



**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.”*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR:

**A season of reflection and giving...** We are a new organization dedicated to the A-B Wilderness and to improving every Wilderness user's experience and connection with Wilderness. In our short time, we have worked hard to establish—with everyone we can possibly reach—who we are, what we are about, and the kind of work it is that we do. The ABWF now has over two years of getting work done on the ground and in direct benefit to the Wilderness and we are proud of our accomplishments.

Now that we have begun to establish a 'brand', a reputation, it is time to do the even harder work of raising the money that will sustain us in the months and years to come. Government support and grant money has become harder to come by, so we are increasingly in need of public support like yours. As we tout a number of success stories in this newsletter, we also appeal to you for financial help. The ABWF asks that you renew your membership and consider increasing the level at which you are a member. Become a new member! Your generosity is important so that we can keep doing the good work we have embarked upon.



This year over **150 volunteers** put in a whopping **5050 hours** to help the A-B Wilderness. It takes money to put tools in their hands and to feed them, as well as to put on the programs and deliver the educational curriculum that promotes good stewardship. It requires funding to recruit and put Wilderness Interns to work on trails for the summer. To the many of you who have volunteered, you know the rewards of that experience. Help the ABWF keep delivering these kinds of opportunities.

The 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act is close at hand in 2014. The Act is one of the most visionary and eloquent pieces of legislation ever enacted in the United States. Setting aside public lands

worthy of our greatest protections for the good of nature and the human experience is one of our great achievements and deserves our celebration. Anniversaries serve as mileposts to renew our commitment to what we hold dear. The ABWF is currently working on a slate of projects and events that will tap into the great goodwill the Wilderness Act inspires. Help us to celebrate this monumental achievement in the upcoming months.

## PROJECT SUCCESSES FROM THE SUMMER:

### NATIONAL TRAILS DAY: PASSAGE CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

June 1st was National Trails Day, which was sunny and brilliant for a great volunteer effort on the Passage Creek trail system south of Livingston. Ten volunteers joined four members of the Yellowstone District's trail crew for an all-day effort to do early-season maintenance of the Passage and Lambert Creek Trails. We split into two crews and used cross-cut saws to cut out a lot of downed trees from across the trail. We also built a retaining wall and shored up one of the steep switchbacks down to the falls that had eroded away. News writer Monica Glokey, volunteered and wrote a nice article on trailwork in the Big Timber Pioneer.



Thanks to our Volunteers—**Tim Border, Steve Caldwell, Monica Glokey, Karen and Kim Holcomb, Tom Lemke, Katey Plymesser, Ryan Van Luit, and Ty Walters**. And thanks to our Yellowstone District partners on the day: **Wes Dudley, Kat Hickman, Zoe Linton, and Lawson Maclean**.

## OVER 60 VOLUNTEERS HELP BUILD THE PALISADES TRAIL!

June 8th was Founder's Day for the town of Red Lodge, with many festivities to choose from. Volunteers showed how much they care about trails by coming out in droves to build a new trail—the Palisades Trail—on the outskirts of Red Lodge. It was a combined effort between the ABWF and the Beartooth Ranger District, as well as the Beartooth Recreational Trails Association and the Montana Conservation Corps. Fifty-eight volunteers, five rangers, and nine Corps members dedicated a Saturday to cut, widen, and improve the 3-mile Forest Service trail that departs from Palisades Campground and contours around the base of Red Lodge Mountain to the end of Fox Road west of the cemetery. Helpers used every tool we had, but it was astounding, with so many at work, how fast 100-foot sections were laid down. By day's end 1½ miles of multi-use trail seemed to have miraculously materialized!



**Thanks to the Palisades Volunteers: Cara Barbee, Grant Barnard, Peter Boyum, Barb Campbell, Alyssa Charney, Jack Clinton, Gary DeMille, Jim Dickert, Kraig Dippold, Doug Durward, Mark Edwards, Mary Fitzgerald, Dan Gathje, Anne Genereux, Linda Hall, Steve Hanson, Brad Hauge, Jeff and Linda Heck, Karen Holcomb, Kristen Hollum, Bob and Mary Johnson, Maggie Karas, Frank and Margo Kelley, Tom and Hannah Kohley, Keith Kolstad, Chris Kruckeberg, Mimi Lockman, Bob Matter, Peggy Monaghan,**

**Amy Moore, Priscilla Neff, Bob Nelson, Leon Odegaard, Paul Otsu, Traute Parrie, Frank Pelli, John Poore, Kim Redding, Mark Robertson, John and Kim Rodakowski, Kevin and Thomas Schiffers, Lynn Sorensen, Bill Stevens, Jaime Stevens, Jim Stevenson, Pat and Wally Tate, Chuck Ward, Jim White, Louis Wolff, Sally Wooden, and JoAnne Wroe...**Phenomenal work!

