



**BOB MARSHALL  
WILDERNESS**  
FOUNDATION

**SPRING 2023**

# *The Roundup*



*The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation works on the traditional homelands of the Amskapi Piikani, the Niitsítapi, the Séliš, Qlispé and Ktunaxa. We admire their deep connection to this landscape and we're inspired by their knowledge and ongoing commitment as the original and longest-serving stewards of the lands we now call "The Bob".*



**Active Wilderness  
Stewardship since 1997**

bmwf.org / trails@bmwf.org  
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Hungry Horse MT 59919

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*Greetings* FROM THE BOARD

What a year is in our rearview, friends, and what a year is coming up! In 2022, we celebrated the Foundation's 25th birthday, received the Forest Service's Award for Group Champion of Wilderness Stewardship, landed our biggest ever grant (to fight invasives!), cleared hundreds of miles of trail, and engaged hundreds more folks with wilderness stewardship.

These numbers and accomplishments are something to be proud of, and you'll read about them here, but I also want to take a moment to acknowledge the people who make it all possible.

That's people like Bill Hodge and Meg Killen, staff we said bittersweet goodbyes to in 2022 as they began new journeys. It's Allison Siems and Rebecca Powell, in whose abundantly capable hands the Foundation rests while the Board conducts a search for a dynamic new Executive Director. It's the rest of the staff who make the BMWF a rewarding and meaningful place to work, a model for collaborative stewardship, and a powerful voice for inclusivity in conservation. It's the volunteers who do it all, and the crew leaders and packers who get them out there. It's a skilled and dedicated Board of Directors on which I am honored to serve.

And it's you, whoever you are, wherever you may be, dreaming of your most recent trip to the Bob, or your next one. It's you even if you never set foot in that wild place but take solace in knowing the Bob is out there, "a part of the geography of hope," as Wallace Stegner said.

We hope this recap of last year and preview of 2023 gets you itching to grab a Pulaski and hit the trail on a volunteer trip, anticipating a bag of popcorn and the always stellar lineup at Mountainfilm on Tour, or committing to any of the numerous ways to support the Foundation and wilderness stewardship. Thank you for loving the Bob!

Warm wishes and happy trails,

Corrie Williamson  
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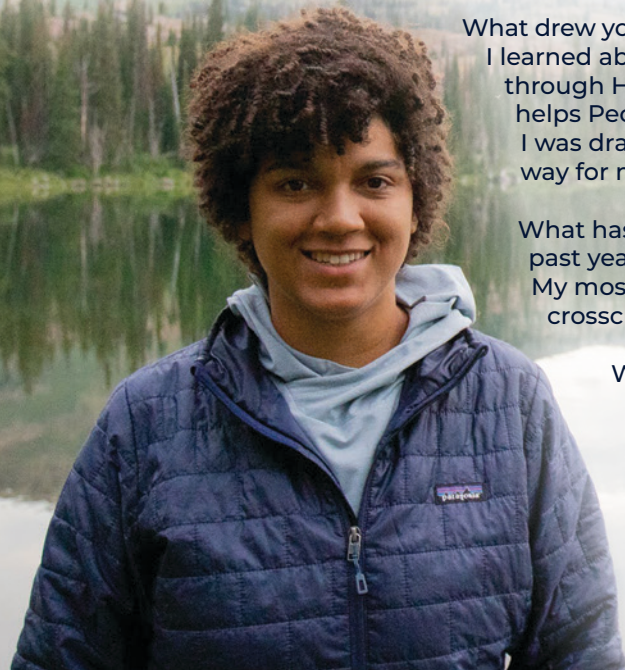


# Volunteers of the Year Awards

We love our volunteers – we truly would not be here without them! Each year we're thrilled to recognize a couple of the hardworking folks who go above and beyond for the Bob.

