

Working Together
for the Wild



absaroka | beartooth
WILDERNESS FOUNDATION

Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness News

"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."

The Next 50 Years

It's been a year of celebrations honoring the 50th Anniversary of Wilderness. The ABWF has been busily involved in Farmer's Markets, Road Races (inset); Wilderness Art Showings, Campfire Talks, Wilderness Walks, Music and Prose of Wilderness, Moonlight Hikes, and Wilderness Celebrations in Bozeman and at the Capitol—all in the spirit of this lovely thing we call Wilderness. It's also been a time in which we have redoubled our efforts to ensure that Wilderness stays front and center in the public eye, and to reflect on how important it is that we have Wilderness to bring us beauty, respite, solitude, and health into our lives.



Celebrations and efforts like those of the ABWF serve as a springboard into the next 50 years of Wilderness stewardship. It's a changing landscape. In the Custer-Gallatin National Forest, for instance, budgets have declined by 44% in the last 7 years alone. Fewer and fewer of those dollars go towards recreation and trails as more money gets shifted to forest fire suppression. If good stewardship of cherished places is to continue, it may be increasingly up to organizations like the ABWF, and up to you, to play a bigger role. Read ahead about how our many partnerships offer a glimpse of how this is happening.

It's easy to overlook why Wilderness needs our stewardship. After all the Wilderness Act describes itself as: *"an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable."* Our policy makers may believe that Wilderness will just take care of itself, and doesn't need our federal expenditures. They may believe that individual states can manage public lands better than our national government. If only they saw how hard our federal Forest Service employees work, the way many of you have seen them, working at their sides as trail volunteers.

When travelers go to Europe, they often visit the famous art museums that save and protect for posterity the original works of art and culture. Our Wilderness areas in America are not much different in that they protect and pass on to future generations the original natural landscapes from which we carved and inspired a culture. We still have many, many of our natural places left, while they are gone elsewhere. And they need our care.

"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."
-Lyndon B. Johnson

2014 Trail Tally:

10 PROJECTS
134 VOLUNTEERS + 3321 HOURS
3 INTERNS + 1,398 HOURS
4719 TOTAL HOURS





Russell Creek Puncheon



Stillwater Trail

The Power of Partnerships

Wicked Creek Trail

In late June, the ABWF held its first multi-day work trip of the summer, the Wicked Creek Trail south of Livingston. This was a grand, collaborative effort, as the ABWF gathered workers from the **Livingston Bike Club**, the **Montana Conservation Corps**, and the **Yellowstone District trail crew** to reestablish a trail from the West Fork of Mill Creek to the crest of the Wicked Creek Trail. At one point I counted 18 people working the trail at once! A 6-mile trail that was once grown over and untraceable now connects Snowbank campground on Mill Creek up and over the ridge to the West Fork of Mill Creek.

As mountain biking grows in popularity in our region and riders seek out more challenging terrain, there is greater temptation to “poach” trails in designated Wilderness. Motorized vehicles and mechanized equipment such as bicycles are not allowed in Wilderness. The ABWF understands that in order to protect Wilderness trails from illegal mountain-biking, rideable trails should exist outside Wilderness. Therefore, we partnered with local biking groups to enhance the Wicked Creek Trail, so now cyclists, hikers, and horseback riders can now complete the route. There are outstanding views of the Absarokas up top in all directions!

Many, many thanks to **John Greene**, president of the **Livingston Bike Club**, for rallying so many great workers: **Mike Cimonetti**, **Dan & Pat Thums**, **Lee & Jeannie Watson**, **Paul Rice**, **Matt Hirsch**, and **Jordan Watt**. This group put in 155 hours towards the new trail! Jordan rode the maiden voyage down the new trail. Lee and Jeannie invited everyone for pizza and beer (and piano) at their house!

Noteworthy: The ABWF received a **\$15,000 Grant** from the **Southern Montana Resource Advisory Committee (RAC)** to sponsor this project. The money paid for the District trail crew of **Kat Barker**, **Lawson Maclean**, **Dana Petersen**, **Stephanie Shively**, **Myranda Hagemann**, **Caitlin Frawley**, and **Chris Magee**. The amount of trail we completed was staggering! **Lauren Oswald** and **Wendi Urie** from the Forest's head office brought muscle and ice cream treats! The RAC grant supplied volunteers with food and equipment, and covered the ABWF's coordination. Even **MCC** out of Bozeman joined us! No wonder 2-½ miles of trail was cut over the course of 5 days! Wow!

