




2024 ANNUAL REPORT



2024 WAS A GOOD



Growth mindset. I used to picture a 1:1 line graph when I heard this, a simple drawing representing moving up and forward in equal proportions, making steady progress in pursuit of a goal. Lately though, I'm seeing more of a squiggly pattern in my mind's eye. Or maybe the way kids draw waves on the ocean: peaks and valleys, with the troughs all oriented in one direction. After a challenging year on a personal level, defined by an injury requiring me to live my trail season vicariously instead of actually, "growth mindset" floats around in the dictionary of my head very near the words "adaptability" and "resiliency". "Achieve" and "accomplish" are still relevant, but not in the rigid sense they once were.

2024 was a good year for ITA. We cleared more miles of trail than ever (332!), hosted our first all-women's veteran's project, continued our progress on the Idaho Centennial Trail, and celebrated lots of smaller victories in engaging new volunteers, connecting with "regulars" and meeting dedicated trail supporters across the state. But we also faced major challenges, like when during our Wilderness Immersion trip, after a week spent clearing a nearly lost section of the ICT in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, a windstorm knocked down hundreds (thousands?) of trees, erasing progress. The crew, after a scary night and disheartening sunrise view of their new reality, straightened their backs and went to work sawing logs and lopping brush- for two more weeks. What else can you do on a trail, or a metaphorical trail, for that matter, but move forward after a blow knocks you back?



Idaho Trails Association's mission is to keep Idaho's hiking trails open for all. We work with volunteers to preserve Idaho's trail system through education, maintenance projects, and public lands advocacy.

Become a member or volunteer at:
www.idahotrailsassociation.org

Idaho Trails Association
PO Box 165
Boise, ID 83701

YEAR FOR ITA



Our Annual Report is a recap of accomplishments, an acknowledgement of those who've made progress possible, and this year it feels right to talk about setbacks, too. Like how one of our youth crews spent an awesome week working the Baron Creek Trail, learning new skills and connecting with the land, then learned the Wapiti Fire burned the area just a few days later. What can we do but get back to work? Public lands are worth it. Trails that allow us to witness both an ecosystem's striking changes and more gradual shifts are indeed worth it.

In 2025, Mom Nature will throw more our way. There are other major obstacles for trail work ahead because of a drastically reduced Forest Service budget that means Forests can't hire summer seasonal trail crews*. And who knows what fire season 2025 will bring? ITA staff and leadership realize this is our time to square our shoulders and meet the challenge. Bring the obstacles! We have crosscuts, axes, and an army of volunteers who believe!

Melanie Vining
Executive Director



*This direction is not limited to trail crews; the Forest Service will not hire what they call temporary summer seasonal workers, outside firefighters.

Board of Directors

- Tim Martin- **President**- Boise
- Mark Sugden- **Vice President**- Jerome
- Pam Bond- **Secretary**- Boise
- Lilly Ragan- **Treasurer**- Boise
- Tom Dabrowski- *Sagle*
- Tobey Jinkins- *Boise*
- Herbert Klein- *Sandpoint*

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- Glenn Florence- *Pocatello*
- Jeff Halligan- *McCall*
- Leo Hennessy- *Boise*
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- John McCarthy- *Boise*
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- Steve Weston- *Middleton*

ITA Staff

- Melanie Vining
Executive Director
- Alex Cravener
Trail Projects Director
- Kelly Hewes
Communications Director
- Barbara Sammut
Northern Idaho Trail Program Specialist

