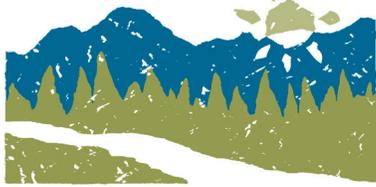


Working Together  
for the Wild



absaroka | beartooth  
WILDERNESS FOUNDATION

# Absaroka Beartooth Wilder 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.”*

## WILDERNESS TURNS 50!

I was drawn to Montana from my earliest days because it was known for its immense and compelling wild areas, full of rugged terrain, endless physical challenges, gorgeous scenery, and very few people. I can't remember a time when I wasn't captivated by the idea of the primordial Wilderness. Even if I never get to see and experience all of it first-hand, I can and do take pleasure in the fact that such a timeless and uncontrolled part of the earth is still there. Wilderness is Montana's greatest natural resource.

This is a special year for Wilderness. On September 3, 1964, a momentous piece of legislation was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson—the Wilderness Act. Fifty years later, as we mark its anniversary, I would ask that everyone give special consideration to all this Act created and the importance of Wilderness in your lives.

*“A Wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”*

The Wilderness Act is a marvel by today's metrics. It is eloquent. How many people can quote (or even remember) lines from any other piece of legal legislation? It is a survivor. When the bill was introduced in 1957 it was revised 66 times before it passed. And it has amazing support. When introduced by Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN), the Senate responded, passing the bill, 73-12. And when Congressman John Saylor (R-PA) brought it before the House, they approved it 373-1! What bill today gets that kind of bipartisan support?

With that language, 54 Wilderness areas, including 5 in Montana and 4 in Wyoming,—9.1 million acres in all—came into being. Furthermore, the Wilderness Act laid down a process which would continue to add Wilderness acreage to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Today there are 758 Wilderness Areas, 110 million acres spread across Forest Service, Park Service, BLM and Wildlife Refuge lands.

What defines Wilderness? Without question, it gives the highest level of protection to our publicly held lands. It gets characterized by its absence of roads and the prohibition of motors and mechanization—features that ensure a truly

primitive experience. But most importantly, Wilderness preserves wild lands in perpetuity. By setting aside these lands, we save special places, not for ourselves alone, but for all generations yet to come.

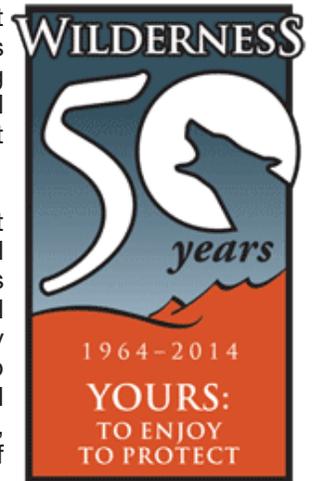
Wilderness is a concept that arose from Americas' historical encounters with an all-wilderness continent. So much of our national character has been shaped by the land, so it is a unique idea to preserve the pristine natural world not for its quarry of raw materials, but as the irreplaceable fabric of our culture.

President Johnson said of passing Wilderness legislation: “Unless we do, much of the wild and beautiful America that we know, and our grandfathers knew, will be lost forever—buried in the debris of our hurrying civilization.” To the great western writer, Wallace Stegner: “We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope.”



The purpose of Wilderness is to pass on a significant piece of our natural history, in its most unaltered state, to the generations to come. It is not to shut anyone out who wants to venture into it. But to go there we must do so on nature's own terms. Our trails make sure that all who go there can find the simplest of access to our wild areas.

We all have a reason to love Wilderness. The ABWF exists to build a 'wilderness stewardship' and that means involving people in taking care of the legacy of our public lands. Wilderness is the mark of the generosity of a civilized society. This summer there will be hikes, articles, speakers, projects, events—all celebrating this amazing thing we call Wilderness. Take advantage. Get involved. Be generous in your appreciation of our Wilderness. Give in a way that is meaningful to you, that sees to the perpetuity of these special places for the next 50 years and beyond.



