

Spring 2023



# THE 45<sup>TH</sup> PARALLEL



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# Message from the Forest Leadership Team



First and foremost, I want to thank everyone for your excellent work on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. We continue to place a focus and emphasis on Communication, Transparency, and Accountability to you, our partners, and the community. Together we have captured opportunities and made great progress stewarding these great landscapes in the Blue Mountains. We are bringing on new colleagues, investing in our partners and communities, and restoring public lands. Thank you for all your contributions and for making us so successful.

The Forest continues to forge ahead with restoration and resiliency across the landscape. Over-stocked stands of fire prone fuels are being analyzed for treatment and protection of our communities. Rivers and riparian systems are undergoing restoration with our partners. Together we are adding complexity to these systems and connecting them to their floodplains. With significant engagement from our Tribal Partners and local communities, investments into Forest infrastructure including roads, bridges and restoration activities are occurring at an unprecedented rate. Each one of these opportunities is predicated on the great work of everyone. We are all pulling together, and it is really making a difference on the Forest.

Together we addressed the Double Creek Fire that expressed itself on almost 200,000 acres including large tracts in the Wilderness. The overall result of this fire was a variable, mosaic burn that has returned fire effects to landscape. We will continue to monitor, assess, and address the effects. One of the most important outcomes was the outstanding safety record with so many individuals, teams, and agencies involved.

With all the activities we are involved in, not only on the Forest but across the agency, please continue to make safety our number one priority. This includes, not only a safe work environment but taking care of yourselves and paying attention to stress and work-life balance. Thank you for all you do on the Wallowa-Whitman and please continue to stay safe!

- Shaun P. McKinney

# PERSONNEL UPDATES

## New employees, details and promotions on the Forest

**William Brendecke** – Project Manager, Supervisor's Office

**Alison Arnold** – Environmental Coordinator / NEPA Planner, Wallowa Mountains Office

**Stephaney Kerley** – District Ranger, La Grande District

**Melissa Nehls** – Visitor Service Information Assistant, Wallowa Mountains Office

**Eric Ott** – Forest Health & Protection Entomologist, Supervisor's Office

**Ya-Wen Ott** – Entomologist, Region 6

**Sarah Brandy** – Fisheries Program Manager, Supervisor's Office

**Jay (Mike) Johnson** – Entomologist, Supervisor's Office

**Brie Myers** – Fuels Planner, Whitman Ranger District

**Megan Hederman** – District Hydrologist, La Grande Ranger District

**Adrian Cuzick** – Range Program Manager, Supervisor's Office

**Jamey Basye** – Deputy District Ranger, Wallowa Mountains Office

**Thomas McGinley** – Silviculturalist, Wallowa Mountains Office

**Robin Sullivan** – Detailing from the Clarkston Office to the Wallowa Mountains Office as a Customer Service Representative.

*“The strength of the team is each individual member.”  
– Phil Jackson*

## Retiring, moving on, and promotions off the Forest

**Gene Yates (Retired)** - Environmental Coordinator

**Sarah Crump (Retired)** – Heritage Project Manager

**Jerry Hustafa (Retired)** – Botanist

**Patrick Currin (Retired)** – Range Management Specialist

**Jane Rushane (Retired)** – Rangeland Management Specialist

**Clint Foster** - Forest Silviculturist, Umatilla National Forest

**Andrea Holmquist** – Environmental Coordinator, Region 4

**Linzi Smith** – Fire Clerk, Region 6

# SAFETY UPDATE

## Stress First Aid

Stress First Aid is a framework to improve recovery from stress reactions, both in oneself and in coworkers. Stress First Aid was originally designed to support military personnel, and subsequently tailored to support a wide range of occupations, including wildland firefighters, emergency services personnel, law enforcement, and natural resource professions.