2024



577

crew leader
planning hours



3,814

volunteer travel
hours



5

Wilderness
Areas



31,340

feet of
tread fixed



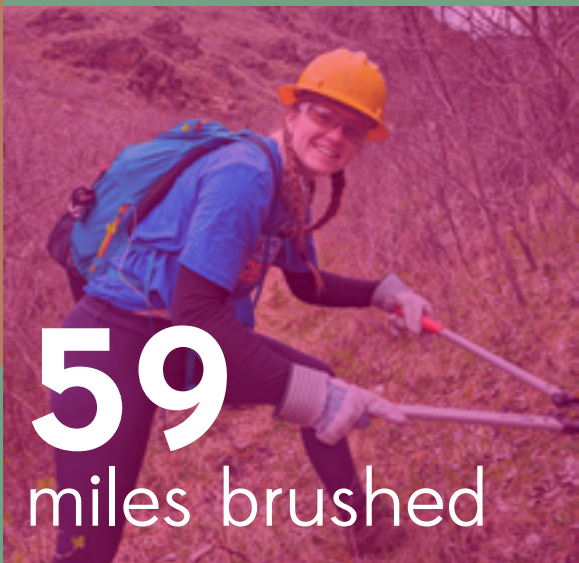
805

water bars
built/maintained



59

miles brushed



AT A GLANCE

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024, Idaho's trails received much-needed care thanks to the unwavering dedication of Idaho Trails Association's volunteers and supporters. ITA successfully organized 78 trail projects statewide, clearing an impressive 332 miles of trail.

Volunteers contributed a total of 11,964 hours over the course of projects ranging from just a few hours to three weeks. Their efforts focused on enhancing Idaho's trail system by clearing trees and logs, cutting back brush, building bridges and puncheons, repairing eroded trail sections, cleaning water bars, installing drains, and putting up signage. Whether working in the front country, backcountry, Wilderness, or along the roadside, volunteers tackled each task with enthusiasm and a strong commitment to improving Idaho's trails.

Traveling far and wide, volunteers logged 3,814 hours in 2024 just on the journey to and from projects. Some embraced the convenience of car camping while others took on the challenge of backpacking. For more remote projects, horses, mules, and llamas were used to carry food and gear.

This essential work takes place on public lands, including areas managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Strong partnerships with land management agencies and like-minded organizations are key to the success of these projects, with support from individuals within these groups, ensuring the work remains productive and impactful. These impressive results wouldn't have been possible without the collective efforts of the volunteer community. In addition to the 759 volunteers directly involved in trail work, many others contributed through planning, organizing, moving equipment, packing food, training crew leaders, attending events, and handling countless behind-the-scenes tasks. This collaborative spirit is what makes ITA a powerful force for trails throughout the state.



IDAHO CENTENNIAL TRAIL

2024 marked the second year of what we hope will be many more to come as ITA made another focused effort on the Idaho Centennial Trail (ICT). Running 996 miles north to south, the ICT winds through some of the most remote and rugged wilderness in Idaho. With support from Idaho Parks and Recreation and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, we, along with other partner groups, are making progress on this special trail.

In 2024 ITA completed 12 projects on the ICT. Because of the remote nature of the trail and sometimes difficult access, projects often involved flying, or packing in, long drives to the trailhead, and backpacking before the work even begins. This year, volunteers spent 2,703 hours working on 47.7 miles of trail from the Fault Lake Trail in the Selkirk Range, to a three-week project in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness, to a week on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Crews cut logs, brushed, repaired tread, and installed signs.

One notable challenge this year was a big windstorm that hit a week into the three-week Wilderness Immersion project. Two years of effort on this section of the ICT had resulted in eight miles of trail cleared, trail that had been brushed and logged in almost to obscurity for years. After the windstorm, this section of trail was again covered by trees. This crew continued to work after the week one storm, clearing over 1,000 logs, finding and brushing out a “lost” section of the ICT, and repairing tread in several places. This wind event underscores the importance of continued efforts and dedicated regular maintenance on even the most remote trails. Like the wild places they run through, trails are dynamic!



WOMEN IN THE WILD

In 2024, ITA's Women in the Wild Program celebrated its seventh year, bringing together 45 women from diverse backgrounds across six projects. These volunteers honed their trail maintenance skills and built a strong sense of community while making a lasting impact on local trails. Together, the crews cleared 18 miles of trails, removed 306 trees, and cleared 5.7 miles of brush, contributing an impressive 1,000 hours of volunteer work.

The season kicked off with a project in the Boise Foothills, where the crew worked on trails in collaboration with Bogus Basin, helping to maintain pedestrian-only paths as part of their effort to increase public access to recreation. The Wood River Trails Coalition (WRTC) joined forces with ITA on the Prairie-Miner Lakes Trails, where volunteers spent a weekend camping and clearing avalanche debris. This partnership has become a staple of the Women in the Wild program, and we are grateful for WRTC! In August, a crew embarked on a five-day backpacking trip to the Caton Lake Trail, with the help of llamas, to clear an overwhelming number of fallen logs. In the Selkirk Mountains of north Idaho, a team searched for a lost trail between McCormick and Fault Lake. North of McCall, another crew focused on enhancing the accessibility and visibility of the Hidden Lake/Hard Lake

Loop Trail by removing brush, improving the tread, and clearing trees. The final project took place on the Queens River Trail in the Sawtooth Wilderness, where a crew continued clearing sections of the loop that ITA has been working on for several years.

