

Summer 2024

Naturalist's Handbook

A comprehensive guide to interpretive services provided by the Sawtooth Interpretive & Historical Association, and the natural and cultural history of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.



NATURALIST HANDBOOK

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Welcome to the team! Working for the Sawtooth Interpretive & Historical Association (SIHA) means that you have the opportunity to help children and adults develop deep relationships with the Sawtooth and Salmon River country. You're often the only "Sawtooth Staff" visitors come in contact with during their time here. We want visitors to remember how important the Sawtooth Mountains are so they help preserve and protect them. This handbook is simply a starting point. There is so much more to learn so don't hesitate to ask any questions you may have. Now take some time to explore!

Warmly,

SIHA Staff & Board Members



CONTENTS

National Recreation Area	<u>4</u>
Wilderness	<u>5</u>
SNRA History	<u>6</u>
Wildlife	<u>9</u>
Geology	<u>11</u>
Plants and Wildflowers	<u>12</u>
Human History	<u>14</u>
Leave No Trace	<u>15</u>
Interpretive Programs	<u>16</u>
Interpretive Displays	<u>18</u>
Redfish Visitor Center	<u>20</u>
Events	<u>21</u>
Stanley Museum	<u>22</u>
Suggested Reading	<u>23</u>

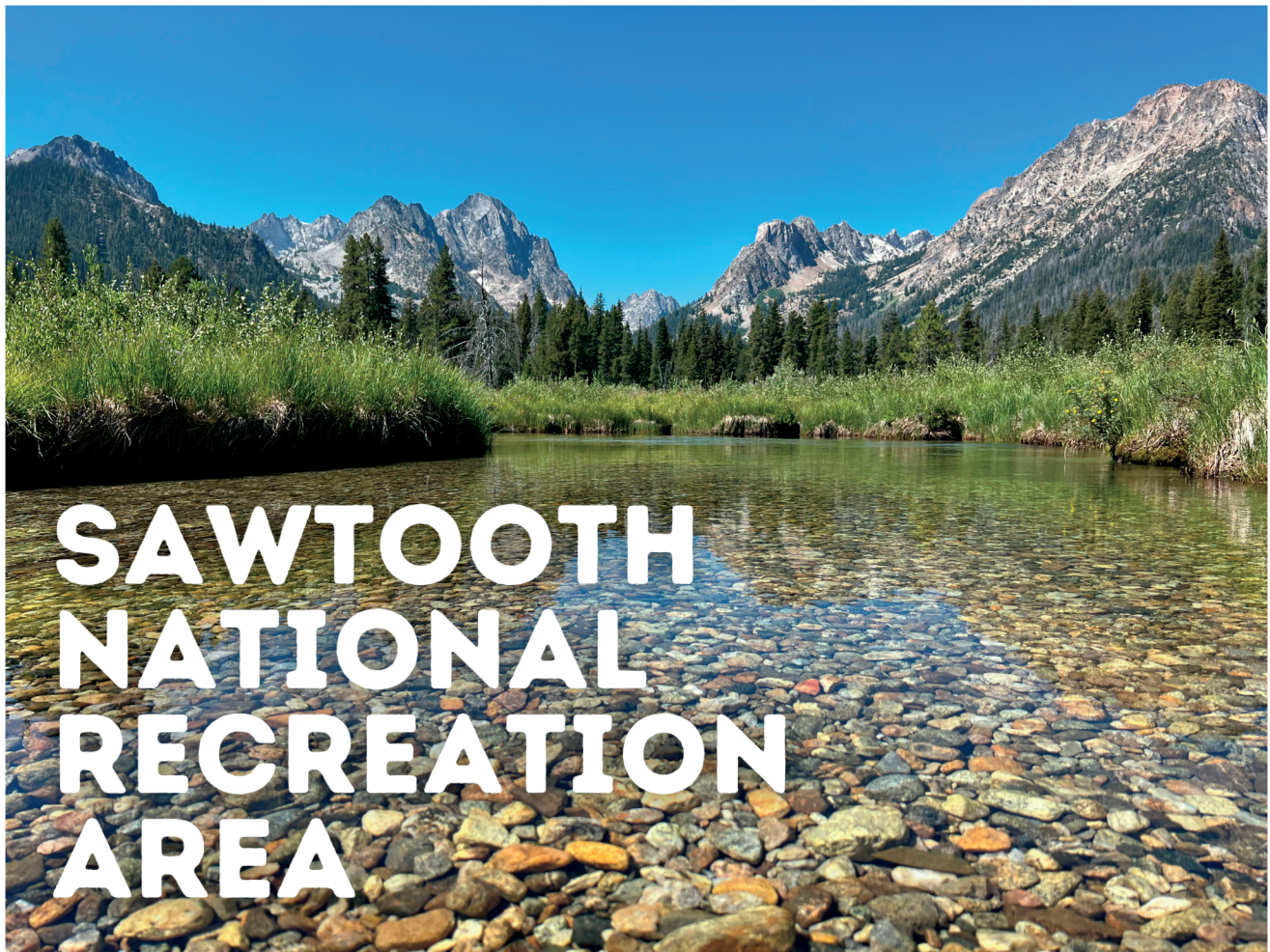


What is interpretation?



To SIHA, interpretation is like holding up a spotting scope for the general public. Visitors have their own plans and goals for traveling to a place like the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). They are often disconnected and believe their actions aren't impacting the natural world. The job of an interpretive association is to slow people down and get them to link their personal experience to the land around them, to make connections, and to build relationships with the resource itself.