A nod to the ABWF volunteers! Five women and 3 men logged **234 volunteer hours**. **Marina Nunez** of Billings, **Jerry Ladewig** of Emigrant, **Kelly Loud & Stuart Postiglione** from Colorado, **Janine Waller** from YNP, **Steve Caldwell** of Livingston, and **William Jenkins** (from Georgia)—thank you all! We base-camped at Snowbank campground and shared great food around the campfire every night!

Almost Heaven

Slough Creek Cabin

Thank you to **Jordan & Les Denny** of Laramie and Billings; **Rob Forstenzer** and **Jack Heckles** of Livingston; **Janet Gale & Traute Parrie** of Red Lodge; and **Walt Hajducki** of Connecticut. These volunteers, plus **Alyson Morris** (our summer intern, WA) with the **USFS's Jeremy Zimmer** tackled a smorgasbord of work projects based out of the historic Slough Creek cabin. **Doug Moffat** and his crew at the **Silvertip Ranch** got the eight of us in there in style by draft horse and wagon, saving long miles on foot. We always appreciate that!

Our work repaired fence around the cabin and pasture, removed an old bridge, cleaned water bars, sprayed oxeye daisy and other noxious weeds in Frenchy's Meadow, and cleaned the cabin. Nearly everyone fished! We had a grand time enjoying nightly campfires, and a slew of meals served up by camp chef and E.D. David Kallenbach. At the end, we hiked out the 13 gorgeous miles and let the Forest Service pack horses haul out the heavy stuff.

Scouting Weeds

East Rosebud Trail

For 4 years, the ABWF has helped monitor a site at the wilderness boundary for knapweed along the East Rosebud, thistle and houndstongue. We're dedicated to pulling and spraying the invasive weeds that threaten to creep up the drainage into the backcountry. This particular day, Troop 7 from Billings under leaders Mark Sevier & Brian Harrington brought their scouts to battle the weeds. With so many eyes, we found a number of major patches and dispatched them.

These scouts (**Zach Brant, David Deichl, Jackson Emery, Graham and Will Hammond, Aidan Harrington, Sean & Sean Harrington James Pauley, Phillip Snyder, Shane Stauffer**) and their leaders/parents (**Mark Sevier, Brian & Molly Harrington, Elizabeth, Lynn, & Rich Pauley, Rick Stauffer**) made sure we didn't miss any weeds! Thanks to **Annette Lavalette and Frank Annighofer of Friends of East Rosebud**. Their effort in getting the East Rosebud designated as a Wild and Scenic River is closer at hand than ever. Montana has very few designated Wild & Scenic Rivers and the E. Rosebud is truly worthy!

The USFS's **Jane Taylor**, weed technician for the Beartooth District, led this effort. She and David sprayed some

"The Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness is truly wild and spending the time out there changes you in a way you cannot explain in words. You come out of there feeling refreshed and grateful for the things you can do and the things your body allows you to do."

-Alice Zeeb, Volunteer

Annual Trails Day Project

The Jomaha Trail

South of Livingston, the Jomaha Trail connects the Main and East Forks of Mill Creek Road. Nine volunteers plus three members of the Yellowstone District trail crew (**Kat Barker, Steph Shively, Chris Magee**) hiked in to where the trail becomes poorly defined. We erected trail markers and posts to better designate the trail, cut out dead timber blocking the way, and created some sections of new trail tread where it didn't exist before. **Steve Caldwell & Barb Holliday** (from Livingston), **William Jenkins** (ABWF's Summer Intern from Georgia), **Richard Lyon** (Bozeman), **Mary Malley** (Livingston), **Molly Nelson** (Yellowstone National Park), **Ty Walters** (Livingston), and **Taylor Westhusin** (ABWF Summer Intern from Colorado) kicked off National Trails Day with some outstanding work.

Signature Project Completed

Red Lodge Creek Plateau Trail

The ABWF resumed its work for a third year atop the Senia Creek Trail on the Red Lodge Creek Plateau. In 2012 and 2013, we carved 1-1/2 miles of trail around the head of Upper Red Lodge Creek, bypassing a poorly constructed and eroded trail. This summer we erased the old trail, and tied in the ends of the new trail to the existing trail.

With the Beartooth's **Madeleine Kornfield** supervising, 10 volunteers for the ABWF worked for four days on the trail, camping a mile from the worksite. We added a few hundred more yards of trail, and built large cairns to guide hikers to the new trail. Considerable time went into erasing the old section of trail, filling it in with rock, dirt, and brush. So efficient were we that we even created new switchbacks leading up the plateau.