## SIGNING UP FOR A PROJECT:

Our projects are of four main types: 1) Trail maintenance and building; 2) Invasive Weed eradication; 3) Citizen Science projects; and 4) Education/Awareness programs. We try to offer a variety of projects that encourage involvement to many ages, abilities, and interests. We also try to accommodate anyone who wishes to volunteer. Groups are welcome. These can be great family projects. The nature of the work tends to favor teenagers and older. If you have any reservations about whether a project is right for you or your group, please contact us directly at **406-425-1944** or email us at **info@abwilderness.org**.

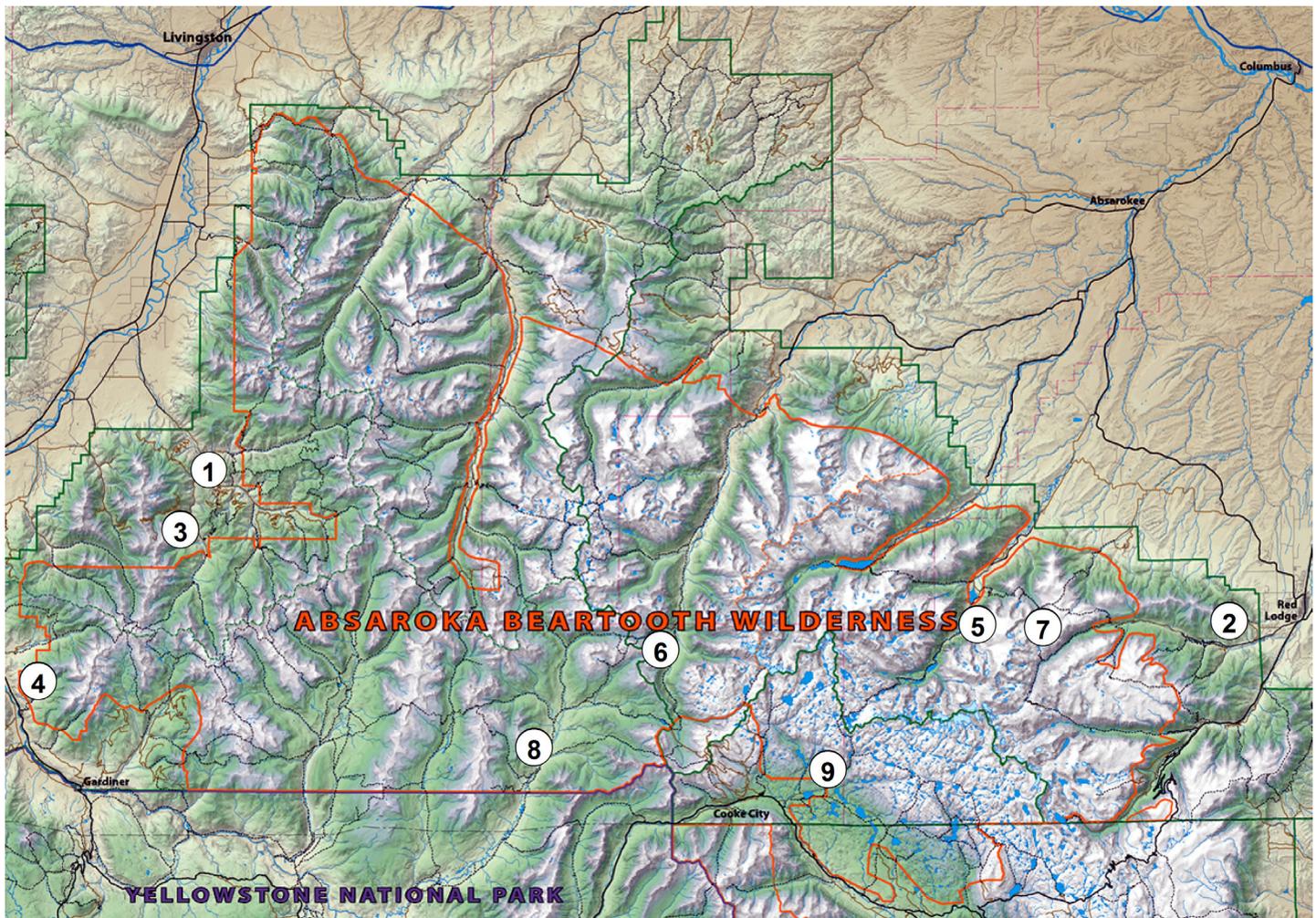
## THE BENEFITS

Spending time in the Wilderness. Physical activity in a healthy setting. Getting to know other volunteers. Hard work, well done, for a worthy cause—our Wilderness. Free Food! And an overwhelming sense of accomplishment at the end of a day.

## SIGN UP!

Much information about difficulty, accommodations, what to bring, and FAQs can be found on our website.

1. Go to our Website: [www.abwilderness.org](http://www.abwilderness.org)
2. Click on the 'Projects and Programs' tab at the top of the page.
3. Scroll down the page and read about each project.
4. Click the button below each project to sign up.



# SCHEDULE OF PROJECTS FOR 2014:

## 1. NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

### SATURDAY, JUNE 7TH: 'JOMAHA' CREEK TRAIL SIGN INSTALLATION & TRAIL IMPROVEMENT:

June 7th is National Trails Day. This year we are tackling work on the 'Jomaha' Trail up Mill Creek past past Snowbank campground. We'll use crosscut saws to clear the trail of downed timber, improve the trail through the burn area, and install signposts. Round trip distance is about 5-6 miles. The first 2 miles is fairly rigorous hiking, but overall this is rated a 'Moderate' project. Meet at the Yellowstone District Ranger Station south of Livingston on Hwy 89 at 8:00 a.m. We'll carpool. We can take up to 12 volunteers, so secure your slot well ahead of time.