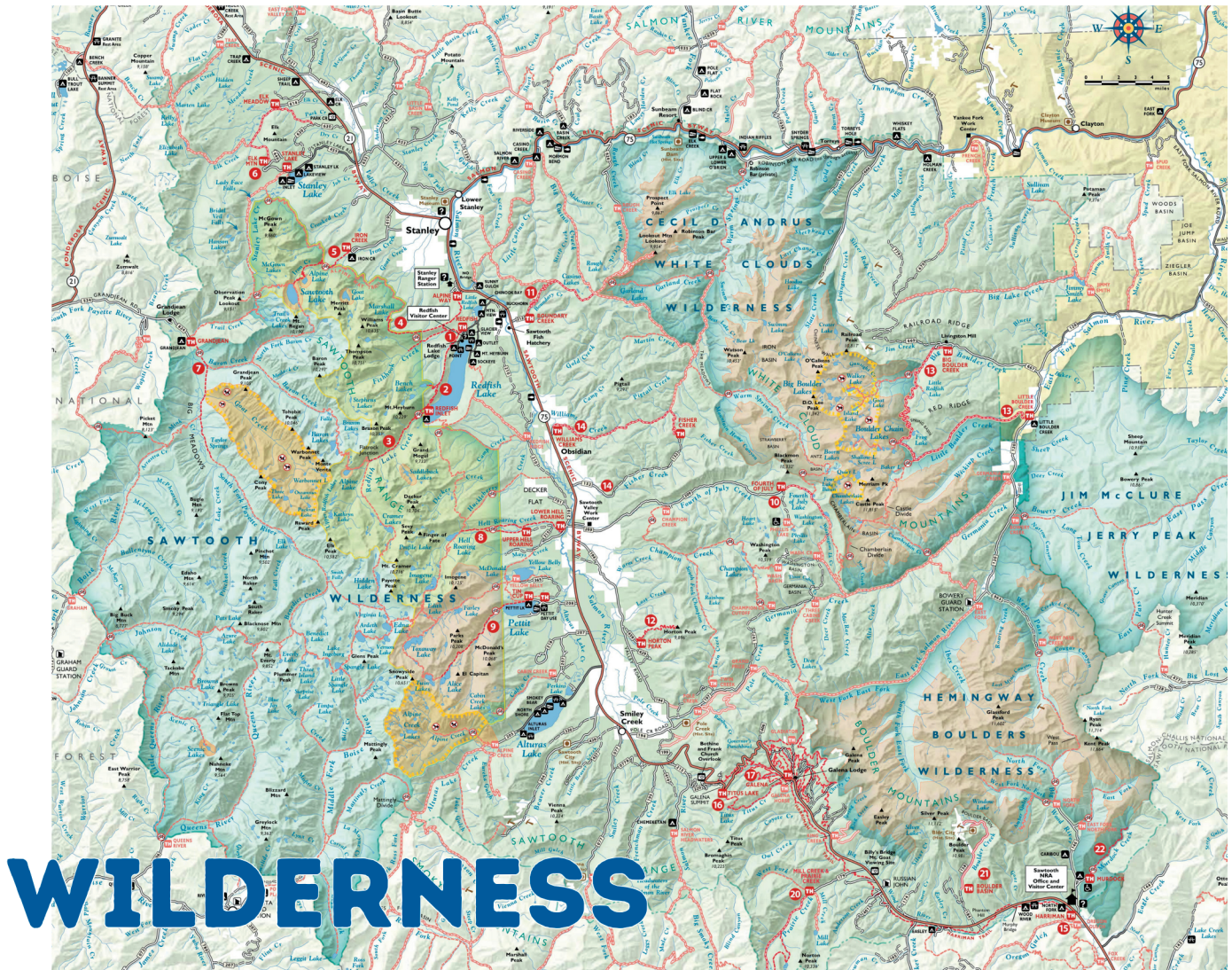
A rock is just a rock, ignored, until a naturalist can share the story of how it got here, the processes and conditions needed for it to form, the weather and erosion that reduced its size and shape, and what its composition means for the plants and animals that make up the ecosystem it helps support. Through conversations and storytelling naturalists pull visitors in. We ask visitors to pause and consider this place as a dynamic, living thing that each of us is a part of, building respect and deepening their connection to the SNRA.



The SNRA is 756,000 acres of land managed by the USDA Forest Service - Sawtooth National Forest. Over 395,000 acres of the area is designated and managed as Wilderness. The Sawtooth NRA was established over 50 years ago on August, 22 1972 with the congressional passage of Public Law 92-400 to *preserve and protect the area's natural, scenic, historic, pastoral, and fish and wildlife values and to provide for the enhancement of the recreation associated with these values.*

The area includes more than 40 peaks over 10,000 feet in 4 mountain ranges (the Sawtooths and the White Clouds on either side of the Sawtooth Valley and the Boulders and Smokeys on the south side of Galena Summit) and the headwaters of four major Idaho rivers: the Salmon, the Payette, the Boise, and the Big Wood.

The mission of SIHA is to protect and advance the natural and cultural history of Idaho's Sawtooth-Salmon River country through preservation and education. SIHA is the official cooperative association of the SNRA—as such, SIHA assists the SNRA in making available interpretive, educational, and informational programs and materials that add to visitors' enjoyment and understanding of the natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources of the area.



The SNRA includes 3 Wilderness areas: Sawtooth (217,000 acres c. 1972), Cecil D. Andrus-White Cloud (91,000 acres c. 2015), and Hemingway-Boulder (88,000 acres c. 2015). Many advocated for national monument status. Other people believed this sort of designation would take away access for too many public land users. Today we help visitors understand the difference between a Recreation Area, a National Forest, and a National Park. Additionally, we work to provide information about what Wilderness areas are, how their regulations differ from other land designations, and why they are important (we'll cover this during training).

The Wilderness Act of 1964 states, wilderness is **"an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain...protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions."**

Two other wilderness areas are located adjacent or near the SNRA: the Jim McClure-Jerry Peak (117,000 acres also created in 2015) and the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. The Frank (as it is commonly referred to) was created in 1980 and consists of 2.3 million acres. It is the largest Wilderness in the lower 48. It includes a large portion of the Salmon River and the put-in for rafting the Middle Fork of the Salmon River is accessed from just outside the SNRA in the Cape Horn area.



ESTABLISHING THE SNRA

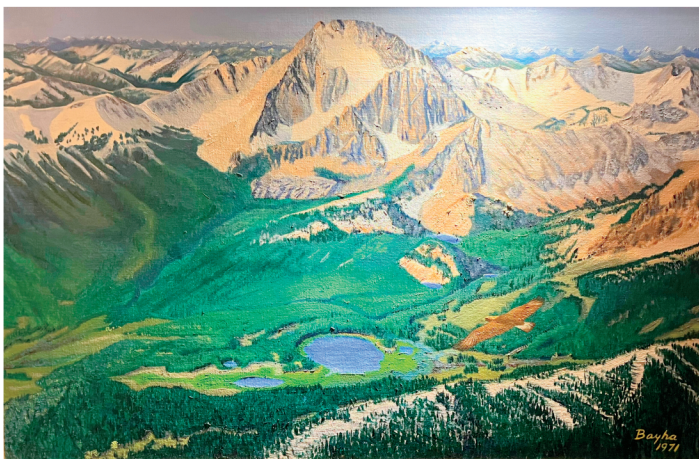
Congress established the Forest Service in 1905 to manage the nation's timber and water resources. Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service, used the principles of utilitarianism to guide the early Forest Service. His goal was to balance resource extraction with principles of conservation. The current Forest Service policy focuses on caring for forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future peoples.

Timeline of Sawtooth Public Lands

- 1905 - The U.S. Forest Service is created to manage Forest Reserves
- 1906 - The Lemhi, Salmon, and Sawtooth Forest Reserves are created
- 1908 - The Lemhi, Salmon, and Sawtooth Reserves are reorganized into the Lemhi, Salmon, Sawtooth, and Challis National Forests
- 1908/1909 - Original Valley Creek Ranger Station is constructed
- 1908/1909 - Pole Creek Ranger Station is constructed
- 1933 - A new ranger station is built at Valley Creek (the building that houses the Stanley Museum today)
- 1972 - Public Law 92-400 passes, establishing the Sawtooth National Recreation Area
- 1972 - Valley Creek Ranger Station is decommissioned and a new building is built further south on Highway 75
- 1974 - Private Land Regulations are adopted by the SNRA which allows the Secretary of Agriculture to set regulations on all private property in the Recreation Area
- 1974 - First Scenic Easement is purchased by the Forest Service
- 2015 - The Cecil D. Andrus White Clouds Wilderness, the Hemingway Boulder Wilderness, and Jim McClure-Jerry Peak Wilderness areas are designated as protected Wilderness. Jerry Peak is outside the SNRA.

