

MARCH 2022

SISKIYOU HIKER

OUTDOOR NEWS FROM THE SISKIYOU BACKCOUNTRY

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2021 STEWARDSHIP REPORT

**SEE THE TRAILS THAT WERE
CLEARED LAST YEAR**

TRAIL THREADS

**UPDATES FROM THE SISKIYOU
BACKCOUNTRY AND BEYOND**

Lost trails are becoming harder to bring back to life, it turns out

for the Siskiyou Hiker
by Gabriel Howe, Executive Director

Unless you're watching closely, you may not notice when Forest Service trails disappear from the record. What that means is in question.

15 MARCH 2022 | APPLGATE, OR -- Program manager Karly White stands along the banks of Whiskey Creek about a mile up from where it flows into the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest's Middle Fork Applegate River. Sweat drips from her brow and hits the exhaust of her STIHL chainsaw, sizzling on the exhausted pipe as she finishes cutting a rotted-out cedar log that had fallen across the Whiskey Creek Trail 914. White isn't the first Siskiyou Mountain Club employee to have worked here.

In 2017, the *Medford Mail Tribune's* Mark Freeman published an article about our work when it started on the old trail (<https://www.mailtribune.com/entertainmentlife/20171201/whiskey-rebellion/>). The story

includes quotes from a Forest Service program manager who was supportive of the work. In the following years, we've used the trail for a skills classroom. It has downed logs, sections of thick brush, and it traverses unstable slopes that require precision tread work. It's not too far from town and is low enough that we can get to it early in the season when we're training.

But the trail may not be legitimate, according to the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. The Whiskey Creek Trail was removed as an inventoried trail sometime between 1994 and 2003 for reasons that are unclear, the agency says. It no longer appears on the Rogue-Siskiyou's website and it doesn't show up on the publicly available National Forest System Trails GIS layer.

"I guess I always figured that if the Forest Service was going to take a trail out of their inventory, that they'd have to go through a management decision and let the public know," says executive director Gabriel Howe. So he did some research: "I was wrong."

Per the 2005 Travel Management Rule, the Forest Service has to go through a lengthy process that involves public input to remove a road from their motor vehicle maps. However, they can remove non-motorized trails from their visitor maps, and potentially, from their official inventory. But where that inventory lives is unclear, and we got different responses from different forest representatives when asked about the issue.

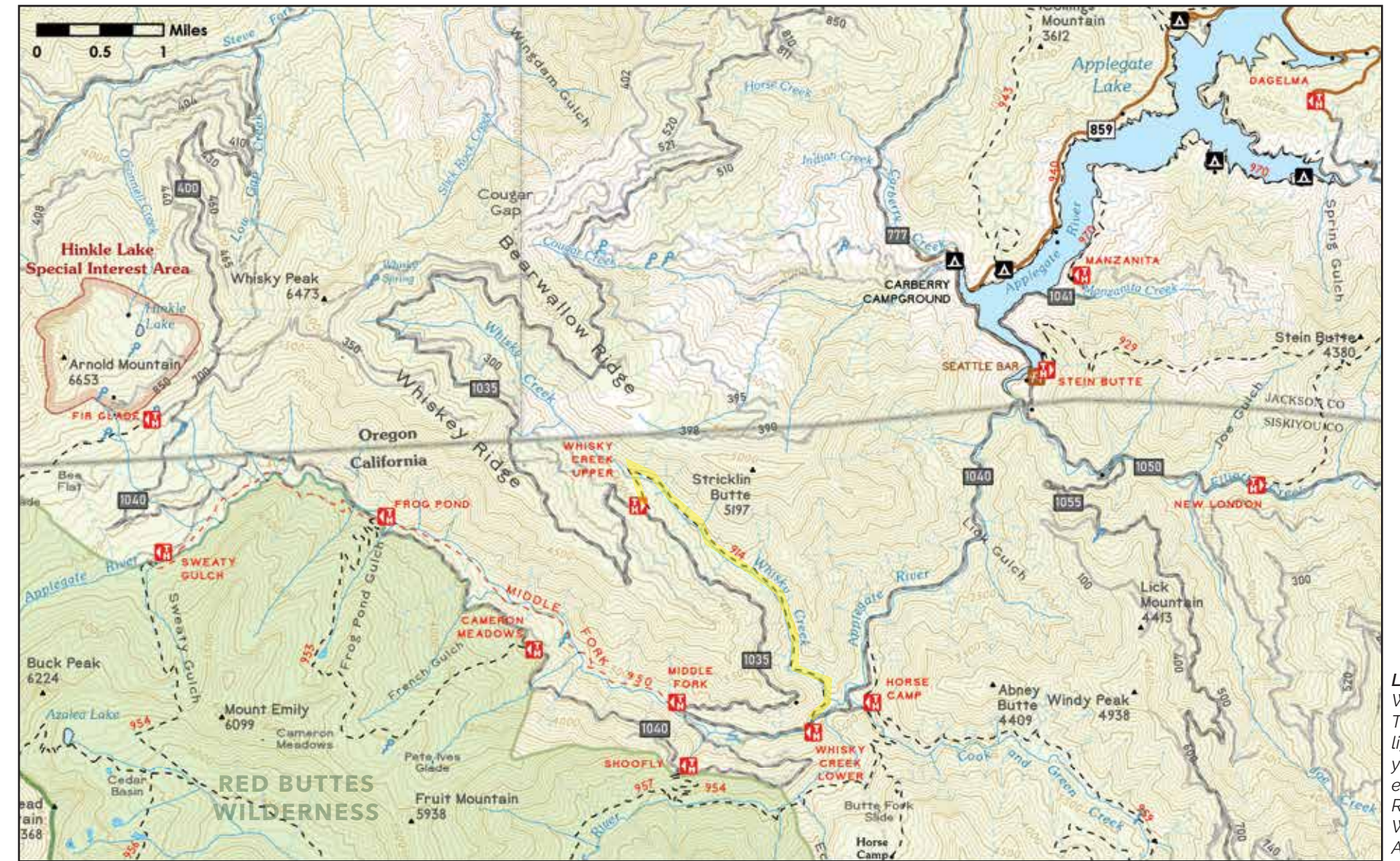
At the end of the day, there are public GIS layers the agency makes available on their website and public databases. Then there are visitor maps. And the agency has a database from which they can extrapolate a list of system trails to populate a spreadsheet. Our staff received one such spreadsheet in January 2021 for reporting purposes. It included the Whiskey Creek Trail 914 (with the peculiar spelling, and that's why we adopted it). But now the trail is just gone from the current outward-facing Forest Service products.

If the Whiskey Creek Trail 914 was a road, the Forest Service would have to send out public notices to stakeholders to take it from the map. Newspapers would publish public notices from the agency. The agency would have to accept comments through a designated period, likely extend that period, field protests, and, as it often goes, fight their management decision in court. But the agency can take a trail off the map and potentially out of their official inventory - wherever record of that inventory lives - with the stroke of a finger.

"There's no law that says there has to be a system database of trails," says Andy Stahl, the Executive Director for Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics. "There's no standard for that." The Forest Service can publish a visitor or wilderness map without any trails. But motor vehicle maps must include those routes included in their most recent travel management plan. Those motor vehicle maps, unlike trail maps, are considered legal record.