## Stress Continuum Model

<b>READY (Green)</b>	<b>REACTING (Yellow)</b>	<b>INJURED (Orange)</b>	<b>ILL (Red)</b>
<p><b>DEFINITION</b> Adaptive coping and mastery Optimal functioning Wellness</p> <p><b>FEATURES</b> Well trained and prepared Fit and focused In control Optimally effective Behaving ethically Having fun</p>	<p><b>DEFINITION</b> Mild and transient distress or loss of optimal functioning</p> <p>Always goes away Low risk for illness</p> <p><b>FEATURES</b> Irritable, angry Anxious or depressed Physically too pumped up or tired Loss of complete self control Poor focus Poor sleep Not having fun</p>	<p><b>DEFINITION</b> More severe and persistent distress or loss of function</p> <p>Leaves a "scar" Higher risk for illness</p> <p><b>CAUSES</b> Life threat Loss Inner conflict Wear and tear</p> <p><b>FEATURES</b> Panic or rage Loss of control of body or mind Can't sleep Recurrent nightmares or bad memories Persistent shame, guilt, or blame Loss of moral values &amp; beliefs</p>	<p><b>DEFINITION</b> Persistent and disabling distress or loss of function Clinical mental disorders Unhealed stress injuries</p> <p><b>TYPES</b> PTSD Depression Anxiety Substance abuse</p> <p><b>FEATURES</b> Symptoms and disability persist over many weeks Symptoms and disability get worse over time</p>

## Get Educated

The Wallowa - Whitman National Forest hosted a Stress First Aid class on April 20th. If you are interested in learning more about Stress First Aid contact Lee Mercer at [lee.mercer@usda.gov](mailto:lee.mercer@usda.gov), or (541) - 523-1227.

# Notes From the Forest

## Wallowa Valley District Hosts Open House by Joseph Black



The Wallowa Valley District, led by District Ranger Brian Anderson, hosted an open house for the Morgan Nesbit Forest Resiliency Project, March 15, 2023. The open house offered the public an opportunity to meet with subject matter experts and ask questions about the upcoming project. During the event, leaders discussed the project goals of promoting forest conditions that support sustainable ecological functions and processes while maintaining and enhancing wildlife habitat diversity and quality.

## Wallowa-Whitman Participates in Community Career Fairs by Thomas McGinley

The timeline for hiring and recruiting Temporary Seasonal Employees commonly referred to as 1039's has dramatically changed from the previous 3 years. Here on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, this has not deterred us from trying to recruit young adults for these once highly sought after positions. Since September we have visited high schools in Baker City, La Grande, and Joseph putting on a job seminar going over the positions we are offering, building a federal resume, and networking with our local job applicant pools across Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties. In addition, we have been outreaching to colleges with natural resources and environmental science programs in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.



## Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is selected for CALR!!!! by Sarah Brandy



What is this acronym, you might ask! It is the Collaborative Aquatic Landscape Restoration project, of course! The WWNF was one of only 10 projects selected across the nation! Here is an excerpt from the department last August when the WWNF found out our project was selected! The Grande Ronde Headwaters Restoration Partnership, built upon 30 years of shared stewardship restoration with 18 county, state, federal, tribal and NGO partners, will restore 129 miles of stream, 496 acres of riparian, wet meadow, floodplain, and upland habitat, and restore fish passage to more than 45 miles of habitat. CALR 2022 funds will be used immediately to restore 15.5 miles of Threatened and Endangered Species Act-critical fish habitat identified

in recovery plans, including Snake River Basin Spring Chinook, Snake River Bas summer steelhead, and Columbia River bull trout. 2022 was the first year of this exciting 5-year program! In addition to the \$5,653,000 federal dollars coming to the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest to restore our important watershed resources, the estimated match from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Bonneville Power Administration, and the Arbor Day Foundation is \$5,716,046! This is amazing news for stewarding our public land! Managers and specialists on the forest will work together to implement important projects and work with local contractors who have a great track record of work on our forest to keep funds in our communities and local economies!

# GET TO KNOW STEPHANEY KERLEY, LA GRANDE DISTRICT RANGER

by Joseph Black, Public Affairs Specialist



STEPHANEY KERLEY  
DISTRICT RANGER, LA GRANDE RD

The Wallowa-Whitman recently welcomed a new District Ranger at the La Grande Ranger District. We sat down with Stephaney to get to know her. Here's her story:

"I first started my career with the Forest Service in 1989, in a youth program called the Job Training Partnership Act," said Stephaney Kerley, District Ranger of the La Grande Ranger District of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

Kerley began her career with the U.S. Forest Service at the age of 14, on the Nez Perce National Forest. At the time, she worked at the smoke jumper, air tanker and helicopter base in Grangeville, Idaho assisting in tasks including creating flight hazard maps and grounds maintenance.

"I had to wait till I turned 15 to use all the lawnmowers and weed eaters, but I also cleaned toilets, answered telephones and tracked the cross-wind component for air tankers that were trying to land and anything else that was needed," said Kerley.

Kerley worked for the Nez Perce National Forest for three seasons before graduating high school and attending Northern Arizona University where she pursued a degree in Forestry while working seasonally for the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests as a wildland firefighter. Now, 30 years later, she has a bachelor's degree in Forestry and a master's degree in forest management.



