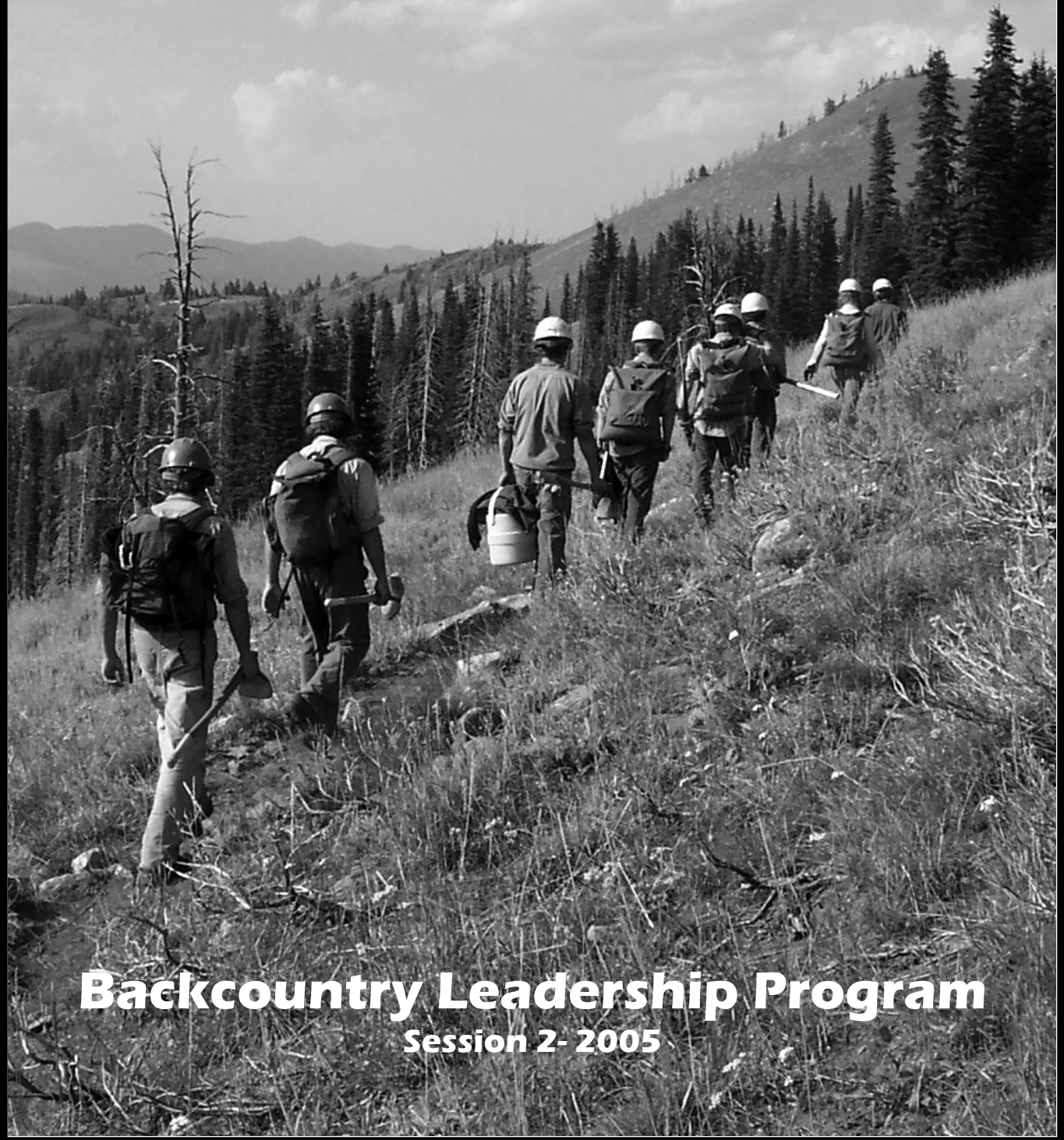




Crew Journal



Backcountry Leadership Program
Session 2- 2005



Dear BLP graduates,

As you sit back and in the warm comfort of your home and gaze at the glowing computer screen and read through your journals I hope you can recapture some of the thoughts and feelings that you experienced this past summer. Remember the feeling of writing on those crinkled pages; gripping the pencil with tired hands from hours of trail building. Smell the campfire and taste the Trio sauce. Hear the buzz of numerous mosquitoes clinging to wrists and other exposed skin. Remember the laughter, friendships formed, conflicts and resolutions, rainy days and amazing sunsets. Remember moments of doubt and apprehension where the task at hand seemed insurmountable. Most of all I hope you remember what you did to meet those challenges and that you can do it again in whatever circumstances life offers you. I encourage you to look for those challenges in life, seek adventure not for the thrill or the bragging rights. But rather for the chance to learn about who you are and who you can become. Remember the drive and determination it took to build that trail and the support you got from the community of your crew. And if you should begin to doubt yourself, take a pilgrimage to the Mink Lake Basin and walk the path that you've made and be proud of what you have done for yourself and for others.

I wish you the best of luck in whatever you choose to pursue. Have a great winter.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Ojerio'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R' and 'O'.

Ryan Ojerio
Program Manager



**Payette National Forest
Krassel Ranger District
Project Name- Club Meadows Trail Restoration Project**

Week 1: 8/1/05-8/5/05

Monday:

After numerous long bus rides and airline adventures, the magnificent BLP crew met up with each other in Eugene. Instead of an obnoxiously long NYC orientation that normally lasts 24 hours, we packed our packs and jumped in the van ready for a 2-day long car ride to McCall, ID. Turns out our project takes place in the middle of the million-acre woods, Frank-Church. So we flew 40 miles in a Forest Service smoke jumping plane, which enthralled us all, to a landing strip 11 ½ miles from our final destination. This 11 ½ mile backpacking hike was pretty brutal, over an incredibly bumpy and elevated terrain, giving all of us a fresh reminder of what BLP is all about.

Tuesday:

We made it into camp Monday, meeting up with the horse packer and our supplies, ready to set up camp and walk over. Our project at the moment is rerouting these nasty steep switchbacks to ease the hikers' blisters. Tomorrow is hump day finally, but remember, it's only the first week that hurts.