## Trail Dawg of the Year: Zeo Walters

Zeo was nominated for their passion for The Bob and budding leadership as an outdoor enthusiast. First joining us in 2021 as part of our Wilderness 101 trip – their first time camping! – Zeo came back for three (!!!) backcountry trips in 2022. It's clear they have a love for wilderness and helping connect others to this landscape. Always with a positive attitude, even in the most challenging times, Zeo has been a joy to have on each and every opportunity they joined. We are so very thankful for their dedication and we hope to see more of them in 2023!



**What drew you to volunteering with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation?**  
I learned about volunteering with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation through Here Montana, an outdoor program based out of Missoula that helps People of Color and ethnic minorities explore outdoor recreation. I was drawn to volunteering with The Bob because it was a structured way for me to experience backpacking and camping for the first time.

**What has been your most memorable experience in The Bob this past year?**

My most memorable experience in The Bob this past year was using a crosscut saw.

**What piece of advice would you give to someone who is thinking about volunteering, but might not have much outdoor experience?**

Make sure you have a comfortable pair of hiking boots.

**Do you have a favorite place in The Bob? If so, where?**

So far, my favorite place in The Bob is Devil's Glen along the Dearborn River.

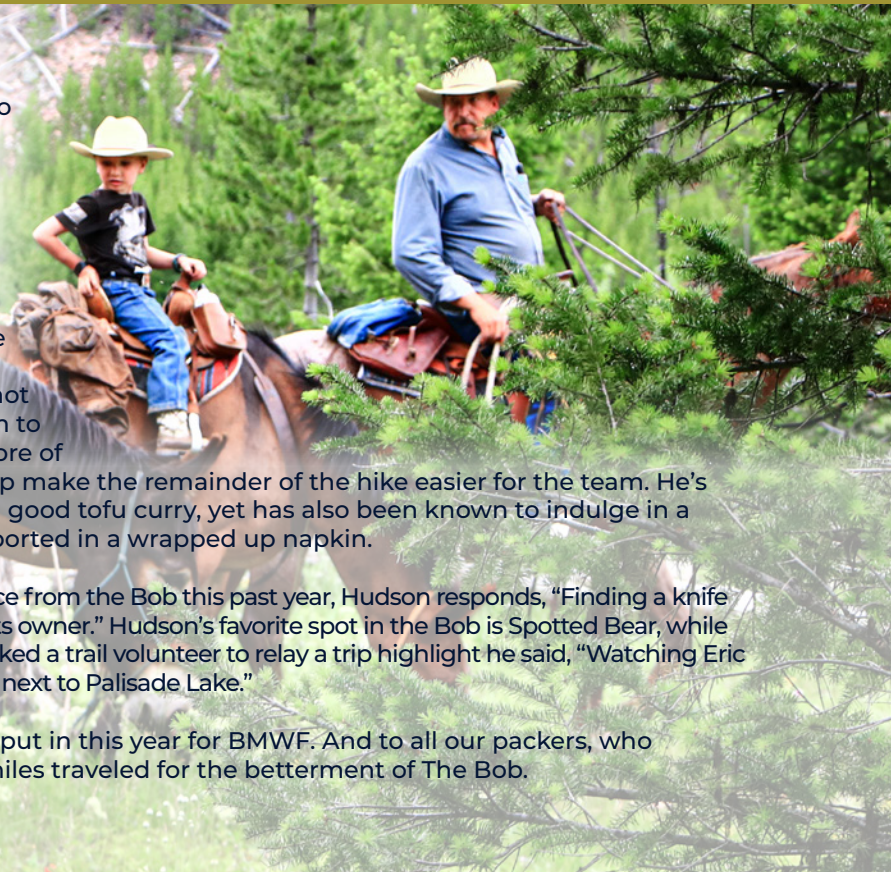
## Packer of the Year: Eric Skelton

2022 was Eric's first year packing for BMWF. He came to us via a Missoula Backcountry Horsemen recommendation. At first impression, Eric seems to fit a stereotypical 'Wilderness Packer' type – but if there is anything we know about packers, it's that there really is no typical type. A man of few words, Eric just wants to know what trailhead and what time, and you can bet that he, his string of mules and his son Hudson will be there and ready.

