Idaho Sled Dog Challenge Perspective

By Pat & Nina Trainor, Volunteers

January 28-February 1, 2020 turned out to be a great event for the Idaho Sled Dog Challenge. This was the third year and 20 teams were entered. Of course, not all finished due to the heavy, wet snow on Saturday night that played havoc with the volunteer groomers and competing dog sled teams. The 100 milers started at the Little Ski Hill and ended at Cascade and the 300 milers started at the same check point and ended at the Wye Campground. On January 28th, the event kicked off with “Meet the Mushers” at the Idaho First Bank building (open to the public), mushers, veterinarians, volunteers, handlers, promoters and others were able to taste some yummy food and ask questions. The Girl Scouts were recognized for the treats that they made for the sled dogs. Charmaine was able to talk about her sled and introduce her dog, Soldier. She explained to the audience about the difference between a house dog and a sled dog and talked about how most mushers like to build their own sleds so that they can repair them when on the trail. Most first time sled dog enthusiasts are surprised at how thin and “mutt like” the dogs are. They are athletes that love to run. They typically burn 10,000 calories a day when participating in events. They are outside dogs.

The lead veterinarian, Rhonda Aliah, D.V.M., talked about sled dogs and led the volunteers in a short training session about how to assist the vets and aspects of the musher/dog relationships that we should be sensitive to as volunteers. There are specific rules about how to assist at these check points. If these rules are violated, mushers can be disqualified.

At the Wye checkpoint, Lisa and Mark Schneider coordinated the many volunteers. They had specific plans in mind on how to set up the musher, veterinarian, food and support tents.

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Volunteers moved tons of snow to set up warming stations and tent locations. Shawn Ogden is a master at setting up these huge canvas tents and knows the attributes to make it all go together in a smooth operation. Both Shawn and Ron Hundahl donated and hauled cords of firewood. There was a ton of extra food made and served by the volunteers, so the mushers and volunteers never went hungry. Granite Mountain Café, The Intersection and Subway donated food as well. Steve made sure that the fire pits were going strong. Bill Vermette helped with a ham radio operation, since there typically is no cell phone service at the Wye Campground. Some people like Betsy Ogden and others came on days when they weren’t signed up because it is exciting and you don’t want to miss it when the teams arrive. The timers and handlers were at the ready as the dogs came through. The monitors who monitored the tracking devices played a critical safety role as the musher’s progress were constantly being tracked. Linnea Hall of New Meadows was a “spirit cheerleader” who provided a flamingo theme and setting that put a smile on all attendees.

There were school buses from Cambridge whose riders watched the mushers take off at the start (Little Ski Hill). New Meadows riders took a bus to the Wye checkpoint where they missed the dogs but were treated to a guided tour of the Wye checkpoint. Students made posters of the dog sleds and some of the mushers. These were posted in the food tent and were well appreciated by everyone.

The mushers came from Alaska and all over the contiguous states. The Awards Banquet featured Bob Long, winner of the world’s longest horse race (the Mongol Derby). His presentation was riveting. The meal was made and served by Incahoots BBQ and was delicious. As the mushers received their awards and checks, they were filled with emotion. Several have run dogs for more than 20 years. They are passionate about their sport. It is special to witness.

Finally, there was a volunteer sign up and meeting on January 13th at 6:00 p.m. at the Meadow Creek Lodge for the Wye checkpoint volunteers. The volunteers who followed the IdahoSledDogChallenge.com could attend and sign up for what volunteer work they were willing to do. (There were approximately 76 volunteers at the Wye checkpoint.) Trained volunteers can make light work of events such as this, so if you are interested, consider signing up for next year’s event.

Council’s own Laurie Warren won the 100-mile sled dog event. It is clear that she is highly regarded by the other mushers and those who know her love for her dogs. Jessie Royer won the 300 mile event. If you are a dog lover, this may be an event you want to attend next year. If you have access to the internet, you can track the progress of the sled dog teams to determine if you want to try to see them come in to a check point. It was cold but we dressed for it. We hope to see you next year! 😊
Friends of the Weiser River Trail extend their sincere condolences to friends and family of avid trail supporter, Terry Bonner, who passed away in the fall of 2019. Terry was one of the earliest supporters of the Weiser River Trail, serving as the first weed specialist and serving on the Board of Directors for several years, including a stint as President. Even after retiring from the Board of Directors, Terry remained actively engaged in supporting the trail as a volunteer, a liaison with the community of Midvale, and helping with the annual Wagon Train event.

Born in 1939 in Huntsville, Arkansas, where his father was a preacher, Terry always loved the farm “scene.” He grew up loving horses and as a child, rode his cousin’s horses. When Terry was 10 years old, his family moved from Phoenix, Arizona, to Eureka, California. It was here, at age 10, that Terry met his future wife, Kay. According to Kay, they were “instant best friends,” and Kay can’t really remember a time in her life without her best friend, Terry. Kay and Terry were married on Terry’s 20th birthday, in 1959, in Eureka, California.

