

Across The Trail

The newsletter of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail



Sandra Broncheau-McFarland
Photo by: Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission



Administrator's Corner

By: Sandra Broncheau-McFarland
Administrator Nez Perce National Historic Trail

Greetings, this is our relaunch of Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT) newsletter, it is amazing to look back and see the many changes that has taken place during this time.

One thing that has grown stronger through the years is the amazing collaboration that we have with partners. We have an eclectic group of partners. We hope you enjoy reading about some recent collaboration along the trail with Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club's trail work, Nez Perce National Historical Park re-opening, Big Hole National Battlefield Commemoration, our new partner qa' ánin 'ískit (respect the trail), Southern Nez Perce Trail work, and Land Return at Wallowa Lake, Oregon.

I am always blown away by what a genuinely excellent group of people can do to commemorate this American treasure. I cannot wait to see what the next ten years will bring, as we cultivate enduring partnerships – tapping the potential of volunteers and building citizen stewards.

Our values include:

REVERENCE - respect for the diversity of our trail users.

INTEGRITY- integrating excellence and stewardship.

CREATIVITY-courageous innovation

DEDICATION- affirming the nature and purpose of the trail by our work through preservation, conservation, interpretation, and collaboration.

Through our knowledge, technology, compassion, and a love for what we do; we will live our promise, philosophy, and values to provide the best possible experience for visitors on our trail and Auto Tour Route.

Respectfully,
Sandi McFarland

The Earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it.....
Chief Joseph, Nez Perce

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Respecting the Trail Together

qa' ánin 'ískit

Introducing qa' ánin 'ískit, the new nonprofit trail wide stewardship partner to the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail. The Nez Perce Tribe Language Program selected “qa' ánin 'ískit” for us, which means “respect the trail.” It is imbued with meaning and easy for English speakers to say.

With nurture and support from Sandi McFarland, Trail Administrator, and the Region One Recreation team, we're making strong progress. We are grateful for the opportunity and honored to be working with the Forest Service, Nez Perce people, and communities all along the trail to bring additional resources to the Trail.

We have spent the last year visiting and attending ceremonies along the trail to better understand how we can best be of service. We envision qa' ánin 'ískit to work in deep relationship with Nez Perce people and will share more on this soon. We have many agency partners who help manage the trail and we are eager to meet each of you and hear your ideas for how we can be of assistance to your work. We are engaging with museums, visitor centers, and cultural organizations in communities all along the trail. The Trail is a local story to them, and we want to provide resources so they can do even more meaningful interpretation. And we want to connect them with others along the trail who working in the same way. We are also reaching out to the many players in the tourism community at state, regional, and local levels, so that the trail can be better shared with visitors along it. qa' ánin 'ískit will also be working to coordinate the 2027 Trail Sesquicentennial, which is a great opportunity to work will all of you.

Our modest office in Hamilton is set up, the board is working hard to prepare the organization for a robust future, the strategic plan is nearing completion, and our web site will be up shortly. We'd love to share our work and progress with you and will send complete contact, web, and social information in the next edition. In the meantime, please reach out to Kristine Komar with thoughts you'd like to share at kk@qaaniniskit.org or 406 360-7019.



Kris Komar, qa' ánin 'ískit, (Respect the Trail) and Rich Wandschneider, Library Director at the Alvin Josephy Center for Arts and Culture at the opening of the Heads and Hearts Exhibit at the Josephy Center in July. Photo by: Sandra Broncheau-McFarland





Wallowa Land Trust

Nez Perce Tribe Celebrates Land Return in Joseph, Oregon

On Wednesday, June 26, 2024, members of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC), along with Dolores and David Bridges, gathered in Joseph, Oregon to commemorate the transfer of the Bridges' 17-acre property in Joseph, Oregon. The Bridges, wishing to conserve the land as wildlife habitat, decided to donate the entire property to the Nez Perce Tribe, while retaining a life estate in the property.

"We have a deep appreciation for the partnerships we have developed in this area. Being able to share our story and connection to the land and learning how collaboration can benefit all parties involved- we are preserving pristine landscapes for today and the future," NPTEC Chairman, Shannon Wheeler shared. "Through processes like this, not only are we preserving the land, but we are also taking steps to heal our people and right historical injustices."