## 2. SATURDAY, JUNE 14TH—COMMUNITY TRAILS DAY 2014 THE PALISADES TRAIL PROJECT REVISITED

Last year 60 volunteers joined us for a mass day-long trails event and we did amazing work! This year we're putting the finishing touches on the Palisades Trail. This trail has already become an incredibly popular one the Red Lodge area. This time we'll work on the north end which starts at the end of Fox Road off Highway 78. With an effort like last year's, we will finish the 3-mile long trail that offers unparalleled opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, skiing and mountain biking tantalizingly close to Red Lodge. Donate a day volunteering to show how much you appreciate our local trails! Bring the family!

The ABWF is once again recruiting as many volunteers as we can on Community Trails Day to clear, widen, and improve the Palisades Trail, Saturday, June 14th, starting at 9 a.m. All ages and abilities are encouraged, as there will be many tasks at hand. Please bring your own lunch. A free celebratory picnic and barbecue will wrap up the day.



## 3. JUNE 19TH - 23RD (THURS-MON) -WICKED CREEK TRAIL DEVELOPMENT.

Many of you regularly utilize the multi-use Wicked Creek Trail system (#78) near the Mill Creek cabin south of Livingston. The ABWF received a grant to help the Yellowstone Ranger District restore the entire length of the Wicked Creek Trail. Currently, the trail climbs for two miles to the summit of a long ridge, then drops down into the W. Fork of Mill Creek. Much of the trail on the south side is poorly defined or in great disrepair, so it's hard to follow. Our aim is to restore the trail on the south end, by rebuilding it, widening it, and erecting signposts along its length. This is a popular trail for hikers and mountain bikers, hunters, skiers and trail runners. Making Wicked Creek a through-trail again would dramatically advance recreation opportunities in the Mill Creek area, particularly for mountain bikes outside of Wilderness.

The ABWF seeks volunteers to work alongside the Yellowstone District trail crew on this project. We hope to gain the assistance of local mountain biking groups as well. We will car-camp at Snowbank campground for the duration and day-hike into the work area each day via the W. Fork Trailhead. The ABWF will provide food, group camping gear and tools/safety equipment for its volunteers. Cost is free! Join us for some or all of the days.



