

# Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew 2020 Annual Report



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## FROM THE SUPERVISOR



2020, what an interesting year. Our trail crew went from not knowing if we were going to have a season in April to having one of our most productive seasons in the blink of an eye. With hard work and perseverance, our crew was able to meet the three major goals we set for this season.

Our first goal was to complete over 275 miles of maintenance, which included many sections of trails that we had not touched in the 5 summers I have been here. Not only did we exceed this goal, but I think it is important to point out that the maintenance completed was at an extremely high level of quality. Every time I went out on my weekend to recreate and was on a trail recently done by the crew I could see the extra effort they put out that the untrained eye might miss. This attention to detail will have a lasting effect on our trail system and make future maintenance tasks less cumbersome. This will give us the time we need to concentrate on our less popular backcountry trails in the coming years.

Our second goal was to fix Porcupine Trail as the ATV section of this trail had become a major safety hazard. In 2019 I went out there to start making plans for this project and came across an ATV rider that had rolled off an extremely out sloped section of trail. Thankfully he was a lucky man and cheated death on that roll over. I am proud to say due to the work of the Ketchum Trail Crew and Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Trail Cat Program the trail is back in serviceable condition. This is a great area, its steep and gnarly, but the views are wonderful. I highly suggest checking it out if you have never been there.

Lastly, we wanted to rebuild Rooks Creek Trail. This canyon gives me a sense of impending doom every time I go up it. Between the Castle Rock Fire, the flooding in 2017, and the avalanches of 2019 this trail has been a bit overwhelming to manage. All of these factors lead to Rooks being completely impassable in 2019 for equestrian and motorcycle use. Due to these concerns last fall we made the decision to bring life back into this awesome connector to Osberg. Throughout the summer we had 6 weeks of Idaho Conservation Corp time, and the Ketchum Trail Crew spent all of mid-August through the first week of October on the project. While the trail is passable again, it is not and never will be for the faint of heart. Steep, demanding, technical, unforgiving, relentless, the list of adjectives could go on but I am sure you get the point. We made a conscious effort to ensure our trail realignments did not distract from the trails personality, but we hope we enhanced it.

This year had one major factor that set it apart from any of the last 14 summer I have worked on trail crews. That factor was our crew members. Every member of the Ketchum Trail Crew came to work amped up and ready to seize the day. Out in the field they crushed through trails like a well-oiled machine. The team cohesion was flawless, as they worked through over 280 miles of trails. The amount of quality brushing of our trails and recuts of narrow logs can be felt in the flow factor on every trail they touched. My hat goes off to Emil Harry, Samuel Cuthell, Emily Rodrigue, Caroline Vanhook, Naomi Oberg, Lochlann Dunn, and Taylor Blea. You are all exemplary employees and I hope to have you all back next season!

# STAFF



## **Justin Blackstead: Trail Crew Supervisor**

Prior to coming to the Ketchum Ranger District in 2016, Justin spent five seasons on the McCall Ranger District Trail Crew and four seasons as an Idaho Department Of Parks and Recreation Trail Ranger.

## **Emil Harry: Trail Crew Foreman**

Emil started his career on the Krassel Ranger District Trail Crew. From there he went into wildland fire fighting working on Snowslide Wild Land Fire Module and the Boise Hotshots. Reconnecting with his passion for trail work he worked for Boise Ridge to Rivers before making the Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew his home.

## **Sam Cuthell: Trail Crew Foreman**

Sam has worked on trail crews for the Civilian Conservation Corps, National Park Service, and the Forest Service. Sam is currently studying Park and Conservation Management at Paul Smith's College.

## **Caroline Vanhook: Trail Crew Member**

Caroline worked with Idaho Conservation Corps from 2013-2016 before joining the Sawtooth National Recreation Area trail crew in 2017. She is currently studying GIS at University of Ohio.

## **Emily Rodrigue: Trail Crew Member**

Emily spent the summer of 2018 on the SCA trail crew out of Challis Idaho. From there she moved to the Ketchum Trail Crew in 2019. Emily is currently studying for a masters degree in Conservation Leadership at Colorado State University.