Terry did not start studying to become a preacher until he was 30. He joined the Navy right out of high school, training to become a dental technician. After three years in the Navy, he received an honorable discharge. Terry then joined the Air Force and continued his dental technician work. During his four years in the Air Force, Terry was stationed in San Diego and Corpus Christi. In his last year in the Air Force, Terry purchased a friend’s dental laboratory and went into that full-time.

During this busy time of Terry’s career, he and Kay welcomed three children: Teresa Bonner, Janice Miller and Adam Bonner. Their family grew over the years to include seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Terry bought his first horse at age 40, an Arabian cross. Later on he was given a Missouri Fox Trotter and went on to breed Arabians to Fox Trotters for several years, breeding and selling many fine horses over the years.

Following in his father’s, grandfather’s and both brothers’ footsteps, Terry felt the calling at an early age. At age 30, he enrolled in the Preston Road School of Preaching in Dallas, Texas, completing a two-year course of study, earning the equivalent of a master's degree in the Bible and Bible related subjects.

In 1979, Terry and Kay and their young family moved to Caldwell to minister to a church there. Terry wound up in Midvale because one of the men in the Caldwell church was from Midvale. Terry and Kay would visit Midvale on hunting trips and fell in love with the area. The Midvale church had just lost their minister and in 1985, they hired Terry. In 1994, Terry and Kay moved to Midvale and bought the bed and breakfast.

Terry continued preaching until 2002, when he retired. Retirement brought new opportunities for Terry, and he enthusiastically and unreservedly supported the Friends of the Weiser River Trail as they suffered through growing pains during those early years.

Terry was always quick to communicate with the current FWRT Board of Directors and weigh in on issues impacting the trail and the community of Midvale. We were always thankful for Terry’s insight and wisdom.

Aside from serving as FWRT President, one of Terry’s lasting legacies was the annual Wagon Train event, first organized nearly 20 years ago with fellow FWRT Director, Dan Dickerson. This legacy lives on and this year’s wagon train event, to be held over Memorial Day weekend, is dedicated to Terry Bonner. Please join us in Midvale on the afternoon/evening of May 23, 2020, to remember Terry and his many contributions to the Friends of the Weiser River Trail. The wagon train dinner is open to all for a cost of $25. Reservations can be made by contacting Pam Haynes at weiserrivertrail@gmail.com or 208-861-8614.

If you wish to make a donation or monetary contribution in Terry’s name, we suggest purchasing Boise Open tickets, making a contribution to Idaho Gives or the Idaho Community Foundation, or to the charity or organization of your choice.

Terry, you will be greatly missed by all!! 😊
FWRT Sponsored Events Scheduled

50K RUN (TEAMS AND SOLOS) – *Postponed*
Run from Midvale to Council
5 persons per team
Sponsored Ultra Runner event
Registration: ultrasignup.com
Contact Beth Ahrend, e-mail: ahrend.beth@gmail.com

IDAHO GIVES DAY – May 7, 2020
On-line site opens May 7, 2020:
idahononprofits/idahogives.org

FWRT ANNUAL MEETING – Tin Pan Alley in Midvale, *Postponed*
John and Shirley Atteberry memorial bench dedication following meeting

COUNCIL BIKE DAY – May 27, 2020 (children’s event)
Contact Brad Nishitani, e-mail: bnishitani@csd13.org

WAGON TRAIN AND SINGLE RIDERS (equestrians) – May 22-25
For registration information, check web site www.weiserrivertrail.org
Call 208-887-2068 or E-mail fwrt@inbox.com

MOUNTAIN TO VALLEY RIDE (bicycles) - June 5-7, 2020
Contact Josh Stallings for details: weisermtbclub@gmail.com

JUNE FUN RIDE (bicycles) - June 6, Ride from Mud Creek to Council (28 miles) or on to Cambridge (48 miles)
Registration: opening mid-March at bluecirclesports.com*

ALBERTSON’S BOISE OPEN
August 13-16, 2020. Tickets on sale soon at: albertsonsboiseopen.com

OCTOBER TREK (bicycles) - October 3 and 4, Ride the entire trail 87 miles! Overnight camping at Mondo hot springs, Cambridge
Registration: bluecirclesports.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED !!
We love our volunteers! If you would like to help out with any of our events, please contact Gayle at gpoorman54@gmail.com.

*Editor’s Note: We are following the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) developments very closely and people should keep in contact with the event(s) manager and the FWRT website for updates. Our most important consideration is the health and welfare of you, our event participants. Thank you for your understanding and support.