Wednesday:

I believe my crew's goals, I think, are to finish some wicked switchback love but gosh I'm having a very hard time spelling today...now that I wrote that I'm writing okay, hmmm... Anyway, we have had a killer day today, and we busted it out. On a personal note, I love cutting down trees.

Bacon

Thursday:

Free time has long become the crew's most sought after activity, as the crazy hectic activity of this week has left us all antsy to be lazy. Especially me. Last night we were visited by the first backpacker we've seen yet, he seemed jolly happy and Thor lost the contest where he predicted we wouldn't see any backpackers these six weeks. Sarah has won so far, as she predicted 2 sightings. We were, however, visited by the SCA crew who are camped 3 ½ miles from us. One girl (I think her name's Ashley) is planning to attend the same university as I am the following spring semester. Such a small small world.

Jesha

Friday:

Today we got on the clock earlier than usual at 6:37. We are getting more efficient every day, and today we all arrived at the work site together. We were all motivated because it was the last work day of our first week, but I think some of us were slowed down by aching backs and sore muscles, or at least I know I was. During the final hour of work, our "power hour," Captain Razzanatazz showed up and motivated us to really work fast. I think we were all disappointed when the last tool count was called because we didn't finish the re-route we've been working on, but maybe that will drive us to work harder and faster next week. I think we will do better next week anyway now that we're getting into the swing of things.

**Payette National Forest
Krassel Ranger District
Project Name- Club Meadows Trail Restoration Project**

Week 2: 8/8/05-8/12/05

Monday:

This weekend our crew definitely had fun. We hiked out to Moose Meadows on Saturday and went swimming in various small swimming holes throughout the creek. It was a 7 mile hike there and back which was a lot different without our work boots on. Later that night before we went to bed, two previous BLP members showed up on a quest to surprise our crew leader Dave. They succeeded greatly by the way! On Sunday, everyone just relaxed and rested. Most of us hung out in the meadow and soaked up sun for the first half of the day and then did laundry the second half. All in all it was an awesome weekend.

JoAnna R.

Tuesday:

This week we are working on a re-route which requires many trees to be felled. We busted out some awesome trail, and began getting rid of the stumps and roots. This day left my body feeling quite exhausted. Looking forward to tomorrow... Signing off Buffy.