Why aren't the Sawtooths a National Park?

The National Forests and National Parks are managed by two different government agencies, with different missions and management policies - the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior respectively. There have been at least five attempts to create a National Park in the Sawtooths. The first time it was suggested was in 1875—before Idaho was even a state! Interest in making the Sawtooths a National Park only grew. The first serious attempt began in 1911 thanks to a women's social club in Boise. The group petitioned Idaho's senators to introduce a bill for a park, but Sawtooth sheepherders pulled other sheep ranchers together to protest their concerns about losing grazing rights. This was enough to stop the campaign but the dream for a park didn't die. In 1960, Senator Frank Church tried to make the area a National Park, but his plan received backlash from both the Forest Service and locals in Ketchum, Twin Falls, and Custer County. The debate around a Sawtooth Park lasted for years.



In 1965, the Forest Service proposed a Forest Service managed National Recreation Area (NRA) as an alternative to a National Park. Like a National Park, a NRA would emphasize recreation but with fewer restrictions on public use. Even though Frank Church and many Idaho conservation groups pushed hard for a park, Church's advisors promoted the Forest Service NRA. Legislation stalled again.

In the late-1960s prospecting for an open-pit mine began in the in the White Cloud Mountains. In late 1968, the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) started mining for molybdenum (an alloy used to strengthen steel). Mining activity was at the base of Castle Peak, the highest peak in the middle of the White Clouds.

ESTABLISHING THE SNRA (cont.)

Not only would the ASARCO mine be destructive, but the company would have to build a road for trucks and other mining equipment in the pristine wilderness. To make matters worse, the mining crew began dumping pollutants into one of the Boulder Chain lakes. At that time, the Forest Service did not have the ability to stop the mining activity.

The mine in the White Clouds started an intense debate. Many community members and journalists defended wilderness. Others supported businesses that could benefit the working people of central Idaho. Earnie Day, with the Idaho Wildlife Federation, stated, "No amount of money can replace the beauty of the high cirques and alpine lakes...the scenic grandeur of the area is worth more in dollars and cents than a one-use destruction." Politicians, journalists, and activists from across the state rallied to protect the White Clouds. The *Intermountain Observer* in Boise made Castle Peak its "man of the year" in 1969. The Forest Service received hundreds of letters and statements about the ASARCO mine. In 1970, Cecil Andrus ran for governor on a platform that included opposing White Clouds mining, and he won! Andrus later reflected that he was the first governor in the West who was elected while campaigning on an environmentalist platform.

One activist who became involved in the effort to save the White Clouds was an artist named Keith Bayha. Bayha painted two pictures – one of Castle Peak in its present, pristine condition, a second picture portraying an open-pit mine at the base of the mountain (previous page). Bayha displayed his work in a downtown Boise storefront that state legislators would walk past on their way to the Capitol. Ultimately, the state legislature sent a formal letter to the US Congress asking them to create the SNRA and protect the White Clouds. Then, Frank Church took Bayha's work to Washington DC to present it to Congress and use it to illustrate the need for protection. Today, these paintings hang in the Redfish Lake Visitor Center.

In addition to the mine controversy, people were growing more alarmed by the increase in subdivisions in the Sawtooth Valley. The center of the development was along Highway 75 between Redfish Lake and Sawtooth City. There were big plans for the growing area (often referred to as Obsidian) that included a trailer park, a gas station, hotel, airport, and a complex of Swiss Chalet-style cabins. Subdivided ranches provide space for more than 1,000 new lots. Many locals and visitors worried about the subdivision's impact on the scenery and resources. Not only did the billboards, airstrip, and houses disrupt the scenery, people worried about the potential rapid increase in visitors.



ESTABLISHING THE SNRA (cont.)



After over a year of negotiations, on August 22, 1972, the president signed Public Law 92-400 which established the Sawtooth National Recreation Area under the control of the US Forest Service. The NRA included parts of three National Forests: the Sawtooth, the Challis, and the Boise National Forests.

Each National Recreation Area is different. Some are managed by the National Parks while some are managed by the Forest Service. Our Sawtooth NRA is managed by the Forest Service and they oversee resources like grazing, timber, and mining. The legislation for the SNRA gives the Forest Service power to forbid further mining operations and to oversee existing mining claims. The Forest Service also has the power to purchase land, purchase scenic easements on private land, or even condemn land that is in danger of being used in ways that are incompatible with the purposes of the NRA. Since 1972, the Forest Service has acquired easements or title on thousands of acres from private citizens, to protect the scenic landscape.

It is unlikely someone will ask about the private lands program, but understanding this unique structure can help put the layers of complexity into context.

From the SNRA's Private Lands Program document for landowners:

The 756,000-acre Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) includes more than 20,000 acres of privately owned land, primarily in the Sawtooth Valley and Stanley Basin, and along the Salmon River for approximately 25 miles downstream from Stanley, Idaho. When the U.S. Congress established the SNRA in 1972, it sought to preserve and protect the Area's **"natural, scenic, historic, pastoral, and fish and wildlife values and to provide for the enhancement of the recreation values associated therewith."** Congress' effort to protect the SNRA was in part aimed at preventing the development of high-density subdivisions that were beginning to spread throughout the area and mar its scenic beauty. Several subdivisions in particular were cause for concern and an indicator of things to come if preventative measures were not taken. These subdivisions were located on the west side of Highway 75, midway between the communities of Stanley and Sawtooth City, and contained more than 1,000 lots, an airstrip and a tangle of roads and overhead power lines. Congress authorized the Forest Service to acquire land and development rights for the purpose of preserving and protecting the values for which the SNRA was created.

Since 1974, about 5900 acres have been purchased by the United States. Most structures and other improvements have been removed from those properties. In addition, conservation easements (sometimes called scenic easements) have been purchased to restrict development on private land, while allowing these lands to remain in private ownership. To acquire scenic/ conservation easements, the Forest Service negotiates with the landowner to purchase the right to permanently restrict certain uses of a property. From 1974 to 2005, the Forest Service acquired 91 scenic/conservation easements on approximately 17,000 acres comprising more than 85% of the total private land base in the SNRA. This acquisition program continues. Significantly, Public Law 92-400 also directed the Secretary of Agriculture (the cabinet official with overall responsibility for the U.S. Forest Service) to publish regulations setting standards for the use, subdivision, and development of all privately owned property within the boundaries of the SNRA. These regulations were codified in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The SNRA Private Land Regulations were published in 1974 (36 CFR 292.14-16) and amended in 2004.