"There are multiple versions of the trail GIS layer," Stahl says. "They [GIS layers] certainly don't have any legal significance." He explains that trails don't enjoy any special significance, unless they have National Scenic or another management status. "A trail is indistinguishable from any other vanilla-flavored square foot of national forest land," Stahl notes.

He speaks hypothetically of Joe the citizen sawyer who bucks up logs that have fallen over roads. Just for fun, say Joe wants to go buck up downed logs and clip brush



Left: The Whiskey Creek Trail (highlighted in yellow) on the edge of the Red Buttes Wilderness Area.



Above: Views of the Siskiyou Crest from the upper reaches of the Whiskey Creek Trail 914. | photo by: Trevor Meyer

and saplings on Forest Service land. "I'm not aware of any law that says you can't do that. Joe can't remove it. He can't sell it. He can't burn it." But Joe can buck logs and cut brush in any area that isn't closed to that activity. If Joe uses a shovel, "that's dicey," Stahl adds, "just a bit."

Back to our spring training ground, the Whiskey Creek Trail 914 which once existed on maps, appeared on GIS layers, and had its own row in the spreadsheets has been pulled from Forest Service databases. Thankfully, the Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District attributed its removal from the "system" to a clerical error and gave us the greenlight to keep training on it.

"But at the end of the day, trails don't have the protection that roads do," says Howe. "And I don't think there are too many people watching." He points out that, sure, Joe the citizen sawyer can go out and buck logs off the Whiskey Creek Trail 914 whether the agency recognizes it as a system trail or not. He continues, "Stahl is right. I don't think that's illegal. But Joe the citizen sawyer doesn't typically get landscape-scale trail projects done on his own."

Big projects get done by groups that need to maintain a strong relationship with the Forest Service, and, more often than not, operate under a financial agreement with them. Those are groups like SMC. "We'll push back some," Howe says, "but not that hard."

Howe says the local national forests support his organization's mission, but he has noticed more "red tape than it used to take to open up old trails. Inaction is about the only thing that doesn't take any red tape anymore. Nobody has to jump through any hoops to let things fall apart." He says his crew is heading to Whiskey Creek Trail 914 this spring. ###



Above: Program Manager Karly White clearing the Upper Rogue River Trail 1034. | photo by: Trevor Meyer

Trevor Meyer moves on from the Club

Leaving a legacy "even deeper than that"

for the Siskiyou Hiker
by Gabriel Howe, Executive Director

15 MARCH 2022 | ASHLAND, OR -- After five seasons, and almost as many promotions, our own Trevor Meyer has moved on. Meyer was instrumental in bolstering our Wilderness Corps program, implementing an onboarding and training process that elevated the program to its current stature. He developed a scaffolding for interns to gain eligibility for employment, putting systems in place that live on in the wiring of our field programming.

Meyer was a driving force in bringing entire trail configurations back to life, and built a reputation internally for his fine touch, follow through, and steadfast commitment to the mission. Meyer documented it all with outstanding photographs that will live on in the archives for decades to come.

"There was no getting ahead of Trev-

or," says the Club's executive director Gabriel Howe. "He was always a step in front." Howe remembers hiring Meyer in 2017 for an intern spot on that year's Wilderness Corps. During the conversation, Meyer told Howe that he was excited about photography. "This is about around that time everyone was getting a DSLR and saying they were a photographer."

Later that summer, Meyer took a well-known shot of the Chetco Bar Fire from afar while on a midnight hike through the Kalmiopsis Wilderness with his crew mates. Howe was leading them on a three-day backpacking trip that started at about 9pm. At about 12:30am, the tired group got to a ridge-top in the Bailey area of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area. There was a view of the fire to the north. "Meyer stopped and had this methodical setup to take

some pictures, and I was like, 'wow, this guy is serious.' And as soon as I saw the picture, I realized he really had a gift." In 2018, Meyer went on to lead a crew of his own through the Marble Mountain Wilderness Area. Later that year, he signed on permanently, and by 2021 took full reigns of our Wilderness Corps and "built that program into what it is now," says Howe, and points to the projects Meyer took on. "He didn't have time to be afraid of problem solving. I really threw him into it."

Meyer's accomplishments include re-decking of the Briggs Creek Bridge. He managed staff and volunteers who stripped the old, half-burned decking, and fastened the new planks across the 70 foot steel-truss bridge. He also orchestrated and, with staff, built an approximately half-mile-long retaining wall along the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest's Taylor Creek Trail. He saw through multi-year, landscape-scale projects

Below: Trevor Meyer on the Upper Rogue River Trail. | photo by: Nick Hodges



throughout the Siskiyou, Kalmiopsis, Sky Lakes, and Rogue-Umpqua wilderness areas.

But Howe says Meyer's legacy will run even deeper than that. "It extends into the lives he touched. Meyer had a transformational style of leadership." Howe expects "big things" from Meyer in the future and "to see his name on stuff." ###

2022 Updates: Work plan for this year

15 MARCH 2022 | ASHLAND, OR -- Over the last several months, we've been working with staff, agency partners, and community members to plan out our projects for the 2022 season. This year's priorities will be focused primarily in the Kalmiopsis and Marble Mountain wilderness areas.

Trails are given a priority of high, medium, or low based on an array of factors, including known conditions, recent

wildfire activity, community interest, and finances.

This is not a complete list - we operate nimble crews that are often able to pivot to other trails as projects are completed ahead of schedule.

Push into Marbles

In 2022, we will be working in the northwest quadrant of the Marble Mountain Wilderness, with projects planned in

the Johnson Hunting Ground, Wooley Creek, and Bridge Creek areas.

Heavy work in the Kalmiopsis

Our crews will be busy April - June working on the west side of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area, where brush regrowth from the 2017 Chetco Bar and 2018 Klondike fires has taken grip, choking entire trail configurations.

Trails we plan to work include the Tin-

cup, Upper Chetco, Collier Bar, Illinois River, Pupps Camp, and Game Lake trails.

Siskiyou highlands

The south end of the Siskiyou Wilderness Area will be getting a makeover this year, with heavy work planned on the Boundary, E. Fork Blue Creek, and Forks of Blue trails with financial support from the Six Rivers National Forest, the Del Norte RAC, and a private donor.