Elizabeth H.

Wednesday:

Our crew's goals for the week include tying up our 3 projects we will have completed by Friday. These include the project we started last week, the brushing and switchback we worked on today, and lastly the reroute we will start tomorrow. Also, besides the fact that we have physical goals we plan to attain, the group is trying to bond together to become one giant leader. Pretty soon the two crew leaders will just sit back at camp and wait on our every command because the crew will be able to function on our own. They will not be needed during the work day.

Thursday:

Our crew is in the process of learning how to function efficiently as both a work crew and a community. The week has gone well, people are beginning to push themselves and we are accomplishing more everyday. Today we had an excellent discussion in SEED. Although work is becoming more enjoyable, we are all looking forward to Friday and the weekend.

Friday:

When your mind is blank and your entire body is completely exhausted and all you can do is sit and stare without a thought crossing your mind and you can take extreme appreciation while taking off your boot and every meal tastes like the best food you've ever put in your mouth, and every muscle in your body aches, and every one looks like they just took a mud bath and you build so much trail you get exhausted hiking back up your creation, and your feet feel like pancakes, and every time you get up there's a sigh, and you actually start to crave more of a challenge, and you start acting like monkeys, you've either gone crazy or challenged yourself and pushed yourself beyond limits that aren't normally touched and beyond those limits are when accomplishments are made.

Amber H.

**Payette National Forest
Krassel Ranger District
Project Name- Club Meadows Trail Restoration Project**

Week 3: 8/15/05-8/19/05

Monday:

The date is 8/15/2005 of the year of the great King Dow, this glorious weekend was bestowed upon us by our great King. On the Sat of day we went on a leisure hike to Silver Creek where we sat and ate Gorp and wartheberries (a breed of huckleberry). Then on the Sun day we went our ways and had time to wash our garments. Today (Monday) we began a SOC foot through a fairly dense area of the Frank Church Woods of No Return. We accomplished much in our quest to please the King Dow, such a revered King he is.

Bacon

Tuesday:

Right now we are in the process of finishing the re-routes we've been working on. We hoped to finish today but we didn't quite get there. We did make progress however, and, we got a tutorial from Dave and Julie that should help make our trail lines more efficient. Tomorrow we will finish the area we are working in which will cut our hike to work in half.

Sarah

Wednesday:

Today! Is the day! The gigantic capitalized "H" HUMP DAY of the session! In celebration of this glorious feat, we're having a hearty dinner of rice and beans, and provided that we trudge like a good crew would, there's cheesecake for dessert! The bear hang is looking mighty empty considering we're to be fed rice and beans (in moderate portions) until Patrick comes on Monday. But enough talk about food. Today we finally completed the 5 re-routes we've been slaving away on, and after lunch we got to build water bars!! Eh, work is work. At least our hike was shaved down a bit. Christmas on Sunday, I wonder who has me...

Jesha

Thursday:

Our crew is learning more and more everyday. This week we are learning about more crewmembers PH's and this I feel brings us closer together. Also the crew started taking more responsibility for the work they are accomplishing. Dave and Julie helped us out a lot by enlightening us more on what needs to be done in our trail bump line. This has improved our efficiency and quality of our trail. All of these newly acquired knowledge and skills have helped the crew bond and become more powerful as a whole.

Ryan O.

**Payette National Forest
Krassel Ranger District
Project Name- Club Meadows Trail Restoration Project**

Week 4: 8/22/05-8/26/05

Monday:

After some discussion and a false start, our crew headed to Moose-Meadows, and Gained. Saturday night we hung out with an MCC crew and played mafia. Sunday we had a serve and Santa exchange. The gifts were amazing and the moon was full.

Tuesday:

This week we are working on a re-route located at the ridgeline closest to our camp. The steep grade makes the trail a little more difficult to build, but the spectacular views make it all the more worth it. Today's sunrise was one of the most beautiful sights I've ever seen. The fog slowly lifted and weaved itself through the trees as the sun rose over the mountains.

Sarah

Wednesday:

Our goals on this project are to build 800ft. of trail per day, and brush just as much. Today we reached and broke our trail goal by building around 850 ft. of brand spanking new trail. This new project has us working a lot harder, physically and mentally to reach our goals. As a result, our appetites at lunch time have risen markedly. We're going to have to start making more shot-gun to match our growing hunger. Our crew is becoming more efficient every day, and will continue to until all our work is done.