WILDLIFE

The SNRA is filled with wildlife of all kinds. To get an idea of the types of wildlife you might come across, check out any of the Lone Pine nature guides (Birds, Mammals, and Fish of the Rocky Mountains). The following touches on a few species you are bound to see near the Redfish Visitor Center.

There are several types of squirrels you will often get asked about. *Golden-mantled ground squirrels* and *chipmunks* (pictured at left) are easily confused. Make sure you know the difference! Our *yellow pine* and *least chipmunks* are smaller and have stripes from their nose to their ears, as well as along their backs. Golden-mantled ground squirrels are larger and do not have stripes on their faces. You will also see the *Columbian ground squirrel* (not pictured), which is similar in size to the golden-mantled ground squirrel or larger, has no stripes at all, and typically has mottled reddish brown and gray fur.

Redfish Lake is named for the thousands of red fish that historically returned to the lakes and streams to spawn. You will still see *kokanee* and *sockeye salmon* in the lake in late summer, just not thousands. Kokanee and sockeye are similar but kokanee are a lot smaller, remain in lakes, and spawn upstream. Sockeye are anadromous and travel to the Pacific Ocean before returning to Redfish Lake. Sockeye were designated as endangered in 1991. We'll tell you all about their history during training. You will also find *chinook salmon* in the area. They stick to the river system. Our chinook run was designated as endangered in 1992.



Advice from the Experts

(former SIHA Naturalists)

Learn how to pronounce anadromous and know what it means!

Visitors love seeing the kokanee under the bridges on the Fishhook Creek Nature Trail or working their way past the beaver dam in late summer. Go there!

Watch for diving osprey at the Fishhook inlet!

Know your wildlife. Even if you're doing a program on geology, someone will probably point out an animal and you may have to detour a bit with your program.

Did we mention the old beaver dam? Use it as a teaching tool.

Osprey are often seen diving into Redfish Lake for a quick bite, especially when the salmon are running. Also, osprey nests can be seen around the perimeter of Redfish Lake. These nests are large "messy" nests that located at the tops of trees. You will also see *bald eagles* in the area. They are much larger than osprey and adult bald eagles have a distinct white head and tail. Juvenile bald eagles can be mostly brown or brown and white underwing, sometimes making identification tricky. Bald eagle nests look similar to ospreys but are usually found 2 to 3 feet below the top bough.



Mule deer are abundant. There are also *white-tailed deer*, however, they are not as common to see in the area. One of the telltale differences between the two is the mule deer's giant (mule-like) ears. They tend to forage through the sagebrush and rabbitbrush and often are seen near the Fishhook Creek Nature Trail. You will also see elk and pronghorn throughout the area. We cover pronghorn on the next page. Elk are much larger than deer and generally more blonde/brown, with a darker head and neck and a distinct light-colored rump. Moose are even bigger and more common on the south side of Galena Pass, with a solid dark brown coat.





WILDLIFE (cont.)

Sandhill cranes can be upwards of 5 feet tall and visitors are often confused (emu? dinosaur?) when they spot the birds far off in fields. They can commonly be seen in meadows throughout the area - hunting rodents - or flying with a distinct harmonic trumpeting call. Some years, in the early summer they congregate in groups of 50 or more in the Vader Creek area up Highway 21, or down Highway 75 in the pastures near Pettit Lake. It's worth driving out to catch them. Usually you will see them in pairs or small groups. And later in the summer you can see babies following adults if you are paying attention.

What's the fastest land mammal in North America? **Pronghorn!** Idaho's pronghorn population has noticeably increased in the last couple of decades and you will see them in the valley and surrounding foothills in large and small herds. People incorrectly refer to them as antelope. They have distinct white sides and rumps. Pronghorns are a remnant of the last ice age, when there were larger, faster predators. They can sustain speeds of 45-50 miles/hour, easily evading today's predators. However, their speed impacts their anatomy in other ways. Pronghorns can jump but don't tend to leap in the same way deer do. When they arrive at a fence they typically choose to sneak under it and you can often see scars on their backs from low barbed-wire fences. There are conservation efforts to

Advice from the Experts (former SIHA Naturalists)

Watch out for pronghorn when you are driving. They will attempt to race across the road in front of you. They have so many cool adaptations. Look them up!

Focusing on animal adaptation for interpretation can really pull in visitors. There are so many great animals to choose from: ermines, wolves, bears, otters, sandhill cranes, beavers, owls...

remove the bottom wire on fences or at least make it barb-less. In some places this is working and has reduced injury.

If you see a **wolverine** in the Sawtooths you should buy a lottery ticket because it's your lucky day. In 2023, wolverines were added as a threatened species to the Endangered Species List. The Sawtooth and White Cloud Mountains hold some of the best habitat for wolverines in the Rocky Mountains.

Wolverines, the largest member of the weasel family, need deep and persistent snow in late spring for denning and rearing of kits. Sometimes visitors say they saw a wolverine, that might be true but it probably was a **badger** - shorter, smaller overall, badgers have a distinct white stripe down their forehead and a light undercoat.



GEOLOGY

Many different geologic processes shaped present-day Idaho. Below is a brief geological history of Idaho and the Sawtooth Mountains. Keep in mind that our area includes four different mountain ranges; the Sawtooths in the northwest, the White Clouds in the northeast, the Smokies in the southwest, and the Boulders in the southeast. The Redfish Visitor Center is closest to the Sawtooths and most of our visitors are exploring the Sawtooths or the White Clouds.

1. Idaho actually formed the western border of North America 800 million years ago (Ma). At that time the western edge of the continent split off and a new ocean basin filled the space.
2. Between 540 Ma and 200 Ma large parts of Idaho were covered with seawater. During that time, sediments were continually deposited on top of Idaho's basement rocks.
3. As sea level receded, the oceanic plate converged with the continental plate at the western edge of Idaho. As subduction occurred, large volumes of rock deep within the mantle melted. In some places, this magma came to the surface and covered large areas such as the Snake River Plain. Near the SNRA, the magma did not make it to the surface and instead formed into a large pluton under the surface known as the Idaho Batholith, 100 Ma.
4. Later, a second batholith, the Sawtooth Batholith, intruded these rocks, 50 Ma. The Sawtooth Batholith is noticeably pinker in hue.
5. Less than a million years ago, ruptures in the earth's crust created faults, which are attributed to much of the range's uplift. Recently another fault was discovered. It runs across the eastern edge of, the range along Redfish, Pettit and Alturas Lakes.*
6. In the past million years the area has been eroded and exposed through glaciation. Glaciers carved the valleys and steep peaks. Large glacial deposits extended into the basin and glacial moraines became the natural dams of many lakes, including Redfish Lake and Alturas Lake. The most recent glaciers began receding about 17,000 years ago and were gone by 13,000 years ago. You can identify glacial valleys by their U-shape.