Red Lodge Food Corps' service member, **Emily Howe** served as our camp cook, and left a lot of sweat on trail, too. This trip was entirely packed in and out by the **Beartooth Backcountry Horsemen**, and we are indebted to this outstanding service organization. They provided horses and helped transport all our tools, food, and supplies to our campsite.

Thanks to: **Joel Gregory** of St. Paul, **Karen Gustafson** and **Dave Wood** of Billings, **Puck**, my wilderness trail dog, **Sarah Bierschwale** of Gardiner, **Terry Perkins** of Roberts, **Tynan McMullen**, 16, from Tomah, Wisconsin, **Mel Tempel** of Apache Jct. AZ, and **Jim Dickert** of Red Lodge.



East Rosebud Trail



Wicked Creek Trail



Slough Creek Cabin



Palisades Trail



Jomaha Trail



Stillwater Trail

One Hundred Volunteers Later

The Palisades Trail Completed!

For the second year in a row, trail enthusiasts from the Red Lodge and Billings area worked on 'front-country' trails outside Red Lodge. I'm happy to report that we put the final touches on the new Palisades Trail near Red Lodge! As many of you have discovered, this is a wonderful multi-use trail with loads of wildlife!

Next year we anticipate working on the **Nichols Creek Trail**, which will start near the junction of the West Fork Rd. and Ski Run Rd. and parallel Palisades and Willow Creek trails, ultimately connecting with those trails at the lower ski area parking lot.

This year 32 people convened at the north end of the trail, to use picks, pulaskis and loppers to carve the existing trail much wider. These volunteers dedicated their Saturday: **Grant & Laurie Barnard, Annie Britton, Martha Brown, John Clayton, Marian Collar, Rachel Court, Kraig Dip-pold, Jack Exley, Dan Gathje, Karen Gustafson, Donna Hight, Kristen Hollum, Bob & Mary Johnson, Frank Kelley, Wanda Kennicott & Max Dehio, Scott and Jane Kings-er, Tom Kohley, Frank Pelli, Steve Souders, Cat Stevens, June Stilwell, Marge Strum, Wally Tate, Marlene Tetrault, Eric Varney, Chuck Ward, Taylor Westhusin, and Jim White. THANK YOU!**

Drinks, brats and picnic fare, as well as tools and signs were paid for by a generous grant from the **Red Lodge Area Community Founda-tion**. Many members of the **Beartooth Recreational Trails Association (BRTA)** and **Red Lodge Hiking Club** were there to lend service. The **Aspen Ridge Ranch** gave us permission to park and have a picnic afterwards under their aspens. Between last year and this, over **100 volunteers** have labored to make this trail their own!

"The act of volunteering transformed a "hike" into a richer interaction with the landscapes that surround me and the people who share love for them."
-John Clayton, Volunteer

50 Miles for 50 Years of Wilderness

The Middle Stillwater Trail

In April, the ABWF received a \$10,000 grant from the Southern Montana Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) to help further repair the middle section of the Stillwater Trail from Horseshoe Creek to the Wounded Man bridge. The money made it possible to mount an ABWF/Forest Service expedition 16 miles up the Stillwater River where we could fix trail and a bridge abutment.

Billings comes through! A group, entirely from Billings, spent 7 days helping the ABWF fix trail that has been an impediment, especially to horse traffic, for decades. Thanks to professors Lynne Fitzgerald and Jon Carling of the **Health and Human Performance Department at MSU-Billings**, who annually put together a trip to back-pack, fish, and do trail service work in the Montana wilderness. These four, including Loretta Morgan and Pat Hughes, coaxed MSUB Outdoor Education students Camille Seed, Ben Smith, and Keith Wectawski, and high school seniors Marissa Henthorn and Alice Zeeb of the **Upward Bound** program to help us in the Stillwater. Rene and Corby Freitag of Billings fit right in with our lively group from MSU! None complained about the 16-mile hike into our camp, and the Stillwater offered welcome fishing and swimming holes at the end of the workday!

Fortunately for all of us, the **Beartooth Backcountry Horsemen** lightened our loads using their stock and time to pack us in and out. **Allie Wood, Nolan Melin, Tay-**

lor Westhusin (ABWF's Intern from Colorado) and **Aaron Benjamin of the Beartooth Ranger District** provided leadership. Over 7 days we hiked and worked **50 miles of trail**, marking the **50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act!**



Wicked Creek Trail



Red Lodge Creek Plateau Trail

We're Nation-wide!