To commemorate this significant event, a Land Return Celebration luncheon and ceremony were held on the Bridges' property. The celebration featured a traditional Appaloosa horse parade by the Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club from Sweetwater, ID with members dressed in traditional regalia, as were the horses. Songs were provided by the Good Life drum and speeches were delivered by multiple attendees including Tribal elders Rosa Yearout and Allen Pinkham Sr., NPTEC leaders, and representatives from the Wallowa Land Trust.

Attendees were moved by the heartfelt connection of the Nimiipuu and many remarked that the owners' expressions of emotion were among their favorite moments of the celebration. David Bridges shared his feelings, "I am very pleased with how deeply the Tribe feels about this. I felt overwhelmed knowing we did the right thing; it couldn't possibly be better, and I'm very happy about that." Dolores Bridges added, "Seeing the horses come down over the hill, the coming home ceremony, and the speakers and what they had to say were meaningful. We thought we would be in the background and that it would be more for the Nez Perce Tribe, but the number of people that were thanking us was overwhelming."

The Wallowa Land Trust collaborated with the Bridges family and the Nez Perce Tribe to secure over 17 acres of land, overlooking Wallowa Lake and located along the 1986 Congressionally designated Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail. This collaboration among all parties, ensures the lands preservation for future generations.

The Wallowa's are ancestral homelands of the Nimiipuu, who were once forced off the lands. Today, the Tribe continues to make several advances in returning home through the purchase and gifting of land parcels in the area.

"It was a memorable day; one that our ancestors were smiling upon. Thank you to the Bridges and the Wallowa Land Trust for the opportunity to partner on a project that will have lasting significance to the Tribe and the benefit of reserved serene views of this beautiful place," concluded Chairman Wheeler.



Abreann Yearout, member of the Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club.
Photo by: Sandra Broncheau-McFarland



Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club.
Photo by: Joyce McFarland



Pictured left to right: Front Row: Kel Hoffman, Conservation Director at Wallowa Land Trust (WLT), Ashton Picard, Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC), Shannon Wheeler, Chairman NPTEC, Ryan Oatman, NPTEC. Middle Row: Liz Arthur, NPTEC, Kathleen Ackley, Executive Director WLT. Back Row: Rachel Edwards, NPTEC, Delores and David Bridges, landowners, Shirley Allman, NPTEC
Photo By: Wallowa Land Trust

National Bison Day

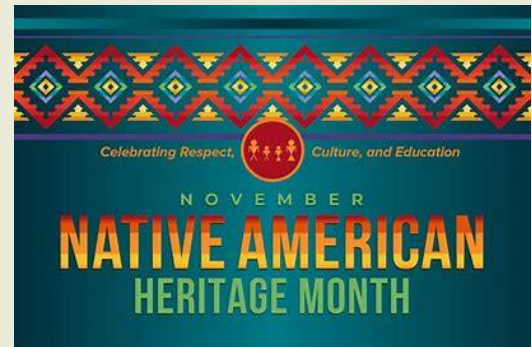
November 2nd is **National Bison Day**. It honors one of the most majestic animals that roamed the Tribes' Aboriginal use areas. Chief Looking Glass, from the 1877 battle, was one of the renowned chiefs who made this trek and is the reason the Nez Perce knew how to get to these locations.

Native Americans used all parts of the buffalo. The hides provided bedding, clothing, shoes, and the walls of tipis. Bison bones and teeth were used to make tools and sacred implements. The Nez Perce used the horns as drinking cups, and they were tied to their saddles in the 1877 Flight and War. They also fashioned horns into spoons and ladles. They made head dresses out of the Bison heads and utilized the skulls in ceremonies.

The meat was essential to the Nez Perce. They traveled the **Nez Perce National Historic Trail** to reach the plains and Yellowstone National Park to harvest buffalo, sometimes staying up to three years before returning home.



Photo by: Sandra Broncheau-McFarland



National American Indian Heritage Month, also referred to as **Native American Heritage Month**, was created on August 3rd, 1990. The bill read in part that "The President has authorized and requested to call upon Federal, State and local Governments, groups and organizations and the people of the United States to observe such month with appropriate programs, ceremonies and activities".

The theme for Native American Heritage Month in 2024 is **"Advancing Leaders Through Innovation"**. It invites all Americans to explore the legacies, triumphs, and challenges that have shaped Native American communities. Join us in celebrating by attending or sponsoring an event to help share their culture, traditions, music, crafts, dance, and ways and concepts of life.

Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club Happenings

By: Rosa Yearout

As part of our five-year Agreement with the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest funded by the Nez Perce (Nee-me-poo) National Historic Trail, twenty-nine members of the Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club (NPapHC) attended the Big Hole ceremony on August 9, a Nez Perce tribal holiday to remember the battle there on that infamous day in 1877 when so many lives were lost.

Elder/Veteran Wilfred "Scotty" Scott, who has led these ceremonies since they first started at major battle sites, said that this was the largest event at Big Hole in his memory. This was reflected in the 15 total number of riders in the long horse parade that circled the group assembled on the battlefield. They represented the Tribe's Young Horsemen's Program, the NPapHC, and the Chief Joseph Foundation. NPapHC president Jack Yearout led a horse with an empty saddle carrying a Nez Perce Pendleton blanket, which was presented to retired Beaverhead National Forest District Ranger Dennis Havig in memory of all those who lost their lives here in 1877 and for his help to the Club over the years on their trail rides in the area.

Also present at the ceremony was a large contingent from the Appaloosa Horse Club's Chief Joseph Trail Ride, which ended at Big Hole this year. The annual ride covers about 100 miles of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail to honor the participants of the conflict in 1877.

In other related Forest Service activities, NPapHC youth completed six weeks of trail work with RAC funds under the direction of Abe Yearout. We also took riders and horses to the tribal ceremony at the Whitebird battlefield. Plans are being made to continue with regular trail work on the Nez Perce Trail.

The NPapHC provided riders and horses for the Tribe's ceremony for the Bridge's donation of 28 acres near Wallowa Lake to the Tribe.

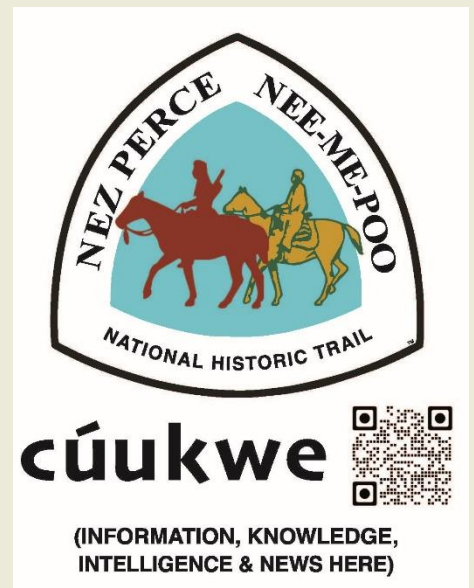
Finally, Jalessa Oyenque, the NPapHC's Youth Coordinator, provided weekly Horseback riding lessons to NPapHC beginning and intermediate young riders in the spring. Riding was put on hold for the summer but will resume later this fall.

Let Visitors Know You Have Information

qa' ánin 'ískit has created a useful tool for you to let folks know you have information on the Trail to share. Seeing, speaking, and hearing the Nez Perce language is important to Nez Perce people, so we have determined to include it whenever possible in interpretation. Angel Sobotta, with the Nez Perce Language Program, recorded the word for information -- cúukwe and it can be heard by using the QR code on the decal. It is interesting to note that this work means much more than information, too.

The decal is two sided and meant for a window so that it shows on both sides, maybe for your front door.

If your site carries NPNHT Auto Tour Guides, maps, books, or other information on the trail, we'd be happy to send you one. To order email or call Kristine Komar at kk@qaaniniskit.org or 406 360-7019.



Meet Mary

Curator and Archivist at the Nez Perce County Historical Society



Mary E. White Romero has been working at the Nez Perce County Historical Society (NPCHS) and Museum for 23 years. She loves the local history and has enjoyed her years at the museum. Mary appreciates learning every day from what the museum receives to their collection and from visitors who walk through the doors.

Mary was born and raised in Sweetwater, Idaho on the Nez Perce Reservation since and graduated from Lapwai High School in 1991. Mary and her husband still live in Sweetwater and raised 2 of her children on the same homestead where she was raised.

Mary E. White Romero, Curator and Archivist at the Nez Perce County Historical Society and Museum.
Photo by: Melody Keith



More About the New Nez Perce National Historic Trail Exhibit

The Nez Perce National Historic Trail exhibit with film, "Landscape of History – The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail" can be seen at the Nez Perce County Historical Society and Museum (NPCHS) in Lewiston, Idaho. The display was created in March of 2024. The exhibit includes images of the trail in North Central Idaho and the Hells Canyon area. Brochures regarding the historic trail are available beside the exhibit.