Throughout these projects, crew leaders Beth Norton, Brenda Magnuson, Cindy Walker, Dagmar Rapp, Leslie Hvozda, Lilly Ragan, Jen Elliot, Pam Bond, and Patti Stieger provided support and mentorship to volunteers, ensuring the success of the efforts. A special thank you to Carith Kamermans and the WRTC for their continued partnership and support.



VETERANS PROGRAM



In 2024 ITA hosted two veterans' projects. We continue to build this program offering veterans the chance to gain valuable trail maintenance skills while connecting with others who share a love for the outdoors.

The first project was in partnership with the Two Wolf Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Hamilton, Montana. The Foundation is dedicated to fostering personal connections, continued service through conservation and stewardship, and promoting post-traumatic



YOUTH TRAIL CREW

2024 marked the fifth season of ITA's Youth Trail Crew Program, with five projects across the state engaging youth ages 14-18 in hands-on trail work. These young volunteers tackled tasks like clearing brush, repairing trail tread, and using crosscuts and axes to remove fallen logs. In total, 68 volunteers contributed to 20 miles of trail maintenance, removing 58 trees and clearing 8.6 miles of brush—all under the expert guidance of volunteer Youth Trail Crew Leaders. Along the way, participants gained valuable trail maintenance skills, connected with the land and each other, learned Leave No Trace principles, and experienced the importance of teamwork.

The season kicked off with a project at Big Bar Campground along the Snake River, where students and teachers from Boise's One Stone School joined crew leaders to work on trails with stunning views of Hells Canyon. In June, a crew embarked on a weeklong backcountry trip to Copper Creek on Rapid River in the Payette National Forest. With their gear packed in by Heavens Gate Outfitters, they worked an impressive 6.8 miles of trail. A self-supported trip in the Sawtooth Wilderness saw a crew of 12 backpack up Baron Creek to tackle brushing and campground rehab tasks. ITA also returned to continue clearing the Queens River loop near the town of Atlanta removing 32 trees and hundreds of feet of brush to help pave the way for future ITA crews on that trail. Finally, work continued on Loon Creek, where a crew camped at the Secesh River Trailhead to keep clearing the trail toward the lake.

Thank you to our invaluable Youth Program leaders: Cindy Walker, Eric Messenger, Kasey Rose, Mark Sugden, Patti Stieger, Ray Arguello, Terry Patterson, Tom Crawford, and Valerie Armichardy. Thank you to the volunteer cooks/camp hosts who keep the crews happy and fed: Fred Herbert, Hugh Cook, and Kelly Hewes.

growth for military veterans and former first responders. An all-women veterans' crew from across the U.S. gathered to learn trail maintenance and crosscut saw skills while working on trails along Bear Valley Creek and toward Blue Bunch Mountain in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. The second project took place during a weekend camping trip at one of Idaho Parks and Recreation's Idaho City yurts. The crew spent the day clearing trails for hikers, cross-country skiers, and snowshoers, while enjoying storytelling and stargazing under the night sky.



A big thank you to Alisa Rettschlag, Pam DeMetro, and Walt DeMetro for your leadership on these projects, and to Matt Fisher for the incredible dinner on Marsh Creek!

NOTABLE



Lower Pistol Creek

The goal of this project was to clear and stabilize the trail on Pistol Creek and Little Pistol Creek, extending up to Foresight Creek, in the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. After a scenic flight from McCall to Pistol Creek Ranch, the crew was warmly welcomed by the Ranch staff, who helped transport their heavy gear three miles to the base camp where they stayed for the next five nights. Throughout the project, the crew focused on log clearing, brushing, and improving the trail tread. In total, they worked on five miles of

trail, brushed 1.9 miles, and significantly improved 5,000 feet of trail tread! ITA is working with the Salmon-Challis National Forest to repair a damaged section of trail near Foresight Creek in 2025 and to connect the Little Pistol Creek Trail with other existing trails in the area to form loop opportunities.

