

# **BACK COUNTRY A.T.V. ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**THE OLDEST AND FINEST A.T.V. CLUB IN COEUR D' ALENE, ID**



Clark Fork River in Montana



**P.O. BOX 595  
HAYDEN, ID 83835  
[www.backcountryatv.org](http://www.backcountryatv.org)**

**NOVEMBER 2014  
VOLUME 14  
ISSUE 11  
BY DAN HUTCHINS.**

# Christmas Party



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BY DAN HUTCHINS.

3

**CHRISTMAS PARTY** December 13 2014 Back Country ATV is going to have a Christmas party held at the Rathdrum Grange in Rathdrum. The Grange is located on Highway 41 and Boekel rd. across from Zip's Drive Inn. The date is December 13th at 5:00 pm. We would like **everyone** to bring a wrapped ornament, or a small inexpensive wrapped gift \$5 or \$6 for an exchange. This is when the fun starts. Donna will once again work her magic, to make everyone laugh, it is a good time for all, if you have not been to one of our Christmas parties, and went through the gift exchange then you have truly missed a fun time. So plan to attend, make new friends, and see some old ones and have a great time. Also, bring a food dish of some kind. There will be several gifts to raffle off. We are looking for donations for our raffle, so if you could donate something it would be appreciated. So buy some tickets at the door. There will also be a silent auction on some items. A percentage of the raffle goes to the local food bank this year. We will have a box at the door for any food that you would like to donate to the local food bank. This party is for all members and their family and friends and to all of our Great Business Members and their employees. Don't forget that you can pay your club dues for 2015 at the party.

Dues are due January 1st 2015. .. Any  
questions call Dan or Karen 509-483-6625



**Our next Club Dinner will be at Toro Viejo - 3960W 5th. Post Falls On January 17th between 5:30 and 6 pm.**

**Take Exit 2 North at the Truck stop light, hang a right...there you are in all your glory!! They have a space that is private from the rest of the restaurant, with your own Bartender if you choose to indulge a bit. The food is Great and so are the Margaritas!! Tim & Carol Flatgard**

**Back Country ATV would like to welcome our newest members. Dotty Matej and her son, Wes Matej Welcome to the oldest and finest ATV club in CDA.**

**The 50/25/25 Drawing total was \$102.00  
50% won by Clate Williams - \$51.00  
Jeff Almond's name was drawn for the pot of \$116.25, But was not present to win.**

**Here is a little item sent to me by Doug Lynch. Worth passing along! With the holidays coming up, I can see where this could be a real problem. The newest virus circulating is the UPS/Fed Ex/USPS Delivery Failure. You will receive an e-mail from UPS, Fed Ex, or USPS along with a packet number. It will say that they were unable to deliver a package sent to you on such-and-such a date. It then asks you to print out the invoice copy attached. **DON'T TRY TO PRINT THIS. IT LAUNCHES THE VIRUS!** Pass this warning on to all your PC operators at work and home.**

**This virus has caused Millions of dollars in damage in the past few days. Snopes confirms that it is real.**



## THE BEGINNING OF THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE AS I REMEMBER IT

By Dean R. Harrington  
(Retired 1945)

### 1931

While 1931 wasn't considered a bad fire year, we did have some hot, dry weather the last of August and the first of September. A small cloud drifted over my district, we heard the thunder and saw the forked bolt of lightning come to the ground. It set two fires about 8 miles apart. The lookouts called in within a few minutes. There was no rain and both fires started to spread fast.

I started seven men and a plow unit to one, and two smoke chasers and a trail crew to the other. Then I rode horseback to the one where I had sent the plow unit. I reached it in short order. It was rapidly spreading in a 1926 burn, due to heavy fireweed and downed timber. We were making good headway with the plow unit until afternoon, then we got some whirlwinds which caused it to jump our lines in all directions. I had a portable phone so called the station and ordered 40 men. We were able to cut the spread on the head end of the fire with the few men at hand and the plow unit. At dusk the 40 men ordered arrived and we were able that evening to work down both sides, and the fire was dying down. With the coolness of the night I was sure we would gain control by early morning.

Just about dusk I lost a man from a falling snag. This, of course, was a sad affair. I had talked to him about 10 minutes before and warned him of the snag that was leaning toward where he was working. He told me he was aware of it and had a large, green Douglas-fir with a forked top that he could get behind if the snag fell. It did fall and came down in the forks of this green tree, but the top of the snag broke and fell endways, pinning him beneath it. We made a stretcher and started out with him but he lived only a few minutes.

About 9:00 p.m. I rode up to Hamilton Mountain Lookout where I could get a look at the second fire and have good telephone communication. I could see from the fire's behavior that the crew wasn't making any headway toward its control. I called the station and learned from my alternate that my conclusions were correct. He told me they were sending 75 men and Ranger Bishop from Coeur d'Alene. I thought they should have more men and asked him to get the supervisor, Mr. Simpson, on the line. I told Mr. Simpson that from what I could see I thought it would be wise to call out the Ohio Match Company men and send at least 125 of them. This fire wasn't slowing down. It was in a 1910 burn and the debris and windfalls were heavy, with lots of standing dry timber. This fire was on a ridgetop, with steep side slopes. You could see what was happening. As soon as a snag would burn off it would slide down the mountain, scattering fire all the way.

