



PHOTO: JOHN WATSON

# SIERRA BUTTES TRAIL STEWARDSHIP

Annual Report / 2023

**Revitalizing the  
Lost Sierra using  
Trails as the Tool**





# Greg Williams

## *Executive Director*

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### **Executive Summary:**

#### **Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship - 2023 Organizational Accomplishments**

2023 was the type of Dirt Magic year we'd been waiting for—free from the challenges of pandemics, wildfires and forest closures, our Operating Budget soared from \$2.4 million in 2022 to \$3.3 million in 2023 and we leaned hard into our commitment of growing a healthy and vibrant outdoor recreation economy in the Lost Sierra. We made significant progress and momentous achievements that furthered our mission to revitalize disadvantaged mountain communities, using trails as the tool.

This year we hosted two races: the 9th annual Lost & Found Gravel Festival in Portola and the Downieville Classic Mountain Bike Festival, which we brought back for the event's 25th anniversary, after a four-year hiatus. Most of my adult life has been spent developing, planning and promoting the Downieville Classic and it has become a family reunion. To have the opportunity to bring the family back together to ride and smile on the trails of Downieville was an incredibly special moment.

Races are a crucial part of our fundraising efforts, and this year the events were hugely successful, as were our three 5 Bucks a Foot campaigns. Additionally, we grew and strengthened our Project Development Team, whose efforts helped leverage and secure \$1.6 million in Government Grants, focused on trail expansion, community engagement, environmental stewardship and new local job creation.

We hit an organizational high for creating employment with 67 employees and an annual payroll of \$1.54 million. Our staffing included four Adult Trail Crews and two Youth Trail Crews working on 44 trails across eight project sites on land managed by four National Forests across six different counties. Combined our crews constructed 18 miles of new trail and maintained 256 miles of sweet Sierra singletrack for us all to enjoy.

As we reflect on our accomplishments, we look forward to building upon these successes in 2024, continuing our mission to create a lasting legacy of inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible trails throughout the Lost Sierra region.



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# Trails Report

## 2023 BY THE NUMBERS:

### MILES

**MAINTAINED: 255.68**

**VOLUNTEERS: 1,144**

### MILES

**FLAGGED: 150**

### VOLUNTEER

**HOURS: 8,339**

### MILES OF

**NEW TRAILS: 17.56**

### VOLUNTEER

**MATCH \$: 258,470**

The 2023 season was a long and busy one for the Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship Pro Trail Crews, with work completed on 44 trails across eight project sites throughout the Lost Sierra.



This brings SBTS' 20-year (!) statistics to: 194.6 miles of trail built, 2,558.24 miles maintained, 8,806 volunteers engaged for 131,052 hours of work with \$3.9 million in match value.

# Impact Report

## YOUTH CREW



The SBTS Youth Crew had another stellar season in 2023, with 20 local teens participating in two paid four-week hitches. Together, they built over 3,300 feet of new trail on Mount Hough, making progress on critical future Connected Communities links. Along with Hough, the Youth Crew also worked on Mill Creek, Chapman Creek, Bear Lakes Loop, Round Lake Trail, the South Park trail system, Mount Elwell and the Thousand Lakes Wilderness trails. During their hitches, the kids work and live together in their Lost Sierra backyard, under the guidance of adult crew leaders, maintaining and building new trails, cultivating backcountry skills and awareness, practicing Leave No Trace principles and learning lessons on how to be good stewards of public lands.

**YOUTH  
CREW: 23**



**YOUTH CREW  
TRAIL BUILDING:  
3,300'**



## EMPLOYMENT

The 2023 Stewardship team is dynamic and diverse, including 12 development staff, 24 Pro Trail Crew staff, 23 Youth Crew staff, and 8 Yuba Expeditions employees, resulting in:

**EMPLOYEES: 67**

**PRO TRAIL CREW: 24**

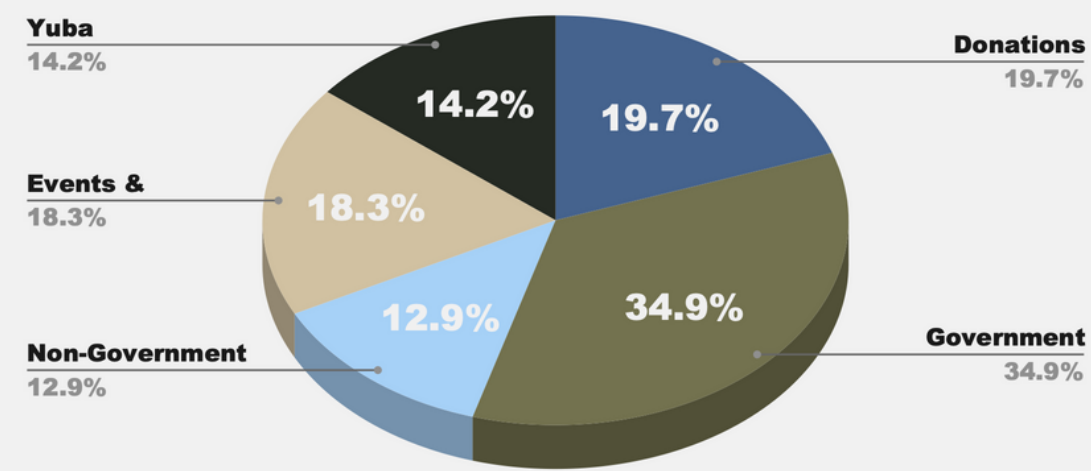
**2023 PAYROLL: \$1.54 MILLION**

**APPLICATIONS FOR OPEN POSITIONS: 130+**

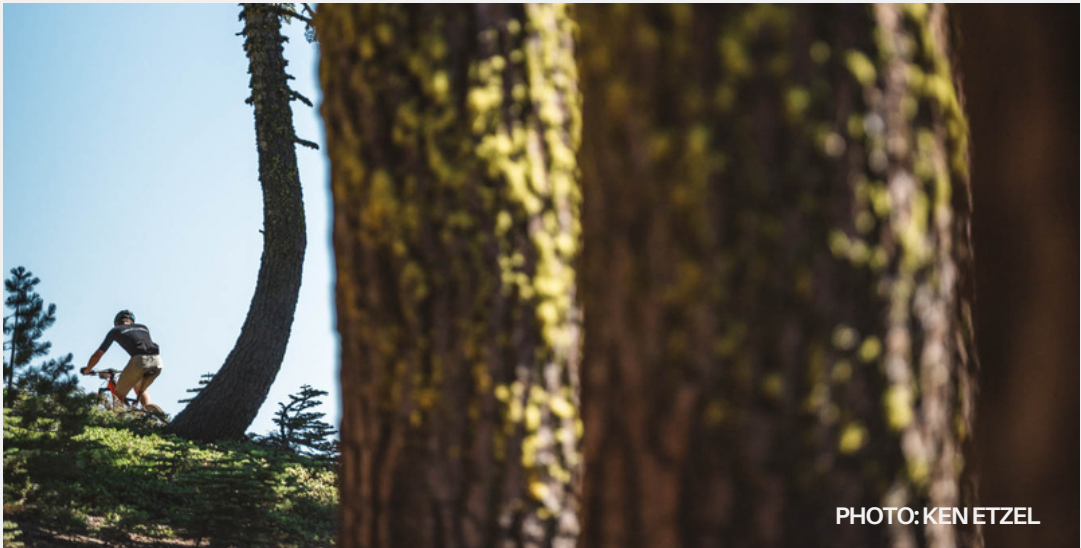
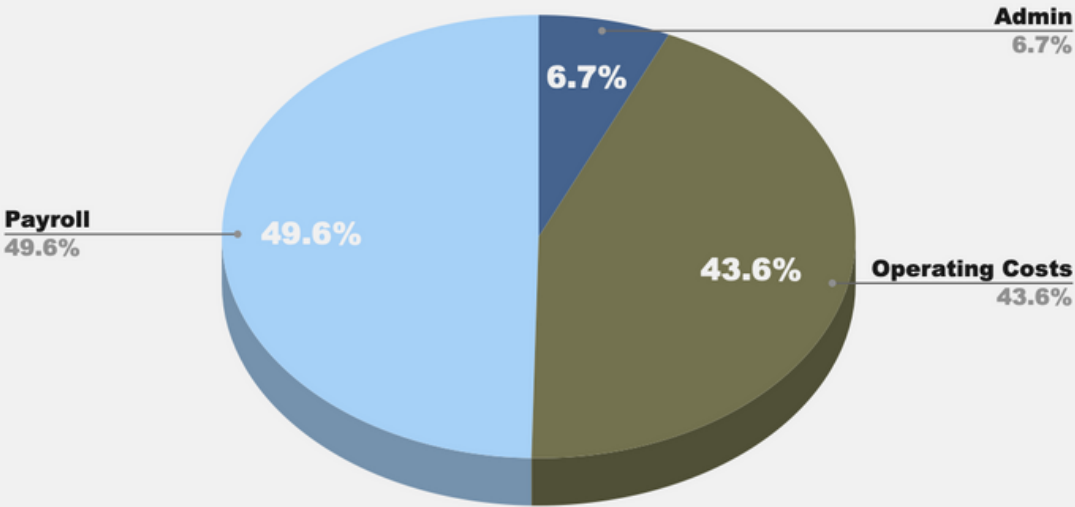
# Financials



## 2023 REVENUE: \$3.31 MILLION



## 2023 EXPENSES: \$3.17 MILLION







# 2023 Events

## DOWNIEVILLE CLASSIC



### 25 YEARS OF DVC

After a four-year hiatus, the Downieville Classic Mountain Bike Festival and All Mountain World Championship, presented by Santa Cruz Bicycles, took place July 13-16, 2023 and proved to be just as spectacular as ever!