Bogus Basin

In partnership with Bogus Basin, ITA volunteers, along with a representative from Bogus Basin, spent two separate days working on trail maintenance and development around the ski hill in the Boise National Forest. The team mainly focused on brushing and improving the tread of trails used as snowshoe routes in the winter. They worked on rerouting the trails to create more switchbacks, enhancing the user experience. This project is part of a broader initiative by Bogus Basin to make recreation more accessible to the public. The trails are designed to be shorter, providing a bike-free space for people to explore the mountain at their own pace.



Settlers Cedar Grove

In this incredible area of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest, the Settlers Grove of Ancient Cedars is home to towering trees—some estimated to be over 600 years old. ITA focused on maintaining the Settler's Grove Interpretive Trail, which winds along the west fork of Eagle Creek, crossing footbridges and passing through these ancient giants. A crew of nine volunteers camped in a parking lot next to the trees for a three-day project to restore this unique and popular trail. Following a fire in 2015, trees of all sizes have fallen across the trail each year, and thick brush has grown over the path, obscuring it for up to a mile in some places. In certain areas, the trail was completely hidden by overhead brush for several hundred yards. Despite unseasonably high temperatures and long hikes to reach the worksite, the volunteers worked hard to remove 12 fallen trees and clear brush along 1.6 miles of trail, successfully reopening this section for hikers to enjoy once again!



PROJECTS

Lolo Trail

This project was a collaboration between ITA and the Idaho chapter of the Lewis and Clark Heritage Foundation, with Chuck Raddon representing the Foundation. Eight ITA volunteers worked on five miles of trail during this seven-day project on the historic Lolo Trail. The work focused on two sections: 3.5 miles from Sherman Peak to Sherman Saddle and 1.5 miles from The Smoking Place to the Sinque Hole Camp. Both segments were connected to a Forest Service road at either end to help to reopen these areas for public use. While at camp, Chuck shared the rich history of the area, highlighting its significance in the Lewis and Clark expedition as well as its connection to the Nimiipuu people. Chuck also chose work locations based on their cultural importance and recreational value. Jay Romlein, the volunteer camp cook, generously prepared meals for the hardworking crew throughout the project!



ESI Little Queens River

A team of volunteers, consisting of ESI Construction interns and ITA crew leaders, gathered in the Sawtooth Wilderness to help repair the infrastructure supporting a bridge on the Little Queens River Trail. Additional work included clearing the trail leading to the bridge and making improvements to corrals at the trailhead. The crew divided into two groups. One team hiked to the bridge to place large rocks around the abutments for added support and to help redirect the river's current away from the base structure. The other team focused on clearing fallen trees while practicing chopping with axes and Pulaskis. Everyone had the opportunity to use crosscut saws to cut through large logs. The corrals team also cut posts and poles to repair a hitching rail and feed bunks. As always, the ESI crew demonstrated exceptional teamwork and dedication as volunteers!

Kirkwood Bridge

ITA, Hells Canyon Recreation Collaborative, and Backcountry Horsemen of Idaho partnered with the Wallowa Whitman National Forest to replace two bridges at Kirkwood Ranch, deep in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area along the Snake River. Volunteers took a jet boat from Pittsburg Landing to the Pittsburg Administrative Site on to set up base camp. Then, the jet boat transported people and materials six miles up to historic Kirkwood Ranch, only accessible via the river or on foot. During the first project, materials were unloaded and staged for the replacement of two bridges spanning Kirkwood Creek. In September, during the second project, the two bridges were successfully constructed. As time permitted, the crew also worked on maintaining the Snake River Trail and removed invasive weeds at the Ranch.



EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT

Presentations, classes, and projects

In an ongoing effort to educate the public on topics related to trail preservation, Leave No Trace principles, and traditional trail skills, ITA hosted 16 presentations and classes both in person and virtually in 2024. Presentations included Backpacking 101, the Idaho Centennial Trail, and Hiking with Dogs. ITA also hosted two opportunities to learn about backpacking as part of trail projects on our Navigation Trail and Twenty Mile projects. ITA, in partnership with the Payette National Forest and through a grant from the Idaho Humanities Council, offered history and archeology presentations in the field to adult and youth volunteers on two trail projects.



