



NATIONAL WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE

Building a
wilderness
stewardship
community

NWSA NEWSLETTER/ANNUAL REPORT • SPRING 2019

Join the NWSA!

Membership in the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance comes in two forms: individual or organization memberships.

Individual memberships show your support for the mission and purpose of the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, provide access to pro deal offerings and association with the greatest people on earth - wilderness stewards. Any donation over \$25 per year qualifies you as an NWSA member for Workshop and Symposium discounts.

Organization memberships entitle your group to apply for NWSA Grant programs, provide access to toolboxes and educational materials tailored to support wilderness stewardship organizations, and participation in review and comment efforts on industry wide-issues lead by NWSA.

All members have access to NWSA services and support, including volunteer workshops, webinars, and Conference/Symposiums, many at no or reduced cost.

Please consider a membership in NWSA as a wise investment for the future of wilderness stewardship. Collectively we are stronger than individually.

To join (or renew your membership), visit wildernessalliance.org/donate

BOARD TRANSITIONS AT NWSA IN 2018

Alliance board members Jennifer Tripp and Darcy Shepherd cycled off in 2018, after several years of great service. As our treasurer since 2012, Darcy was instrumental putting our financial life together and keeping track of it as well. Darcy is Director of Finance and Human Resources with Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Jennifer has been active with NWSA since 2012, including her time on the board as outreach committee chair. She fulfilled that responsibility as well as her job as Director of Trail Operations for the Pacific Crest Trails Association.

Coming on the board are Ian Nelson and Zack Bumgarner. Ian is the Northern California/Southern Oregon Regional



"Retiring" NWSA treasurer Darcy Shepherd receives a plaque for her service from NWSA exec Randy Welsh.

Representative for the Pacific Crest Trail Association. He has worked for the PCTA since 2005. Before that, he served as Associate Regional Representative in the Mid Atlantic Regional Office of the Appalachian Trail Conference.

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WILDERNESS WORKSHOPS BOUND FOR BEND

The October 2018 National Wilderness Workshops in Gunnison, CO, focused on cultural diversity. The Workshops had 150 attendees from 40-plus organizations and agencies.

NWSA expects that 2019 in Bend will be even better. The focus will be on converting wilderness users to stewards.

The National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance (NWSA) and the Society of Wilderness Stewards (SWS) are excited to announce Bend, Oregon as the site of the 2019 Wilderness Workshops. October 23 through 26, 2019, federal land managers, their non-profit partners in public land

stewardship and other interested parties will gather to share their thoughts and plans for the future of Wilderness and other wild public lands.

"I've secured two properties in the Old Mill District in Bend as the core sites for the Workshops," said NWSA executive director Randy Welsh. "The Hilton Garden Inn and Hampton Inn and Suites have sufficient meeting space and catering to handle 150 people. The hotels are about 400 yards apart on opposite sides of the river, and the walk between them is easy and beautiful. We'll arrange sessions to allow for easy transitions between locations.

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About NWSA

Our Mission:

The mission of the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance is to develop a growing network of volunteer-based organizations to provide stewardship for America's enduring resource of wilderness.

Our Vision:

Our vision is to see each wilderness area within the National Wilderness Preservation System adopted by a wilderness stewardship organization dedicated to protecting and nurturing the area's character and values. We envision effective partnerships between community-based, non-profit wilderness stewardship organizations and all government agencies charged with the management of our national wilderness areas.

Our Goal:

Our goal is to improve wilderness stewardship and create an allied constituency for wilderness by connecting stewardship organizations with each other, linking our efforts and experiences, directing groups to resources, and fostering new organizations.

Our Objectives:

- Identify wilderness stewardship groups nationwide in order to determine the present level of support.
- Through our website and other resources, share knowledge, experience and expertise among local, regional and national stewardship organizations.
- Provide new groups with start-up models of different structures, help them anticipate the questions that typically arise as groups form, and connect them with people who have built successful organizations.
- Sponsor national and regional gatherings of stewardship groups.
- Provide grants to help stewardship groups accomplish on-the-ground projects benefiting Wilderness
- Help foster a culture within governing agencies that values volunteer-based wilderness stewardship organizations and has the means to give them effective support.



Ian Nelson, board member, birder and ultimate frisbee

Board, from page 1

Zack Bumgarner began volunteering on forests in North Carolina and Tennessee in 2013, and his passion for Wilderness stewardship has grown ever since. In 2017, he began working as a seasonal Wilderness Ranger for New Mexico Wilderness

Alliance on the Santa Fe National Forest in New Mexico.

