

Trail Maintenance »

The Crosscut Saw Club

A little recognition for volunteers who have gone above and beyond and then some

Five days of volunteer trail work is a big commitment. WTA issues a **Personalized Hard Hat** to the volunteers who have made this commitment as a way of saying both “thanks” and “please come back” in the same breath. In 2009, WTA issued over 200 of these green hard hats.

Volunteers who have joined 25 work parties are given a **Trail Crew Vest**, embroidered with the WTA logo. With these vests, we’re helping our volunteers stay warm while they work and encouraging them to serve as ambassadors on and off the trail.

Volunteers who reach the milestone of fifty days on trail are presented with a monogrammed Corona pruning saw. (Here again, we’re a bit self-serving in our choice of gifts. After all, you’ll have to come out and volunteer again if you are so well equipped, right?) Folks in this select category are known as our **Trail Crew Saw** stewards.

Until recently, there were no more tangible rewards or intangible award categories beyond the Trail Crew Saw. As we looked at the growing list of volunteers who had far-surpassed any incentives, two new categories of recognition just had to be created. WTA is proud to introduce our Full Bench Club and the Crosscut Saw Club.

The **Full Bench Club** recognizes volunteers who have spent 250 or more days on trail. In trail terminology, *full bench* refers to a type of construction in which the full width of the tread is cut into the hillside. Though it is more difficult to build initially, it is the preferred choice of trail professionals because it is more durable in the long run. Likewise, our regular volunteers have done more than just build trails. They have helped us to continually improve our trail maintenance program and to create a firm foundation for our future work.

Our **Crosscut Saw Club** recognizes volunteers with 500 or more days on trail. These volunteers (just four so far) represent the upper echelon of WTA’s trail maintenance Hall of Fame. They possess both WTA history and trail skill and have given above and beyond any imaginable expectations.

Together, the four individuals we have just inducted into the Crosscut Saw Club have contributed a total of 3,725 days on trail. That is more than ten years of trail work (and sure to be more by the time you read this!). I hope you enjoy reading their profiles as much as I have enjoyed working with them. Please note that all of the totals listed are as of press date and sure to have gone up by the time you read this.

Mike Owens started as a volunteer with WTA eleven years ago and is now an invaluable employee, acting as the organization’s year-round chief crew leader. While Mike is now a paid staff member, he continues to volunteer one of the four days he spends out on the trail each week. Many of WTA’s volunteers have had Mike as their crew leader on their very first work party, and he’s the reason why many of them returned for another day. Mike has led more than 1,500 work parties.

It is quite probable that Mike has introduced more folks to trail maintenance than any other person in the United States, past or present! Mike always does a stellar job. He is a true strength for this organization. We’d like to thank Mike for all of his efforts over the years, including his 1,750 days on trail and the many more that are sure to follow.



Alyssa Kreider

Volunteer Coordinator
alyssa@wta.org

For a complete list of recent honorees, see Page 14.



Mike Owens

Jim Knoke has been a volunteer with WTA since April 20, 1996, when he worked on the Baker River Trail with Greg Ball as the crew leader. Jim is a regular member of the "Thursday Crew" in the Puget Sound area. People who know Jim know that he likes to move rock—the bigger, the better. On more than one occasion, Jim has tackled boulders that others had deemed "unmoveable." Upon returning to the work site, you will find that the rock has not only been removed from the trail, but also placed in a new location that helps to support the tread.

Jim has shown great dedication to this organization over the last thirteen years—as impressive as all the rock walls he has had a hand in constructing. Jim has spent 675 days on trail.



Jim Knoke

Pete Dewell started with WTA in the late 1990s. He quickly earned his personalized hard hat, then his orange hat and, finally, that elusive blue hat, denoting chief crew leader status. Since that time he has become known as the Patron Saint of Trails, keeping a watchful eye on the sign-ups and putting himself forward when that flashing box says "crew leaders needed."

He's spent a 735 volunteer days on trail. It has become a tradition to depend on Pete. When a crew leader went down with a bad



Pete Dewell

back he was heard to shout as he hit the ground: "Tell Pete. He'll cover for me!"

Pete is willing to do whatever WTA needs most and that includes everything from providing pro-bono legal counsel to dressing like Santa to deliver gifts to volunteers. Pete is also the author of *Tread and Retread the Trails*. (You can purchase this trail maintenance manual directly from Pete. Look for him on a work party near you!)

Bill Sunderland has been with WTA since April 24, 1995, when he took part in a Earth Day event for University of Washington graduate students. He is now Bill Sunderland, Ph.D., also known as "Cyanzgai" or, by select volunteers, as "Marshmallow Bill." He can always be counted on for his ability to assess perplexing problems, such as how many Chevy Suburbans could be supported by a bridge in the Darrington District.

He has served as a Volunteer Vacations crew leader, a day-trip crew leader and an assistant crew leader many times over. All the while, he has mentored some of our best crew leaders and assistant crew leaders. His running total is 565 volunteer days in the field. ♦



Bill Sunderland

Volunteer Vacation Schedule 2010

The 2010 Volunteer Vacation and Youth Vacation schedule will be available at online on WTA's website on February 1. You will then have one week to match the trip dates with your ideal summer schedule before the schedule goes "live" for sign-ups on February 8.

You'll find your usual favorites along with some stunning new locations. The common theme for all of our trips: these trails need maintenance—ranging from log-out and bridge repair to brushing and drainage work.

Note: Some trips do fill quickly, but you can call us to be added to a wait list. In 2009, most of our wait list volunteers had an opportunity to join their first-choice trip.

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