2022 Projects			
WILDERNESS	TRAIL	PRIORITY	MILEAGE*
Kalmiopsis	Collier Bar Trail #1182	HIGH	3
Kalmiopsis	Illinois River Trail #1161	HIGH	27
Kalmiopsis	Upper Chetco Trail #1102	HIGH	18
Kalmiopsis	Game Lake Trail #1169	HIGH	9
Kalmiopsis	Red Mountain Trail #1105	HIGH	7
Kalmiopsis	Pupps Camp Way #1174	HIGH	5.5
Kalmiopsis	Horse Sign Butte Trail #1175	HIGH	3.5
Kalmiopsis	Tincup Trail #1117: Tincup Trailhead to Boulder Creek	HIGH	4
Kalmiopsis	Bailey Mountain Trail #1109	HIGH	6
Kalmiopsis	Bailey Cabin Trail #1131	MED	2
Kalmiopsis	Navy Monument Trail #1105A	MED	1.5
Kalmiopsis	Johnson Butte Trail #1110	MED	6.5
Wild Rogue	Rogue River Trail #1160: Camp Tacoma to Clay Hill	HIGH	1
Wild Rogue	Mule Creek Trail #1159	MED	6
Wild Rogue	Panther Ridge #1253	LOW	9
Wild Rogue	Mule Creek Mine Trail	LOW	1
Red Buttes	Tanner Lake Trail #1243	HIGH	3.5
Red Buttes	Fehley Gulch #1231	HIGH	1.5
Red Buttes	Boundary Trail #1207	HIGH	12
Siskiyou	Forks of Blue #4E07	HIGH	6.5
Siskiyou	E. Fork Blue Creek #4E09	HIGH	3
Siskiyou	Boundary Trail #4E50	HIGH	9
Marble Mountain	Wooley Creek Trail #5558	HIGH	24
Marble Mountain	Bridge Creek Trail #5816	HIGH	9
Marble Mountain	Haypress Trail #5828	HIGH	5.5
Marble Mountain	Johnson's Hunting Ground #5213	MED	7
Marble Mountain	Onemile Lakes Trail #5211	MED	3.5

* Mileage to be cleared, not always total trail mileage

FAST FACTS

- 6 Number of Wild and Scenic Rivers that travel through the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest
- 8 Number of designated Wilderness Areas on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest
- 7 Number of National Recreation Trails on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest
- 1 Number of National Scenic Trails on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest: the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest

Connect With Us (541) 618-2200
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www.fs.usda.gov/rogue-siskiyou

Spring Hike Guides:

Long trail opportunities in the Siskiyou and beyond

The long and winding route from Takilma to Orleans

Description
Difficulty: Strenuous
Maps: USFS Siskiyou Wilderness
Watch out: Creek crossings, missing signage, rattlesnakes, burn areas

Trailhead at its southern end. The last section of this route along the Boundary, Forks of Blue, and E. Fork Blue Creek trails will be passable around August 1, should 2022 work schedules go as planned. So if you don't want to wait until then, or do the entire route, consider shorter iterations.

One could hike out at No Man's Trailhead, shortening this route to about 32 miles, or finish up at Devil's Punchbowl, which puts it at about 22 miles. Other options include hiking out the South Fork Smith River or Elbow Springs trailhead.

The growing list of options in the area illustrates how trail configurations in the Siskiyou Wilderness are coming back to life through our multi-year effort with the Klamath, Six Rivers, and Rogue River-Siskiyou national forests.

This 55-mile route through the Siskiyou Wilderness starts at the banks of the East Fork Illinois River, climbs to Young's Valley, then descends the Clear Creek National Recreation Trail. But instead of heading out to No Man's Trailhead, in this endeavor, a hiker would continue south, ascending to the Kelsey Trail via the West Fork of Clear Creek to Harrington Lake.

From there, the route continues its march south along the Boundary Trail 4E50 to its terminus at Elk Valley. After a few miles of road walking, hop onto the Blue Creek Trail 4E07, and follow it all the way to the E. Fork Blue Creek



Above: 2019 Intern Sasha Benson on the Dillon Divide, Boundary Trail 4E50. | photo by: Trevor Meyer

170 miles: Crater to Caves

Description
Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous
Maps: Pacific Crest Trail maps, SMC Red Buttes Wilderness, and Sky Lakes Wilderness North & South maps
Watch out: Long sections without water

After restoring the connection of trails between the Pacific Crest Trail and the Oregon Caves National Monument, we promoted the Cascade to Caves Route, an eighty mile venture that starts at Pilot Rock. Take it a step further and start at Crater Lake.

From there, hike south on the PCT for almost 130 miles. At that point, veer west along the southern border of the Red Buttes Wilderness along the Boundary National Recreation Trail 5254. Follow the trail route beyond Lonesome Lake to Cedar Basin, Azalea Lake, Sucker Gap, and summit Mt. Elijah. From there drop down to the

Oregon Caves visitor center. That's almost 170 miles total, traversing two national monuments, one national park, three national forests, and even more terrane types. It features multiple lake basins, including those in the Sky Lakes, and winds all the way through Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.

This pursuit should be taken later in the summer, when the mosquitoes and the thru-hikers are gone, but before fall weather could throw you off course. And if you don't want to hike the full 170 miles, shorten it by starting at Pilot Rock or take out our Red Buttes map and plot a course of your own.

But ending a long hike at the Oregon Caves is ideal, and in a few years, you could even celebrate victory at the historic chateau after it's done being renovated. But until then, finish your trip in Cave Junction with a beer at Wild Rivers Pizza, lunch from Taylor's Sausage, and dessert from Dairy Queen.



Above: Views of the Siskiyou and Grayback Range from the Oregon Caves | photo by: Trevor Meyer

Some shorter options:

East Applegate Ridge Trail

Description
Difficulty: Easy
Maps: <https://www.applegatetrails.org/east-art-trail>
Watch out: Can get crowded

Also known as East ART, the 5.6-mile trail is south of Jacksonville, OR and accessible in the winter months, generally. The views are the highlight from this ridge-top trail system traversing the Poorman and Bishop Creek drainages. Learn more at blm.gov/visit/east-applegate-ridge-trail.



Left: For those searching for sunshine over the winter months, the E. Applegate Ridge Trail is a good place to go looking. | photo by: Karly White

Butte Fork Applegate Trail

Description
Difficulty: Easy to moderate
Maps: SMC Red Buttes Wilderness
Watch out: Creek crossings, uneven terrain

The upper reaches of the Butte Fork Trail are a mile in the sky, stretching all the way to Azalea Lake in the Red Buttes Wilderness. But the lower end of this Civilian Conservation Corps-era trail starts at low elevation, crosses a couple of creeks, and continues climbing up the banks of the Butte Fork-Applegate River. You can also bypass the first few miles by starting at the ShooFly Trailhead.

Along the way, you will find yourself mesmerized by the grandeur of this old-growth forest that has fared well in recent fires. Come spring, the ground comes alive with ground cones and the fabled snow plant, *Sarcodes sanguinea*. And in the summer, this is a shady refuge where there are deep pools for swimmers willing to brave the cold of the Butte Fork.



Left: The lower section of the Butte Fork Trail burned in the 2020 Slater Fire. That winter, a small crew of dedicated volunteers spent several weekends clearing out the burned areas and getting the trail back in shape. | photos by: Luke Brandy

Private-public partnership and a landscape-scale project in the Marble Mountain Wilderness