The Russell Creek Puncheon Project

Nine volunteers for the ABWF found out what a puncheon is, replacing one at the head of the 'Beaten Path' trail near Cooke City. Beyond Kersey Lake we found a 105' raised and rotted boardwalk across a soggy meadow. The bridge-like structure was too decrepit for horse and human hooves. So the ABWF's volunteers tore the old one out and built a new one with planks packed in by the **Skyline Guest Ranch**. Heading the project was the **Gardiner District's Jeremy Zimmer** and **Stephanie Shively**. Beams were cut with crosscut saws from the forest nearby and hauled into place with monumental effort. We discovered the advantage of 'Swede Hooks,' hinged dual hooks that allow multiple people to carry very heavy logs.

Six foot long 'sills' sunk in the ground crosswise served as the supports. Perpendicularly atop these we laid down the 25 foot tree-trunks—the uber-heavy 'stringers.' A horse from the Skyline Guest Ranch saved us from hauling half of them ourselves. The stringers were notched out and the planks levelled and spiked into place with 8" to 12" nails. Four days later we hammered in the final spike, completing our puncheon.

Let me say it's gratifying to get volunteers from across the nation! **Walt Hajducki** drove from Connecticut and worked two back-to-back projects for the ABWF. **Brian Hurd**, 19, from the Rochester, NY area took trains, buses, and autos to get here. **Cobe Chatwood** lives in California. **Alyson Morris** represented the state of Washington and **Matt Hallingstad** drove from Idaho; both provided much needed muscle on the project! **Luke Gullickson**, a musician from Iowa, was there, while **Jerry Ladewig** and **Barb Ostrum** call Emigrant and Red Lodge home. Thanks, Jeremy, for placing so much trust in ABWF volunteers on such a challenging project. Our 'Intra-National' volunteers rocked it!

"I had a blast this week and have many fond memories. I've spent some time volunteering that I felt wasted my time and talent, and regretted the decision later. Definitely not the case with ABWF. And I hope to do it again."

-Matt Hallingstad, Volunteer

Wilderness Conservation 101

Interns Taylor, Alyson, and William

For the third year, the ABWF wrote grants and came up with money to help fund three summer-long volunteers.: **Alyson Morris** a student at Western Washington University (Bellingham), **Taylor Westhusin** student at MSU, Bozeman (originally from Boulder, CO), and **William Jenkins** student at University of the South (Sewanee, TN). Hired through the organization **Student Conservation Association (SCA)**, it costs about \$4000 a piece to hire each intern. Coming from all over the country, these three got the opportunity to work alongside Forest Service wilderness and trail rangers across the A-B Wilderness, thus adding tremendously to the workforce of each of the A-B's Districts. This year we raised most of the money through a grant from the **National Forest Foundation (NFF)** through a fundraisers. I rarely got to see these three, except on work trips sponsored by the ABWF. Most of the time they were on 9-day hitches in the backcountry, hiking long distances and doing toilsome trail work in places where the general public has a hard time getting.



SCA Interns: William and Taylor



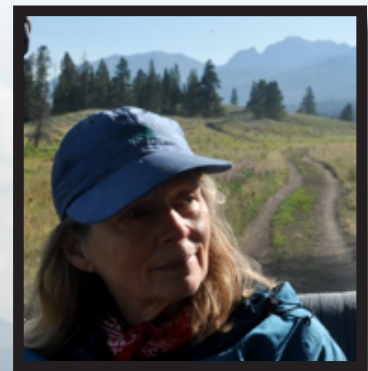
Russell Creek Puncheon



SCA Intern: Alyson

Volunteer of the Year: Jerry Ladewig

This year's award for special effort goes to Jerry Ladewig of Emigrant. When asked why she volunteers, Jerry replied on one project that she's there for the free food; on another she claimed it was to get in shape. If you ask me, Jerry just loves working in the wilds of Montana. She's done plenty. In 2014 she volunteered multiple days on two occasions, for the Wicked Creek trail building project and late in the summer on the Russell Creek bridge building. Last year she helped wrap gifts at REI and made baked goods to be given out for those who helped out the ABWF. She spent a week on Slough Creek working in various capacities in and around the Forest Service cabin. In her words:



*"I believe in giving back
to the resource I have used
and enjoy so much.
The fresh air, physical effort
and camaraderie
give me breath.
Trail work is part of my
fitness regimen!"*

Entering
MONTANA