Our crew leaders and volunteers came out of the backcountry singing Eric and Hudson's praises. When packing a group 12 miles into camp on a hot day, Eric waited halfway for over 3 hours for them to catch up to him, then insisted on taking even more of their personal gear to lighten their loads and help make the remainder of the hike easier for the team. He's also quite culinarily diverse and can appreciate a good tofu curry, yet has also been known to indulge in a two-day-old Trixi's hamburger that's been transported in a wrapped up napkin.

When asked about their most memorable experience from the Bob this past year, Hudson responds, "Finding a knife at Palisade Lake." Eric replies, "...and then we found its owner." Hudson's favorite spot in the Bob is Spotted Bear, while Eric's is the top of Scapegoat Mountain. When we asked a trail volunteer to relay a trip highlight he said, "Watching Eric (the packer) and his son play Go Fish around the fire next to Palisade Lake."

Big thanks to all the hard work Eric and Hudson put in this year for BMWF. And to all our packers, who certainly deserve a standing ovation for all the miles traveled for the betterment of The Bob.



# Remembering Suzie Ranger

Suzie on hunter patrol during her tenure with Spotted Bear

In 2022, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex lost two icons – folks who dedicated their lives to these wild lands, who were part of its shared history and woven into the fabric of its community. Sue Johnson, 30+ year Spotted Bear Ranger District employee who joined the Foundation staff after her "retirement", left us in late October. Dave Owen, longtime Ranger at Spotted Bear until his retirement in 1985 who helped develop the concept of BMWF, passed in early December.

Their contributions and legacies will live on through the memories of those who were lucky enough to know them. Our Program Director Rebecca Powell sat down with former Board Member and retired Spotted Bear Wilderness Ranger Al Koss to swap stories and remember our dear friend Suzie "Ranger".

These excerpts were taken from a longer interview. Listen at [bmf.org/stories](https://bmf.org/stories)

### Do you remember your first impression of Sue?

(Al) I just remember how friendly she was. After that, she always knew who I was and remembered me. I remember her smile and her laugh. As you said, once a person met Sue, they were always a friend.

(Rebecca) She was kind of the glue that held the social life together of everybody else. She was already working at the Foundation when I started, and I remember her being very friendly, and like, "Ok, who are you, what's your story, tell me all about you." She was always just such a positive force. She always had her earrings matching her shirt, very coordinated.

(Al) Earrings were always a big part of her life. When we would travel, we would find different earrings from different places. And all of her shirts [would match them], particularly during the holidays.

### Do you have any favorite jokes Sue used to tell, or funny stories?

(Al) One year Sue had a day calendar on her desk, and every day was a lyric from a country western song. And one of them was, "You better be better to me." And she would always bring that up – something would come up, I would say we gotta do this... and she would say, "You better be better to me."

One story that I think is pretty memorable of who Suzie was... We had an employee fund at the ranger district...and Suzie always brought up that we should be doing something for the employees with that. So at the end of orientation she came up with the idea of a barn dance. It started out in the cook house, we'd push all the tables back and people would come in and dance. One year when the cook house was damaged, we said "Where are we gonna have it?" "Well it's a barn dance, let's go to the barn!" So we cleaned out the barn and from there on, it became the Spotted Bear barn dance, and it's still going on to this day. Suzie was the instigator of the barn dance.

### What do you miss most about her?

(Al) I think just being able to pick up the phone and talk. Catch up on what's going on, what's been happening, what she's been doing. There were always different activities, different people, things that she knew, different stories, catching up on her family and our family... I hope that as people listen to this, it will spark memories for them of their time with Suzie, because she touched so many people's lives.