## **Naomi Oberg: Trail Crew Member**

Naomi is another fellow 2018 SCA trail crew alumni who joined our crew in 2019. She is currently pursuing a degree in Biology from Westminster College.

## **Lochlann Dunn: Trail Crew Member**

Lochlann started his trails career with Idaho Conservation Corps in 2012. From there he went on to work on the Sawtooth National Recreation Trail Crew for three seasons before joining the Ketchum Trail crew this year.

## **Taylor Blea: Trail Crew Member**

This was Taylors second season on the crew. Currently studying Construction Management at Northern Arizona University he looks forward to working his summers during college on the Ketchum Trail Crew.

# Season Stats for Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew 2020

**Miles of trail maintained: 283.59**

**Trees removed from trails: 1,301**

**Drains installed or cleaned: 539**

**Feet of trail brushed: 118,255**

**Feet of tread improvement: 23,980**



# Major Projects

## Porcupine Reconstruction

Porcupine Trail (#172) was heavily affected by both flooding during the spring of 2017 and avalanches during the spring of 2019. For this project we partnered with Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to utilize their trail cat program to rebuild the ATV section of this trail. The Ketchum Ranger District Trail crew completed re-routing and cutting through the avalanche debris piles and installing a trail structure to cross a deep intermit stream.



## Rooks Creek Reconstruction

The Ketchum Trail Crew worked with Idaho Conservation Corp and Wood River Trails Coalition to complete 5 re-routes on the Rooks Creek Trail (#145). The goal of this project was to relocate the trail to a sustainable area while not removing the rugged character of the trail. These new re-routes were steep, rocky, and tough to build. Throughout the project, the Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew spent over 60 hours drilling and shaving rocks to build a trail through this unforgiving landscape.



## Partners

This season we collaborated with Wood River Trails Coalition, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, and Idaho Conservation Corps to complete our major trail projects. These valuable partnerships are crucial to the sustainability of the Ketchum Ranger District Trail Crew.

**Idaho Conservation Corps:** We oversaw the work of both a 2-week youth program and a 4-week young adult program to complete the Rooks Creek Project. This was a brutal project in a rough canyon to work in as the topography lends itself to high winds and extreme heat. This crew did a great job maintaining moral in otherwise adverse conditions.

**Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation:** The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation provided us with their Trail Cat and a highly skilled operator for 8 days to complete the Porcupine Project. This machine is capable of moving copious amounts of earth in a short time period. It was awesome to see how efficiently we could rebuild the ATV section of this trail with this incredible machine.

**Wood River Trails Coalition:** This season the Wood River Trails Coalition raised funding to offset the costs of one of our trail crew members. This allowed us to move from a 6 person crew to a 7 person crew. Without this crucial position we would not have met our lofty goals for this season.