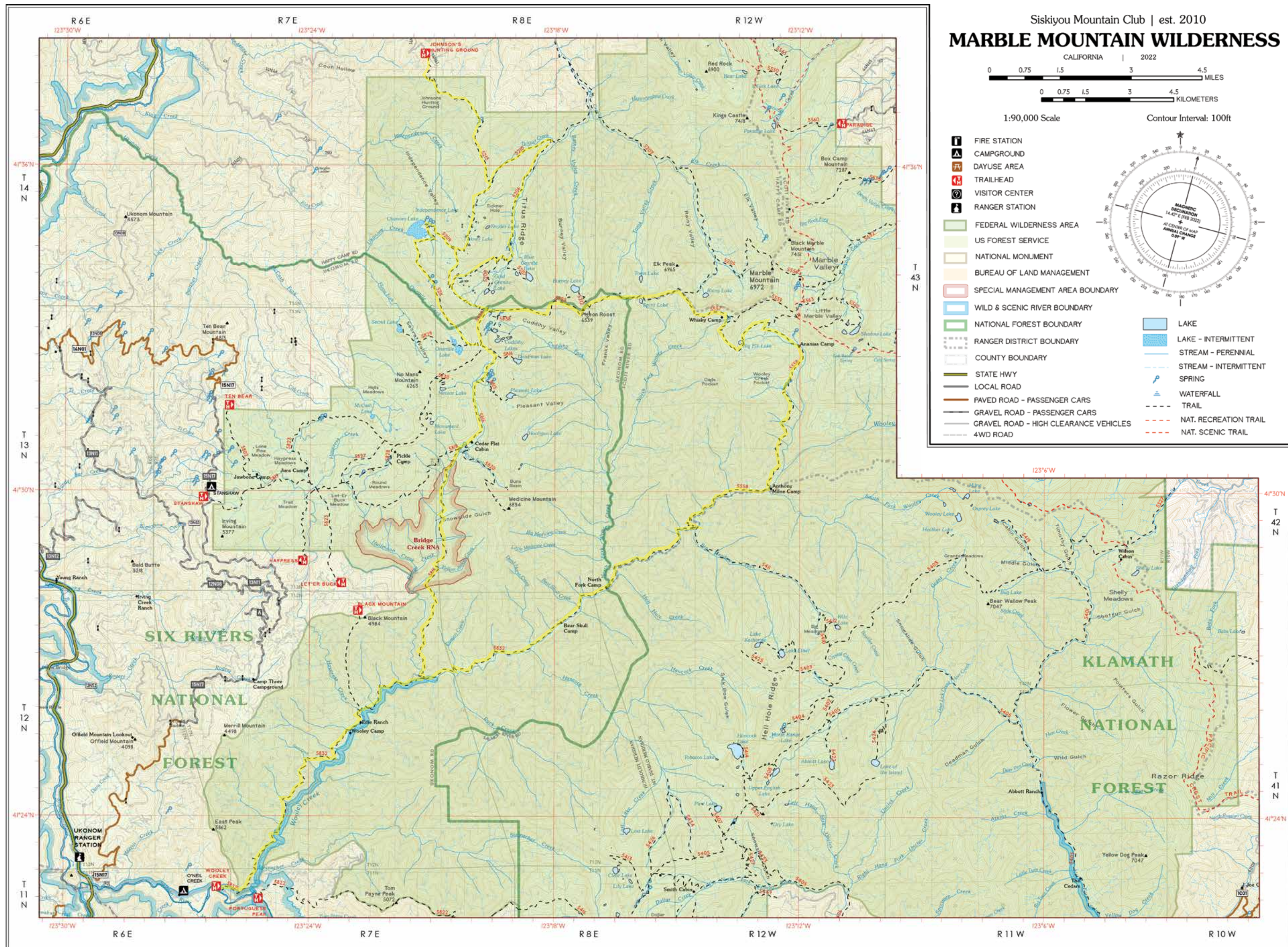
15 MARCH 2022 | ORLEANS, CA -- A private donor has provided up to \$80,000 in a matching gift over two years to be used on project work in the Six Rivers National Forest, with an emphasis on a circuit in the Marble Mountain Wilderness that combines the Bridge Creek, Ukonom Divide, and Wooley Creek Trails. The configuration forms an approximately 50-mile loop that traverses lake basins, a prominent ridge, and wild creek drainages.

SMC is moving forward with the project in the Marbles with \$15,000 in support from an agreement with the Klamath National Forest to work in the Johnson's Hunting Ground vicinity, which ties into the Bridge Creek area. "We're hoping to grow that support with our partners and secure multi-year funding," says the Club's executive director, Gabriel Howe. "We need multi-year funding because it's a multi-year project."

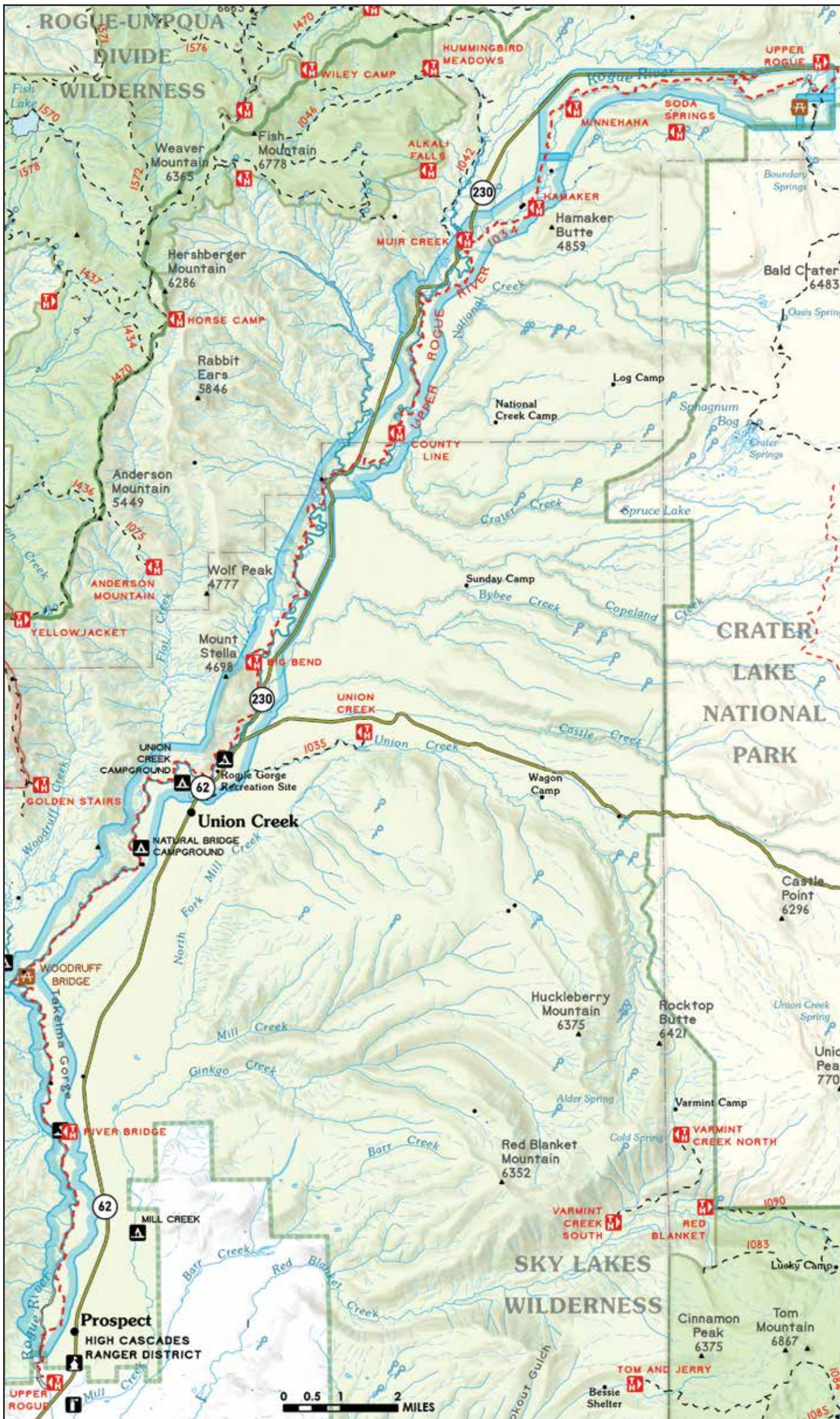
Howe says the project work is right up the Club's alley. Chock full of downed, fire-killed trees, brush walls, and plenty of trail archaeology. "We spend a lot of time finding the original trail in these fire areas," says Howe. "It's worth taking the time to do it right."