**On March 31, 2020, a 6.5 magnitude earthquake shook the area. Its epicenter was northwest of Stanley. Over the next 12+ months there were thousands of smaller earthquakes as the fault continued to move. There are locations around Stanley Lake where evidence of the earthquake are visible. At the time of the earthquake, the closest ground sensors were in Challis and Cascade, ID. After the earthquake, sensors were installed throughout the area including at Mountain Village Resort and the Sourdough Lodge so that real time data collection could be sent via their WIFI signals. You can track seismic activity in the area on the USGS earthquake website.*



Advice from the Experts

(former SIHA Naturalists)

Geology may seem static but people throughout ID, MT, UT, WA, and OR felt the 2020 earthquake. Ask them about their experience.

Use food to illustrate the geology of the area!

Use the beach to have people create their own glacial lakes.

Keep it simple. People think geology is complicated, but there are ways to explain it so anyone can understand at some level. Gauge how much information your audience can handle and be flexible each time you are with a new group.



Make sure YOU are familiar with the processes that occurred to create our area.

Fault lines mean hot springs! Learn about how they form and visit as many as you can!!

PLANTS & WILDFLOWERS

There are many distinct wildflowers and plants you will find on the trails in the area. Lodgepole pines (pictured at left) dominate our landscape near the Redfish Visitor Center. Dead lodgepoles can be seen everywhere due to a mountain pine beetle outbreak in the mid-2000s through the early 2010s. This is a natural cycle that has been heightened due to fire suppression, climate change, and other factors. Visitors often ask about our dead and downed trees.



Blue stain fungus on a dead lodgepole pine (caused by mountain pine beetles)



Mountain Pine Beetle galleries



In 2022, **whitebark pine**, a hardy, high-elevation tree species found in the SNRA, was added to the endangered species list. This tree provides important food and habitat in high-elevation ecosystems. Whitebark are more common above 7,000 ft. elev. but can be found throughout the SNRA. Their distinct 5-needle bundles are easy to spot once you know what to look for.

Advice from the Experts (former SIHA Naturalists)

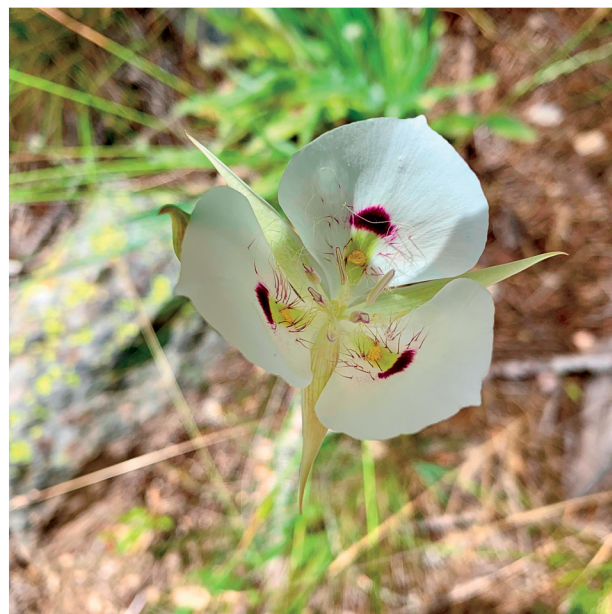
Do your own research on unique tidbits about different wildflowers and trees.

A Guided Walk isn't just identifying flowers for visitors. You have to know more than the names of the plants. Create a sub-theme for your flower walk: crazy uses of plants, how they can be used in art, who pollinates them, etc.

Take a flower guide with you and don't be afraid to tell visitors you don't know a plant name. Look it up! Even better, encourage them to use the field guide to identify it.

You will walk Fishhook Trail a lot! There are other, unnamed trails. Find them so you can switch up your guided walk locations.

Personal tip: the alpine wildflower communities are very different than what you encounter in the valley. Take the time to get up high and enjoy!



Wildflowers are seasonal, so each week brings new blooms. If you are doing a guided nature walk make sure you pre-walk the trail every so often before you bring visitors. The wildflowers may be completely different from one week to the next! The following is not meant to be a field guide, but it may help you familiarize yourself with some of the flora and their common names.

White mariposa 'Sego' lily
Calochortus eurycarpus

PLANTS & WILDFLOWERS

(cont.)



Spreading phlox
Phlox diffusa



Scarlett gilia
Ipomopsis aggregata



Evermann's fleabane
Erigeron evermannii



Common yarrow
Achillea millefolium



Arrowleaf balsamroot
Balsamorhiza sagittata

There will be opportunities to work on plant identification throughout training!



Shooting Star
Dodecatheon pulchellum



Sagebrush
Artemisia tridentata



HUMAN HISTORY

Archaeological artifacts suggest that humans were present here at least 10,000 years ago. Native American tribes who are believed to have visited the area in the summers, to hunt various animals and catch fish, include the Shoshone and Bannock. These tribal groups were known to live together and today they are federally recognized as the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. More specifically the Agaideka (salmon eater) and Dukudeka (sheep eater) bands of the Shoshone-Bannock have ties to the area. Winters in the area are harsh and it is assumed that this deterred humans from enduring more than the summer months here.

At the request of the Tribe, SIHA does not interpret indigenous history in the area without the input of the Shoshone-Bannock tribe. We are working on developing displays and interpretation at the Stanley Museum on the non-white history of the area. To learn more about the Shoshone-Bannock history, visit sbtribes.com/about. If you happen to pick up a book about tribal history, consider the author and their cultural biases before assuming it is in an accurate account of Indigenous history.

Advice from the Experts

(former SIHA Naturalists)

No one will remember all of the exact dates you give, so don't focus on giving a long list. Timelines are helpful. Know when events happened in relation to each other.

Instead of listing dates to lay out the history tell a story to illustrate what life was like or explain an event. When you are talking about a specific place, maps or other visuals can be a helpful visual for visitors to reference.

A few places to interpret human history:

- Carvings in the aspens on Fishhook Creek Trail - a good place to mention modern damage to history
- The historic Redfish Lodge District (c.1920s)
- Mining relics in the Stanley Basin
- Consider learning about SNRA congressional designation history to help contextualize preservation efforts.

When it comes to more recent human history, facts are contested among historians. Many believe that Alexander Ross, a Hudson Bay Company fur trapper, leading the Snake River Brigade in 1824, were the first Euro-Americans to visit the valley, while others argue that Ross' journal entries do not put him at Galena Summit viewing the Sawtooths but rather, near the headwaters of the East Fork of the Salmon River.

Whether or not this is true, it was beaver that brought the first white visitors to the area in the 1820s-1830s. Unfortunately for trappers, beaver were scarce and interest in the area waned until gold was discovered in 1863 by a group of miners led by "Captain" John Stanley. Stanley was not actually a captain, but had acquired the nickname from the prospectors he was leading. Shortages of supplies and lack of paydirt (dirt rich with gold) caused Stanley and his men to return to other territories, but Stanley's name was left on several landmarks and the town (founded in 1890).