Credit: Kelly Hewes

# PROFESSIONAL/AGENCY PARTNERS





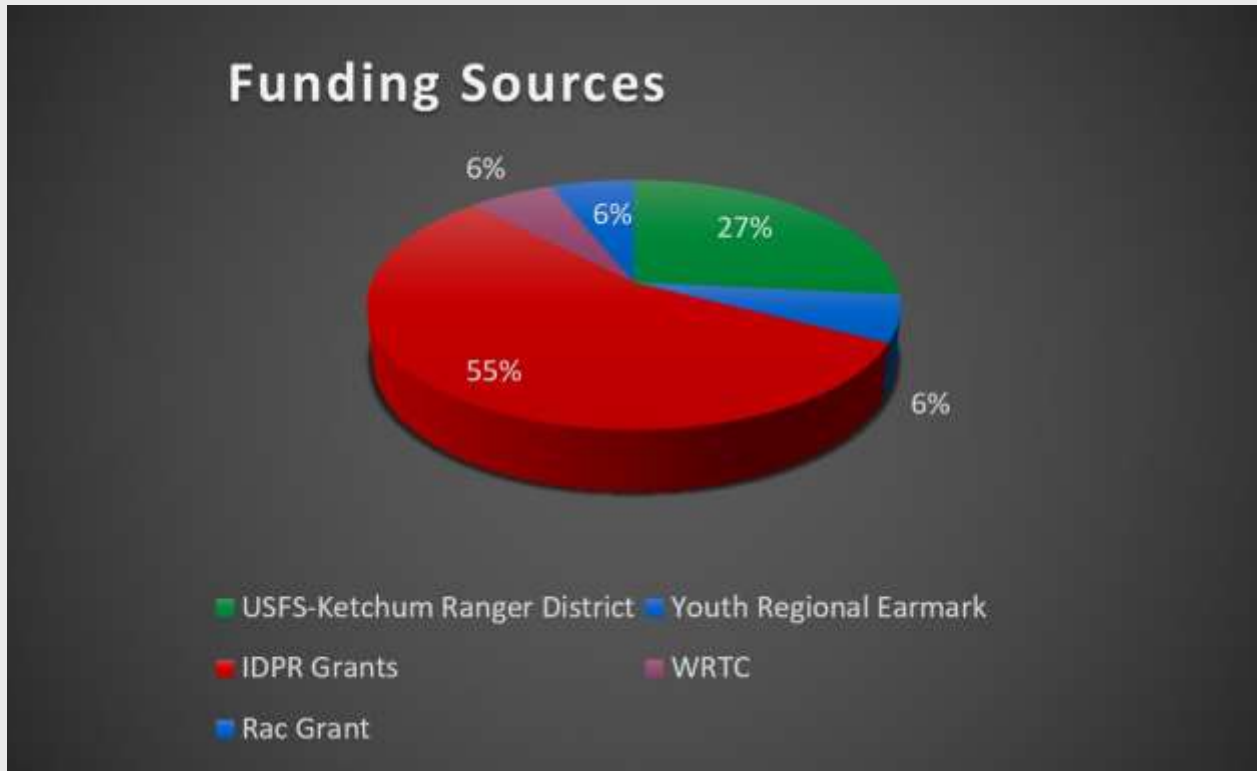
# Volunteers

**Wood River Trails Coalition:** This summer the WRTC hired Kya Goldschlager as the Volunteer Coordinator. Kya, a former Ketchum Trail Crew member, took the WRTC program to new heights. Throughout the summer there were 7 volunteer events leading to over 400 hours of volunteer time. Kya was instrumental in creating new events such as the Greenhorn Beer and Brush Bash that were a resounding success. The engaging volunteer events and community buy in created by the WRTC is a highlight of our season.

**Idaho Mountain Dirt Bike Riders Association:** Our local off-road motorbike club worked diligently to log out our motorized trails throughout the season. This resource is vital to our crew to help with keeping our trails open. Their consistent availability to respond after wind events and storms to re-log out our motorized trails is remarkable. Throughout the season they donated their time and equipment for over 200 hours.



# FUNDING



**Budget: \$146,949**

Trail Crew Wages: \$105,064

Youth Corps: \$35,000

Materials and Supplies: \$6,885

**100%** of our budget goes directly to boots on the ground and tools in the dirt. This efficient use of funding ensures that Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR), National Forest Foundation (NFF), and the Wood River Trails Coalition (WRTC) are funding meaningful trail work on the Ketchum Ranger District. Continuing to lean on outside funding sources is imperative for the future of the Ketchum Trail Crew.

## NEXT SEASON'S GOALS

- **Heavy maintenance on Iron Mine Trail:** This trail has been neglected for many years even though it is a critical link to the Little Wood River. Our plan is to use the Student Conservation Association to bring this trail back to its former glory. By utilizing pack strings and backcountry camps, we will ensure we are efficient as possible.
- **Re-Decking of the Adams Gulch Trail Structures:** Old Adams Gulch Road (#146) currently has six trail structures scattered throughout the first 4 miles. The existing structures are too narrow for hand cycles designed for our adaptive sports visitors. By re-decking these structures and installing new stringers where needed, we will allow for a unique recreational opportunity close to Ketchum.
- **Continue Heavy Maintenance:** While our trail system is starting to make the turn to a sustainable state, we have a pressing need to perform heavy maintenance on our furthest out trails. We plan to contract a packer for the summer of 2021 and increase our overnight hitches to meet this need within our trail system.