SMC's Wilderness Corps will spend four to five eight-day hitches on the project this year, pushing their way up Bridge Creek and through Johnson's Hunting Ground. Multi-year projects are not uncommon for the Club to take on, and Howe says he's working to grow his workforce so the Club can take on more landscape-scale projects.

"This is the future of trail work, combining philanthropy and agency support." Please email info@siskiyoumountainclub.org if you'd like to participate in this project. ###



Updates from the Upper Rogue



for the Siskiyou Hiker

The Upper Rogue River Trail #1034 is a 47-mile National Recreation Trail with a little something for everyone to enjoy. In the last few years, a 50K trail run hosted by Daybreak Racing has inspired new interest in the route, prompting recent maintenance efforts.

15 MARCH 2022 | PROSPECT, OR -- Siskiyou Mountain Club program manager Nick Hodges runs along the Upper Rogue River Trail with a flimsy vest full of snacks and water, a small electronic device clutched in his right hand. His heavy breath makes thick clouds in the cool spring air along this northern stretch of trail on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

"I use this GPS to scout the trail," he says during a short break near Crater Lake Highway 62. "I locate downed trees, take pictures, and take notes," he says between breaths. Hodges takes a bite of a bar and heads off. He took that data back to the office and recorded the conditions for work scheduled a few months later.

The trail follows the Wild and Scenic Upper Rogue River from near Crater Lake to the town of Prospect, OR. It passes through old-growth mixed conifer forest and keeps users close to the river, highlighting unique volcanic features such as Takelma Gorge and Natural Bridge.

In recognition of the area's tremendous recreational and scenic values, the Upper Rogue River Trail was designated a National Recreation Trail in 1979.

About 11 years later, Jeremy Long got to know the trail during weekend trips with his college buddies at Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls. "We'd go to Crater Lake, then drive 62 down, and I saw the signs for the trail." Long, born and raised in Oregon, went on to start Daybreak Racing, a company that hosts trail running races throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Around 2015, he found himself searching for a new race location. The Upper Rogue Trail "had always been in the back of my mind." Long looks for trails that are contiguous, and not in wilderness areas, which are generally closed to new commercial activity. The Upper Rogue fit the bill but it was in very poor shape by then.

In fact, Long said he couldn't find long sections of the trail. Fire damage, lack of routine maintenance driven by reduced budgets, and other factors had allowed much of the trail to creep into a state of disrepair. By 2015, when Long put the trail on his radar, it was almost entirely lost due to the number of down trees, damage to trail tread, and fire scars on the trail's northern portion.

"There's consistent deadfall," says Long, pointing to the exceptionally poor section of trail above Union Creek. "A regular hiker wouldn't find it." But the "bones of the trail are there," he says. "It has

really good bones. It has lots of great access points. It just needs some attention."

With that lower section impassable, Long planned a 50K out-and-back race on the Upper Rogue, and has operated that race for the last two years. "It's buttery. It's got nice soft dirt," he says. "The fall colors are unlike any I've seen in Oregon." And while the race has been a success, he hopes the entire trail gets opened up and he can plan a 50K race from Highway 230 to Union Creek day use area.

Things are moving in that direction. Since 2019, the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest has been assigning field staff, and coordinating with partners including High Cascades Volunteers, Backcountry Horsemen of America, Daybreak Racing, Northwest Youth Corps and Siskiyou Mountain Club, to successfully open some of the trail.

The heart of one of those sections is where SMC staff member Nick Hodges was scouting last spring. Hodges worked a good share of his October on the Upper Rogue, putting long days into running a chainsaw through sections full of fire-killed trees. Those hitches were funded by an agreement with the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, and the chainsaw crew completed around eight miles of heavy work. "But there's a lot more," says Hodges.

About 10 miles of sections with similar conditions are left to complete the project. The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and the Club are working together to secure the federal and private funds it will take to open the rest of the trail and initiate a sustainable maintenance plan for its future.

"It's nice up there," says Hodges, who, like Long, happens to be a marathon trail runner. "It will be good to get it open." Hodges said if he were to run the trail, he'd start at Crater Lake. "And finish with pie at Beckie's" in Union Creek.

This story was written with contributions from SMC and the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. ###

Below: Downed logs are the main issue for the Upper Rogue River Trail. This monster is located between Hamaker Campground and Boundary Springs. | photo by: Trevor Meyer



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Madstone Cabin: Crossing paths with history

for the Siskiyou Hiker
by Gabriel Howe, Executive Director

In 2021, our Wilderness Corps restored the Little Chetco Trail all the way to Madstone Cabin Site in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, a spot with a unique story to tell.

15 MARCH 2022 | CAVE JUNCTION, OR -- On October 15, 1988, Paul Fattig showed up at the Babyfoot Lake Trailhead to embark on a journey into the underbelly of Curry County, OR, a remote region in the most extreme southwest corner of the state. There's not a lot going on in this little slice of the 180,00-acre Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area. But despite a permanent injury that left him with a noticeable gait, Fattig, a news reporter then, was on a mission.

His uncles, Alfred and Charlie Fattig, were drafted to WWI, but considered themselves pacifists and dodged the draft. That made them fugitives, technically speaking, so the brothers settled on the banks of the Chetco River about 60 miles up from Brookings, OR. The flat where they built a small cabin became known as Madstone Cabin, and later showed up as Madstone Site on Forest Service maps.

Nephew Fattig, who was then writing for the Grants Pass Daily Courier, was hellbent on seeing it. So he asked (then) Kalmiopsis Wilderness Ranger Rene Casteran to lead him in. From Babyfoot, the hike to Madstone is about 14 miles across rough terrain with an elevation profile that looks like a rollercoaster. That didn't deter Fattig.

He and Casteran had never met before, and Casteran

didn't know about Fattig's injury. When Fattig got out of the car on that autumn day, he saw a look come over Casteran's face. "He was thinking, 'This poor SOB would be lucky to make it into Babyfoot,'" which is an easy one-mile hike.

Casteran confirms he was concerned about Fattig's gait "That one foot just drags along." But the two marched on. Casteran, a marathon trail runner, slowed down to stay near Fattig.

"I would have preferred Rene set the pace," says Fattig, "but he was concerned he'd outdistance me."

The duo made it to Copper Creek, about three miles from Madstone, by sundown. The next day they made the day hike into Madstone, where Fattig's uncles hid out for over two years, living off of deer, fish, and trading what gold they scraped from the stream for provisions during covert trips to Kerby, OR.

It was a pilgrimage of sorts for Fattig, who had spent his fair share of time in the area, but never visited the site. He and Casteran spent a second night at Copper Creek, and made the long haul out on October 17, 1988. "He seemed surprised I made it," says Fattig. "He didn't know my background. I never give up."