2023's race was sweltering—one of the hottest DVC on record—but that didn't stop nearly 900 riders from sweating, smiling, partying and riding. The tiny town of Downieville was packed, from the narrow streets to the cool river, friends reunited and celebrated this magical event's epic return.



## LOST & FOUND



The Lost & Found Gravel experience was back in full force this year and brought almost 1,000 racers to Portola, CA. Presented by Cervélo, Lost & Found is more than just a gravel race, with camping, music, and epic food...it's a whole vibe. Lost & Found's expo area also included a Builders' Bazaar, showcasing unique and incredible work from 12 custom frame builders.

### NOTHING BUT FLOWERS

Lost & Found 2023 also coincided with an absolute superbloom! Mule's ear, lupine, scarlet fritillary, penstemons, milkweed, and Washington lilies provided a multicolored carpet that managed to take whatever breath was left from our racers!



# Connected Communities PROJECT UPDATE

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## PHASE 1: PLANNING

The Connected Communities Trails Master Plan has entered the final draft stages before being presented to the Forest, Stakeholders, and the public.

Ground-truthing efforts over the spring and summer focused primarily on project areas in Indian Valley, Jonesville and Sierra Valley. This mapping effort will support the Trails Master Plan.

Next Step: ground-truthing additional segments will continue once environmental compliance funding is secured for current proposed trail.

## PHASE 2: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### Sierra Valley Recreation Project:

63 miles of trail proposed to connect Loyalton, Sierraville, East Zone Connectivity Project (to the south), and Peavine Maze Project (to the east).

This planning will provide a replicable model for planning, design, and environmental compliance for the overarching Connected Communities Project.

Funded by a grant from Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Grant Program, 2023 work included ground-truthing with NEPA, CEQA document drafting in 2024-2025.

### Peavine Maze Connectivity and Restoration Project:

The Nevada Off-Highway Vehicles Program grant funding for this project has kick-started the environmental review process for this project including: NEPA drafting, resource surveys and tribal collaboration.

This project provides the Reno linkage to the Connected Communities Project by developing 23 miles of new single track and the adoption of up to 25 miles of existing social trail.

## PHASE 3: CONSTRUCTION

**First Connection!** The link between Quincy and Taylorville is set to be completed in late 2024. This trail is part of the ongoing Mount Hough Phase II project - 78 miles of single track by 2025. Funding from: California OHV, Recreation Trails Program and Negley Flinn Charitable Foundation.

**East Zone Construction:** 70 miles of trail construction is underway near Truckee, the southernmost region of the Connected Communities footprint. SBTs is leading the construction effort in partnership with the Tahoe National Forest.



# Story of the Year:

# CARBON NEUTRALITY

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The Lost Sierra is no stranger to the devastating effects of climate change - In 2021 over 50% of Plumas County burned in the Dixie Fire, which will forever change the landscape.

In alignment with our mission of forest and trail Stewardship, SBTS also has identified additional ways to lower the carbon footprint of operations, trail crews, and events.



**Trail Crews:** With funding from TC Energy, we were able to swap out gas powered tools for electric options for one of our Trail Crews. Before scaling up, it is important to test the equipment in the field for longevity, power, durability, and function.



*SBTS received funding from private pledges and a grant from TC Energy to fund our shift from gas powered motos and trail building equipment. Pictured here are two Surrons being used by Pro Trail Crew members*

**Operations:** SBTS's Admin offices have been relocated to a more accessible downtown location. Staff are encouraged to ride their bikes to the office, and as the square footage has decreased, so has the cost of heating and cooling. Staff are also offered a remote/hybrid work schedule to reduce the carbon impact of travel.

**Events:** Racers, staff, volunteers, and vendors travel from far and wide to attend race events. As racers register, a small surcharge is added to their registration fee. SBTS has estimated the carbon footprint of event travel and purchases carbon credits through Cool Effect.

**TONNES OF CARBON  
PURCHASED: 299**

**GAS ENGINES SWAPPED  
FOR ELECTRIC: 18**



# Gratitude



THANK YOU TO OUR  
DONORS, PARTNERS,  
SUPPORTERS &  
VOLUNTEERS.

WE COULDN'T DO THIS  
WITHOUT YOU!!