Zack received the USDA's 2018 Wilderness Partnership Champion Award and was a gold medalist at the 2018 Wilderness Workshop Olympics.



Zack Bumgarner and Dale, a favorite wilderness volunteer

2018 TRAILS AND WSP GRANTS

Year 2018 marked the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System Act. In celebration of the Act as well as part of the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance's (NWSA) continued commitment to the health of the Trail System, NWSA, in cooperation with the Forest Service, administered and funded 42 projects for both motorized and non-motorized trail uses. 114 proposals were received, requesting over \$1,400,000 in funding. The 2018 Trail Funding program elicited over \$1,000,000 in matching cash, and over \$2,000,000 in in-kind matches (See more details at right).

"Trails connect people to the National Forests," said NWSA executive Randy Welsh, "and this funding helped local groups and volunteers participate in caring for and managing their Forests."

NWSA also administered 20 grants for Wilderness Stewardship Performance projects. The \$188,000 granted to 19 applicants was leveraged with over \$300,000 in volunteer time.

A sampling of the diverse organizations that received Trail grants is Alaska Trails; BCHA — Motherlode Chapter; Boulder Mountain Bike Alliance; Continental Divide Trail Coalition — Helena; Friends of the Dillon Ranger District; Idaho Trails Association; National Smokejumper Association; Pony Express Association; Redwoods Park Conservancy; Southwest Montana Mountain Biking Association; Volunteers for Outdoors Colorado; and Watershed Research Center.

Recipients of WSP grants included, among others, Ascend Wilderness Experience; Friends of Mt Evans - Lost Creek; Great Broads - Cascade-Volcano Chapter; Idaho Youth Employment; Poudre Wilderness Volunteers; Sitka Conservation Society; Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards; and Upper Gila Watershed.

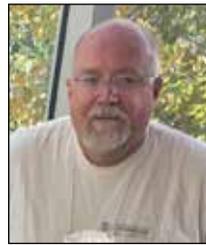
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2018 was our best year ever. After a successful National Wilderness Workshop in Russellville, AR, in October 2017, NWSA expanded our network of wilderness stewardship organizations significantly. Over 40 groups now band together under the NWSA banner.

In 2018, funding for wilderness trail stewardship increased to over \$600,000. Our agreement with the Forest Service provided essential funding for groups to do stewardship in their local areas. Over 7,000 volunteers were supported by this combined funding, with improvements to wilderness stewardship in over 25 wilderness areas and over 1,600 miles of trail maintained. NWSA is proud to be able to help the wilderness stewardship community reach such high levels of accomplishment for the good of the National Wilderness Preservation System and the National Forests.

NWSA offered educational webinars in 2018 and started a monthly webinar series, “Wilderness Stewardship Challenges” in 2019.

Thank you for your support of wilderness stewardship and NWSA. Together we can build a lasting wilderness stewardship community.



— Randy Welsh

WEBINAR SERIES SERVES AS IT GROWS.

By Dave Cantrell

Since our first effort in November 2017, NWSA has presented five webinars. They have covered subjects as diverse and pertinent as the use of “Wildspotter” software to map and catalogue weeds and the practicalities and intricacies of the Wilderness Stewardship Performance program with seven scheduled and two more in planning stages through 2019. Great teamwork with the Partnership for the National Trails System has helped us present at least once every month. Hundreds have tuned in to learn from nationally rec-

ognized experts, and bring the knowledge to use on their home turf.

We’ve had very positive feedback from members of wilderness stewardship organizations, wilderness managers, agency representatives, and potential wilderness stewardship startups. Webinars have been in two series, “Challenges,” every volunteer group faces (for example, advice on building a solid budget) and “Volunteer Partnership Opportunities” (for example, ways to support Latino Conservation Week and National Public Lands Day).

If you have a topic you’d like us to present or wish to present, drop a note to dave@wildernessalliance.org.