Casteran recalls that Fattig "was talking about a book he was writing. He published an insert or small story in the paper after our hike, but he was planning to write a book."

Time marched on in the Madstone country. Fattig visited again two years later with family members. Some kids started a wildfire while participating in a wilderness therapy program. And by the late 90s, Madstone existed much as it did in the days of Alfred and Charlie, a place to be alone.

There's just no easy way to get there. You either take the 14-mile hike from Babyfoot Lake Trailhead, or pursue an even more perilous off-trail approach. But solitude is almost guaranteed in this strange landscape on a remote plain enveloped by

Below: Our Wilderness Corps restoring the tread down to Madstone Site | photo by: Nick Hodges



coastal mountains that go as far as the horizon. The area's strange aesthetics are grounded in its geology. Everything exists behind the orange Mars-like hue of the peridotite rock that dominates Madstone country.

From this strange layer of the earth, water seeps through tiny cracks between giant sheets of rock, even during the deepest of droughts. From these growing conditions, other-worldly plant communities evolved, seen in the bug-eating cobra lilies patches that line the seeps. Come spring, the ground explodes with a show of wildflowers that wilt quickly.

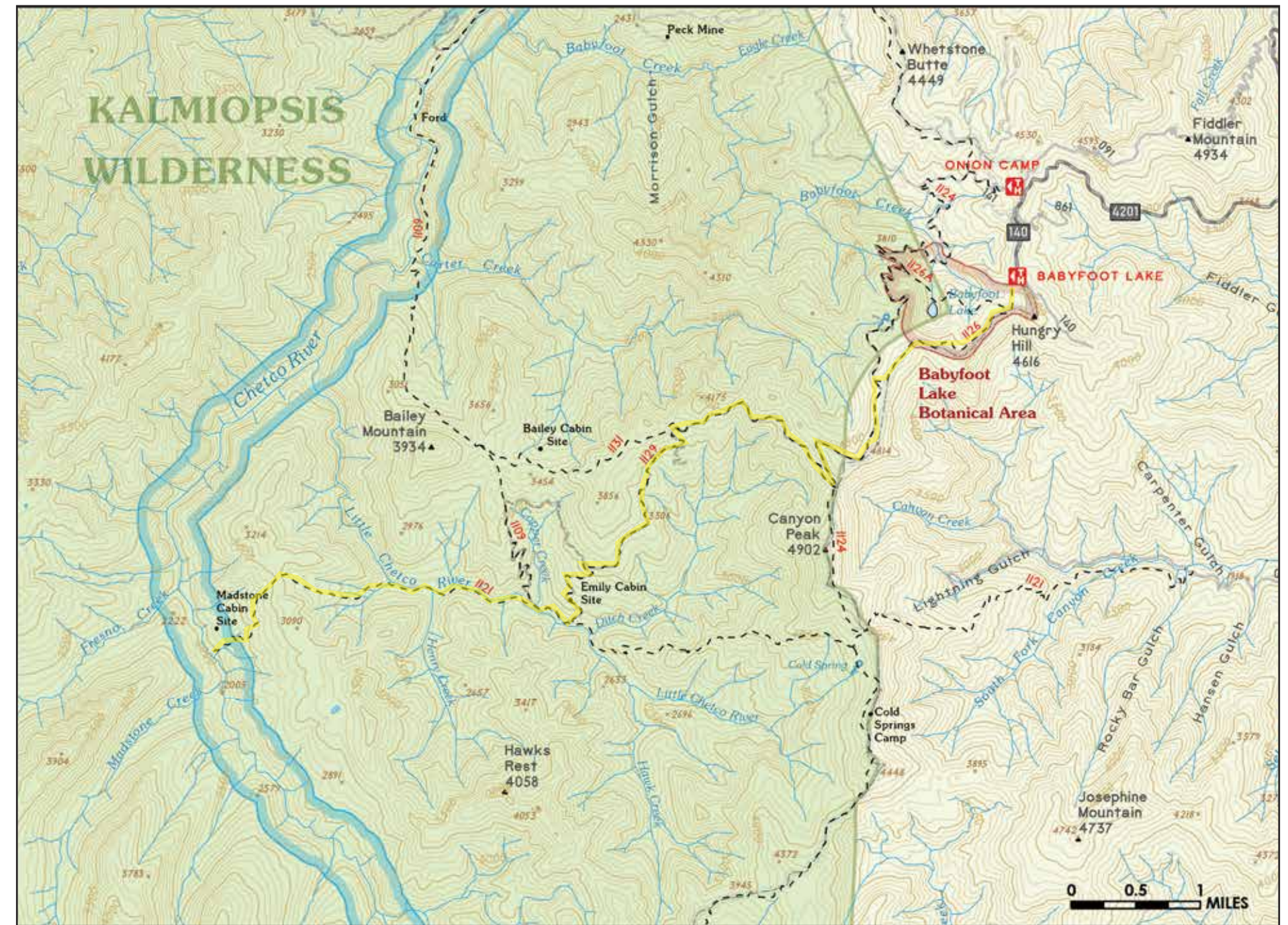
And the streams themselves are destination-worthy. Just below the site of Alfred and Charlie's cabin is a deep pool. Through the 90s, few people would visit, says Casteran. Then in 2002, the Biscuit Fire came through this section of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area.

In the following years, fields of ceanothus and tanoak brush grew to around 20 feet high along the Emily Cabin Trail that leads into Madstone. Thousands of trees fell on the route. And between 2010 and 2019, SMC crews cleared a lot of the trail configuration leading there, but never maintained the last two miles of trail that dead-ends at Madstone Site.

"It wasn't a priority at the time and we kind of wrote it off like we do a lot of trails that go nowhere," says executive director Gabriel Howe.

Then in 2019 Fattig published that book he had been telling Casteran about two decades previous. It's called *Madstone*, and it's an account of his uncles' two and a half year foray in the area. Howe read the book and learned the site was named after a madstone the brothers found in the gut of a deer during the slaughtering process. He read descriptions of Madstone country with intrigue.

"We'd worked the trails around Madstone," he points out. "And I'd been to within a couple miles, but never all the way to the cabin." So Howe started talking with



Left: The route down to Madstone Cabin (highlighted in yellow). To get a larger map of the trail system, pick up the Powers & Gold Beach Ranger District Map distributed by the Rogue River - Siskiyou National Forest

his staff about the idea. "We discussed the values that a place like this has. It's remote, and this is as far up the mainstem Chetco River you can get on a trail. Hiking to the middle of nowhere is part of what makes our region special." So Howe and his team started planning.

In 2020, with the trail to the Little Chetco already open, Howe dispatched a crew to start working their way from where they left off and into Madstone. They had about two miles to restore. But after a full 10-day hitch, it seemed as though Howe may have bit off more than his crews could chew. "I had limited funds to work with. And in 2020, they didn't make it quite as far as I thought they would," he says. "Not for a lack of trying."

Assistant Crew Leader Owen Brodie was on that 2020 hitch for 10 days, as a Corps intern then. "We were crawling on our hands and knees to cut through the brush fields. The brush was about 20 feet tall."

