



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

at www.abwilderness.org or find the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation on Facebook.

P.O. Box 392
 Red Lodge, MT 59068
 406-425-1944
info@abwilderness.org



BILLINGS ADVERTISING AND MARKETING CLUB

Early last spring, the ABWF applied to the Billings Advertising and Marketing Club (BAM). Each year their group, consisting of some of the best minds in advertising and marketing from all over the Billings area, agrees to develop a marketing campaign for a local non-profit organization of their choosing. I'm proud to say this year they chose the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation as the recipient for their generous efforts.

The results have been amazing, which hopefully you have seen and heard! The ads and media coverage have broadened our exposure; BAM has helped the ABWF develop everything from a new brochure, to a wonderful radio spot promoting volunteerism for our trails and weeds projects in the backcountry, to a TV Public Service Announcement. The poster they developed, seen here, has been distributed all over communities surrounding the A-B Wilderness. A special thanks to Anne Gauer from Spotlight Productions, Kathleen Benoit of Skinner Benoit, and Jessica Baldwin from Billings365.com, plus Mike Kindstater, Jack Gauer, Greg Miller, and Allen Hatter and all their print and production help. And that's Steve Sheehy and Kim Zimmer who served as models for the poster. Thanks Everyone!



Absaroka Beartooth WilderNews

absaroka | beartooth WILDERNESS FOUNDATION

"It is the mission of the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Foundation to support stewardship of the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness and to foster appreciation of wild lands."

FROM THE DIRECTOR:

One of the perks of this job is that I get to lead volunteer projects, go camp out in the wilderness, and visit new areas with volunteers who have given their time to come take part in some pretty strenuous work. I love handling the logistics of the projects, cooking meals for the volunteers, and shooting lots of photos of the work being done. But mostly I love getting right in there with the volunteers and the Forest Service trail crews, getting dirty and sweaty, clearing and improving trails, and knocking out invasive weeds.



That's me with Upper Stillwater Trail Project volunteers plus Karen and Linus.

People ask me all the time if the A-B Wilderness Foundation is a part of the Forest Service, or if I work for the Forest Service? The answer is no, but the ABWF is a primary partner with the agency and we work closely with the various Forest Service districts who are tasked with the management and care of the A-B Wilderness. We consult and collaborate with the Forest Service to keep the wilderness experience unaltered, available, and enjoyable for the wilderness user, and try to help the wilderness user take better care of and appreciate the Wilderness all the more.

This summer I've been fortunate to work alongside many, many Forest Service crewmembers who take care of the A-B Wilderness year in and year out. A humble, quiet and hard-working group of people, I have been amazed by the difficulty of the work that these trail crews do, often on 9-day 'hitches,' deep in the backcountry away from medical care, showers, and the creature comforts the average heavy laborer enjoys. They need more people to know the importance and the difficulty of what they do.

Their work is incredibly hard, and made harder with just skeleton crews. Sadly, budget cuts and the dire effects of the sequestration have hampered the Forest Service's good work all the more. This summer illustrated that the 'A-B,' our favorite Wilderness, will rely more and more heavily in the future upon 'Friends Of' groups like the A-B Wilderness Foundation. We feel good about the fact that we were able to hire 3 full-time Wilderness Interns to help shore up depleted trail crews. Our efforts at getting volunteers' help on trail projects and weed eradication efforts has made a real difference. We need you to become a friend of the A-B Wilderness. Volunteer. Get out in the Wilderness. Become a member and help financially support our work.

THE 10TH ANNUAL FUN RUN FOR CHARITIES:

Support the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation at this year's Fun Run!

This year on Saturday, August 31st, in Red Lodge, the community celebrates the 10th anniversary of this great event. Put on by the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation (RLACF), the 5K and 10K Run plus 2-Mile Walk, is a primary fundraiser for over 50 non-profits in the Red Lodge area. The RLACF raises a lot of money by this event—over a million dollars in its tenure—which goes back to the non-profits like ourselves. For the ABWF, this is a great opportunity to raise funds for our operations and projects.



There's a further reason you should make your donation to the A-B Wilderness Foundation through the Fun Run. All donations made on behalf of the ABWF are matched by the Community Foundation, so this is an excellent way to multiply the impact of your gift. It's as easy as sending in your check in the enclosed form to the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation. They will distribute the funds, matched, back to us. We DO need your financial support! Support the ABWF through the Fun Run.



WHITEBARK PINE SURVEY:

CITIZEN SCIENTIST VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Meet Emily Francis and Max Grigri. These two young research fellows hired by the group Clean Air/Cool Planet, and with the assistance of the ABWF, are in Red Lodge where they base their scientific expeditions into the high country in search of Whitebark Pine. This iconic tree species of the Greater Yellowstone area is being heavily threatened by a fungus called Blister Rust and the Mountain Pine Beetle infestations of recent years. Known as a critical food source for Clark's Nutcrackers, squirrels, and Grizzly bears, the loss of such an important keystone species has ominous ecological repercussions. But not much is known

about the state of health of whitebark pine stands in the A-B Wilderness, even though the A-B is prime Whitebark habitat. The ABWF became involved to help shed some light on our understanding of Whitebark Pine ecology.