1) Al and Sue on Pivot Mountain in the late 1990s  
2) Rebecca and Sue at Voices of the Wilderness in 2015

# 2022 By the Numbers

## ANNUAL REPORT



**61** TOTAL PROJECTS



**17** PARTNER AND AFFINITY GROUPS

**11** WILDERNESS INTERNS



**2** PACKER APPRENTICESHIPS



**2** ARTIST WILDERNESS RESIDENCIES



**451** MILES OF TRAIL MAINTAINED



**3,145** TREES CLEARED

**1092** YARDS OF TREAD IMPROVED



**50** MILES OF TRAIL BRUSHED



**169** DRAINAGES MAINTAINED

**3** TRAIL STRUCTURES CONSTRUCTED



**212**

MULE LOADS OF GEAR



**122**

PACKER APPRENTICE MILES IN THE SADDLE



VALUE OF PACKERS: **\$67,800**

**369** VOLUNTEERS

FEMALE: 52%

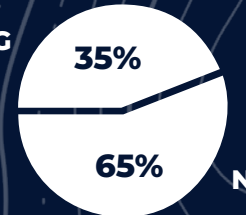


MALE: 46%



NONBINARY: 2%

RETURNING



NEW



**2,466** CUPS OF COFFEE



**1,644** NIGHTS IN A TENT

### FINANCIALS

INCOME



**\$798,981**

- 2% Merchandise
- 3% Fundraisers
- 4% License Plates
- 29% Individual Donations
- 62% Grants

EXPENSES



**\$775,485**

- 11% Fundraising & Outreach
- 24% Administration
- 65% Boots-on-the-Ground Programs

**68.5** ACRES OF WEEDS TREATED



**3.25** ACRES WEEDS SPRAYED



**40** ACRES TREATED W/ BIOCONTROL INSECTS

**611** LB WEEDS HAND PULLED



**499** ACRES WEEDS MAPPED



**24**

COMMUNITY EDUCATION EVENTS



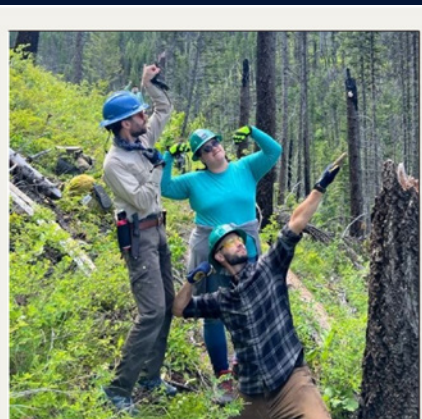
TOTALING **\$463,461**



IN WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP VALUE

# Volunteer Voices HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIELD IN 2022

“ My first job after high school graduation was working at Spotted Bear RS. It was 44 years ago, and I was one of only 3 women at the RS. It was excellent to get to return to Spotted Bear and see the place; it's so much bigger than I remember it. I admired the dedication of Zack, Demi & Jim to the work, responsibility, and how they were committed to engaging everyone. It seems very generous to take volunteers and let us all enjoy the Bob and at the same time making sure their tasks are completed and everyone is safe. I admire all the people at BMWF that continue to build these projects and relationships (with USFS, packers, community members, FWP) to give back to the Bob. **You let us shine.** ”



PARTNER: THE CENTER

“ Learning new skills in clearing trees with saws, especially the Crosscut Saw. Getting to know each other in a unique and challenging environment. Exploring the creeks, swimming in gorgeous pools and seeing a young non-threatening grizzly bear on our day off. ”

Our leader built a strong foundation in the very beginning by following her intuition and letting our crew establish ourselves in a very organic manner. She then laid out the schedule and safety concerns to secure the foundation. From there we were a strong team that was free to learn in a fun and safe environment. No egos got in the way of accomplishing our goals - instead **laughter, stories and sharing knowledge while working hard made the days fly by with joy and accomplishment.** Our crew and leader were truly amazing and we will be staying connected for years to come, looking out for one another. A unique experience from all my other wilderness experiences that adds a sense of accomplishment not felt before. ”

“You will be camping in style. **Incredible backcountry meals will be had.** Getting to know the Latino Outdoors group was the best part of my trip. Using a crosscut was a very close second!!!”

