

## Society for Wilderness Stewardship



# 2012 Annual Report

## February 2013

AMERICA NEEDS A UNIFIED VOICE FOR WILDERNESS STEWARDS

### Greetings Fellow Wilderness Stewards,

I am pleased to introduce the Society for Wilderness Stewardship's first Annual Report. Growing up in the Cascades of Washington State my family often hiked in what came to be the Indian Heaven Wilderness. My first childhood backpacking trip was into a small, pristine lake situated on the southwest flank of Mt. Adams, aptly named Looking Glass Lake. My experience of wilderness touched off a spark within me, kindling a deep-seated passion to learn more about wilderness and to work as a steward ensuring primeval wilderness exists for our children's grandchildren. It is a privilege for me to be on the Board of Directors for the Society of Wilderness Stewardship.

Through 2012 the SWS has worked steadily toward realizing our goal of professionalizing the discipline of wilderness management and stewardship through career development and networking. Curriculum and logistics have been established for the first ever National Wilderness Ranger Academy. Society for Wilderness Stewardship volunteers developed and presented five sessions at the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance Annual Conference in Asheville, NC. The Society continues to be heavily involved in planning for the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014. We are acting as a fiscal agent for Wilderness50, a group of NGO's including SWS, and agency representatives striving to ensure that the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act is celebrated in style.

I would like to sound a hearty thank you to the Society's members and partners in supporting the SWS through our formative years. In particular I would like to thank the founding board members and current Board of Directors for their investment of time and energy in growing SWS. I am deeply grateful for the contributions being made by SWS's first Executive Director, Lee Lambert. I would also like to thank an increasing list of partners and collaborators including the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, the Sierra Club and Vicky Hoover as significant contributors to Wilderness50, the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest and Pawnee National Grassland Association for helping us to build capacity, and our agency partners including the Arthur Carhart Wilderness Training Institute, the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management who continue to work closely with the Society.

**Thank you for your support!**

**Diane Bedell**

**Board Vice-Chair**

**Society for Wilderness Stewardship**

*The Society for Wilderness Stewardship is the national membership organization dedicated to informing, uniting, and supporting the extensive community groups and individuals actively engaged in stewardship of America's National Wilderness Preservation System. Our individual members include a wide range of people interested in the stewardship of wilderness: researchers, managers, educators, government and private conservation workers, volunteers, students, business owners, and American citizens. This community of professionals shares a strong passion for wilderness and a deeply-rooted sense of the intrinsic value of its benefits. At the Society, we are committed to uniting these communities to explore and address wilderness stewardship issues.*

## Mission Statement

*Our mission is to advance the profession of wilderness stewardship, science, and education to ensure the life-sustaining benefits of wilderness.*

## Vision Statement

*Our vision is that the values and benefits of the National Wilderness Preservation System are understood, treasured, and preserved by all people and that stewards of wilderness have the resources to ensure continuation of its benefits.*



## Leadership, Board Members & Agency Liaisons

(as of Feb-2013)

Maura Longden, Chair

Diane Bedell, Vice Chair

Bob Dvorak, Secretary

Tom Carlson, Treasurer

Lee Lambert, Executive Director

### Committees

Diane Bedell, Advancement

Bob Hazelton, Communications

Greg Hansen, Education and Programs

Mike Smith, Membership

Linda Merigliano, Professional Development

Tom Carlson, Stewardship

Peter Appel

David Cole

Chad Dawson

Mark Douglas

Steve McCool

Derrick Taff

### Agency Liaisons

Kyle Johnson, National Park Service

Carol Miller, Aldo Leopold Wilderness  
Research Institute

Nancy Roeper, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

James Sippel, Bureau of Land Management

Ken Straley, U.S. Forest Service

Ralph Swain, U.S. Forest Service

## Financial Summary

### 2012 Expenses

53.42% - Administrative & Office  
Support

03.19% - Professional Fees

19.69% - Information  
Technology

19.02% - Financial handling fees

04.68% - Miscellaneous



### 2012 Income

48.71% - Membership

51.05% - Grants & Cost  
Sharing

00.24% - Miscellaneous

*In 2012 the SWS income was almost entirely based on membership dues and income from a Forest Service cost-share agreement. The SWS board recognizes that this funding situation is not sustainable and does not allow the organization to grow and become an effective voice for wilderness stewardship and also represent the professional wilderness managers. The SWS Executive Director, Lee Lambert, and other board members are working hard to craft an operational budget and fund raising strategy, and also establish relationships with potential donors and put funding agreements in place with all agencies in 2013.*



