

## **SJBCH Trails Committee Report - March 2017**

**Adopted Trails** Our chapter has two adopted trails, Anderson Trail on the Pagosa Ranger District and Archuleta Trail on the Divide Ranger District. The goal is to get these trails opened early in the high-country season, which is not always easy. We have a good lead person for this work (Gary Staplekamp), but he can't do it all himself. He has a work crew for Archuleta, but we'll need more volunteers for Anderson Trail to clear logs, remove brush and do tread work like Rocky and Kelli Day did in 2016.

**July Williams Creek Trail Gravel Hauling** After a very successful trail improvement and gravel-hauling project at Williams Creek last August, Bob Volger and crew, along with the Pagosa RD and the Rocky Mountain Regional Pack String, will return there July 10-14 to finish the work of hauling the remaining smaller-sized gravel as a top-coat for the nice reconstructed section of trail. Stay tuned for details, hope you can get involved!

**Piedra Primitive Area Trails** We have been asked by Pagosa RD Trails Manager Tyler Albers to help re-open some currently closed trails in the Piedra Primitive Area. Due to an overall inability to keep these trails open over the last ten years (because of downed trees), many of them like Coldwater Creek Trail, Sand Creek Trail, Skunk Creek Trail, Shaw Creek Trail and others in the area are impassable, and there is the possibility of losing these trails permanently over time if they are not re-opened and maintained. We would like to start emphasizing this area in our work in 2017. Chainsaws are permitted in this area, so if a chainsaw is your tool of choice, here's your opportunity. Please contact any Trail Committee member for information if you're interested.

**Outfitter & Guides Partnering** In March we met with Dick Ray of the local outfitter and guides group to discuss the value of partnering. Briefly, we agreed that we would like to develop our relationship more in the interest of common objectives on our public lands for stock access and general public benefit. One idea Dick has that he's been discussing with the Forest Service is developing parking areas off main roads for stock trailer and general public access for all seasons, and his first suggestion is just off Highway 84 at Kenney Flats. He is proposing that we partner by planning the work with the FS, moving the existing gate in a little farther on the road, constructing a parking area, and purchasing some gravel to surface the dirt parking area. Dick suggests we conduct community fundraising to cover gravel surfacing and other costs and is asking SJBCH to consider providing seed money for the project. We need board approval to move ahead with this idea.

**March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting with Trail Wise BCH in South Fork** We had fourteen members of SJBCH and Trail Wise BCH, along with Lisa McClure, Wilderness manager for the Divide RD, meet for lunch at Ramon's in South Fork on March 12. It was a nice opportunity to meet new people, share some thoughts and experiences, and to plan for the future. Trail Wise BCH president Anne Robinson now has a copy of our SJBCH 2017 Trail Work Plan and intends to share it with her chapter's members for cooperative work efforts, and she will share their project work plans with us.

**Day trips or Overnights?** While many of the trails we work on lend themselves to day trips, sometimes the accessibility or length of the trail makes it tough to clear or work on the trail at its highest or farthest-in point. This is especially true with a couple of the trails like Anderson, Archuleta, Cimarrona, and Williams Creek. We sometimes do a simple single overnight on these trails in order to get the top ends of them cut out or maintained, and we hope to do more of that this year. So if you want to see the high country, work a little farther in on a trail, hear Vern's "stories" around the campfire, or maybe learn how to do overnights with your stock, then consider joining us on these trips.

**Little Blanco Trail STEP Outdoors Crew Pack-In and Thirty Mile Stock Unloading Area Maintenance Trip** For several years we've packed the Step Outdoors crew into the Little Blanco Trail as they work on the trail. We've also gone to Thirty Mile SUA on the Divide RD every year to do maintenance work. This year the plan is to pack the Step Outdoors crew in on July 14, then go to Thirty Mile on the Rio Grande River for July 15 through 21, and then return to Little Blanco to pack the Step Outdoors crew out on July 28. Vern Jahnke's the leader for this work, so if you're interested let him know.

**Uncle Ted Needs You!** It's a little tough getting done what needs to get done out there on the trails these days, and we need as much help as we can get in order to help the Forest Service keep them open. This is going to be the case even more in the future with reduced FS trails funding, more dead trees across trails, brush growing into trails, and deteriorating trail tread.

We encourage our members to get involved with our trail work. Not all projects are suitable for every person, considering training and experience, and group sizes and levels of expertise are important safety considerations in this work. But the work can sure be rewarding. Seeing the work accomplished, seeing beautiful places, and doing that with stock is sure nice. If you're green as far as trail work goes or if you think you may not be up to it physically, why not try it, start slow, learn the ropes, and become a valued partner in our trails group. No matter your level of experience and expertise, you can get involved in one way or another; there's a job out there for everyone - just jump in. Please contact any Trail Committee member if you're interested.

We are also looking for more of our trained volunteers to help lead some of the trail-clearing and other work. Our crews are normally made up of about three to five people, sometimes more, and often with a few of the crew members being in training roles.

For more information on any SJBCH trail or project matter, please contact John Nelson, [FtValleyPS@aol.com](mailto:FtValleyPS@aol.com), 928-853-0348.