fine wines arranged by Larry Stone, we raised approximately \$85,000 which will be put to use in helping the Sawtooth Society accomplish its work to help preserve, protect and enhance the area we all love.

By all accounts the evening was an unquestionable success. Thank you and please make a note on your calendar that the 2010 *Sagebrush Soiree* will be July 31, 2010 at Wes Wills' Fisher Creek Ranch. Thank you Wes!



It was all the little details that made the 2009 Sagebrush Soiree the special evening that it was!

Important Partnership with the State of Idaho Extended

Careful readers of this edition of the Advocate will detect a common theme for much of the content regarding the many projects we help make possible within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). Many of you who have been members of the Sawtooth Society for years, already know that few of these projects would be possible without the heavy-lifting done years ago to make the Sawtooth Society the beneficiary of the proceeds from the purchase and renewal of the State of Idaho Goat License Plate Program.

This program was initiated in 2000 and is managed under a joint Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Idaho Parks and Recreation Department and is reviewed and renewed every three years. Over the last several months that review was completed and on November 6 the Sawtooth Society and Idaho Parks and Recreation entered into a new three year agreement that will ensure we can continue the many good projects that benefit the recreational enjoyment of residents and visitors to the SNRA.

If you already have a Goat Plate, we appreciate your contribution to this fund. Please buy another! If you don't have one what are you waiting for? They are the best looking license plates out there!



Idaho Parks and Recreation Director Nancy Merrill and Executive Director Gary O'Malley signing the new Partnership Agreement

Partnership with Sun Valley Adaptive Sports Established

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thrills from participating in a wide range of sports and recreational activities.

The Sawtooth Society is working with Tom Iselin, the Executive Director of Sun Valley Adaptive Sports, the U.S. Forest Service and Redfish Lake Lodge to better build the awareness of currently available recreational opportunities within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and to enhance both facilities and programs offered in the future. If you would like to help make a direct and dramatic difference for youth, adults and veterans from around the country and see to it that they have a lasting and meaningful experience right here in the SNRA please contact Gary O'Malley at 208.721.2909.



Check Out Our New Website!

We are very glad that the grueling work of preparing a new website is behind us. However there are many ways in which it can be improved and refined. Please go to www.sawtoothsociety.org and give us your feedback regarding how to further enhance it.



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State of Idaho / U.S. Forest Service Land Exchange

Most of you remember the controversy created by the State of Idaho Transportation Department when it initiated mining gravel on a highly visible parcel of land in the Fourth of July Creek area in the summer of 2006. That parcel is one of four owned by the State that lies within the boundaries of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). These parcels are legally unencumbered by the regulations and principles established by PL 92-400, the law that created the SNRA. Thus, the State of Idaho is under its normal constitutional mandate on these parcels to maximize their financial return to benefit the citizens of Idaho.

The rub comes when this financial focus conflicts with the scenic, historical and pastoral values which have been firmly established over the last three decades on the other lands within the SNRA. In this case the conflict came to a head as the Idaho Department of Transportation began the gravel extraction on a long-term mining lease it had obtained from the Idaho Department of Lands, the manager of these four state parcels. As a result, many recreational users, neighbors and visitors were upset with these actions, which they considered incompatible within the SNRA.

Since 2006 the Sawtooth Society has helped foster discussions between the

State of Idaho and the U.S. Forest Service to find an agreeable way to transfer these four parcels from the state to the federal government. A key element of this work is finding an acceptable source of gravel for the state to use for road surfacing. The first chapter of this work included the possibility of a three-way land exchange involving the Tamarack development. However, that development's financial challenges have required that discussions begin anew, looking at other options to consummate an exchange.

While exchanges of this magnitude often take up to a decade to complete, the parties continue to believe it is in everyone's best interest to find a long-term solution to this thorny issue. This land exchange is and will remain a top priority for the Sawtooth Society to help resolve by:

- Acting as a catalyst to bring the parties together to seek creative and long-term answers.
- Keeping the media, Congressional Delegation and the Governor's Office and other stakeholders apprised of progress.
- Investing time and other resources as necessary to overcome hurdles to a successful exchange of the state-owned lands within the SNRA to the U.S. Forest Service.

Should you wish to learn more about the issue or how you can help please contact the Sawtooth Society.

In the next *Advocate*...

- Get a preview of the 2010 *Sagebrush Soiree* - July 31
- Learn of the important progress from the Sawtooth Vision 2020 initiative
- Have you ever considered planned giving to benefit the Sawtooth Society?