Wilderness First Aid

Thanks to a generous donor and in memory of an idea that started with our late Board Member and Crew Leader, John Platt, ITA began offering Wilderness First Aid classes for crew leaders in 2022. Two longtime ITA volunteers and retired medical professionals volunteered to obtain certification through the American Red Cross and teach 2-4 classes each year. This year, ITA held classes in north and south Idaho, continuing to ensure our volunteer leaders have solid skills in first aid and CPR. Thank you to Brian Mahon and Anne Poinier for teaching these classes and to Harris CPA's Center of Influence (Boise) and ITA board member and crew leader Tom Dabrowski (Sandpoint) for hosting.



Crew Leader Education and Mentoring

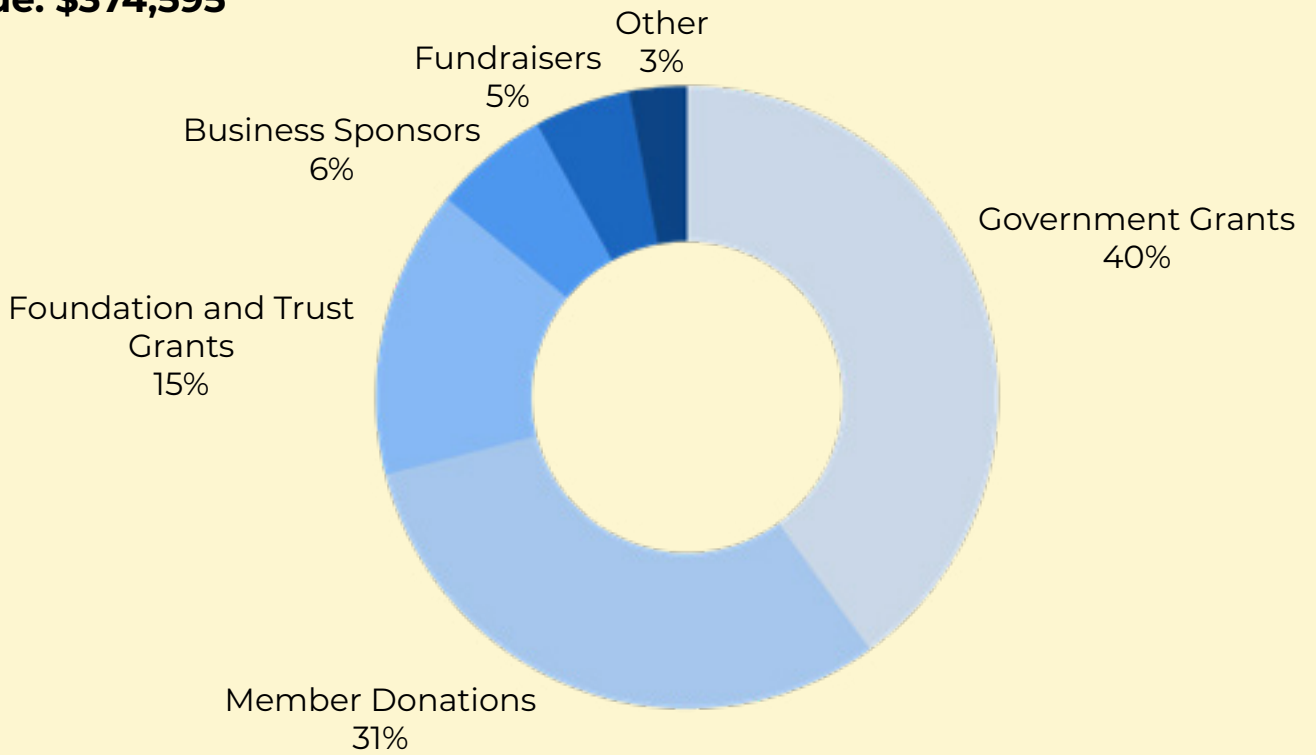
The Crew Leader Education and Mentoring (CLEM) sessions continued in 2024 with trainings in Sandpoint in the north and outside McCall in the southern part of the state. Over forty crew leaders met for long weekends to learn new skills, brush up on old ones, and share ideas for leading safe, fun, and productive ITA trips. This year was focused on crosscut saw training and certification for our leaders, a requirement for ITA's crews to be self-sufficient and safely lead projects on Forest Service-managed lands.