“ Plenty of downtime balanced with hard, meaningful work. The triumph of sawing through a particularly large tree, the beautiful views of the Bob and meeting great folks who also love the outdoors! **This was a life changing experience** and I would love to do more with BMWF. ”



BMWF GIRLS IN THE BOB



BMWF #19: GREEN FORKS

“1) The people – this crew was amazing! **Despite our differences, we were all able to connect and truly enjoy each other's company.** 2) Celebration s'mores on the last night of the hitch. 3) Getting some work done while being able to laugh and have fun!!!”



BMWF #7: GATEWAY PASS



PARTNER: LATINO OUTDOORS



# Volunteer Adventures

GIVE BACK TO THE BOB THIS SUMMER!



## VOLUNTEERING BASICS – What can you expect from a BMWF volunteer trip?

### WE PROVIDE:

- An experienced Crew Leader who will show you the ropes
- All meals, tools and group camp supplies
- Pack support to and from camp to lighten your load
- A free-of-charge, unforgettable way to experience The Bob!

### YOU BRING:

- Personal camping gear and clothing (we have a gear library if you need anything!)
- A willingness to roll up your sleeves and work hard for 8 hours a day, using traditional trail maintenance tools
- A positive attitude, ready to learn new things and have an adventure!

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

Interested in joining us? Congratulations on pushing yourself to try something new this summer! Here are some\* of the best ways to get ready to head into the Bob with BMWF.

- 1. Get comfortable with your gear.** Test out your backpack with weight prior to your trip on a local trail close to home. Wear-in brand new boots beforehand, your feet will thank you! Test out gizmos and gadgets that are traveling into the backcountry for the first time (don't forget an extra battery or two). If you need to borrow a tent, sleeping bag, backpack, or sleeping pad, let us know at least 3 weeks prior to your trip and we'll check it out of our gear library for you.
- 2. Warm up your body** with some goblet squats, step-ups, hanging knee raises, downhill lunges, and plenty of stretching. With these exercises you target the muscles predominantly used while hiking, so it's a good set to have in your toolkit to limber up.
- 3. Plan to maintain a well balanced diet.** While hiking and working your body will be using plenty of energy and will need fuel in the form of carbs, sugars, veggies, electrolytes, vitamins, and protein. Don't be surprised if you find yourself hungrier than usual. Decide how you'll plan to pack your provided lunch everyday, are you a Baggie Baddie, a Tupperware Trailblazer, or a Bento Box Boss?
- 4. Review the participant list.** Who knows, maybe some new friends or neighbors can carpool with you to the trailhead, or better yet, get in shape with you before your trip begins.
- 5. Bring an open mind and a good attitude!** We're all here to do some great work to help keep our public lands accessible and maintain their wilderness character. Prior to going into the backcountry, take the opportunity to check in with yourself on what you'll need to decompress (reading in a quiet space, taking a walk, listening to music, meditating, or fishing) after a long day.

\*Find the full list and many more tips on our website!

## SAMPLE BMWF MENU

Breakfast: Continental Style  
Coffee! Oatmeal, bagels, cereal, etc.

Lunch: Build your own  
Sandwich fixings, snacks, apples, granola bars...pack and hit the trail!

Dinner: Crew Leader's Choice  
Light appetizers after work followed by a hearty dinner. Crew Leaders plan each meal to be healthy, filling, and tailored to all dietary restrictions.  
*Don't forget the s'mores!*



## READY TO LEARN MORE?

Visit [bmwf.org/volunteer](http://bmwf.org/volunteer) for our full list of 2023 projects and how to sign up! Trips will be published on March 6th.



# THANK YOU to these donors and sponsors who so generously supported our work in wilderness stewardship in 2023

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