Chief Tidwell meets with Ranger Kerley and other members of an Incident Management Team in 2012. Photo Courtesy of Stephaney Kerley

"I am really excited to work with the La Grande Ranger District, especially with the aquatic restoration projects," said Kerley. "My thesis for my master's program was in riparian restoration."

From 1993 - 1994, Stephaney worked on the Kaibab National Forest, working in Fire Prevention and with Helitack, before moving back to the Nez Perce to work on a hand crew in the second half of '94.

"It was about '98 when I started my first permanent position, with the National Park Service, Grand Canyon National Park," said Kerley. "I worked at the Fire Dispatch Center as the assistant center manager; and my daughter was born that year too."

Kerley stayed with the dispatch center until 2000, when she finished her master's degree and moved to the Phoenix office of the Bureau of Land Management.

“Phoenix just wasn't for me,” said Kerley. “So, in 2001 I went to the Uinta National Forest in northern Utah to work as the Interagency Dispatch Center Manager. It merged with the Salt Lake Interagency Fire Center, in 2002, to make the Northern Utah Interagency Fire Center (NUIFC).”

Kerley became the center manager for the NUIFC, where she stayed until 2005. After which, she moved to the Boise National Forest to be the Interagency Dispatch Center for the Boise Interagency Logistics Center.



*Stephaney conducts a briefing with a neighboring ranger. Photo Courtesy of Stephaney Kerley*

In 2009, Stephaney took on her first ranger position, when she became the District Ranger for the Mountain Home Ranger District on the Boise National Forest. Stephaney also explained how her fire dispatch experience has helped her through her career as a District Ranger.

“As a center manager I was trying to weigh everything in a very stressful environment and make the best decision that I could at the time,” said Kerley. “As a District Ranger, I almost always have a team of experts to consult with, and time to consider everything before making decisions.”

Kerley spent an astonishing 11 years as the District Ranger for the Mountain Home Ranger District, before moving to Eastern Oregon to take on a District Ranger position with the Umatilla National Forest in 2021 where she stayed until 2023.

In 2023, Kerley joined the La Grande Ranger District, filling the District Ranger position behind the recently retired Bill Gamble.

“One thing that I could immediately see about this district was that it was run by a really experienced District Ranger, and he built an amazing legacy here with all the partnerships and partner projects that are going on,” said Kerley. “I really hope to be able to continue that and maybe build on that while I'm here.”

Kerley continued to explain her excitement to be part of the La Grande team, being able to be a part of the National Forest legacy and explore La Grande with her husband Chris.



*Stephaney meets with an evacuee. Photo Courtesy of Stephaney Kerley*

“I am really excited to be part of this great team, to be a member of the community and to be able to assist our public with its Forest Service needs.”

# 5th Grade Hatchery Steelhead Salmon Dissection

by Sarah Brandy

March 15th was an exciting day for Imbler Elementary School 5th graders in Mr. Larry Bennet's classroom. That afternoon these students had a hands-on experience learning about the anatomy and physical adaptations of steelhead, a fish that travels up from the ocean to rivers where they were born, and in the case of these hatchery fish, return to the Enterprise Hatchery.

The afternoon started with a short presentation on the importance of salmon and steelhead to native cultures, Columbia River tribes, whose cultures have long subsisted on these fish. Following this discussion, and the discussion about the long journey of these fish from the ocean back to the Willowa River, safety with dissection tools were covered. Next, the excitement in the room intensified; each group of 2-3 students received their own 25-30" steelhead to study. These hatchery steelhead salmon were picked up from the hatchery that morning and were colored brightly with their spawning life stage colors of pink and green and dark spots.



Sarah Brandy teaches students at Imbler Elementary School about the anatomy of fish and how to dissect a Steelhead Salmon.



Steelhead Salmon sit in an iced-down cooler in preparation of dissection.

Students looked at the external anatomy, the slime, the scales, and the fins. When we opened up the fish to look at the internal anatomy, they were especially fascinated with an organ that fish have, but humans do not, called the pyloric caeca. This funny-looking organ is similar to the small intestine in humans. They also enjoyed finding the two-chambered heart. The instructors loved working with the small groups asking and answering questions like: why is the spleen so red, why do fish have such huge livers? And how is the lateral line on fish similar to ears for other animals? And do fish smell with their nares? Do they blink?





Students work on dissecting a Steelhead Salmon

Students learned some comparative anatomy-like operculum (gill plates) to gills like human ribs are to lungs.