Splattski Scholarship Fund

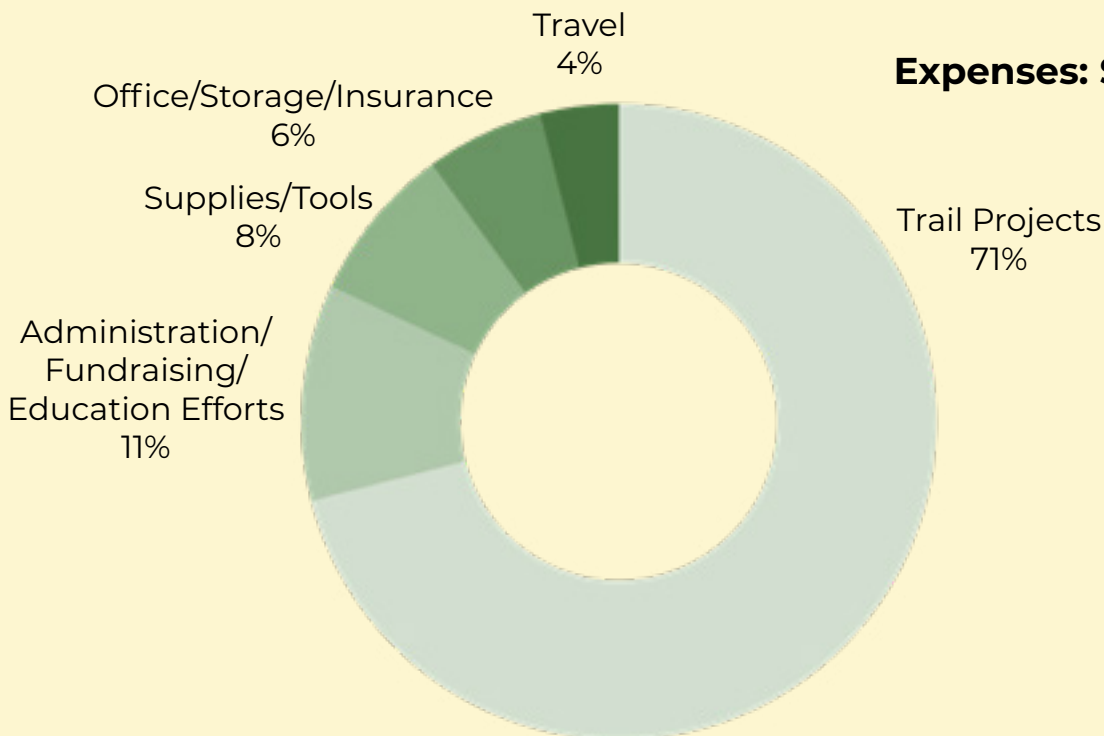
The Splattski Scholarship Fund, established in 2022, helped outfit three ITA volunteers with the gear needed to pursue outdoor adventure and more trail projects! ITA was excited to award these scholarships to purchase items such as hiking boots and lightweight tents, and thrilled to hear back from each recipient about how the new gear was put to use. This fund continues to help more people access the outdoors.

FINANCIALS

Revenue: \$374,595



Expenses: \$338,793*



* excess revenue went toward ITA's cash reserves/savings

THANK YOU TO

Land Managers

In 2024 ITA partnered with the following Land Managers: **US Forest Service Regions 1, 4, and 6, Bitterroot, Boise, Caribou-Targhee, Idaho Panhandle, Nez Perce-Clearwater, Payette, Salmon-Challis, Sawtooth, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, Boise BLM-Bruneau Field Office, City of Boise- Ridge to Rivers, Bogus Basin, Idaho Parks and Recreation, and the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley.**

Volunteer Groups

Thank you to the following volunteer groups that partnered with ITA in 2024: **Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, the Squaw Butte, Twin Rivers, and Priest River Chapters of the Backcountry Horsemen of Idaho, Boise State University, ESI Construction, Great Burn Conservation Alliance, Hells Canyon Recreation Collaborative, Monday Hikers, Moscow Area Mountain Bike Association, One Stone International School, The Sawtooth Society, Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, Teton Valley Trails and Pathways, Two Wolf Foundation, Washington Trails Association, and Wood River Trails Coalition.**

Donors

A huge thank you to ITA's incredible members for helping ITA make a big impact on Idaho's trails! Thanks to their generosity, ITA broke records for the number of projects and volunteers out on the trail this year. Every new and renewing member fuels the mission, turning donations into miles of open trails, thriving wilderness, and unforgettable outdoor experiences.

