

Sawtooth

INTERPRETIVE
& HISTORICAL

Association

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2024

“You are not in the mountains, the mountains are in you.”

~ John Muir

President's Letter

A warm hello to all our SIHA Friends and Supporters!

We all have something to celebrate this season! After three years of thoughtful and diligent work, SIHA accepted a very generous donation of the former Session's Lodge property at Obsidian. The site will be the home of the future “Center for the Sawtooths.”

This mid-valley campus will be used to further SIHA's mission for generations to come: *to protect and advance the natural and cultural history of Idaho's Sawtooth – Salmon River Country through preservation and education.* You will find more details about how this project benefits all of us inside the newsletter.

The Association also faced challenges this summer: a late opening due to planned road construction around the Redfish Visitor Center was followed by a two-week evacuation when the Bench Lake Fire threatened the Redfish Lake complex. Just when we thought there was nothing else to worry about, the Wapiti Fire led to an evacuation of Lower Stanley, causing us to cancel the Sawtooth Salmon Festival and close the Stanley Museum due to hazardous smoke levels. Thanks to Lin, Erica, our seasonal staff, and board

Megan Carley

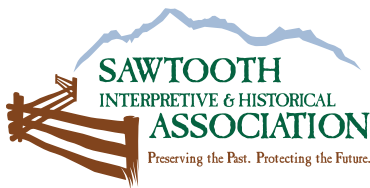


members, SIHA was able to pivot our programming during closures. Program shifts allowed SIHA to continue reaching visitors and providing our summer crew with opportunities to hone their skills in communication and education for the benefit of those who visited throughout the summer months. The trying summer highlighted SIHA's resilience and the importance of the services we provide to visitors and our community.

We are excited to dream about how the Center for the Sawtooths will fold into the Association's current operations and we'll be reaching out to all of you, our supporters, to gather feedback and ideas as we dive into a master planning process. We look forward to taking SIHA to the next level to increase our mission for the public who love, live and visit this magical place. Just another sign that the mountains are in You! We hope you will consider SIHA in your year-end gift planning to help us climb higher!

Wishing you all a joyous holiday season and new year and thanks to each and every one of you for your continued support.

Stewart Wilder,
Board President



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Lin Gray, Executive Director
Erica Cole, Business Manager

2024 SUMMER CREW

Programs Coordinator: Alicia Lindbom
Historic Specialists: Azelie Wood,
Morgan McCully
Naturalists: Heath Bagley, Rory Cushen,
Jenna Downing
Volunteers: Steve and Chari Maier,
Jeff Lindbom

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Idaho Rivers United
Stanley Community Library

FOLLOW US!



SIHA - Team Highlight

Dave Pinney - Board Member



Dave joined SIHA's Board of Directors in 2022. Originally from suburban Chicago, he moved west to study at the University of Idaho, where he earned a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1988. Shortly after graduation, Dave and his wife, Melissa, relocated to Boise, where they raised their two children, Kyle and Christine. During his 30-year career, Dave worked in the tech industry, designing computer memory chips.

While in Boise, Dave and Melissa began visiting the Sawtooth Mountains, making regular trips to Stanley.

Like many others, they quickly fell in love with the area's natural beauty and rich history. Dave's connection to SIHA began when he and Melissa brought their children to the Stanley Museum. Over time, his interest in the region's past and his desire to support a meaningful local organization led him to become more involved with SIHA. After retiring in 2018, Dave and Melissa moved to Stanley full-time, and when asked to consider joining the board, he jumped at the chance!

As a board member, Dave is a hands-on volunteer who contributes to SIHA's work days by assisting with everything from tear-downs and rebuilds to webcam troubleshooting to cleaning projects. He also helps at the Redfish Visitor Center and Stanley Museum, volunteering his time at the front desks. For Dave, one of the most rewarding aspects of being involved with SIHA is the opportunity to learn more about the people who have shaped the Sawtooth Country's history.

He enjoys deepening his understanding of the region's past and contributing to conversations that uncover the stories of those who lived here before him. Outside of his work with SIHA, Dave is a director at the Salmon River Clinic in Stanley and a founder/director of the Pulaski Users Group, a nonprofit dedicated to the stewardship of Central Idaho's public lands. His deep connection to the region and his commitment to its preservation make him a highly valued member of the SIHA board.



Here's a peek at the new permanent Shoshone-Bannock history display in the Stanley Museum with replica projectile points and a digging stick. Made possible in part by funding from the Idaho Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Goat License Plate fund administered by the Sawtooth Society.

OUR 2024 IMPACT

6

Summer Crew members and two 6-week volunteers made all of these numbers possible!

58

new SNRA Junior and Master Rangers promised to enjoy and respect this special place during their Ranger pledge.