Two Bike Rides Slated

Come out and enjoy the trail on our two bike rides this year. Registration and details are available at:
www.bluecirclesports.com under the Tour Events. The rides accommodate beginner to advanced cyclists and are fully supported including a sweep that assures no riders are left on the trail.

The Annual Bike Ride is the first Saturday of June and offers distances of 28 miles and 48 miles. Riders meet at either Council or Cambridge trailheads to load bikes and board busses to the start of the ride near New Meadows. Once on the trail, riders enjoy the ride to a snack stop at Starkey Hot Springs and then continue to a lunch at Cambridge Senior Center. Those who boarded at Cambridge continue on after lunch. We have a limit of 90 riders so register early.

The October Trek is the first weekend of October and offers a 2-day ride of the entire trail. Riders meet at the Weiser Trailhead to load bikes, camping gear, and board the bus. The ride starts near New Meadows with snacks at Starkey and lunch at Council Senior Center. The day ends with soaking, supper, and camping at Mondo Hot Springs. Sunday dawns with dew or frost on the tents and a short ride to Cambridge for breakfast. Then riders head on to Midvale and the Weiser River Canyon to lunch at Presley Trailhead. A short 11 mile ride to Weiser ends the day uniting riders with their vehicles and camping gear. More information is available at www.kotaho.com/octobertrekinformation including videos of previous rides. Rider limit is 45 so register early. ☺
Spring is on the way. Time to start thinking about upcoming events.

The Weiser River Trail Wagon Train event is coming up on May 22-25, 2020. It is time to consider trucks, trailers, mules and horses for moving along sixty miles of the Trail. It is always quite an undertaking. But, having done it for so many years now, it always seems to come off effortlessly.

Like anything else, rising costs have put a constant pressure on continuing the event. The last minute decision to cancel the 2018 event did not come easily. Event organizers had to consider how to plan a four-day event with all the amenities on a very thin budget, and the numbers just didn’t work out.

In 2019, the Friends of the Weiser River Trail decided to provide part of the food for the event from the directors, to save catering costs. With no rehearsals, we were able to feed thirty people with only minor “speed bumps” along the way. There was plenty of laughter, and things got easier as the days went by. We were pleased to be so well received, and were encouraged to try it again in 2020.

Through the years, some of our returning patrons have started to thin out, but it is still always nice to see familiar faces. Speaking of familiar faces, last fall we got to spend an enjoyable day together with some old friends. We were invited to join Terry Bonner and Dan Dickerson to take Terry’s horse and hitch on a little trail ride. They both had served as past Wagon Master and as FWRT board directors. Just watching each man’s love and respect for the Trail and the wagon train ride event made me think of all of the vision and hard work of the past and present directors in establishing the Weiser River Trail. The WRT is a wonderful treasure for everyone to enjoy.

A month after our get together, Terry Bonner passed away. It turned out that the day of our ride together would be his last. Rest in Peace and Happy Trails, dear Terry.

I would like to encourage you all to get your applications in and come and join us for the 19th annual Weiser River Wagon Train! ☺

Today, with the loss of the Lortz Trestle, the Weiser River Trail is not contiguous between Starkey Hot Springs and the Combs Trestle, for a distance of about two and a quarter miles. People must detour on the Fruitvale/Glendale road to bypass the broken trestle. Signs have been posted to direct folks on this detour.

The Friends of the Weiser River Trail board is working diligently to raise funds and begin the process of restoring the Lortz Trestle that was almost completely destroyed in the 2019 spring flooding of the upper Weiser River. It is essential to reconstruct this bridge to restore continuity to the Trail. Board president, Pat Trainor, has been working with several contractors to obtain bids for reconstruction, as well as obtaining the necessary permits to allow for any intrusions that may occur along the stream bank during reconstruction, including restoration of any damages. Contractors have told us that while some parts of the trestle may be salvageable, approximately 60 feet of the center steel girders will need to be replaced and replanked. The latest bid has come in at $141,469. FWRT has applied for two grants requesting funding for the trestle reconstruction. These grants, if approved, will require FWRT to come up with about a 20% match.

Last fall, we set a goal to raise $20,000 in a special Lortz Trestle repair fund. Thanks to our generous members and supporters, we have raised about $16,000 towards our original goal! Still, with the increase in what the trestle reconstruction will cost over what estimates were last fall ($60K), we will have to keep up the hard work of raising money. Please consider making a special contribution to the Lortz Trestle Repair Fund. Donations can be made by check, or electronically through Pay Pal on the Weiser River Trail website. If you buy Boise Open Tickets, or contribute to Idaho Gives, your contribution to the Trail is doubled.

