

## APRIL 2010 OVERVIEW

### KLAMATH BACKCOUNTRY TRAIL CREW

#### STEVEN ADDISON

Apprehension, nervousness and tangible excitement were abound as 18 strangers met for the first time to begin a 5 ½ month adventure. From Formia, Italy (via San Diego), Brooklyn, NYC (and other points on the eastern seaboard) to Wisconsin and Minnesota and up and down the West Coast we arrived safely to Sacramento by train, plane and automobile. Fresh faced and bushy tailed we all sat through a week of orientation on the edge of our seats for the final push north, to the Klamath Bioregion.

The ride north (thanks Tina Ratcliff, Calith Sprock and Taylor Rose (Ward) for the safe driving) was an eye opener for many of us, with snowy peaks to our western and eastern flanks and Mt Shasta directly north. We stopped in Yreka, CA for a last dalliance with the world of conveniences. Then we made a mad dash west on highway 96 toward Happy Camp. Awaiting us at the Happy Camp ranger station were Trails Foreman Phil McNeal (Trinity '85, Klamath '97, '02, Kings '98) legendary packer and poet Bill Roberts, and the indispensable Cypress LeBlanc. After checking out the digs in the sleepy hamlet of Happy Camp, we followed Phil to our new home, in the Clear Creek watershed (Lat. 41 43.735, Long W123 32.074).

Reactions varied as we drove through the Douglas Firs, Incense Cedars, Tan Oaks and the occasional Port Orford Cedars (for a more detailed description check out The Klamath Knot). We shared a collective gasp as we crossed the lush Clear Creek gorge. After seven miles along a Forest Service dirt road, we arrived at our new home, No Man's Trailhead. Steven Jerome (Stanislaus '07) our all season go-to-guy, Ellen Andrews the Scott/Salmon River Trails Foreman and packer, Ken Delia our SCA volunteer were all milling about on our arrival. In the kitchen was the glue and backbone to any trail crew camp, the cook, Ann McBroom finishing our dinner of extra large helpings of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, veggie-patties, homemade gravy and all the fixins.

Our first weekend together was spent making camp more homey. Tyler Frykman and Andy Johnson worked tirelessly with Aaron Smith (Shasta-Trinity '08) hanging tarps and putting the final touches on Ms. Ann's Backcountry Kitchen. Our very own Brooklynite, Ben "Benny Good-Times" Fusco-Gessick and Sarah "The Hatchet" Borman may have found their true calling as Lumberjacks, as they chopped through rounds of Doug Fir. Tents were up and clusters of personal tents became neighbors within the forest. Evenings around the camp fire consisted of getting acquainted and talking about what lies ahead. Taylor and Santino Alvarez strummed cords on the guitar, while Donald Beasley provided entertaining lyrics about clean white socks and loves left behind. Sunday found us preparing for the work week and our new routine, up before dawn and in bed well after dark. Also on Sunday Lee Bundy drove into camp and made himself at home on our crew.

"There is no good and bad, just what you take out of the situation", words spoken by our Katie Shell, philosophically describing our first week in Clear Creek. Monday morning came too early and too cold, but with the sun rising over the canyon wall, Phil delivered a safety sermon about the hazards and dangers of living in the mountains. Afterward we set off for work to brush and learn about the finer points of trail work. By late afternoon sprinkles gave to rain, and by evening a deluge. Tuesday, our camp and crew were soaked to the bone, but back on the trail. Our happy-go-lucky smiles were slowly turning into smiles of endurance. Tents took on water and dry clothes and sleeping bags became a luxury. On Wednesday morning we awoke to a winter wonderland, our camp covered in inches of snow. Tarps sagged with the accumulation of snow, and personal tents collapsed throughout the night. The Klamath crew found itself weary of the cold and precipitation.

Huddled around our fire pit Wednesday morning we stared into the continuing snow. This is what memories are made of – experiences shared with one another, some good, some bad. Like awaking at 3:00 AM to discover, 2 inches of water inside your tent; so you get up and make a fire in the cold, dark snowy hours before dawn just to be joined by others in similar predicaments, or watching Alejandra Orozco's and Donald Beasley's first encounters in the snow. We steeled ourselves and made the best of our situation, by getting back on the trail and sometime before lunch holes in the sky opened and pieces of sunshine fell like manna. By evening the worst had passed and laughter began returning. Thursday's scattered showers came and went, and Friday's sunshine and warmth a welcomed companion. As reported to Phil LaFollette on Saturday, "Everyone is safe, a little damp, a tad bit cold, but smiling".

**CURRICULUM:** The curriculum for the whole month of April was action packed. The 2010 Orientation at McClellan Business Park was jammed with how-to-do this and that. We had workshops on EEOP, Sobriety and Leadership, Conflict

Management, Health and Safety, Packers and much more. David Jensen and Alejandra Orozco taught techniques on starting fires and lantern lighting. We had Lee Bundy's class on tool sharpening class and general how to be effective on the trail. Russ Juncal set our imagination and brains ablaze with his thought provoking instruction about the environment, climate change, basic geology and the importance of bioregionalism.

**ODDS AND ENDS:** A big thank you for everyone who taught and conducted workshops during Orientation, individual thank you cards are in route. Thanks to Aaron Smith, Steve Jerome, and Ann McBroom for setting up camp for us. Another big thanks to Dan Brown and the Shasta-Trinity /Stanislaus crew for the use of your van (hey guys, where's the maintenance log?). Big ups to the Dreadlock Kingpin Ken Delia for picking up the loose ends and Phil McNeal for the great project and camp. Finally, thanks to Lee Bundy, aka "Super Bundy" for the instruction, inspiration, insight and intrigue. You will be missed, see you in Garden Gulch.