Some of the unplanned findings self-directed by the groups were the best:

Kids found worm-like parasites living in the gills of these fish, they extracted eyeballs and the lens of fish eyes, which is a perfect clear sphere. One group really wanted to see the brain, which required a bit of, well, surgical cutting to look at the cross-section of the brain.

This hands-on experience was incredible for these kids. They learned to carefully use their dissection tools, how to carefully extract organs without cutting into others, and the appreciation of these fish that have migrated over 8 dams on the Columbia and lower Snake Rivers to return to the Enterprise hatchery.

The team that led this event consisted of Carrie Castleton Lowe, an environmental educator with the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, Jan Boyer, a Fisheries Biologist with the US Forest Service out of Joseph, and Sarah Brandy, a USFS Fisheries Biologist out of Baker City.

Feedback at the end of the day from students included: “This was my favorite day of school ever!” and from the enthusiastic teacher to the group of instructors “These kids will not forget this day as long as they live.”

This is the mission of both the Grande Ronde Model Watershed and the US Forest Service, to serve the people and our communities, to educate students on the amazing natural resources that are in their backyards.

This group of instructors will be leading hatchery steelhead dissection in three 5th-grade classes at Central Elementary school in April. There is nothing like hands-on learning!



*5th Annual*

# **RYAN SULLIVAN MEMORIAL**



## **SCRAMBLE**

**FRIDAY JUNE 2, 2023**

**BUFFALO PEAK GOLF COURSE UNION, OR**

**BENEFITTING THE  
FAMILIES OF  
RYAN SULLIVAN,  
DAVID GRAY, &  
OTHER INDIVIDUALS  
IN NEED**

**4 PERSON SCRAMBLE  
SHOT GUN START: 9 AM  
REGISTRATION STARTS: 8 AM  
COST: \$85 PER PERSON WITH/  
CART. LUNCH PROVIDED**

**PRIZES, RAFFELS & SILENT AUCTION  
LONGEST PUTT\* CLOSEST TO THE PIN\* LONGEST DRIVE**

Keepers of the Flame is a Non Profit Organization  
raising money helping local  
Families! Verbal Commitments  
Expected/Prepay Available\*

Contact: Joel McCraw 208-631-4897 (cell) or Jody Prummer 541-805-9915(cell)

# Get Out There: Portland Trail Blazer's Federal Night

By Robert Hassmiller and Joseph Black



On March 1, 2023, the Portland Trail Blazer's hosted their annual "Federal Night", during their home game against the New Orleans Pelicans. Robert Hassmiller, Whitman Ranger District Hydrologist of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, along with his family and four Baker AAU players, were in attendance.

"We had the good fortune of being able to travel to attend the game in person," said Hassmiller. "We traveled to Portland on a Wednesday morning and arrived at our hotel by the airport, jumped on the light rail, and traveled to the Moda Center."

Hassmiller and his group were able to enter through the "early entrance" door to enjoy court side seats for pre-game warmups. Here they met some familiar and famous faces, including Portland Trail Blazer's starting point guard Damian Lillard and New Orleans Pelican's point guard CJ McCollum.

"Damian Lillard walked two feet next to us through the corridor and signed all of our gear. It was so neat to see how they warm up and do their training. CJ McCollum was back in town and was doing his two-ball dribbling warmups," said Hassmiller.

Quickly after the game began, it was shaping up to be an exciting playoff battle between the two teams. The game ended with a final score of Pelicans 121 and Blazers 110; fans were happy to see the nail-biting game.

After the game, fans participating in the "Federal Night", were able to hop on the court and shoot free-throws on the Blazer's court. As the game and events concluded, Hassmiller reflected on the experiences of the evening.

"As I took the rail line back to the hotel, I thought about how awesome it is to be a federal employee and to share this opportunity with our local kids. It was a magical night and I feel blessed to call the United States Forest Service my employer," said Hassmiller.



Taking a shot on the Trail Blazer's Court.  
Photos Courtesy of Robert Hassmiller





## IN THE NEWS

### **Forest Service Proposing to Clean up Mines Near Granite**

*Written By OptimistPrime, Eugene Daily News*

The U.S. Forest Service is proposing to remove waste rock and soil from several abandoned gold mines near Granite that contain concentrations of arsenic and other toxic substances that exceed state and federal health standards.

The proposal also calls for filling open shafts, building ditches to divert water contaminated with heavy metals, and seeding the sites with native vegetation.