## **The SWS continues to grow and expand our influence in the wilderness stewardship community**

*SWS volunteers developed and presented five sessions at the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance conference in November.* The sessions were focused on "Stewardship Beyond the Trail" and included information on fire ecology and management in wilderness, wilderness experiences sought by visitors, wilderness character monitoring and wilderness visitor trends and implications. The SWS representatives were Dr. Chad Dawson, Dr. Robert Dvorak, Dr. Carol Miller, & Mr. Jimmy Gaudry.

*The SWS is participating as part of the 50th Anniversary National Planning Team (Wilderness50)* and is collaborating on the planning and eventual implementation of local, regional, and national events and projects, specifically designed to elevate the profile of wilderness during the 50th anniversary celebration. This currently includes a week-long celebration of wilderness at the Smithsonian Institute and the 50th Anniversary National Wilderness Conference planned for October 15-19, 2014 in Albuquerque, NM.

*The SWS facilitated wilderness character monitoring in the Holy Cross Wilderness and will be moving on to the Black Elk Wilderness in 2013.* These projects are part of an interagency strategy to monitor trends in wilderness character across the National Wilderness Preservation System. The project reports are made available to all wilderness managers as demonstrations of what can be done to monitor wilderness character in their wilderness. This project is being planned and implemented under a cost-share agreement with the Rocky Mountain Region of the U.S. Forest Service.

*The 2013 SWS Celebrate Wilderness Calendar is available for purchase.* This calendar displays images of many of the spectacular areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System and highlights dates of many of the important wilderness events. Members have contributed photos and we hope this is the first of many calendars to come, helping to raise funds for the SWS and



Photo Credit: Laura Smith, Cape Romain NWR, South Carolina

awareness of SWS activities.

*The SWS recruited a new Chair and Vice-Chair, more Board members, and established an Agency Liaison with all four federal agencies to fill vacant positions.* Much of the work of the SWS continues to be done by the volunteer board and these new leaders represent research, academics, and managers that bring a wealth of expertise and new energy and goals.



*The SWS established and filled the position of Executive Director.* Lee Lambert accepted the position in early 2013 but had begun work in 2012 as an SWS member on fund-raising strategy, communications, and membership priorities. Lee has an extensive background in business as a conference planner and also in the non-profit world including experience in developing and growing wilderness friends groups. Lee's knowledge of non-profit organizations, contacts, and skills will be a big help in moving the SWS towards a better funded and effective organization capable of meeting our goals.



## SWS to conduct pilot trainings in 2013 in preparation for the Wilderness Ranger Academy in 2014

Designated Wilderness constitutes 17% of the federal land base and the National Wilderness Preservation System continues to grow both in size and complexity. As we look towards the future, increasing professionalism with mastery of foundational field skills will be needed to fulfill the Wilderness Act's mandate to preserve wilderness character. The 2014 Wilderness Ranger Academy (WRA) will provide those skills.

The SWS will launch its first WRA at Colorado State University's summer field campus at Pingree Park in May-June 2014. In preparation, the Professional Development Committee is conducting several Academy pilot trainings in 2013.

The WRA aims to set the "gold standard" for field-based wilderness skills training for the next generation of wilderness stewards. The focus is on foundational and traditional field skills with an emphasis on traveling and working safely in various wilderness environments.

What sets the WRA apart is its focus on hands-on, individualized immersion training that allows participants to take mastery of field skills from the orientation level to the professional level. It also will serve as a "one-stop" course that allows participants to gain skills and certifications in the full range of field wilderness competencies. The academy is intended to complement, not compete with, existing seasonal orientation and manager training courses.