## 4. SATURDAY, JUNE 28: BASSETT CREEK WEED ERADICATION

Don't let Weeds Win! The ABWF is conducting weed warfare on Houndstongue, Toadflax, Knapweed, & Thistle. Volunteers will help pull, dig, remove seed heads, and chemically spray all the noxious weeds we can find. It is about 2.5 miles into the Basin, with many switchbacks and little cover/water, so bring sun-screen and plenty to drink. Hike is ~6 miles on the day.



Bassett Creek flows into the Yellowstone River at LaDuke Spring, 9 miles north of Gardiner (48 miles south of Livingston) on Highway 89. Weeds are one of the greatest threats to the integrity of the native ecosystem and volunteer efforts make a difference in keeping them at bay. Meet at the La Duke Spring picnic area at 8:30 a.m. Lunch and snacks are provided. Limit of 10 volunteers, so reserve your spot.

## 5. SATURDAY, JULY 5TH: EAST ROSEBUD WEED BUSTIN' DAY!

Volunteer a single Saturday in July. If you have wanted to help the ABWF on an easy trail and don't have the time for one of our multi-day projects, this weed-busting project could be for you! The ABWF will again be teaming up with the East Rosebud Lake Association and other volunteers to pull and spray invasive weeds (mostly spotted knapweed and Canada thistle) on one of the most heavily used trails in the entire A-B Wilderness--the Beaten Path. We are gaining the upper hand in destroying the weeds that threaten wilderness quality and push out native species, but we need your help! An expert will be on hand to train you how to spot our most threatening invasive species and how to manage them. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the E. Rosebud Lodge and General Store in Alpine.



## 6. JULY 17TH-24TH (THURS-THURS)—STILLWATER RIVER TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Get to the heart of the Wilderness! The headwaters of the Stillwater River arise near Cooke City and flow 30-miles to the Stillwater Mine outside Nye, Montana. The ABWF needs 10 trail volunteers to continue improving the middle sections of this trail down to Horseshoe Creek. Water has rutted the trail very badly and our crew will add water bars and drains, fill in the ruts, and widen the trail in places. If it goes as planned, we will start at the south end of the trail and work our way down the entire length of the Stillwater Trail. We're partnering with a Beartooth District crew on this one.

This is a multi-day project requiring overnight camping within the Wilderness. The Forest Service will assist us with a mule-team to pack in food, tools, supplies and heavier personal equipment to make the journey much easier! All food is provided; you provide your own shelter and sleeping gear/personal effects. This project is rated very strenuous in difficulty due to the distance into the backcountry and the physicality of the work, but the trail itself is quite moderate. Because of the complicated logistics, ideally we're looking for volunteers who can commit to the entire trip, but if you can only volunteer for part of this trail camp, we can work out the details. July 17-24. The ABWF is partnering with MSU-Billings on this project and have received a grant to complete this work!

## 7. AUGUST 8TH-12TH (THURS-TUES)—RED LODGE CREEK PLATEAU TRAIL BUILDING PROJECT

For the third year in a row, the ABWF we will return to the tundra-covered Red Lodge Creek Plateau and finish off the project we started in 2012. Last summer, with the help of the Beartooth District's trail crew, 13 volunteers largely finished a mile-long reroute of the trail that now relieves hikers from having to drop deeply into the gulch and climb back out again. This year we will cover up and rehabilitate the old trail, and then connect the two ends of the new trail with the existing trail to complete the project. You will be astounded to see how much ABWF volunteers have accomplished!

We are looking for 10+ volunteers for the project. This is rated as fairly strenuous since most of the work will be above tree line, at nearly 10,000 feet. The project requires camping out for multiple days in the backcountry near the work site. The Beartooth Backcountry Horsemen will haul in all our equipment, supplies and food. From the W. Fork of Rock Creek, the project is located 5 miles up at the crest of the Senia Creek Trail before it drops into Crow Lake and the E. Rosebud. Even if you only have a couple of days to volunteer, we want your help! Ages 12 and up. The cost is FREE! August 8-12.