Photo by: Melody Keith

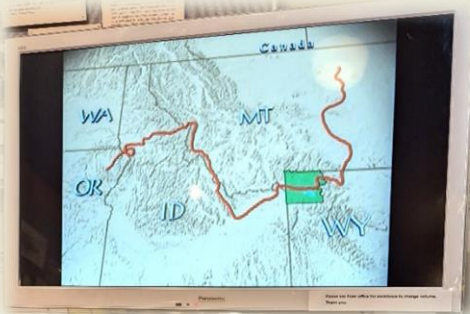


Photo by: Melody Keith

This year we've seen 1,550 visitors view the new exhibit. If you would like to see the Nez Perce National Historic Trail exhibit and film, our hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am-4pm at the corner of 3rd and Capital Street in Lewiston.





ʔickumcílé·líkpe Big Hole National Battlefield News

Happy fall from Big Hole National Battlefield! We had a busy summer here, delivering deck talks and tours, roving the trails, and chatting with visitors daily. This summer we had a major pavement preservation project, much needed to keep our pavement in good shape through our rough winters.

Here's what else we've been up to.

- We welcomed 4 interns for interpretation, who all played a pivotal role in continuing to share this important story.
- We hosted our annual Summer Speaker Series, where we welcomed in many cultural experts to share their wisdom each week from July - August. It was a great opportunity for visitors and staff alike to learn more about topics including traditional food, beadwork, hide painting, and more. I always leave each weekend amazed by the many skills of our speakers.
- This year was also the year that the Chief Joseph Trail Ride with the Appaloosa Horse Club came through. The Chief Joseph Trail Ride rides the entire route of the Flight over the course of 13 years, and this year about 150 people visited the battlefield as part of that journey.
- Commemoration was on August 9th, where 350 people attended, the largest in recent memory. We are thankful that so many people were able to gather to honor the lives of those lost here. It was a meaningful and emotional day, and the evening was closed out by Nez Perce Nation Drum performing at May Creek Campground—the acoustics of that little meadow in the woods is awe inspiring.
- Coyote Camp is our annual field trip extravaganza and was held September 16-20. Students visit and learn more about the battle and nímí·pu· culture.

Big Hole National Battlefield will be moving to winter hours over Indigenous Peoples' Day weekend, October 13th, with the visitor center open Tuesdays - Saturdays, 10-5. Park grounds remain open sunrise to sunset daily. We hope you'll stop by soon.



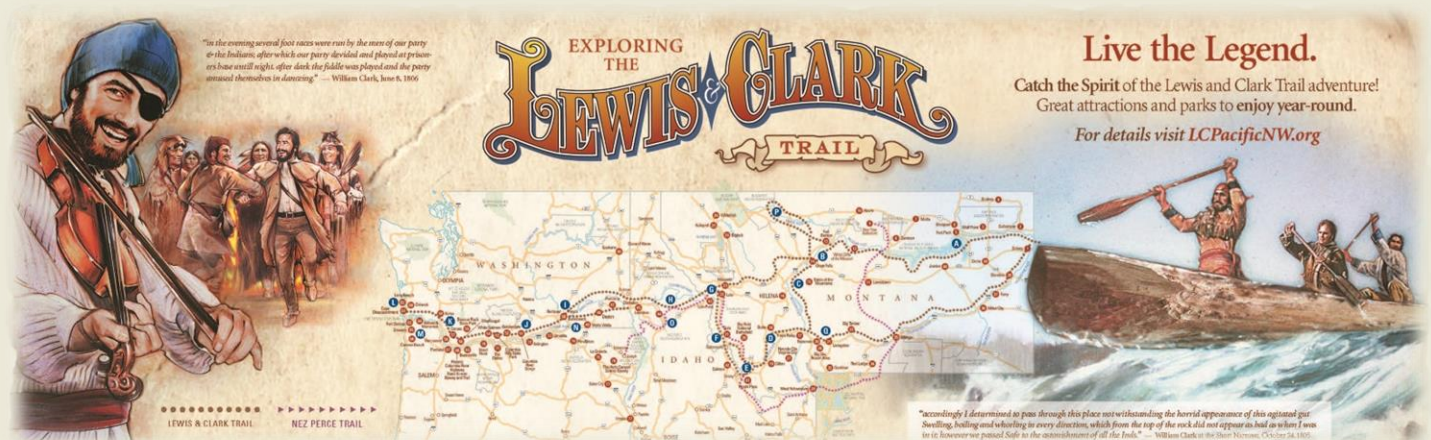
Left: Appaloosa Horse Club. Upper Right: Appaloosa Horse Club. Lower Right: Commemoration. Center: Nez Perce Nation Drum
Photos by: USDI National Park Service, Big Hole National Battlefield