Robi P.

Thursday:

Today, in my mind, was an excellent day. During the times we worked together, we really functioned as a trail crew. I loved to see the tools moving as a single entity. Today was one of our more productive and unified days. The crew was feeling great. I loved to hear everybody motivating each other. The second half, especially after the third break, we were like a machine. The days following will be more similar to today, and even better.

Ryan O.

Friday:

On this glorious Friday, dating 8/26/05, we were under the temporary but merciful ruling of Robi. He is a great King and under his rule we achieved trail almost to the 4,000 ft. marking and brushing 200 ft. passed that. This achievement did not astound me because I believe in the great power that this crew can harness within themselves. We, as a crew, have accomplished a great many a foot of trail and next week we shall do even more!

Bacon

**Payette & Siuslaw National Forests
Krassle & South Zone Ranger Districts
Project Name- Club Meadows Trail Restoration Project & North Fork Smith River**

Week 5: 8/29/05 – 9/2/05

Monday: Wow what a weekend, the forest fire we'd seen in the distance proved to be too great a threat. Playing it safe the Forest Service decided to pull us out. So we hiked out 6 miles to meet a plane and fly out to Chamberlain and then McCall. There we took showers and got a tour of the smokejumper base while we waited for our gear to catch up with us. It was definitely a disappointment to leave the project unfinished with the end in site. We all wonder where we are going next.

Tuesday: Started driving last night and made it to the middle of nowhere, Oregon. Dodging jackrabbits bounding across the highway we eventually made it to a safe place to pull over and bivy for the night, the morning light revealed amazing vistas of red and orange across the high desert. At NYC we got our new project specs and headed to the coast range, hiked into camp arriving at about 6:30 and had an amazing dinner including vegetables!

Wednesday: Our project this week is to build some new trail, but it is not as challenging as our previous project. The coast range is much wetter than we are used to. Robi and Thor taught the group how to make a fire using just sticks and wood using both a bow and string and the hand method.

Siuslaw National Forest
Project Name- North Fork Smith River Trail

Week 6: 9/5/05 – 9/9/05

Monday: What did my crew do this weekend? We adventured across the great monstrous mountains of sand and traversed islands of magnificent trees. Also, we were visited by our lovely friends, who watched us from within the Pacific, the sea lions, as we frolicked upon the beach. As we discovered our mysterious island out in the middle of the endless grains of sand, I stumbled upon a “CAR BATTERY” which was really a secret hidden Geo cache with all sorts of exciting treasures that I never got to look at but only hear of its wonderful existence! We played like trolls all weekend long in the land of gigantic jungle gyms and oversized elephant ears.

Amber

Tuesday: This week we are putting in structures and fixing up the trail in general. Today we built a 40-foot turnpike and a 15-foot turnpike. We also finished a re-route we started yesterday. Hopefully we will be working on bridges later this week, depending on whether or not the supplies are dropped off by the helicopters.

Sarah

Wednesday: [Describe your crew’s goals for the week] BAH, PROMPTS! A week from today will be so nice, I’ll be all snuggly in my warm bed with my kitty and popcorn and a movie with incense burning and my clean feet in puffy soft socks. Although I’m anxious to go home and bask in the luxuries, leaving my crew, my routine, the trees of the Northwest will be incredibly sad. I’ll feel lonely in my bed and awkward eating lunch immediately after making it. And, after all, being a waitress really isn’t that luxurious. We have 1 ½ days of work left, a short hike, and 4 more dinners to enjoy. Come Sunday we graduate, exchange emails, and say goodbye, perhaps forever, onward to our lonely snuggly beds.

Jesha

Thursday: Our crew learned to get through 6 weeks as one. Today was our last work day and we did some retreat and built some retaining walls. Several of us stayed after to achieve our finished product. But, some of us are down because we didn’t get to help finish and we got evacuated from the Frank Church (this of course happening 2 weeks ago). I think we are all proud of our accomplishments, though, and that is what truly matters.

Bacon

My Most Challenging Day At NYC Was...

