



absaroka | beartooth  
WILDERNESS FOUNDATION

# Absaroka Beartooth WilderNews

"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:

Winter 2015 Issue

*Sometimes I get asked what I do in the winter for the A-B Wilderness Foundation. "Lots", I say, because it IS a busy time of year though there may not be the trail projects happening as they do in summer. There are grants to write and report on, fundraising and events to plan, and of course summer projects to nail down. This issue of WilderNews is dedicated to winter—behind the scenes during the quietest time of year. It's a favorite season for me when animal tracks and ice sculptures ornament the landscape and the solitude attunes my senses more acutely onto what's before me. I love snowshoeing off-trail, over pillows of untouched snow, through aspen stands and along streams where snowshoes really show off their flotation abilities. **Get out and experience the wilderness in winter.** Wherever you live, there's a portal to skiing or snowshoeing in your Forest or Wilderness. Below are some venues we certainly recommend!*



**Lake Fork Trail (Red Lodge Area)** From Red Lodge, drive south on Hwy 212, has a 3K loop option. More experienced skiers may choose to ski up the road to the Lake Fork Trail into the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. The trail runs along Rock Creek. About 2 miles above the trailhead is Silver Falls seen from the trail, on your left. Hardy skiers can ski to Lost Lake, 5 miles in. This trail system has no snowmobile access, so it is very quiet! It is not for beginners.

**Bear Creek Trail (Gardiner Area)** From Gardiner travel towards Jardine. This route consists of the Bear Creek Road from the parking area on TVX Mine property to the Bear Creek Trailhead near the wilderness boundary. The entire length is groomed after the road is closed to cars, trucks and ATVs in early winter. Snowmobile riders are asked to avoid the set ski tracks. This trail is relatively easy for beginners and those looking for a flat workout with views of surrounding mountains.

**Wicked Creek trail (Emigrant area)** leaves opposite of the Snowbank trailhead and switches back along an old roadbed. This trail is closed to motorized traffic and is excellent for snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. Passing through second-growth forest, eventually the views open up and one can see Mount Cowan, Pyramid Peak, Crow Mountain and the Absaroka-Beartooth beyond. The roadbed hits the ridge after about 6 miles and continues on around the summer ATV trail, so you could make this trip as long or short as you wish. If snow conditions allow, adventurous souls can make turns down from the ridge through the old logging units, making the trip back to the car just a little bit faster!

## Save the Date

*Pint Night at Red Lodge Ale's-March 10  
Pint Night at Katabatic Brewery in Livingston-April 7*

*Proceeds from beers sold benefit ABWF!*

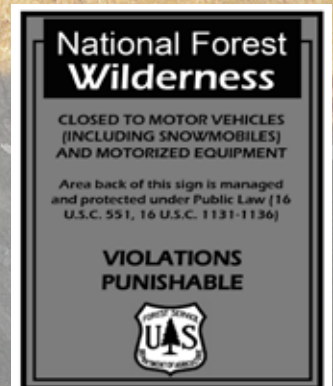




## Winter Wilderness Incursions

Section 4(c) of the 1964 Wilderness Act, congress prohibits certain uses of Wilderness: “there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area.” Despite these regulations, encroachment into Wilderness nonetheless occurs. The problem multiplies during winter with the use of snow machines, since snow covers over many constraints such as roads, rocky barriers & woodfall. Snow makes recognizing the terrain and wilderness boundary lines more difficult, leading to greater encroachment—as does the promise of untracked terrain for snowmobiles.

Cooke City is one area that sees too many illegal incursions into Wilderness—typically 200-400 a year, according to Jeremy Zimmer of the Gardiner District. Each winter the district does its best to hire snow rangers to patrol popular areas, educating people where they can and can’t ride, and handing out maps. Patrollers post signs identifying boundaries. But chronic underfunding means that winter patrolling doesn’t always happen, snowmobiles go unrepaired and unfueled, and Wilderness boundaries become vulnerable. Clearly, fewer incursions happen in years when there’s a more routine presence of snow patrollers. **You can help!** Financially supporting the ABWF allows us to seek matching funding to sustain the winter patrol program. **Volunteer!** If you ski regularly in the Bear Creek area near Jardine, Jeremy can use your help removing brush and branches along the trail that slap and trip skiers. Contact the Gardiner Ranger Station directly at 406 848-7375 if you’d like to help; they have tools you can borrow.



## Scientific Monitoring and Citizen Science

Citizen Science has been the big buzzword in conservation over the past few years—i.e. recruiting citizens with time and a willingness to assist scientists in data collection from a variety of studies and surveys. Driven by lack of funding and personnel, science has learned to turn people’s fascination with the natural world into a valuable workforce of volunteers ready to accompany scientists, grad students, and interns in the field. Connecting people in deeper ways to their outdoors is crucial as far as we’re concerned. To date, the ABWF has assisted in projects monitoring glacial ice, whitebark pine, pikas, and native cutthroat trout. This coming summer we again hope to solicit your help on one or more of our featured projects as we expand our commitment to helping further science in the A-B Wilderness.



We’ll provide you with training so you’ll know how to use GPS and other equipment and know what to look for when gathering data. You’ll head into the field with the scientists or perhaps on your own as part of you or your group’s hike. There may be overnight opportunities.

This summer we will be working with the Forest Service to help them monitor “Wilderness Character.” Land managers are mandated to self-monitor the quality of their own stewardship and the wilderness experience. This means carefully checking to see, quantitatively, how numbers of visitors and stock affect an area, or which camping sites are impacted or illegally located. If this grant goes through, 4 interns will be hired to conduct the wilderness character surveys throughout the A-B, and coordinate volunteers like yourself to help them. Such data helps managers know where best to allocate their limited resources.