For several years, miners attempted to strike it rich without success, until the late 1870s when silver and lead were found. Many mining towns flourished and collapsed before the end of the 19th century Vienna, Sawtooth City, Bonanza, Custer, and others. During the mining boom, beef, mutton, and hay suppliers prospered in the area by providing miners with needed supplies.

In the 1880s, a wagon road was built from the Wood River Valley over Galena summit. This access slowly began the settlement of the Sawtooth Valley. Sheep grazing began in 1902. Grazing of livestock (specifically cattle) still occurs in the basin today. By 1905, recreation was already becoming a large draw to the area and, of course, still is today. It wasn't until the 1930s that the Sawtooth Valley began to see real tourism.



LEAVE NO TRACE

This is arguably the most important part of SIHA's work. Over the last decade, the Sawtooths have seen a large increase in summer visitation and this was painfully true in 2020. With more visitors, we are seeing undereducated visitors impacting the land in many negative ways. In all of our programming, and in our own day-to-day interactions with nature, we practice the following principles, commonly known as the Leave No Trace Principles (LNT). There are only a handful of people who patrol the Sawtooth Wilderness and White Clouds during the summer. Any contacts we make concerning LNT may have a lasting impact on backcountry users' behaviors.

Leave No Trace Principles

1. Plan Ahead and Be Prepared
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

The SNRA's goal is to share at least three messages with folks traveling into the Wilderness: BEARS. POOP. FIRE. Simple, right? SIHA follows this messaging program.

BEARS: we recommend using a bear hang, bear canister, or Ursack in the backcountry. There is a front country food storage order we will cover in detail, it *requires* storing food and attractants in a bear-proof container or hard-sided vehicle. People can be fined for non-compliance.

POOP: Human waste must be buried in a 6-8 inch cathole or packed out. Toilet paper cannot be buried - it must be packed out. Make sure people have a plan!

FIRE: ground fires are prohibited in the Sawtooths and in some drainages no fires of any kind are allowed. We'll cover the details. We suggest people bring a gas

stove, like a Jetboil, if they want to heat water and food - then they don't have to know the details.



You must always have a First Aid kit with you during programming. The Visitor Center has kits to use, just make sure you return them.



Advice from the Experts

(former SIHA Naturalists)

Although we don't technically have an "agenda" during programs, there's still an underlying mission of preservation/protection. Set a good example for your program participants. Pick up litter if you see it, don't cut a trail, etc.

Develop sound bites so when you have the opportunity you can engage users beyond simply stating a principle: *"Did you know that last year, on Independence Day, over 100 campfires were found that had not been put out! Do you know the steps for putting out a campfire?"*

Learn how to use the FS radio. You will likely have to use it professionally at least once in the season.

Spend time exploring on your days off. If you can speak from direct experience about the terrain and location, it will help you share correct information with visitors. And, then you'll get to brag to your family and friend about all the cool places you are going.

We don't advertise every trail for good reason. Make sure you understand why.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

This section of the handbook does not explain general interpretation approaches or ideas; instead, it addresses the specific types of programs we do in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Your programs will be observed at least twice during the summer. You will meet with the Summer Programs Coordinator, a peer Naturalist, or the Executive Director to receive feedback. The observation form will be available to you before you are observed. We are open to other types of program formats. If you have an idea let us know. Our goal is to get visitors excited about the natural and cultural history of the area and maybe we need to update our approach!

Junior Ranger Programs

Jr. Ranger Programs are 40 – 50 min. long and are for kids ages 5 – 11. Naturalists choose the topics such as: Leave No Trace, birds, geology, fire ecology, etc. Because the audience is children, these programs are largely activity based.

Patio Talk

These are engaging, quick 15 minute talks that give visitors an overview of a main interest of the area. Talks are focused on something extremely pertinent like glaciation or the running of the kokanee during spawning season. These programs occur outside on the front porch of the Visitor Center. Make an announcement inside before you begin your program so guests can join you if they would like to.

Ranger Talk

This is a hybrid program that fits somewhere between a casual patio talk and a formal evening program. A 30-minute program typically seated for some in-depth discussion with options for an activity or two. It may include a short walk.

Evening Programs

Evening Programs begin with a campfire (if there are no fire restrictions) 15 min. prior to the program. Programs last 40-45 minutes with time for questions after the program. They include a interactive elements to keep kids engaged and content to keep adults engaged. Audiences span a large range of ages and naturalists have to pivot as needed to keep folks on the hook. Past topics have included beavers, nocturnal animals, forces that shape the Sawtooths, nature art, pronghorn, fur trapping, camp skits and songs, and many others.



Advice from the Experts

(former SIHA Naturalists)

Take advantage of “teachable moments.” A deer will inevitably walk behind you while you’re doing an evening program. Don’t pretend like it’s not there. Go with it! Point it out to those who haven’t noticed it. Try to incorporate it into your program, but if you can’t, that’s okay too.

Take care of yourself! You don’t want to burn out halfway through the season. What helps you recharge? Do you need to switch up your programming? Take a different trail? Learn some new content?

Always be learning. Take hikes on your day off, read the books SIHA sells, familiarize yourself as much as you can.

We interpret to deepen the connection people have to this special place.

Choose topics that interest you! If you aren’t feeling it, your participants won’t be either.

Be silly! Trust us, it makes everything more fun.

When all else fails telling nature-themed dad jokes will lighten the mood.



INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS (cont.)

Discovery Stations

Discovery Stations are set up at various locations for 1-1.5 hrs at a time. They include interactive teaching tools children and adults can touch (maybe you've heard of a touch table). Typically set up along a busy trail to the beach or lodge, visitors spend between 30 seconds and 10 minutes engaging you. We have several discovery stations already designed, they just need updated numbers for the current year. We may be asking each crew member to create a new discovery station so be ready with ideas! Some current topics include: scat and tracks, skulls, bears, wolves, mt. lions, and otter vs. beaver.

Trailhead Portals

Portals are discovery station-style programs that we set up at some of the busiest trailheads in the SNRA for 1 to 3 hrs. Visual aids and props are used to present the Leave No Trace principles to visitors before they begin their hike/backpack. Other topics are covered including wilderness rules, how to fill out a wilderness permit, and current trail conditions. Be ready for a fast paced few hours—sometimes you engage with hundreds of people!

Other locations

We provide discovery stations and/or trailhead portals at Stanley Lake, Iron Creek trailhead, Pettit Lake/Tin Cup trailhead, Redfish Lake Inlet trailhead, Fishhook Creek trailhead and Hell Roaring Creek trailhead and others as scheduled.

We also provide custom programs to school groups and summer camps on occasion and may ask Naturalists to help present these programs.