## 8. AUGUST 12-16, (TUES-SAT): SLOUGH CREEK CABIN WORK WEEK



We're returning to the Slough Creek cabin at Frenchy's Meadows to complete more weed work, trail work and cabin maintenance! Sign up quickly. These 8 slots went FAST! last year. This is a truly unique opportunity to travel to a remote area along Slough Creek, 13 miles off the Lamar Valley in Yellowstone. We will do various work around the historic ranger cabin there. Last year we were able to catch a horse-drawn wagon ride in, courtesy of the Silvertip Ranch. It cut out a lot of miles hiking! We will set up base, cook, sleep (you can pitch tents outside), and hang out around the cabin. Slough Creek flows out of the A-B Wilderness through an area known for its wildlife and gorgeous trout streams, so bring your pole! The work is more moderate in terms of difficulty, though there is heavier trail work and easier weed work to go around. Maximum of 8 participants. Food is provided. There is a \$75 charge to offset costs.

## 9. AUGUST 18-22, (MON-FRI): RUSSELL CREEK PUNCHEON REPLACEMENT PROJECT:

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act, why not be a trail volunteer along the famed 'Beaten Path' Trail? Russell Creek, just out of Cooke City, is the traditional start for the 30-mile long Beaten Path trail that ends in the E. Rosebud. Near the start the trail crosses sensitive wet meadows and a low bridge/boardwalk needs replacing. Our volunteers will remove the old puncheon and replace it with a new 100' structure that will be horse-packed in. This project is on the more moderate in difficulty so bring your engineering skills!

We will basecamp at the Forest Service cabin outside Cooke City and hike two miles in each day. Due to grizzly protocols in the Cooke City area, we must sleep in the cabin or in hard-sided campers. Meals are provided! On the final day, Friday, we will take a break from the work and enjoy a hike in the immediate area. This project is co-sponsored with the Wilderness Walks program of the Montana Wilderness Association! Space is very limited.



## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Chuck Ward spent a lot of hours on trail last summer helping on ABWF projects. So what did he do for a winter encore? After filling our ears with how bad a shape our trail tools were in, Chuck volunteered to put his expertise towards a solution. Axe heads were loose, pulaskis not sharp, so Chuck worked over the winter fixing up many of the tools in the Forest Service's cache. Here he is with his handiwork. Thanks immensely, Chuck!



## PINE CREEK FUNDRAISER

Thanks to our wonderful supporter Debbie Erdman who threw us a fabulous event, and to new friends Yvonne Brutger and Dain Rodwell for opening up their beautiful home for a House Party benefitting the A-B Wilderness Foundation. Many from the Livingston and Paradise Valley area attended, enjoyed great food and drinks, and learned a lot more about the ABWF. We raised nearly \$3500 from the intimate event! If anyone is interested in hosting a gathering of this nature for the ABWF, please contact David.

## SUMMER 2014—MONTANA PIKA SURVEY!

The Craighead Institute and the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation are teaming up to do citizen science, the Montana Pika Survey—finding volunteers who will help record pika locations and other data when out hiking in the A-B Wilderness. This is the very cute and industrious pika that lives in mountain talus or boulder fields. He is also an important barometer of a changing climate as he sees his alpine habitat shrink. You can help record pika locations throughout Montana, by following these steps.

1. Identify a pika, by seeing them, hearing them or by their haypiles
2. Record the location using a GPS, smart phone, or Google earth
3. Go to our website and record the location [www.Craigheadinstitute.org-Mt pika survey](http://www.Craigheadinstitute.org-Mt pika survey)

This data will help determine pika distribution throughout the state and help managers and researchers plan for the future. Check back on our website for details on a training session given by April Craighead on pika identification and how to use a GPS.





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WILDERNESS FOUNDATION

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at [www.abwilderness.org](http://www.abwilderness.org)

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