

## ***PWV/WRV Work Weekends on Rawah North in 2023***

*My interest in restoration and improvement to the CLRD goes back about 15 years. Starting with reroofing some of the cabins at Arrowhead Lodge to working with Kristi Wumkes for PWV to adopt North Fork Trail. After the High Park Fire, Bob Manual and I proposed a Renovation Committee be formed and asking Mike Corbin and Mark Snyder to co-chair it as they continue to do to this day. I have remained a member of the committee.*

*Most all funds raised by PWV have been requested with the suggestion it would go toward bettering our trails. Sometimes the funds have been earmarked 'Restoration' and sometimes there is no designation and have been placed in the general fund.*

*I met with Larimer County officials back in 2012 and got the ball rolling with hiring the youth crew. The 10 man Larimer County high school crew works 4 days per week which provides 30 hours a week of actual boots on the ground trail work. **So it is costing PWV about \$30/hour per crewmember** which I feel still provides good value. There is roughly 8 hours a week of travel time and 2 hours a week of education time. I have mentioned in many fundraising request letters how our members mentor and work alongside the youth crew. I even surprised the crew once on North Fork trail hiking in ice cream sandwiches packed with dry ice.*

There is a great deal of deferred trail maintenance throughout the CLRD.

The Rawah Wilderness trails have been neglected for many years. Most likely this was due to the fact that much energy had to be focused on reopening the lower trails affected by the Hewlett Fire, The High Park Fire and the 2013 floods and of course the Cameron Peak Fire.

The Rawahs have a shorter time window to schedule work. It is often the middle of June before the snow melts off the trails. There are often many trees to clear before the trails become passable. So work needs to be scheduled from July 15<sup>th</sup> through early September.

Matt Cowan has identified enough work on Rawah North to keep crews busy for years.

**Wildlands Restoration Volunteers is a (501c3) non-profit volunteer-centered organization, established in 1999, that organizes high-quality ecological restoration projects on public lands in the United States**

CLRD has used them in recent years on Young Gulch Trail and Beaver Creek Trail as well as others.

They have capabilities that PWV does not. WRV holds formal training sessions. They typically recruit younger volunteers such as 25-40 year olds for their projects. Many of the volunteers that worked on Rawah North trail this past September had worked other WRV projects. Along with one paid staff member, there were 6 volunteer crew leaders. They have volunteers who are sawyer certified to fell 12 inch diameter trees for bridge stringers.

It will cost PWV \$10,000 per weekend if we schedule two weekends on the Rawah North Trail possibly about 3 weeks apart. This is for 30 volunteers camping 6-7 miles up the trail. They hike in on Friday looking over the work sites as they head to the camp spot. Meals are provided so work starts at 0800 sharp on Saturday and dinner is waiting for everyone at 6pm. So a full 8 hours of work is accomplished

on Saturday. On Sunday breakfast is served and camp is broken so assume 4 hours of work is accomplished before hiking out. **30 folks working 12 hours equals 360 hours divided into \$10,000 equals \$28/hr per volunteer.** As I mentioned at last month's BOD meeting the cost is no more than the youth crews that we have been hiring for years.

This work requires 500-600 lbs of tools, food and supplies. If lumber is required that could easily add another 500 lbs to pack up to the work site. The PWV Stock Patrol has trained members to handle this and close relations with local businesses including outfitters as well as CSU Equine program. In 2022 we were able to borrow 5 horses from Rawah Guest Ranch and two mules from the CSU Equine program. By getting the dates set up early, I feel there is a very good chance PWV will be able to be assisted by a few CSU Packing students. Their instructor joined us along with her teaching assistant for a ride in 2022.

Putting off work will only make the trail more problematic—ole saying "***Pay me now or pay me more later***" applies to the *Rawah North trail*.

The college age RMCC crew housed at Stub Creek will also be packed in by the PWV Stock Patrol for one and perhaps 2 eight day hitches into Rawah North. Coordinating the work that the PWV/WRV work weekends are accomplishing with this crew could produce some solid results.

Though WRV will be organizing and providing leadership for the Rawah North project, like in 2022 PWV's are invited and encouraged to participate just like we have done in the past on North Fork Trail, Hewlett Gulch Trail, Young Gulch Trail.

Fred Allen