Foundations and Nonprofits

Every year a significant portion of ITA's funding comes from the generosity of various foundations and nonprofit organizations in the form of grants or other support like partnering on trail projects. ITA is thankful for the continued support of longtime partner organizations and the new support of others who believe in the power of trails:

American Trails Legacy Trails Program funded work in the Sawtooth and Boise National Forests.

Avista Foundation supported trail work in north Idaho.

Idaho Fish and Game's Access Funds and **Community Challenge Grants** funded work in backcountry areas of central and west-central Idaho.

Idaho Humanities Council granted funding to bring history talks to several trail projects.

Idaho Power supported trail work in Hells Canyon through their grant program and shuttled volunteers with their jet boat.

Idaho Women's Charitable Foundation granted funding to support ITA's women's and youth programs.

Innovia and Equinox Foundations granted funds to support trail projects in north Idaho.

Lightfoot Foundation provided funding for ITA's youth program.

M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust provided funds for ITA's new Northern Idaho Trail Program Specialist position.

National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance provided support for Wilderness monitoring and education in the Gospel Hump Wilderness.

Sawtooth Society provided grant support for trail projects in the Sawtooth Valley.

Stibnite Foundation granted funds to support trail work in west-central Idaho.

OUR PARTNERS!

Business Members

ITA launched a Business Membership Program in 2021 and it continues to grow. ITA recognizes the business partners on social media, the website, and in the monthly Old Saw newsletter. It's a small token of appreciation for the big impact these contributions have on the trails program.

\$1000+

AllTrails
Café Mulé
Idaho Forest Group
Idaho Power
McAlvain Construction
Mother Earth Brewing
Scheels

\$500+

ESI Construction
Hyperspud Sports
Sage Environmental Services
Shu's Idaho Running Company

Thank you to the following businesses and individuals who donated items and services for fundraising efforts like ITA's Pack Your Summer Auction, End of Season Raffle, and Annual Membership Drive as well as gear to be used on trail projects:

888 Custom Milling and Woodwork
BD Recreation Consultants
Breakwater Expeditions
C&Gs Wild Alaska Salmon
Cedar Grove Wildlife Guiding
Chisel Custom Design
Columbia Sportswear
D&B Supply
Dagmar Rapp
Dave Beck
Diane Lang
Emerald Slope Vineyards
End of the World Provisions

Evans Brothers Coffee
Felco
GSI Outdoors
Hide & Hive Dry Goods
Idaho River Adventures
Jenny Turner
Kristen Kohntopp
Landgrove Coffee
Lava Hot Springs
Litehouse Foods
Lost Grove Brewing
Mackay Bar Outfitters
Mark Tabor
Mother Earth Brewing
Mother Madre Bees

Mountain Village Resort
Mystery Ranch
Nick Hazelbaker
Payette Brewing Company
Red River Hot Springs
Sawtooth Flying Service
Scheels
Schweitzer
Six Moon Designs
Sweet Lou's
Sun Valley Mountain Huts
Taisie Design
White Clouds Preserve

Thank you to the following businesses, organizations, and individuals who supported ITA through events and fundraisers:

Bert's Brewing
Bogus Basin
Boise Bench Lions Club
Boise Bicycle Project
Boise Farmer's Market
Broken Horn Brewing
City of Boise

City of Pocatello
College of Southern Idaho
Grangeville Senior Center
Green Acres Food Truck Park
Hyperspud Sports
Ken and Virginia Greger
Ketchum Community Library

Lost Grove Brewing
Payette Brewing
Sawtooth Brewery
Treefort
White Dog Brewing
Yoga for Good



ITA is a nonprofit that works with volunteers, organizations, and government partners to preserve Idaho's incredible trail system through education, maintenance projects, and public lands advocacy. Join us in our mission to keep Idaho's hiking trails open for all.

**To learn more about becoming a member or volunteer, please visit:
www.idahotrailsassociation.org**