OTHER PROGRAMS SIHA NATURALISTS MAY DEVELOP

Guided Walks

We've had poor luck attracting visitors to guided walks. If a member of the public or school group requests one, we will likely have a naturalist pull a program together. Naturalists guide visitors on 1-2 hrs. long nature walks along nearby trails. Depending on your topic, you will generally head up Fishhook Creek Trail. With one hour for travel you will often not make it more than 3/4 of a mile up the trail before having to turn around. Guided walks can emphasize wildflowers, geology, wildlife, history, sagebrush ecology, etc.

Boat Tours

A pre-pandemic program that we haven't revived. Hosted in partnership with Redfish Lake Lodge, these tours leave from the marina dock. Lodge employees drive the Lady of the Lake pontoon boat. Naturalists tell visitors about the geology, flora, fauna, and history of Redfish Lake. The tours have between 4 and 12 participants and travel around the shoreline of Redfish Lake for approximately 1 hr. Reservations are made at the Lodge and includes a per person fee with a minimum of 4 adult participants.



INTERPRETIVE DISPLAYS

Throughout the summer season you may be responsible for putting together 1 or 2 interpretive displays for the Visitor Center (or other locations). These interpretive displays must convey information to visitors even though we are not speaking with them face to face.

There are at least three interpretive displays set up at the Redfish Center at all times. Each display is changed about once a season to keep the information new and fresh for returning summer visitors. Displays are text and image based with limited options for interacting. Coming up with an interactive option is great! We also use our displays to shout out books we sell relevant to the topic. If you are assigned a display, you will be scheduled in advance for your displays so you'll have plenty of time for creating.

Naturalist have been creating these displays since 2011 and many of them did not follow proper interpretive display techniques. Your job will be to evaluate, update, and redesign the displays using interpretive guidelines and to create new displays for topics we have not yet covered.

Interpretive Sign Design Information:

Make sure your fonts are readable (fancy fonts are pretty but not practical) and BIG. Usually anything less than 28pt is too small. You want visitors to be able to read your headlines from several feet away.

Use a limited amount of fonts and colors. Your display should have a simple, cohesive design. Bright colors and visuals draw people in. **USE THEM!**

If you can make your display interactive, **DO IT!** Consider including an animal track patterns on the floor or matching games are great examples.

Less is better but too little is useless. Break down sections into no more than 50-word segments.

Try to be succinct. Use the 3-30-3 rule. Create a design that has a 3 second message, a 30 second message, and a 3 minute message for visitors who want to engage at different levels.

Spend time researching interpretive displays at other locations. Evaluate what works and what doesn't. You can find a lot online.

2011 Display

colorful, large heading (if you can free-hand your headings so they still look professional, go for it)

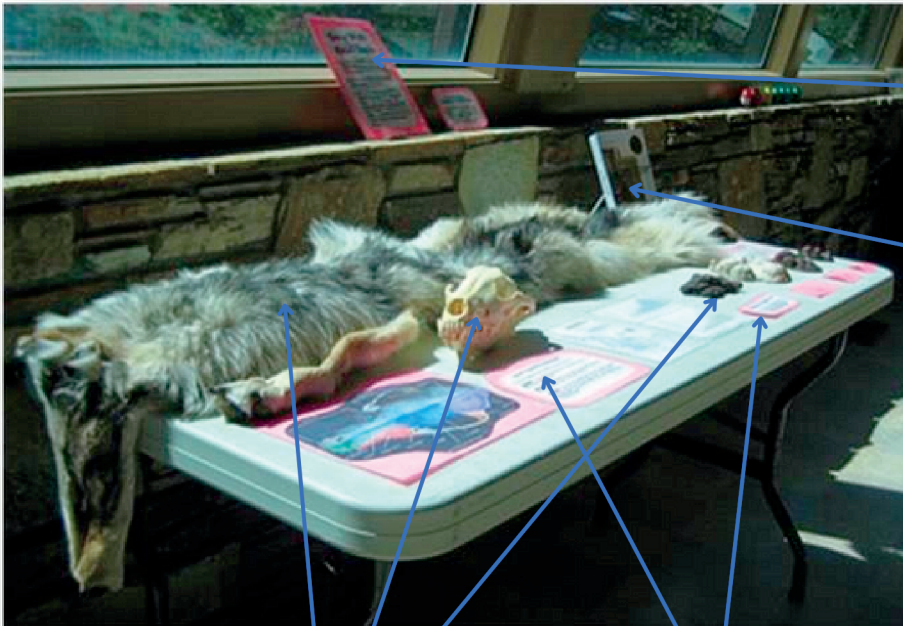


lots of bright visuals to draw people in

small amounts of bulleted text but the font is so little it is hard to read

INTERPRETIVE DISPLAYS (cont.)

Touch Table Example



font is too small but the bright colors are great

relevant sale book displayed

multiple artifacts to touch (yikes, skull must be boxed they are too fragile to allow visitors to touch them!)

limited text

More Notes:

Materials for displays are available at the Redfish Visitor Center & Gallery.

Historic photos are available to use.

If you'd like to revamp past displays, text for each should be on Dropbox (for older displays) or Google Drive (for newer displays).

Your display will be evaluated by your peers. You are expected to revise and improve it based on feedback.

Display Example

large, colorful title

quite a bit of small text, most visitors won't read through all of it

relevant sale book displayed



lots of awesome visuals, colorful and big enough to see from a few feet away

artifacts to examine more closely (even though this isn't a touch table)

REDFISH VISITOR CENTER & GALLERY



Advice from the Experts (former SIHA Naturalists)

Take your lunch break outside!

Acknowledge every visitor that comes in, even if they don't come straight to the desk. This way, they know you're available if they need you.

Tell visitors that make purchases that all of our proceeds go to SIHA programs like Jr. Rangers, etc. It's important they know where their money is going.

Familiarize yourself with all of the maps that you'll be handing out and using to give directions. If you do this upside-down then when you are behind the counter you will know how to correctly orient yourself!

Keep yourself busy and the Center looking professional, whether it's filling the brochure rack, dusting, organizing, mopping up water from the drinking fountain or researching programs.

Don't bury your head in a book or computer screen – you become less approachable.

Put on a smile. It can be tiring to answer the same 3 questions all day but don't take it out on the visitor. A smile, even if you aren't feeling it, will change your attitude.

In addition to programs, every Naturalist will also be responsible for working behind the desk at the Visitor Center. Each summer we see nearly 15,000 people walk through our doors. You will often be the first or only face visitors see representing the Sawtooths. A cheerful demeanor and smile always goes a long way when interacting with the public. The visitor center is open daily from 9:30am – 5:00pm and is a public resource for visitors and our local community.

There is an art gallery with regional artists' work available for purchase (35% of gallery sales benefit our educational programs), public restrooms, and a lake viewing area. The media room, where movies are played, has been closed during the pandemic but may open in 2024.