Training in foundational field skills that include the Art of Rangering, personal safety, map reading, Leave No Trace practices, visitor contacts, emergency response, first aid, traditional tool use, wilderness character monitoring, resource restoration, and fire resource advising - critical skills for employees to succeed in wilderness positions - will be offered. Agency recognized certification courses are also being offered such as Leave No Trace Trainer, crosscut saw use, and Wilderness First Aid. All four agencies are focused on improving safety and recruiting a more diverse workforce while increasing the opportunities that the WRA offers for hands-on field training sessions.

The SWS is recruiting twenty people to become the first to be certified in field skills addressing the six core wilderness competencies recognized by the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and National Park Service. Recruitment is focused on: (1) people currently in agency career pathways programs who desire to pursue responsibilities in wilderness stewardship, (2) students in resource colleges and universities particularly those colleges who serve diverse populations, (3) veterans eligible for employment or re-adjustment programs, (4) seasonal employees, interns, retirees, or volunteers who have aspire to a career in wilderness stewardship. Limiting enrollment to twenty participants provides for a high instructor-student ratio and allows participants to develop camaraderie that lasts throughout their career.

Post-academy internships have been secured allowing graduates to immediately apply field skills. Scholarships may be available to help lower the cost for those who need financial aid. For more information on the WRA please contact the Society for Wilderness Stewardship-[info@wildernessstewardship.org](mailto:info@wildernessstewardship.org).

In May 2013, SWS Executive Committee Chair Maura Longden and Treasurer Tom Carlson will conduct a pilot training program at the Wilderness Skill Institute (WSI). Started in 2011, the Institute features a two-week program now hosted each year at the Cradle of Forestry facility outside of Brevard, North Carolina on the Pisgah Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest. The session includes a combined audience of Forest Service Southern Region wilderness managers and wilderness rangers along with members of the wilderness partnership groups. The SWS will present modules on The Art of Rangering, The Wilderness Act, and Minimum Requirements Analysis (both process and application).

In early June, SWS board member Linda Merigliano, working with SWS Forest Service Liaison Ralph Swain, will conduct a pilot training at the Region 2/Region 3 Interagency Wilderness Ranger Rendezvous. The Rendezvous will be held at the Big Springs Administrative site, built by the CCC in 1934, on the North Kaibab Ranger District, situated just north of the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park. The SWS will present modules on Wilderness Character Monitoring and the Art of Rangering to over 70 interagency participants. The SWS will also be conducting pilot trainings this fall at the Americorps Conservation Corps trainings in Arizona and California.

Accomplishments towards the WRA in 2012 include developing module content and a preliminary course agenda, securing a venue, establishing a budget and challenge cost share agreements, developing recruitment materials, reaching out to potential students, and securing post-academy internships.



## Looking Ahead to 2013

We have an active year ahead of us as the SWS continues to grow. We'll make presentations at the George Wright Society Conference coming up in March. We'll also implement a variety of other strategies and projects designed to grow the membership, enhance benefits, and become a more effective voice for both wilderness and the profession of wilderness stewardship. At the March Retreat the Board will complete strategic and fundraising plans to guide the future of SWS.

The SWS remains the only professional organization that represents all those involved in wilderness stewardship. Our members are wilderness managers, scientists, and educators, all of whom work for the betterment of wilderness and our profession. Much remains to be done and the SWS need more members to join and get involved in the efforts of their professional society.



## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Wilderness Ranger Cookbook

In 1990, the Forest Service produced the first-ever Wilderness Ranger Cookbook, still for sale today.

For the 50th anniversary in 2014, the cookbook will be rewritten and expanded to include recipes from all four wilderness management agencies and from any wilderness ranger, wilderness volunteer or resource specialist who works in congressionally designated wilderness.

### MEMBERSHIP

Funds from membership in SWS supports all the necessary costs of a member based non-profit organization. These costs include both the administrative functions (i.e. conference calls, website, brochure printing, displays, travel to meet with agency leaders, etc. ) and, most importantly, it helps us meet match requirements for grants - stretching our member dollars for wilderness stewardship!



Photo Credit: Jeff Brooks – FWS, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska

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