Supervisor Simpson firmly told me he thought the crew being sent was adequate to handle the fire. I added that since my fire was in fair shape I would like to turn it over to Hank Ogston, a scaler, and go over on the other fire myself. He objected to this, saying I had the worst fire of the two as they had scouted them by plane that afternoon and for me to go back to the fire and make sure it didn't get out of control, which I did. Two days later the fire I was on was almost out. I contacted the supervisor again. The McPherson fire was still spreading fast. This time he agreed that I could go over on that fire as crew foreman and take the Ohio Match crew with me. I was to report to Mr. Sanderson, Assistant Supervisor, who was in charge.

Two days later this fire jumped the Coeur d'Alene River and made a run of eight miles in seven minutes. I was camped on the river, and when I saw what had happened I pulled all my crew down to the river. I sent 10 men to try to save our camp by use of a Pacific Marine pump. I told them to get all the bedding, tools, etc., under the kitchen fly and to keep it wet. I left my crew on a large island in the river and told them to stay there. I waded down the river and the only air you could get to breathe was down about 6 inches from the water. There were trees and large embers falling all around and it was hot. By throwing water on your back or ducking down in the

river you could stay cool for a short period but within a few minutes your clothes would be dry again. I was also worried for the safety of Howard Flint and his small crew that had been sent to handle a small spot fire that had shown up earlier, as he was now in the direct path of the fire. I had sent a reliable man to warn him of the danger but I had not heard from them. I finally made it to our campsite by staying in the river. Here I found that the men were doing a fine job of keeping things wet with the pump. The cook was standing out in the river, waist deep. He was holding a slab of bacon in his hand and asked me where we would go from there. I remarked we weren't going any place at the present time.

The fire was just like a cyclone. Large trees and snags would twist off and were carried into the air. Others were uprooted. The green cottonwoods at our camp were catching on fire from the extreme heat. The gas tank on our pump was so hot that the gas was squirting out the air vent. We held a dishpan over it to prevent sparks falling on it. It was an extremely difficult task to fill the gas tank; however, we managed to keep the pump running and saved our entire camp.

When evening came and things quieted down, I got my crew and tools together again, except for two men who had left. Later I found they had made the Ranger Station at Magee and had spread an alarm that I had been burned up along with several others. About dark Howard Flint and his crew came in. He had seen what was happening and had pulled down to the river also. He had with him the lad I had sent to warn him.

We put in the night here and the next morning the pack trail had cooled down enough that we were able to get the pack string through and move to the McPherson ranch. Here we planned a new attack. Several crews had been sent in from the Montana side. I heard later that some of those men had a narrow escape as they were caught in the run of the fire. The next day Frank Jefferson arrived at the head of the fire and on the downriver side. I had the upriver side and was able to drive a line some 5 miles up the edge of the fire. This line we were able to hold. I believe it was on the second or third day I got word from Jefferson by messenger to pull 50 men from my crew which I had out on the fireline and bring them to his camp, crossing through the fire. My men didn't like the idea, because all their personal belongings were back at the fire camp. But finally I got them to consent, with the promise that I would make sure we would be able to save their possessions.

We finally wound up this fire with some 1200 men on the job. I was told later that several decadent hemlock trees burned throughout the winter and were cut down and put out the next June.

During the winter we held a postmortem on this fire in the forest headquarters at Coeur d'Alene. The Regional Office boys were there Kelley, Jefferson, Stockdale and others. The question often came up as to what else could have been done to prevent the spread of this fire. I don't remember what the final answer was, but I have always thought we might have prevented it if adequate man power of seasoned men had been dispatched in the first days. It was stressed by the Regional Office that we make an effort to adequately man all fires and that it was cheaper and better to have too much help than not enough. After this I followed that procedure and found it worked out to my advantage. As I look back now, I feel that we should have planned a controlled burn, when conditions were favorable, on some of those old 1910 burned areas, then cleaned them up and planted them; but here, again, man power and money were lacking.

During my first winter on the Coeur d'Alene I was working in what we called the "bullpen." This was a large room in the Supervisor's Headquarters where scalers and Rangers from outlying districts had space during the winter months. As I recall, I was working on my District Ranger filing case. All the other men ordinarily occupying this room were on leave or out for the day, except a timber salesman by the name of Johnson. "White-Pine Johnson" he was called by all. He was checking scale books and was in charge of the Ohio Match sale on the Little Northfork of the Coeur d'Alene River. He laid his scale book down upon his desk and said, "Young man, you are working too hard." I stopped and looked at him questioningly. Then he said, "I want to give you some advice on how to get along in the Forest Service." I said, "Fine." Then he began by saying, "You must keep your head cool, your feet warm, your eyes open, your mouth shut and learn how to spell the word approximately." I laughed at the time, but later found out that he was so right.

( Continued Next Month)





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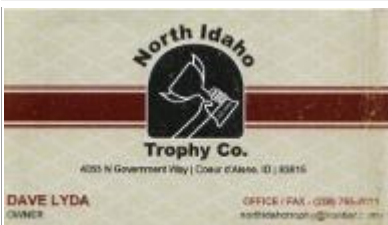
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