



Pacific Northwest Region
Malheur National Forest
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Forest Feature

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Cooperative Efforts Yield new Skills and Needed Wilderness Trail Maintenance

John Day and Prairie City, OR. – At the end of June, the Malheur National Forest's north zone recreation staff and trail crew began a three-day wilderness trail bridge construction training with Alex Ray, owner of Payette Environmental Services, LLC.

The extended trail team included four trail crew employees; Kenny Quillan, Erica Carlson, Lauren Jurewicz, and Chris Conant, Brain Radcliff, the 2020 Recreation VetsWork Intern; and two permanent district recreation staff. Alex also joined the crew in conducting the laborious work.

The training took place in one of the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness's most popular areas, Strawberry Lake. During the training the extended trail crew learned and applied skills to replace two single log stringer bridges (21' and 13' spans) on the loop trail that goes around the Lake. They also staged the materials to undertake a third bridge replacement later in the summer. As wilderness, every ounce of this work was accomplished by hand, including all saw work and the rigging operations to move the two bridge stringers. The team also addressed a number of drainage issues and a large trail hole created by a fallen tree. An incredible amount of work was conducted in these three days, and the training was an overwhelming success. Take a closer look the next time you have the opportunity to hike around Strawberry Lake.

This is the second year that the Malheur National Forest's recreation staff have worked with Payette Environmental Services to conduct trail work trainings. In 2019 they worked on the Big Creek Trail to address minor drainage issues and construct a turnpike in a boggy section of the trail. They are already discussing the training and project needs for next year; rehabilitating trail segments with deeply incised erosion. "Each year has provided a new set of skills that has allowed our recreation program to make big strides towards improving our trail system." -Jared Bowman, North Zone Recreation Manager.

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Figure 1- Bridge 1 rigging.



Figure 2- Bridge 1 completed



Figure 3- Bridge 2 before



Figure 4 - Bridge 2 complete

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