Details are at wildernessalliance.org

2018 Trail and WSP Grants by the numbers

TRAILS GRANTS

- 114 organizations submitted 114 proposals totaling over \$1,697,000 in requests
- 42 trail projects were awarded \$402,000 in funding
- Projects were in every FS region
- Projects included trail construction/reconstruction, trail maintenance, structure rehabilitation, sign installation, bridge replacement, backlog elimination
- \$1,014,000-plus in cash match from selected projects
- \$2,200,000-plus in-kind match
- 6,270-plus Volunteers supported
- 125 trail crew staff and leaders supported
- 93,120-plus volunteer hours
- \$2,167,490 in value of volunteer labor alone

- Over 7:1 return on investment
- 1604-plus miles of trail maintained to standard
- 18 bridges built
- Thousands of water bars cleaned
- Hundreds of feet of structures replaced or rehabilitated
- Thousands of tress cleared
- Nearly 500 workday events

WSP GRANTS

- 21 organizations submitted 22 proposals
- 20 projects from 19 organizations were funded totaling \$188,000
- Projects included: Wilderness education and teacher training; invasive species survey and eradication; campsite monitoring and rehabilitation; solitude monitoring; trail condition assessments and mapping; recreation site

- inventory; boundary survey and marking; and water monitoring
- 650-plus volunteers supported
- 14,000-plus volunteer hours of work
- \$309,960-plus value of volunteer labor
- 30-35 additional seasonal staff hired to expand Wilderness workforce capacity including wilderness rangers, trail crew, and weed crew members
- 500-plus campsites inventoried or rehabilitated
- 150-plus miles of trail assessments completed
- 300-plus miles of trail cleared
- 300-plus acres of weeds inventoried
- Many college, high school and other youth engaged
- Raised WSP point scores in 8 categories

Board and Staff of NWSA

Andrew Downs, Chair
andrewdowns@wildernessalliance.org

Andrew Schurr, Vice-Chair
andrew@wildernessalliance.org

Dave Cantrell, Programs
dave@wildernessalliance.org

Anne Baker, Secretary
anne@wildernessalliance.org

Sandy Compton,
sandy@wildernessalliance.org

Randy Rasmussen
randyrasmussen@wildernessalliance.org

Zack Bumgarner
zack@wildernessalliance.org

Ian Nelson
ian@wildernessalliance.org

Katie Currier
katie@wildernessalliance.org

Stuart Dodd
stuart@wildernessalliance.org

Randy Welsh
Executive Director
randy@wildernessalliance.org
801.808.2167

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 752
Bend, OR • 97709

www.wildernessalliance.org

Interested in serving on the NWSA board? Contact Randy Welsh.

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

by Andrew Downs

The National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance continues to grow the partnership which we serve, and the ways in which we serve it.

Our partnership with the Society of Wilderness Stewards — particularly regarding the annual National Wilderness Workshops — has allowed us to engage agency folk and stewards in a unique and productive way.

Our webinar series, available on the wildernessalliance.org site, continues to get bigger and better. The trail

and WSP grant programs we facilitate have provided extraordinary additional value to a national coalition of agencies and partner groups working in Wilderness.

Moving into our second decade of work serving our alliance of partners, NWSA will continue to grow the services we provide by listening to that partnership and leveraging the deep love and respect for wild country that is vibrant within our membership to meet shared challenges.



Workshops, from page 1

The Old Mill District is Bend's premier shopping and entertainment center aligned along the Deschutes River, and only about a mile from downtown. The famous Deschutes Brewery is a stone's throw away, and a possible a Friday night event site.

The 2018 Workshops in Gunnison drew over 100 participants, and the goal for the 2019 session is at least 150. NWSA and SWS invites employees of any of the four federal land management agencies to attend.

Randy Welsh says, "If you love

Learn more about NWSA at wildernessalliance.org and SWS at wildernessstewardship.org. To stay apprised of the upcoming Workshops and other events, sign up for notifications at wildernessalliance.org/signup

wilderness, no matter your agency job, but especially if your job includes wilderness duties, we'd love to have you here." Also urged to attend are staff and volunteers of non-profit organizations who work in wilderness, with any public

lands, conservation or access for diverse populations or have an interest in learning more about any of those topics. Students and local community members are also welcome.

One goal of the Workshops is to expand the scope, perspective and community of public lands advocates and stewards, wilderness or not. NWSA and SWS encourage anyone interested to come share their thoughts on wilderness and public land management.



The NWSA Board at the Wilderness Workshop in Gunnison, CO. Back row, left to right: Stuart Dodd, Sandy Compton, outgoing treasurer Darcy Shepherd, Randy Rasmussen, Chairman Andrew Downs and Executive Director Randy Welsh; Front row: Andrew Schurr, Dave Cantrell, Anne Baker and Katie Currier.