4,105

people explored the Stanley Museum and learned about our local history.

227

Sawtooth Summer Series attendees at six programs deepening our understanding of the SNRA.

6,885

visitors served at the Redfish Visitor Center & Gallery.

93

Free programs conducted including Ranger Talks, Junior Ranger programs, Patio Talks and Evening Programs, with over 400 attendees.

10

local and regional artists were part of the Redfish Gallery.

3,663

Connections made with visitors in the field, on trails, in campgrounds, and at Discovery Stations.

137

visitors attended History Day and tried their hand at roping, candle making, gold panning and more!

356

fans of Smokey Bear joined us to celebrate his 80th birthday!

111

students from the Wood River Valley attended custom programs designed and delivered by SIHA Naturalists.

3,358

Public land users were educated at our trailhead portals held at the busiest SNRA trailheads.



Introducing the Center for the Sawtooths

We are so excited to share more about our newest project with you - it's a big one! In July, Ezra, Al, and Amelia Jones donated a property to SIHA (the former Sessions Lodge) located in the mid-Sawtooth Valley at Obsidian. SIHA is eager to open this historic waypoint to the public again, though it won't be a cafe. The site will become SIHA's permanent home and an education center we are calling the Center for the Sawtooths. We have a lot of ideas and dreams for the property and will spend the next year working out long term needs, feasibility, and a master plan.

The goals and mission of SIHA aligned with the donors' hopes: to use the site as a resource to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural features, ecosystems, and human history that make up the Sawtooth National Recreation Area through education and collaboration with partners.

Our vision is for the site to be an asset to our community, a resource to visitors, an educational hub, and a home for SIHA's staff and like-minded nonprofits who, just like everyone else, struggle to find housing and office/work space in the area.

SIHA has much to accomplish. An internal

fundraising effort and generous anonymous challenge match brought in funds for site clean up and operations in the first two years. We'll announce the next phase of fundraising efforts when master planning is complete.

We've already begun site clean up and will be reaching out in the coming months with opportunities to join us for work days, requests for feedback as we work through our master planning process, and maybe even a gathering or two to celebrate.





Stay informed by subscribing to our email list located at the bottom of any page on our website: discoversawtooth.org.

The location of Sessions Lodge is just south of the Williams Creek Trailhead in the Sawtooth Valley. Its history highlights the development that, in part, led to the establishment of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). A subdivision with approximately 150 quarter-acre and half-acre lots and an airstrip was in progress directly across the highway from the lodge. The US Forest Service paid owners the appraised value for the properties in this subdivision, curbing development that could have overtaken the Sawtooth Valley.

At the Center for the Sawtooths we plan to share this and other stories that explain why the Sawtooth National Recreation Area was established, what it is actively protecting, and how it has functioned over the last fifty years.

If you are interested in donating to the project at this stage or would like to join a work party, you can learn more here. 



CENTER FOR THE SAWTOOTH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

REACHING NEW MILESTONES EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

2025 Goals

- House SIHA's summer crew onsite.
- Complete Master Plan and Site Design.
- Continue developing the fundraising plan.

October 2024

SIHA begins site review and design narrative that will lead to master planning.

August 2024

Volunteers and Board members begin demolition on several smaller buildings onsite. Over 500 hours are volunteered to clean, repair, and demo buildings.

July 2024

Ownership of 2 Sessions Dr. is transferred to SIHA!

Fall 2023

SIHA launches an internal fundraising effort for initial planning, site clean up, and operating costs. **The goal is exceeded in May 2024!**

Summer 2023

Working with Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality, Smiley Bears remove old fuel tanks and lines. Testing confirms no ground contamination.

Fall 2021

SIHA and the Smiley Bears, LLC (the Jones Family) begin discussing the possibility of a land donation.

Would you like to become a part of history?

There are still a few spaces in “Your Pathway to Sawtooth History” at the Stanley Museum.



Purchase a brick memorializing a loved one, sharing words to live by, or commemorating your time here. Funds raised from brick sales go into SIHA's Historic Building Fund to help with the maintenance and upkeep of historic buildings and future projects.



Clarissa Rinehart

Join the fun with SIHA's Board of Directors

We are recruiting!

SIHA's Board includes folks with all kinds of connections to the Sawtooth National Recreation Area from former USFS staff and seasonal summer crewmembers, to longtime locals and passionate public land stewards.

Do you have a love of the Sawtooth and Salmon River country, and an interest in protecting and advancing its natural and cultural history?

Consider learning more about how you might be able to contribute as a member of SIHA's board. Contact Lin Gray, Executive Director, at lgray@discoversawtooth.org for more details.

Have you been following the Alpine Examiner?