A Great Opportunity

In 2024, we collaborated with the National Park Service to mutually promote the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Brochure text and photos were updated for the Lewis and Clark NHT which in turn promotes Nez Perce NHT road trip webpages in the Pacific Northwest section of the Lewis and Clark NHT. These brochures are distributed to visitors across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.

The brochure includes a dedicated panel on the Nez Perce NHT and their website has a designated landing page linking to Lewis and Clark NHT auto tours that feature parts of the Nez Perce NHT (<https://experiencelewisandclark.travel/pacific-northwest/auto-tours/nez-perce-adventure-tour/>).

Just like with the brochure, their website has a special page devoted to the NPNHT at experiencelewisandclark.travel. This page includes links to four of our other state auto tour pages that include historic sites and visitor centers along the Nez Perce NHT.



Nez Perce National Historical Park Grand Exhibit Reopening

On May 31, 2024, the Nez Perce National Historical Park celebrated the Grand Exhibit Reopening. The event included Nez Perce tribal singing and drumming by Waaph qau qu. There were numerous outstanding speakers including Steve Thede, Park Superintendent, Ryan Oatman, Vice-president Nez Perce Tribe, Jason Lyons, National Park Service, Bobbi Conner Confederated Tribes Umatilla Indian Reservation, and Rosa Yearout Nez Perce tribal elder who spoke and did the opening blessing.



Photo by: Sandra Broncheau-McFarland

The exhibit included images of Nez Perce ancestors and voices of the Nez Perce echo throughout the exhibit. The walls are wrapped with beautiful scenes of Nez Perce homeland past and present. The new exhibits provided visitors with engaging displays that offer multiple layers of discovery about the Nimiiipuu (Nez Perce) homeland.

The exhibit remodel has been ten years in the making and replaced exhibits that had been on display since the visitor center opened 40 years ago.

“I’m always thankful for the ones that came before us. I’m always thankful for them. Because of them we are still here today. ‘Cause they are the ones that made us the way we are.” Bessie Scott, Nez Perce Tribal elder



Heads & Hearts Seeing the Landscape Through Nimiipuu Eyes

The Grand Opening for this exhibit at the Alvin Josephy Center for Arts and Culture was made possible through grants and a participating Agreement with the USFS Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail. The event was held July 18, 2024, at the Alvin Josephy Center for Arts and Culture in Joseph, OR. The exhibit was a collaboration between nimiipuu story tellers, linguists, and elders along with geologists and nimiipuu photographers.



Sandra Broncheau-McFarland and Cheryl Coughlan, Executive Director Alvin Josephy Center for Arts and Culture.
Photo by: Kris Komar

The event attracted some 70 people. The exhibit shows how the nimiipuu stories and art record real past events and enhance our understanding and appreciation of the Northwest's landscape. It is a way of "Two-Eyed Seeing-experiencing a landscape from two cultural perspectives. You will never see this place Hell's Canyon NRA along the 1986 Congressionally designated Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail after seeing this exhibit. Exhibit Coordinators were Ellen Morris and Roger Amerman. Both accomplished artist and geologist.

Indigenous stories are far more than "myths." These stories, names, and understandings convey the history of landscape features also important to scientific understanding of the Northwest's geology. We call this dual Indigenous and scientific understanding of Ethnology.

The exhibit included a full color glossy booklet, videos of tribal elders and Nez Perce perspectives Pax ut hi ka tin, Allen Pinkham, Sr. Tewte likeeye, Charles Axtell, and Tisqeq? 'Ilp ilp, Judge Slickpoo, Piiamyanon Maqsm'aqs, Dr. Phillip Cash Cash and Jewie Davis, Chief Joseph Band Confederate Tribes Colville Indian Reservation. Two young nimiipuu photographers, Precious Domebo and Pox Pox Young who live on the Nez Perce Reservation in Lapwai, ID. Made most of the photographs of landscape, elder and other nimiipuu on the trip. Artist and geologist Aba Cha Ha, Roger Amerman and Ellen Morris Bishop.