Enter Emily and Max. They received a crash course in whitebark pine when they arrived, led by experts in the Forest Service, at the University of Montana, Utah State University, and Cornell, the organization Clean Air/Cool Planet, and our very own whitebark expert and Board member, Jesse Logan. Project design and research protocols were developed, and shortly thereafter Emily and Max were finding their way into the high country to locate and survey their plots. Getting to the locations, backpacking in to the plots, and carrying out their survey work often takes 3-4 days, so the logistics of getting to the sites all over the A-B Wilderness is one of their greatest challenges. Not only do they assess the stands of whitebark for the presence and extent of blister rust and pine beetles, but they also make record of the presence of Clark's Nutcrackers, squirrels and grizzly signs.

Max and Emily could use your help. The ABWF is seeking to pair interested volunteers to serve as 'Citizen Scientists' with these two researchers in order to help them conduct their surveys in the field. If you have a few days and a desire to hike/pack into some tremendous Wilderness backcountry and learn a great deal about the health of whitebark pine, call 406-425-1944 or send an email to info@abwilderness.org. Emily and Max will be here through the end of September and would love your company!



"This fellowship has been more than I could have ever asked for. I gather meaningful data on a beautiful tree in the incredible AB Wilderness we all know and love. I have spent countless hours stepping over downed trees, hopping through boulder fields, and sliding down rock scree in search of whitebark, and I would not trade one second." --Max Grigri



L to r: Adam Markham of Clean Air/Cool Planet and the Union of Concerned Scientists; Max Grigri; Emily Francis; Wally McFarlane of Utah St.; Linus Metzler, ABWF volunteer; Dr. Jesse Logan of the ABWF; and Taza Schaming of Cornell. Max investigates a whitebark pine hit by mountain pine beetles.

THANKS TO OUR WILDERNESS INTERNS:

Since early June, three Wilderness Interns hired by the ABWF have been hard at work. Blaine Hartman, Karen Holcomb, and Alex Haughton were hired through the Student Conservation Association (SCA) with a \$10,000 grant we received from the State of Montana's Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Because of federal budgetary cuts, the Forest Service was unable to hire many of the trails and backcountry staff it depended on in previous summers. Crews for the Gardiner, Yellowstone, and Beartooth Districts—the three main districts that oversee the A-B Wilderness—were all severely depleted.

The ABWF is proud to have contributed three incredibly strong and hard-working young people to work side-by-side with Forest Service crews. Blaine was based in Gardiner and then Cooke City for the summer; Alex was based in Big Timber; and Karen was close by in Red Lodge. The numbers aren't in yet, but the three of them cleaned and built innumerable water bars that prevent trail erosion, cut out more fallen trees across the trails than you can shake a stick at, filled in many deeply eroded trails, and removed miles of brush growing over the trails. They helped organize volunteer projects and often taught volunteers the skills they needed to help with the projects. And of course they hiked a ton of miles, learning much

about Wilderness conservation in the process.. All will be heading back to University very soon, so this is an opportunity to say thank you—Karen (Disco Tent), Alex (The Engineer) and Blaine (Barefoot Blaine), for your superhuman efforts this summer when it was so sorely needed by the Forest Service. You have made a big impact and the Forest Service has expressed so much appreciation for all your help!



MEET LINUS:

When an 18-year old Swiss kid emails your organization about volunteering for two months

of the summer, as Linus Metzler did 8 months ago, you tell him "YES" even if it's before you are fully sure of all the complexities that are involved. That is what happened, and Linus has been here working in a myriad of ways for the ABWF since early July. He's become an amateur expert on whitebark pine, is incredibly comfortable hiking and backpacking in the rugged A-B, and even gets up early to get water boiling in the morning for breakfast! Linus is going into computer science at University, so has been very helpful in updating the website and keeping things current on Facebook. I think Linus already knows more about how to do my job, than I do most days. Check out the website, if you haven't for a while, as it is getting much more current thanks to our webmaster and Linus!

Thanks go out to the Atherly's of Red Lodge—Jean, Everett and Katie—for hosting Linus in their home during his stay. Ev's been teaching Linus how to drive a car! Says Linus: "The A-B Wilderness is to me one of those, maybe last places in the USA of such a huge area, which is closed to the destructive impacts of humans...I think it shows people the importance of nature and raises consciousness for ones' natural environment. And such an area needs people who keep the trails intact, which enables people to experience this wonderful part of Montana and Wyoming. For me it's been a perfect place to slow down and enjoy this country!"