But "We spent all the money I had earmarked for the project," says Howe. "We're used to leaving projects half-finished with a plan to come back. But I didn't have a plan." His staff told him it would take another big push to get all the way to Madstone, with over a mile of full trail restoration from the top of a ridge down to the site.

Howe says some managers might question the merit of putting resources into a trail few people will follow as more popular trails in the Rogue River-Siskiyou

National Forest disappear in the widening cracks of maintenance droughts. "I get it," he says. "They have to be targeted. They have to prioritize. But we have priorities, too, and breaking barriers is part of the Club's DNA," he says, "and people deserve trails that take them to nowhere."

Casteran agrees. "The reason they had that cabin there was because they [Alfred and Charlie Fattig] didn't want to run into anybody," he says, going on to describe the experience of solitude in a wild place like Madstone. "You feel like your perception has been expanded and is sharper," he says. "It's a great place to go by yourself. A place to contemplate, just be with yourself in a very special area very few people have seen."

So Howe applied for a grant from the Siskiyou Resource Advisory Committee. The committee of citizens periodically distributes grant funding to agencies and nonprofits for projects on federal lands in Curry and Josephine counties. "It wasn't lost on me that Fattig was sitting on the committee," Howe says. "And they've supported similar projects in the past," he adds. "Why not try? I thought."

The RAC approved funds with unanimous support, allowing for work to continue on the Madstone project. This time Howe dispatched a crew of staff to the project in September 2021. Brodie was there, having been promoted to staff since he last visited, and started work where his last year's crew left off.

The crew had to cut through brush fields that intern Tiffani Ayres describes as "hell. We were cutting through brush that was like 30 feet tall," she laments, and describes scooting on her hands and knees to reach the base of trunks that had been growing since the 2002 Biscuit Fire. She'd cut the base and continue crawling along.

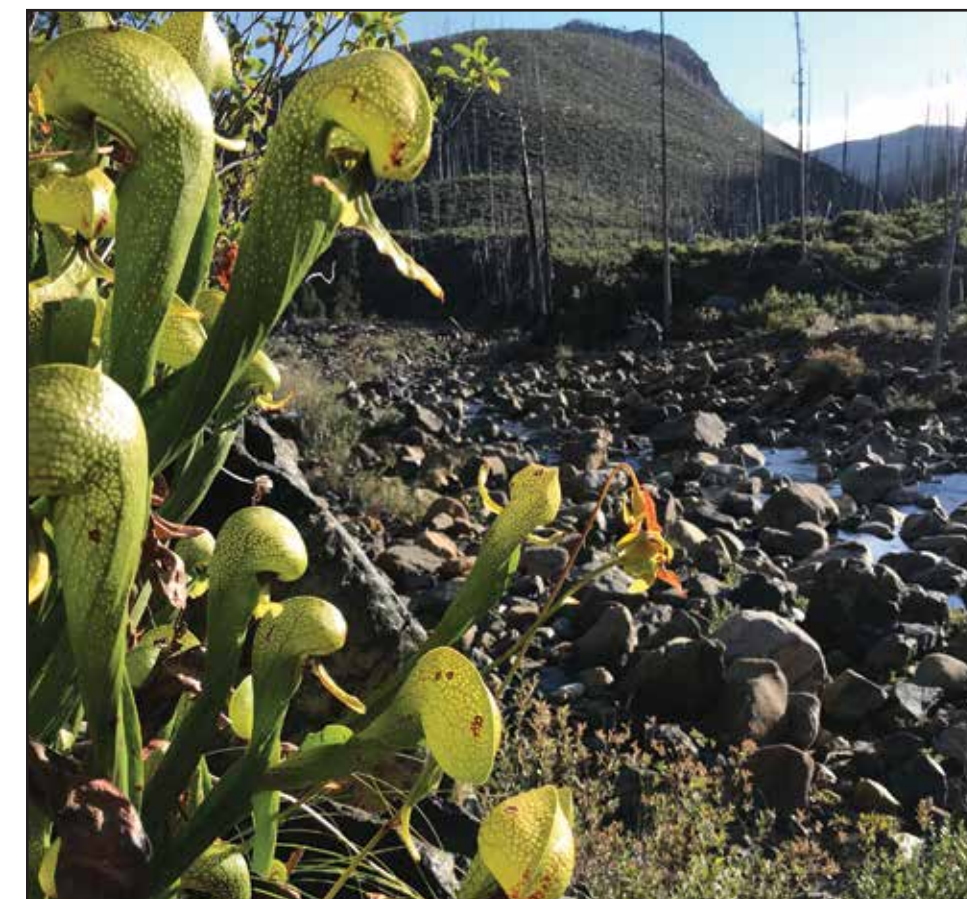
In September 2021 they finished the project during an eight-day hitch in the area, and they read the book *Madstone* while camping at Madstone. Brodie says people need to be prepared for how difficult and rugged the hike is if they decide to go. "That's what makes it so special." He encourages people to take the book with them.

"If you go out there, think about that. Two guys lived there for like three years," Brodie adds. "You're now part of that story," Brodie will be coming back in 2022 for his third year on the Club's Wilderness Corps.

"Unlike Alfred and Charlie, we are not pacifists," says Howe, and speaks to how his Wilderness Corps strikes with military-like precision and ambition. "We like a good fight."

Despite the differential in hiking speeds, Casteran says Fattig was a good companion. "But I've never seen him in-person since," says Casteran.

"Thank you for your work there," Fattig concludes. "It means a lot to me. Alfred is rolling over in his grave." ###



Above: Cobra lilies growing along the shores of the Chetco River at Madstone site. | photo by: Nick Hodges

Trail Threads

15 MARCH 2022 | Ashland, OR --

Clubhouse Gossip

Changes to SMC program structure
Instead of confining staff into managing volunteers, interns, or staff, our program managers now report directly to the executive director and manage all stewardship operations as an integrated team. They are all supported by administrative and human resources specialist, Meredith Yox.

Our workforce continues to grow seasonally and the Club is recruiting more program managers to fill out the growing demand for our landscape-scale services.

Nick Hodges promoted to permanent position

After six seasons with SMC, crew lead Nick Hodges has been promoted to Program Manager, marking his first year of permanent employment. Hodges is responsible for fleet management, project planning, training staff, and leading crews in the field.

Karly White shifts further into field work

White held the ship together through the dark days of the pandemic and kept our volunteer program humming,

White is still responsible for some administrative oversight, GIS and creative design, as well as community outreach, but works with program managers to deliver field programming.

Bits and pieces

Pressure on Oregon State Parks: "Unlike anything we've seen"

Oregon's coastline is becoming one of the most visited in the country, according to a staff member at Oregon State Parks. "It's unlike anything we've seen," they said during a conversation about making reservations.

Hiker found dead on Ashland trail

On February 22, hikers called 911 and said they'd found a body on a trail in Ashland, OR. Later the deceased was identified as 37-year-old Mathew Daniel McCormick of Medford. The autopsy determined that the victim sustained injuries from a fall.

Court decision in Willamette could have implications

Last fall the Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, an agency watchdog group, won a preliminary injunction to stop roadside salvage logging in the Willamette National Forest. Part of the lawsuit was also to reopen

thousands of acres of burned forest that had been closed for public safety.