Preston provided a soothing atmosphere of flute and guitar music for the exhibit. Preston has a Junior standing this year at Montana State University, Bozeman, MT. His major at MSU is Music Technology and Production. Preston's ethnicity is 1/2 Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, 1/4 Choctaw Nation of OK, and 1/4 Czech/Dutch/German American. Preston is an enrolled member and a citizen of the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho. Preston can play over 14 different instruments.

Light refreshments of traditional smoked salmon and Mountain tea were served with crackers and vegetable/fruit. A big thank you to Rich Wandschneider, Library Director, Kalle Kalle Riggs, Library Assistant and Nakia Williams Cloud, Director Cultural Resource Program, Nez Perce Tribe.



Preston Amerman
Photo by: Sandra Broncheau-McFarland

Trail Report

By: Ivar Nelson

It takes a crew of retired smokejumpers to have the resilience and stamina to lug chain saws for miles in order to cut through ages of fallen timber to open up a thousands-years-old trail through the historic homeland of the Nez Perce Tribe. The trail is still there, clearly worn in the ground underneath the brush, deadfall and repro.

And we did it, continuing our ten-year effort by connecting two frustrating gaps and establishing GPS markers on the Southern Nez Perce Trail (SNPT) during our June 2024 session of work identifying and clearing the trail. Twelve volunteers working for three days were able to identify the trail tread just east of Mountain Meadows and find the gap between Slide Creek and road 60, two places that had frustrated previous efforts. Perfect weather helped, although a brief thunderstorm reminded us of our vulnerability in the middle of nowhere.

The GPS crew of Dan Pierson and Mickey Pillers walked the trail and created an accurate GPS map west of Mountain Meadows to Red River, as well as introduced the use of GPS markers for locating confusing parts of the trail. Such use made possible two “golden spike” moments where we bridged gaps by working from both ends of the identified trail. Mickey promises a digital version in the near future.

We are close to finishing identifying and clearing the forty-mile east segment of the SNPT from Red River to Poet Camp. The density of the forest in these final gaps means that we will need the second session of summer 2024 to clear trail that we identified in this first session.

Staying at the historic Red River Ranger Station, built in 1940, worked out very well, giving us electricity, bathrooms, hot and cold water, and heat which camp cook Pat Hart supplemented by creating a portable electric kitchen. Some of us finessed the lack of showers by going up the road to the Red River Hot Springs to sooth our ancient bodies.

Thanks to David Cain, the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests (NCF) Archaeologist and Jeremy Harris, the acting Ranger of the Red River District, and Debbie Rendleman for enabling the much-welcomed use of the Station. And to Adam Washebek for his very responsive trip to McCall to certify our sawyer jumpers who appreciated the update on techniques.

In addition to David Cain, visitors included Ryan Ghelfi of the Selway-Bitterroot/Frank Church Foundation and Katie Eldredge, zone archaeologist in the NCF, as well as accidental drop-ins who thought the Ranger Station was still open. For the first time we had funding from the Forest Service for the volunteers, thanks to a tag-team of Sandi Broncheau-McFarland of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, Carol Hennessey of Northern Region Forest Service, and Melanie Vining of the Idaho Trails Association.

We moved our July session away from Poet Creek in order to complete the clearing of the now identified sections near Mountain Meadows and Slide Creek. We hope that the Ranger Station will be available again for that session, if not we will stay at 14-Mile Campground. With the identification of the Mountain Meadows campground connection, the long hike to work on that section is eliminated, to enormous relief.

Continual rain in the NCF means a lower chance of fire, but climate change has made forecasting increasingly unpredictable. As always, July work can be altered until the last moment by fire in the NCF. We could use another couple trail workers if you or someone you know is interested in joining us.





Pictured left to right: Dan Pierson, “Hud” Hudson, “Mickey” Pillers, Larry Swan, Steve Mello, Ivar Nelson, Barry Gall, John Stright, Allison Stout, Craig Gehrke, Gary Dobbins.

Photo by: Pat Hart

Stay in Touch Contact Us

Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail

12740 Highway 12

Orofino, ID 85344

208-476-8234

sandra.broncheau-mcfarland@usda.gov

Website: [Nez Perce National Historic Trail - Home](#)

General Email: npnht@usda.gov

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