Again, thank you so very much for helping the Friends restore the historical Lortz Trestle. We couldn’t do it without you! ☺
Current FWRT President Pat Trainor Shares Bio and Thoughts on Trail Future

I am a retired Civil / Environmental Engineer for the Forest Service with 30 years of service. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in 1975. My wife Nina and I moved to Council in 1978 for her job as a special education teacher. We have three adult children, all born in McCall and raised in Council. Presently, I am an active member of the Adams County Historical Preservation Council as well as the Council Museum Board. Other Council community groups that I have been involved with are: Adams County Parks and Recreation, Council EMTs and coaching high school baseball/softball. My wife and I have been Pioneer members of the Friends of the Weiser River Trail since its inception. I have been a director of the FWRT since 2012 and I have been your president since 2016.

I wish to take this time to thank each and every one of board members for their hard work and dedication to make this Trail special and well used.

I also wish to thank the fine citizens and city of New Meadows who are working hard to find funding for a feasibility study. This study will analyze and recommend a trail route into New Meadows.

Thanks to all of you who have donated to the Lortz Trestle repair. We now have two grants out for funding possibilities.

As your president, I see the Trail growing in popularity for users. It will continue to add more facilities and expand into New Meadows and, hopefully, into McCall. I look forward to meeting all of you. So, if our paths meet on the Trail, please come see me and shake my hand and say, “Hello”. My job is committed to putting more smiles for the miles on the Trail.

Winter Rockfall Disrupts Trail Travel Below Cambridge

by Paul Poorman

For the second time in half a dozen years, the rock wall above the trail at MilePost 37 ½ has collapsed. Since February, trail users between Cambridge and Midvale were forced to scramble across a 25’ long jumble of rocks.

Now in mid-March with the trail surface drying out, Dan Haynes, trail maintenance supervisor, and Guy Amidon, Chief Excavator are clearing the debris. By the time you read this article, the trail should be clear and available for spring enjoyment. Runners in the spring 50K ultra relay should be able to glide past the piles of rocks and admire Guy’s clearing job. Responding to incidents like this does cost money and that’s why the trail is so dependent on your financial support and the yearly Idaho Parks & Rec. maintenance grant.
A Place of Refuge . . .

In these difficult times of unseen viral enemies, roller-coaster stock markets, and government officials telling us to ‘shelter in place’, it is a comfort to know that we can escape to the Weiser River Trail to find refuge from the storm. The Friends of the Weiser River Trail want everyone to know that we will continue to maintain, improve and protect the Trail for all to enjoy and find some peace.

On the Trail, one can take a leisurely walk, or a healthful run. Perhaps you might prefer a bike ride, or a horseback ride, and maybe pack a picnic to share with family and friends.

The Trail offers the quiet beauty of nature as it follows along the Weiser River, where one might see a playful otter frisking amongst the willows, or an alert deer raising her head to check you out as you pass by. A soaring Bald Eagle may fly overhead, and chattering quail may scamper excitedly ahead of your path. On the Trail, there is plenty of space for “social distance”, yet one can still smile, wave to and greet other visitors who are out and about enjoying some fresh air and sunshine - which may be the best cures for viruses and the blues afterall.

The Friends want to invite you to come out and enjoy the refuge the Trail offers in these troubled times, and in all times. We wish you good health, safety and security, and we hope to “see you on the Trail”!

Gayle Buhrer-Poorman, Trail News

Annual Meeting and Bench Dedication

The annual meeting for the Weiser River Trail will be held May 16, 2020 at the Tin Pan Alley in Midvale. There will be lunch served beginning at 2:00. One of the main purposes of this meeting will be the results of the election for the board of directors. The ballots and information will be mailed out or emailed out prior to the meeting.

The Weiser River Trail purchased a memorial bench for John and Shirley Atteberry, which was installed at the north end of the canyon between Cambridge and Midvale. The board of directors will be holding a dedication ceremony at the bench after the annual meeting.

Please mark your calendars for May 16th and come to the meeting and dedication.

Become a Member

The Weiser River Trail is owned and managed by the Friends of the Weiser River Trail, a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. The mission of FWRT is to preserve the integrity of the rail corridor, manage it as a public trail, and conserve the natural habitats along its length.

FWRT is a self-funding membership organization that depends heavily upon funds raised through membership dues, grants, and fund-raising efforts to cover ongoing maintenance and operational costs.

We welcome your support!

☐ $15 Basic Member
☐ $25 Trail Blazer
☐ $50 Pioneer
☐ $100 & Up Bridge Builder
☐ $1000 Life Member

Name_________________________
Address_______________________
City___________________________
State / Zip______________________
Phone_________________________
Email_________________________

Please Send your contribution and membership information to:
Friends of Weiser River Trail
9201 Grandmason
Eagle, ID 83616

If you would like to help work on the trail or serve on a committee, please call the number listed below. Your help would be greatly appreciated!

If you would like more information about The Weiser River Trail, Visit us on the web at: www.weiserrivertrail.org And for membership information Call: (208) 286-7279
A frosty morning scene from the 2019 Idaho Sled Dog Challenge