



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STANLEY, IDAHO—The Sawtooth Society celebrates 20 years in its mission to preserve, protect and enhance the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (NRA). Twenty years ago a small group of people, led by Bethine Church, came together to address concerns about the Sawtooth NRA. This small band of inspired men and women had a vision for how to address those concerns. It was at this time that the Sawtooth Society was created as an advocate for this iconic area, which so many people cherished—then and now.

The Sawtooth Society celebrates many accomplishments in the last two decades for the Sawtooth NRA. It has played a pivotal role in securing Wilderness protection for the Boulder-White Clouds Mountains and avoiding a problematic National Monument. In addition, it successfully worked to lessen budget cuts, addressed the risk of another catastrophic fire, including co-leading the current Sawtooth Valley Wildland Fire Collaborative, as well as encouraged inconspicuous private lands development and, along with the Forest Service, developed a “lessons learned” book based on 40+ years of experience. It has also helped lead a broad stakeholder-based, long-range strategic planning effort, Sawtooth Vision 20/20, to identify risks and opportunities facing the Sawtooth NRA.

The Sawtooth Society’s mountain goat license plate grants have funded more than 190 recreation enhancement projects of all types, and its continued popularity and support allows for more projects in the years to come. Through organized programs, it has led scores of stewardship enhancement projects with numerous partner groups and hundreds of volunteers, many of which have involved youth under the banner of the Austin Kraal Memorial Volunteer Program—a central part of the Society’s core work.

“We’ve accomplished a great deal over these past twenty years,” said Sawtooth Society President Wayne Hughes. “However, our work is never done, and we must continue to strive to inspire new generations to continue to preserve, protect and enhance the Sawtooth NRA for the future. This is a unique and special place and being an advocate for it is a role we cherish. As federal budgets are reduced the needs and opportunities to do important work on the ground will become even more critical. It is the Society’s greatest desire to ensure that all visitors will enjoy the Sawtooth NRA for generations to come.”

For more information, contact the Sawtooth Society Executive Director Gary O’Malley at 208-721-2909 or email [gary@sawtoothsociety.org](mailto:gary@sawtoothsociety.org).

**About the Sawtooth Society**

Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2017, the Sawtooth Society offers memberships, programs, grants and volunteer opportunities. Individuals and organizations can join with the Society to accomplish its active stewardship efforts to preserve, protect and enhance the Sawtooth NRA for future generations. For details and more information, visit the Sawtooth Society's website [www.sawtoothsociety.org](http://www.sawtoothsociety.org).