The hike out to Club Meadows from Moose Meadows, because I could barely move my legs and I had really bad stomach pain. When I finally got to Club Meadows I took off my pack and with a great sigh of relief concluded my first 11 ½ mile backpacking trip. –JoAna R.

My most challenging experience was the final Thursday. I felt that a great deal needed to happen and I was responsible. We were capable of finishing but the rockwall took forever. I could not rely on my partner, so I had to keep track of everyone and then find work when work ran out. –Thor K.

At first I had a hard time adapting to the NYC social mentality and it made me feel really detached from the crew, especially at camp. These times made me very emotional, a series of very trying challenging days. –Jesha L.

Challenge? I think the greatest challenge this session was the hike out of the Frank Church, well at least at the beginning. I buckled down and kicked butt after I told myself I could do it. –Bacon

My most challenging day was the hike into the Frank Church. I felt that I was unprepared and out of shape. Other challenging days would be adjusting to the NYC days, lots of exhaustion, and wanting to sleep in late. –Buffy

The hike in, pushing myself beyond what I thought I was capable of, opening up to people, hiking all the time, pushups, adjusting to people, the cross cut, the hand saw. –Amber H.

My Three Favorite NYC Experiences Were...

Working on the trail to Bismark, learning how to build a shelter in the woods, and weekend hikes to Moose Meadows. –JoAna

Rallying on the Bismark Trail, acting like a monkey with Robi, and the sunrises on the ridge. –Thor

Seeing an explosive forest fire, seeing the Pacific for the first time, and collecting treasures from the mountains, beaches, and meadows. –Jesha

Seeing the beautifully powerful forest fire with my crew, spending 6 weeks with so many incredible people, and finally the last breakfast together. –Bacon

The power of the fire that evacuated us and the amazing hike that followed; swimming in the swimming hole after work, leisurely backstroking, floating like a log; the warm fuzzy feeling in our last circle, eating that amazing dinner, and appreciating each and every one of you. –Buffy

My three most favorite BLP experiences:

-drumming circle and guitar around campfire with Jesha and Dave

-busting trail out 3rd and 4th week of work

-watching the stars with Buffy and Ryan. –Amber

One Thing I Will Always Remember...

Will be the amazing sunsets in the meadow from the fire. The colors were breathtaking. – JoAna

Being evacuated in that teeny plane and trespassing through the ranch. I will never forget the hike out through the different ecosystems of the Frank Church. –Thor

The extreme fiery-blood red sunset during our evacuation. –Bacon

Being on the inside of cinnamon rolls, and the day at the beach, skipping on the sand, sleeping in the sun. –Buffy

Camp fires, the blood red sun, Christmas, wonderful laughs and smiles, Sarah's dirt teeth, the challenge, Thor and Ryan and Robi joking around, Julie's funny faces, cinnamon rolls, Ryan's pats on the head, Dave's mischievous self, Jo's rabbit, my love for this CREW. –Amber

From Now On I Will Always...

Wake up with the appreciation of people before me who took the time to care about wilderness as much as I do. –JoAna

I will truly examine all of my options and possibilities. –Thor

Wipe with damp moss. –Jesha

Consider everyone's view on a subject, and if possible, apply their views to mine. –Bacon

Try to appreciate each moment, don't just let it fly by. Watch sunsets. Appreciate moss in its many forms, whether it be old man's beard or fresh and green. Build shelters when in the woods. When at home dance naked in the afternoon. –Buffy

Appreciate all the little things in life, push myself to greater challenges, give more people a chance. –Amber

At NYC I Learned...

Once I thought I pushed myself as far as I could possibly go, I always had energy for one more mile, one more smile, and one more swing. –JoAna

Most of all I improved my trail skills. I learned to cross-cut, complete technical projects, and how to lead a trail crew. –Thor

I learned a whole lot of good stuff from our SEEDs this session. Excellent SEEDs. –Jesha

I learned how to lead an NYC crew, how to get along with so many people, and how to work extremely hard and fast. –Bacon

I have learned more patience, leadership, and discipline. I have learned how to live more at ease with a group of people. I also learned from the many educational SEEDs. –Buffy

I have learned and gained better communication skills, how to push myself when I feel I have nothing left, and that this world is full of amazing opportunities. –Amber