The Alpine Examiner is SIHA's blog, posted weekly in the summer and periodically throughout the winter. The blog is an opportunity for our summer crew to enhance their writing skills and share what they are learning and experiencing in the Sawtooths. It is also a way for you to enjoy the history, wildlife, and seasonal happenings from afar. One week might be an “Ode to Squirrels” followed by a review of the “U.S. Forest Service and their Core Values” the next. The views in each piece are the opinion and research of the author, so readers get the chance to experience different perspectives. Here is an excerpt from our Historic Specialist, Azelie, from her August 18th blog post, “A Brief History of Schooling in the Stanley Basin.”

“...for the few children living in the Stanley area just over 100 years ago, the beginning of the school year looked quite different than it does today. Before the year 1914, there was no schooling at all for the children of Upper or Lower Stanley, except what little was provided by their busy parents. That fall, however, a kind-hearted and determined woman named Mrs. Josephine Thompson decided to address that problem.

Mrs. Thompson, with her husband John (after whom Thompson Peak is named), had moved up to the Basin several years prior to 1914, upon the completion of a previous teaching contract. With no children of their own, they began to befriend local families, and Mrs. Thompson soon realized that there was a need for a more formal method of education for the children of the area.

After receiving approval from the Custer County School Board and the State of Idaho School Board, Mrs. Thompson opened up her home as a boarding school. There at the Thompson ranch, four children came to live through the year, and another young girl would walk—or ski in the winter—for class during the day.”

You can find all of the blogs in the Alpine Examiner by scanning this QR code.



PEOPLE IN NATURE

"Through The Mist" Lea Driever



WILDLIFE

"Winter Fox" Jim Stark



SCENERY

"Stanley Lake" Colin Randolph

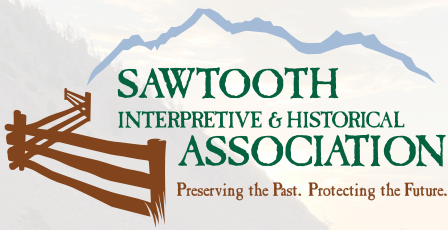


Congratulations to our 9th Annual Summer Photo Contest Winners!

A special thank you to all our 2024 supporters! The Sawtooth Interpretive & Historical Association is honored to receive funding and in-kind contributions from individuals, foundations, and businesses who support our mission. We extend our sincerest thanks to our past and present members, donors, and volunteers.

You may have noticed our 2024 donor recognition missing from the newsletter.

We have moved our annual donor list to digital-only and you can find it in the digital version of the newsletter on our website! **Discoversawtooth.org**



P.O. Box 75 - Stanley, Idaho 83278

Shop Our New Online Store!

Unwrap
SNRA Magic
this Holiday
Season!

We are thrilled to announce the launch of SIHA's online store.
Our virtual doors are wide open to welcome you!

We invite you to shop for SNRA merchandise including:

- t-shirts • beanies • baseball hats •
- ornaments • trail maps • patches •
- magnets • stickers • and more! •

**Order before December 15 to
ensure delivery before Christmas.**

Questions? Email Erica at: books@discoversawtooth.org.

Cherish your Sawtooth memories with a keepsake from
SIHA's online store while supporting our mission.

Scan the QR code and start shopping! ►





Jeff Moeser

Our deepest thanks to our members, volunteers, donors, seasonal staff, community members, partners, foundations, businesses, and visitors. 2024 was an unexpectedly tough year due to the Bench Lake and Wapiti Fires. Your continued support keeps the Association energized as we strive to reach as many people as possible.

Anonymous (9)
 Addy & Braden Kirkham-Morrill
 Alex & Pat Higgins
 Alex & Sue Orb
 Alfred Haas
 Al Jones
Amelia Jones
 Snow Bunny Drive-in
Andy Munter & Janet Kellam
 Anna Means
 Arlene Funderburg
 Arlene Oyer
 Barb & Barry Neiwert
Becky & Doug Obletz
Bernice Hartz
 Bill & Cydney Wood
 Bill & Peggy Hart
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 In memory of Carol Olbum
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 Tim & Becky Cronh - Stanley Baking
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 In honor of Leo Ariwite
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 Sawtooth Society
 Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
 Stanley-Sawtooth Chamber of Commerce
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In memory of Ken Hartz, long time SIHA volunteer, docent, & board member

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 Joan Mackey
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 Tom Stuart



Bold supporters contributed to more than one fundraising campaign.

We strive to be accurate with our acknowledgements. If you notice an error or omission, please contact Lin Gray, lgray@discoversawtooth.org

www.DiscoverSawtooth.org | PO Box 75 - Stanley, Idaho 83278 | 208.721.5658