The visitor center also includes a bookstore with books, nature guides, and other educational items for sale. Each naturalist will operate the point-of-sale system for the bookstore. ALL revenue comes right back to SIHA. This is very important to tell visitors. Their purchases are directly supporting our Junior Ranger programs, nature hikes, etc.

Most importantly, the visitor center is a place for visitors to get their questions answered. Naturalists are not expected to know everything, but are expected to know where to find the answers to visitors' questions. Most questions revolve around activities in the area, trip planning, and wildlife. You will shadow returning staff before covering the desk on your own.

Naturalists are trained in opening and closing procedures (these will be accessible online) and will also participate in the general upkeep of the visitor center; dusting, restocking inventory, tidying up the Kid's Corner, cleaning bathrooms, taking out garbage, etc. We all have to pitch in to keep everything running!

We hope this won't be an issue in 2024, but changes to daily operations based on public health safety may include wearing PPE at all times during working hours, limiting the number of visitors inside the building, installing physical barriers between visitors and crew, and regularly disinfecting high-touch surfaces. SIHA is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment. If you feel uncomfortable about something, please speak up.



EVENTS & SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The Sawtooth Association hosts a number of special events and programs each year. Some are annual programs and others occur as they become available or as we are able to organize them. Each naturalist is assigned to help plan and implement one of the events.

The **Sawtooth Forum & Lecture Series** (FLS) began in 2007. Every other Friday throughout July and August SIHA hosts a guest speaker outside at the Stanley Museum. Programs span a variety of topics from geology to raptors, storytelling and climate science. Each program begins at 5 pm and lasts about an hour with time for questions. The SIHA crew helps set up for the programs and attends them to learn more about the area throughout the season.

On the Saturday closest to August 9th we celebrate **Smokey Bear's Birthday** at the Visitor Center. The event includes a birthday cake, kid's activities, an appearance from Smokey himself, and presentations from a USFS wildfire crew, if they are available.

We hold **History Day** at the Stanley Museum, which includes an ice cream booth. This event includes kid's activities, outdoor history displays, and tours. It is put on to increase visitation and visibility of the Museum.

At the end of August SIHA and Idaho Rivers United team up to put on the **Sawtooth Salmon Festival**. This event celebrates salmon and educates visitors about this important keystone species. It includes bus tours to several locations along the river where salmon create redds (spawning beds) that are visible, educational activities, music, and anything else we can think of! We try to encourage other organizations to join us with educational booths, as well as food and beverage vendors and a band. It looks a bit different every year.

Other special guest speakers and programs are scheduled throughout the season. If you encounter an author, adventurer, historian, or scientist who you think would make a good program presenter let us know. We like to schedule in special speakers at our evening programs at the Redfish Center throughout the season. Or, we can cook up something new on the fly.

We expect to run events as normal this season, unforeseen circumstances may change how we hold and host events.





STANLEY MUSEUM

The Stanley Museum is the historic Valley Creek Ranger Station (1908-1972). During this time Forest Service Rangers and other staff lived and worked out of this location. In 1972, when the SNRA was created, the new ranger station was built where it is today (between Stanley and Redfish Lake on Highway 75).

SIHA took over management of the site as a museum in the early 1980s. The Museum is located less than a mile north of Stanley on Highway 75 at the confluence of Valley Creek and the Salmon River. The Museum is staffed by the Historic Specialists. The Museum is open daily 10am-5pm. Many artifacts in the Museum interpret the daily life of local residents. Other topics include mining, mountaineering, hunting and trapping, and what life was like for the Forest Service Rangers who lived there.

The site consists of 3 buildings built between 1929 and 1935 with the help of the Civilian Conservation Corps, including the Ranger office and Ranger residence, a garage/switchboard building that we now use as an office and storage for our bookstore inventory, and a toolshed/ice house that has our newest interpretive display, teaching visitors about the history of the Forest Service in the area.

Advice from the Experts (former Museum Staff)

Learn how to set up the FLS tent early on. If you can get it down to a science it makes things a lot easier. 3 people can do it, 4 is better. You need 6 to move it.

The Museum can be quiet. Bring work with you that you can do behind the desk whether it is reading research or developing a display or program. But, make sure you greet every visitor. People can be confused when they walk through the door and a friendly hello makes all the difference.

We have scavenger hunts for kids who come into the Museum. Make sure all the artifacts listed are on display—things get moved around or removed from time to time. Know where everything is!



SIHA has a long-term goal to reconstruct a fourth building onsite, originally a Forest Service Clerk's residence. There is also a barn that was part of the original Ranger Station complex on the adjacent property.

We hope to install a new permanent exhibit in 2024 that shares some of the Indigenous history of the area. The contents of this exhibit were provided by the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and SIHA is working directly with the Tribes' Language and Cultural Preservation Department. You'll learn more during training.

Many events happen at the Museum throughout the summer including the Forum and Lecture Series, History Day, and the Salmon Festival. The grounds are also available as an event space for family reunions, weddings, and other gathers as long as they do not impact operations.

The image at the top of the page is from the 1980s, after SIHA took over operation of the site and turned it into a museum.



SUGGESTED READING

The following titles are not required reading (except for museum staff, who must read *Stanley-Sawtooth Country*), but if you want to learn more about the area before you come and be better prepared as a Naturalist, we recommend you check them out. We have many of these titles available at the Visitor Center and the Museum for you to browse when you get here. Some of these books cover basic interpretive principles while others are specific to the area. Enjoy!

INTERPRETATION

A Crash Course in Interpretation
David Smaldone

Foundations in Interpretation
Free online course through the
National Park Service

*Into the Field: A Guide to Locally
Focused Teaching*
Clare Walker Leslie, John
Tallmadge, and Tom Wessels

Interpreting for Visitors
William J. Lewis

Environmental Interpretation
Sam H. Ham

*The Last Child in the Woods:
Saving Our Children From
Nature-Deficit Disorder*
Richard Louv



THE SNRA

Stanley-Sawtooth Country
Esther Yarber and Edna McGown

Traplines
John Rember

*Redfish Lake Lodge: A Look at the
Early History of Redfish Lake Lodge*
Clark T. Hegler

*Birds, Plants, and Mammals of the
Rocky Mountains*
Lone Pine Publishing

Browse our Naturalist blog:
*The Alpine
Examiner*



If you have any other questions, please let us know! The Sawtooths are a special place and it's only right that you should have a wonderful time while you're here.

As a Naturalist you will be asked to create content for our online platforms, so don't forget to check out our website: www.discoversawtooth.org, and follow us on Instagram and Facebook **@SawtoothAssociation** if you have your own account. Check out our YouTube channel for past summer speakers **@sawtoothassociation**. If you are not familiar with these platforms, we'd suggest doing some research so you start to get comfortable using them.

You will also research, write and post at least two blog posts on a relevant topic of your choice during the summer. Our website is WordPress with an Elementor theme that makes formatting pretty easy, but does require attention to detail.

We are so excited that you are joining our team. See you soon and safe travels to Stanley!

