



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STANLEY, IDAHO—For the 2017 summer season, the Sawtooth Society’s volunteer stewardship program conducted 31 maintenance and construction projects with 277 volunteers providing over 2,900 hours of labor on key projects within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area [NRA]. As a part of the Austin Kraal Memorial Volunteer Program, the groups often included urban and at-risk youth to assist with projects on-the-ground, building self-esteem and an understanding of nature, while trading technology for the traditional tools necessary in Wilderness Areas.

Groups participating in this year’s trail maintenance, highway and campsite cleanup as well as log fence construction for sensitive areas included: The College of Idaho, the Limelight Hotel Ketchum, Boise Young Professionals members, Cherry Gulch School, Sawtooth Brewery, blueFire Wilderness Therapy, Flourish Foundation and Sage School. On single-day and multi-day backpack trips, volunteers used crosscut saws, axes, pruners and shovels to safely clear Wilderness and non-Wilderness trails as well as improve drainage while practicing Leave No Trace hiking and camping principles. It was the first summer the Society led backpacking trail maintenance trips, which were highly successful with plans to continue and expand this portion of its work in the future.

“The Forest Service very much appreciates the work of the Sawtooth Society and all the volunteer groups who participated with them to work on the Sawtooth NRA,” said Sawtooth NRA Area Ranger Kirk Flannigan. “As federal budgets continue to be reduced and stretched among many priorities, volunteers are essential to accomplish critical work including maintaining trails and recreational facilities. The Society’s success in helping to address this need helps enable all our visitors to have an enjoyable and safe recreational experience in this iconic area.”

Sawtooth Society Executive Director Gary O’Malley added, “Any time we have important work accomplished and bring volunteers to the area, it helps to build the next generation of advocates for the Sawtooth NRA. We thank all our partner groups including the Forest Service for enabling the Society to work toward our goal to preserve, protect and enhance the Sawtooth NRA.”

To learn more about the Sawtooth Society’s volunteer program, suggest a 2018 project or volunteer as an individual or connect an organization with the program, email Stewardship Coordinator Greg Travelstead at greg@sawtoothsociety.org.

About the Sawtooth Society

The Society has invested \$750,000 in more than 190 projects to enhance recreation in the Sawtooth NRA. 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 National Recreation Area for future generations. For details and more information, visit the Sawtooth Society’s website www.sawtoothsociety.org