<https://eugenedailynews.com/forest-service-proposing-to-clean-up-mines-near-granite/>

### **Biden-Harris Administration Invests More Than \$12 Million In Support of the Tribal Forest Protection Act**

*Written By USDA*

The Biden-Harris Administration announced more than \$12 million from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will be invested in fiscal year 2023 to complete projects in support of the Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA). Projects have been selected to support a range of activities focused on forest and grassland restoration. Work will include vegetation management, hazardous fuels risk reduction, and cultural and ethnobotanical surveys on indigenous landscapes.

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2023/03/10/biden-harris-administration-invests-more-12-million-support-tribal>

### **County backs Forest Service's Morgan Nesbit project**

*Written By Bill Bradshaw, Wallowa County Chieftain*

A letter backing the U.S. Forest Service's Morgan Nesbit Forest Resiliency Project was approved by the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners at its meeting Wednesday, March 15. The board's action came just hours before the Forest Service opened the doors of the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise to give the public an opportunity to learn about the project and to ask questions. "After looking at the letter, I think it's good," said commission Chairman John Hillock. "The people should know that the commissioners have worked with our Natural Resources Committee and have committed funding to get additional work done on the Imnaha River Corridor."

[https://www.wallowa.com/news/local/county-backs-forest-services-morgan-nesbit-project/article\\_51929bb2-c456-11ed-a181-5b0c097e69dc.html](https://www.wallowa.com/news/local/county-backs-forest-services-morgan-nesbit-project/article_51929bb2-c456-11ed-a181-5b0c097e69dc.html)



**U.S. Forest Service**  
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

## Stay in the Know!

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest invites all community members who want to receive information about upcoming forest management proposals to join the **Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Project Mailing List**.

## How?

Send us an email with:

- 1) Your name
- 2) Your preferred contact (email or mailing address)
- 3) What types of projects you want to hear about. Indicate general interest or select specific project types from vegetation management, aquatic restoration, range, wildlife enhancement, mining, engineering, and special uses.

## Why?

- Stay current on forest management projects
- Plan your recreation with up to date information
- Contribute your voice to project proposals



Scan the QR code or  
Email [sm.fs.wwnf-webmail@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.wwnf-webmail@usda.gov)



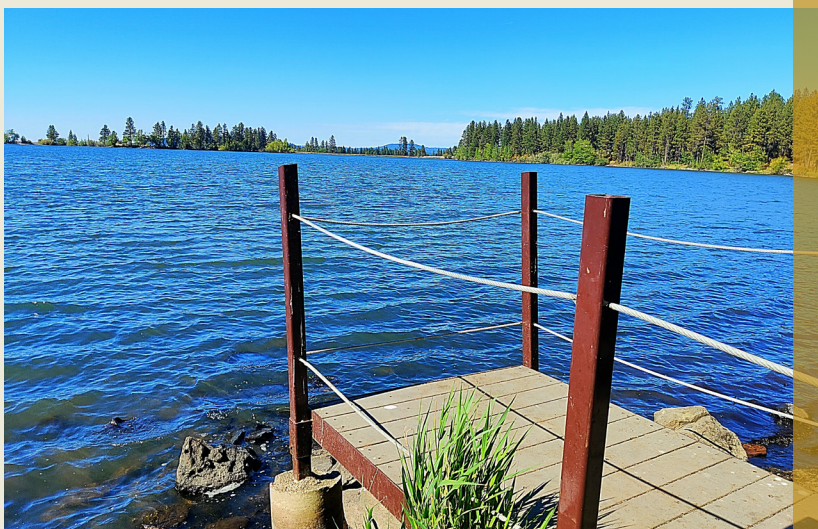
# THANKS FOR READING!



The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest encompasses 2.4 million acres of public lands in northeastern Oregon and western Idaho. Our staff serve the public from offices in Baker City, La Grande, and Joseph, OR; Riggins, ID; and Clarkston, WA.

Ecosystems range from the alpine peaks of the Elkhorn, Seven Devils, and Wallowa Mountains (reaching as high as 9,843 feet), to the spectacular grasslands and canyons surrounding the Snake River (reaching as low as 875 feet), and the vast watersheds, rangelands, and conifer forests in between. There are ten Wild and Scenic Rivers, four Wilderness Areas, and one famous Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.

The Wallowa-Whitman is part of the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service (an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture). Our mission is to “sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”



## WANT TO HAVE YOUR STORY PUBLISHED IN THE 45TH PARALLEL?

Contact your local public affairs specialist or your supervisor for more information

### Wallowa-Whitman Public Affairs Team



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