The Forest Service routinely closes burn areas and also conducts roadside salvage logging, a practice of clearing up to 200 feet on either side of roads, without going through the regular environmental reviews. The premise of the action is that the dead trees pose a threat to public safety. FSEEE undermined that premise with statistical analyses that showed that the actual threat is miniscule.

But the fight hasn't gone all the way to court yet. Check out fseee.org to stay up to date.

Historic data on Inciweb disappears
Inciweb, an interagency all-risk incident information management system, at some point had available all the data aggregated from wildfire incidents. Users could go back and look at daily maps, briefings, closure orders, and other information that was produced during local wildfire incidents.

But the data has disappeared. InciWeb did not respond to an inquiry.

Blame the Forest Service for big fires? Not so fast, new research suggests

Oregon State University fire ecologist Christopher Dunn knows that national forests often get the blame for wildfire conditions in the West. But a new study he authored shows that the vast majority of wildfires that burn structures start on private land. Read the full

study published by Nature at <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-06002-3>.

Beyond the Clubhouse

Gila Wilderness gets a facelift

Through a heroic grassroots effort, Melissa Greene with Heart of the Gila has started to transform this 559,000-acre wilderness tucked in the wilds of New Mexico. Email heartofthegila@gmail.com to learn more.

RVMB: Bull Gap jump line is shovel ready

The project on Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest is "fully approved and shovel ready," according to a page on the Rogue Valley Mountain Biking Association website.

Leadership changes at Pacific Crest Trail Association

The nonprofit's longtime executive director, Liz Bergeron, is retiring, effective May 5. The organization's deputy director will take the reigns as Acting Director before the board of directors hires a permanent CEO. There is also succession taking place at the board level. Read more at pcta.org.

Appalachian Trail Grows in 2022

The official length of the Appalachian Trail is now 2,294.3 miles, according to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. It gained 1.2 miles last year. The trail changed in length after relocations in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the Connecticut/New York border. Read

more at appalachiantrail.org.

Trailkeepers of Oregon hiring South Coast Stewardship Coordinator
Field activities will focus on the stretch of coast between Waldport and Brookings.

Rogue-Siskiyou Trails Coalition seeks members

The coalition's steering committee is down to four members and represented by Siskiyou Uplands Trails Association, Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association, Southern Oregon Trails Alliance, Oregon's Sourdough Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of America, Rogue Valley Side by Side, Rogue Snowmobilers, and Motorcycle Riders Association, according to the coalition's website. Learn more at roguesiskiyoutrailscoalition.org/get-involved.

Spring field courses at Siskiyou Field Institute

The Selma, OR nonprofit has a handful of field courses planned, among them:

- *Meet the Trees*
- *Camassia: A Southern Oregon Gem*
- *Oregon's Geology: Getting The Big Picture*
- *In search of serpentes: Indigenous and Natural Histories*
- *Coastal Geology Tour*
- *Birding Del Norte County*

See the full lineup and register at siskiyoufieldinstitute.org. The institute is also currently hiring, according to its website.

Historic Oregon highway will require permits

The world-famous Historic Columbia River Highway got so busy that the Oregon Department of Transportation will start requiring permits to drive it, according to Oregon Public Broadcasting. Each permit will have a time window for arrival, but will not restrict departure times. The permit will be required for the stretch of busy highway between Vista House and Ainsworth State Park during daytime hours. The permits will be available two weeks in advance.

Limiting no-show permits in the Central Cascades

After over half of newly-required permits for hiking in the Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington, and Three Sisters wilderness areas went unused in 2021, the Forest Service is making changes to the system crafted to reduce crowding and blunt environmental damage in these marquee hiking areas.

Trail users will no longer be able to purchase day-use permits for 19 trailheads until 10 days before their trip. Overnight campers will still be able to buy permits before the start of the season but will only need a permit for the day they enter.

Below: Our 2021 Wilderness Corps celebrating a job well done on a remote peak in the High Cascades Ranger District | photo by: Trevor Meyer



Agency Bits

Klamath National Forest will not pursue paving project on Mt. Ashland

After protest from a handful of groups, the national forest will not be paving a section of FSR 20 near Mt. Ashland that runs adjacent to the Pacific Crest Trail. Klamath Forest Alliance and Applegate Neighborhood Network protested the project.

Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest to receive \$30.4 million in disaster funds

That's just a small piece of the pie. Region 6 of the Forest Service is divvying up a total of \$291 million from funds provided by the 2021 "Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act."

The funds are to be used for bridge repair, removal of hazardous materials, watershed restoration, and other critical recovery needs, according to the Forest Service. Read more at fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/home/?cid=FSEPRD997482.

Crater Lake seeks to rebuild marina, Cleetwood Trail

Public comment closed February 15, but the National Park Service plans to remove and replace the failed dock with a stable marina, replace the composting toilets, and rehabilitate the mile-long Cleetwood Trail. Construction is planned to begin Summer 2024, according to a release from the agency.

The trail closed briefly in 2021 so park staff could install a hardening material on a portion of the trail surface.

Crowdsourcing: Klamath National Forest seeking help for locating big trees

The national forest's botany program is looking for help locating and measuring the biggest trees of the forest. They're looking for the largest trees of all species and are offering "silly little prizes," according to their website. Email Greg de Nevers at gregory.denevers@usda.gov or call 530-643-1203 for details and to get going.

Events on horizon: 2022 shaping up

April 5-6: Wilderness First Aid

The 20-hour course includes CPR and is through National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). It is being hosted at our Gold Hill, OR, facility. Camping is available for participants. The cost is \$300.

May 14 - 15: PCT overnight, Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument

Join Roxanne Tenschler for this moderate overnight backpacking trip through the monument. Hike the PCT northbound from Highway 99 to Highway 66 at Greensprings Summit, approximately 16.4 miles total.

The hike is moderate, with 9 miles the first day and about 7.4 the second. You need basic backpacking gear and food. We provide transportation and an outstanding trip leader with extensive field

training. Email info@siskiyoumountainclub.org for details and to sign up.

Siskiyou Wilderness volunteer series:

April 15 - 19, May 5 - 10, June 17 - 22
Join Luke Brandy for this series of multi-day trips throughout the enchanting Siskiyou Wilderness Area. Email bonsaigoat@gmail.com for details and to sign up.

Join a Memorial Day Tradition: Traverse the Kalmiopsis

A trip certainly not for the faint of heart, hike through the Kalmiopsis and help maintain remote sections of trail. This year the trip is blended with our Wilderness Corps. You should have strong backpacking experience and be in good shape. Includes long hikes on steep slopes and challenging trail projects.

Email karly@siskiyoumountainclub.org for details and to sign up.

Help supply our Wilderness Corps

Join our crews for the first few days of their hitch and help them get ahead. Haul loads large and small and come with fresh fruit and smiles. You should have backpacking experience, be able to drive to and from remote, often unmarked, trailheads, and be prepared to hike up to 10 miles across rough terrain. Email info@siskiyoumountainclub.org for details and to coordinate.





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The Siskiyou Hiker

PRODUCED BY:

Executive Editor and Director:
GABRIEL HOWE

Design Editor and Program Manager:
KARLY WHITE

BOARD MEMBERS

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GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

- Photography:**
NICK HODGES
TREVOR MEYER
LUKE BRANDY
- Editors:**
REBECCA SCHREIBER