## Education

The ABWF seeks to promote the A-B Wilderness and Wilderness values wherever and whenever we can. I like to think we promote “Wilderness Literacy.” This gets reflected in the following ways: We do slide presentations and talks about the A-B Wilderness, to school groups, at the local colleges/universities, to civic groups, service organizations, and hiking clubs—anyone who will host one of our FREE presentations! We invite scientists studying issues relating to the A-B Wilderness to present their work and findings via public events that you can attend. We also highlight trails and wilderness issues in our newsletters, on the website, and via Facebook. We lead hikes, workshops and clinics on topics such as Wilderness history, Leave No Trace, GPS use, safety in bear country, and backcountry living skills. Our interns and staff are in the field educating backcountry users of safe practices and Wilderness regulations. Call David at 406-425-1944 or email him at [info@abwilderness.org](mailto:info@abwilderness.org) if you would like the ABWF to put on an educational program for your class or group!



# 2014 Financial Supporters

## Wilderness Friends (Under \$25)

Braadin Antillon	Timothy Grandpre	Nicole Klein (Florence)	Barbara Ping (Bozeman)
Barb Beck (Red Lodge)	Amy Grandpre (Laurel)	Danelle Lessard (Hardin)	Lynn Redman (Kalispell)
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Charla Floyd (Red Lodge)	Jessica Johnson	Taylor Owen (Billings)	
Julie Garton	Patrick Joyce (Billings)	Carmen Palmer	

## Fossil Lake Level (\$25 to \$49)

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Cassy Haacke (Billings)	Renee Nelson (Billings)	John & Marilyn Simmons (Absarokee)	Nikki Yancey (Billings)
Roger and Lynn Jackson (Red Lodge)	Lucille Olds (Red Lodge)	Rhett Smith (Pensacola, FL)	Howard & Karen Young (Red Lodge)
Wanda Kennicott (Red Lodge)	Cathie Osmun & Jack Exley (Red Lodge)	June Stilwell (Roberts)	
	Frank Pelli (Red Lodge)	Janet Stockey (Red Lodge)	

## Boulder River Level (\$50 to \$99)

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Grant & Laurie Barnard (Red Lodge)	Lee Freeman (Livingston)	Sam Hoffman (Red Lodge)	Pat Thomson (Brevard, NC)
Mike & Kelly Beckstead (Billings)	Daniel Gathje (Red Lodge)	Carolyn Jones (Billings)	Phillip Toon (Boaz, KY)
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Shawn and Jerry Cole (Livingston)	Nancy Hatfield (Livingston)	Richard & Gretchen Nolan (Red Lodge)	Dave Wood (Denver, CO)

## Sundance Pass (\$100 to \$249)

Andrew & Julianne Anderson (Emigrant)	Mark Cunnane	Jeff & Cristi Hunnes (Billings)	Kimberly Schlenker (Bozeman)
Samuel Anderson (Emigrant)	Al & Brooke Cunningham (Bozeman)	Imagine If... (Red Lodge)	Dale Sexton (Livingston)
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Arlene Becker (Billings)	Jim and Cindy Dickert (Red Lodge)	Jean Keffler	Jim Smedsrud (Red Lodge)
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Crazy Creek Products, Inc. (Red Lodge)	Bob Hove (Livingston)	Dennis Noteboom (Livingston)	Charles Ward (Billings)
		Caroline Ostby (Billings)	Catherine Weeden

## Lake Plateau Level (\$250 to \$499)

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John & Petrea Goering (Bozeman)  
Glee and Bob Greenwood (Livingston)  
Allen & Jacky Kallenbach (Estes Park, CO)  
Jesse and Catherine Logan (Emigrant)  
Barbara Prager (Clyde Park)

## Grasshopper Glacier Level (\$500 to \$999)

Rob Forstenzer (Livingston)  
The Hannah B. Quimby Gift Fund  
Bliss and Marcia McCrum (Livingston)  
Bob Quam (Billings)

## Granite Peak Level (\$1000+)

Jo Ann Eder (Red Lodge)  
George L. Ohrstrom, Jr. Foundation (New York, NY)  
Bernie Rose (Billings)  
Farwell Smith & Linda McMullen (Big Timber)  
Stillwater Mining Co. (Billings)  
Susan Scott Heyneman Foundation (Sheridan, WY)

**Thanks to all who contributed to the ABWF in 2014!**

*(Our apologies if we missed anyone)*



## Calling all Artists!

*Wilderness has always inspired some of the most amazing art.* Some of the earliest and best advocates for Wilderness and Parks were artists like Thomas Moran or Ansel Adams who were called upon to paint, photograph, compose, and write about our wild lands in the largely unknown West. Their work stirred public interest and prompted others to preserve these lands for posterity.

In order to promote an even keener appreciation of the A-B, the ABWF is launching an **Artist-in-Residence program** in 2015. If you are an artist and would be excited for an opportunity to spend a rustic week in the A-B Wilderness working on your craft, consider applying for a spot. We will host 2-3 artists this summer in Forest Service cabins across the A-B—at **Meyers Creek** (Beartooth District), **Box Canyon** (Yellowstone District), or the **Cooke City cabin** (Gardiner District). Our goal is to house you in the Wilderness and allow you unencumbered time for thoughtful reflection and development of your work. With any luck, the solitude and beauty of the Wilderness will serve to inspire your musical compositions, prose, photographs or paintings. Each artist will be expected to produce a piece of art that can be displayed or performed in public and donated to the ABWF. For more information, e-mail [info@abwilderness.org](mailto:info@abwilderness.org).