Thank you, Beartooth Rangers, for your guidance and hard work—**Allie Wood, Shannon Burdick, Hannah Marchant, Jenny May, and Ben Clark!** Ultimate thanks go out to Brad Hauge and his crew from Pro-Cut Lawn Care of Red Lodge. Brad provided a \$1000 grant through the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation to benefit the outdoors community. The ABWF received that grant, which paid to advertise, purchase tools and equipment, lunch for the workers, the wooden signs that designate the Palisades trail, and the BBQ that followed.

The event was so successful that volunteers asked for a follow-up workday to finish what was left. So on June 29th, 11 additional volunteers gathered at the Fox Road end of the trail to better establish and widen that section of the Palisades trail. All in all, **ABWF volunteers logged 475 hours of work** on the trail that has become the most heavily used trail in the Red Lodge area. It's a gorgeous trail, so please go see what can be accomplished by volunteers! Thank you: **Travis Burdick, Kraig Dippold, Karen Holcomb, Lynn Sorensen, Jim Stevenson, Wally Tate, Eric Varney, Chrissy and Jaci Webb, Brian Westlund, and Allie**

## BRIDGE CREEK WEEDS WEEKEND

It was a small but effective crew that camped on the Boulder River, bent on the destruction of noxious weeds. **Nancy Ostlie, David Kallenbach, and Derek Kirchner** wrought havoc on the houndstongue and oxeye daisy growing in abundance near the mouths of Bridge and Upsidedown Creeks. Three of us were able to pull up about 30 big bags of the invasive which is covered in Velcro-like seeds.



*Volunteer Nancy Ostlie bags up piles of houndstongue for disposal from the Bridge Creek Trail.*

## UPPER STILLWATER TRAIL DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED

*Volunteer Shella Soby crosses the headwaters of the Stillwater River*

Heavy, satisfying work... The Stillwater Trail connects Cooke City to the Stillwater Mine and follows its namesake river from its headwaters north of Daisy Pass. Horse packers and hikers alike use this trail, and it's a key access to the Lake Plateau. The ABWF took a small crew 12 miles into the heart of the A-B Wilderness to help the Forest Service clear out more than 100 water bars, create new drains, remove downed timber, and fill in more than a mile of deeply rutted trail that was a leg-breaker for horses and humans. Most difficult was the 'check and fill' work—in-setting logs across the trail, creating a set of tiers in the trail and then filling in the trenches behind each tier with rock and soil until the trail is level. In places the trail was entrenched a meter deep, so



an immense amount of rock and tons of earth was moved by hand to fill in the holes. We also created numerous drains so that water does not simply run down the trail again and create new trenches. Our crew had a great time camping in the wide meadows near the worksite and cooling off in the Stillwater.



*Karen Holcomb and Linus Metzler fill in the entrenched trail with rock and soil*

Thanks to **Karen Holcomb** and **Blaine Hartman**, and **Marcus Perry**—Wilderness Interns hired through the Student Conservation Association, who helped on this project. Thanks also to **Linus Metzler**, a student from Switzerland, **Charles Ward**, **David Kallenbach**, and **Shella & Matthew Soby**, who joined the Beartooth's trail rangers—**Amanda and Hannah Marchant**, **Shannon McGann**, and **Allie Wood**, to complete this project.

## IDYLIC TIMES AT THE SLOUGH CREEK CABIN



*The good folks at the Silvertip Ranch gave us a lift the 12 miles into the Slough Creek Patrol Cabin.*

Our volunteers utilized the Slough Creek Patrol cabin as a base while we spent five days around Frenchy's Meadows engaged in a variety of work. Nine volunteers—**Larry Campbell** of Livingston, **Jim Dickert**, and **Neil Rodenbeck** of Red Lodge, **Erich-Emil Gabriel** of Billings, **Jerry Ladewig** from Emigrant, **Blaine Hartman** from Iowa, and **Kathy & Martin Petras** and **Rita Slivka** from Ohio—helped replace fencing around the historic cabin and Frenchy's Grave, as well as scouting out and spraying invasive weeds—oxeye daisy, houndstongue and leafy spurge. Our excellent group also cut out downed timber from over 16 miles of trail, built 17 new water bars on the Lost Creek Trail, dispersed illegal campsites, and made needed repairs around the cabin. It doesn't get much better than this. Volunteers—ages 19 to 75—were transported 12 miles by horse and wagon, courtesy of the staff at the Silvertip Ranch, and hiked the last 2 miles into the remote cabin. For three days we worked alongside the USFS Gardiner District trail crew of **Jeremy Zimmer** and **Katherine Knight**, knocking off late in the afternoon to enjoy fishing, swimming, good food, the horses, and conversation around the campfire. Lazy Slough Creek flows out of the A-B and snakes its way down to the Lamar Valley through one of the most scenic and sought-after destinations in the Yellowstone area. Fantastic trip with **500 hours of volunteer time** logged!



*Volunteers haul new fencing to the cabin.*

## HUGE STRIDES ON THE RED LODGE CREEK PLATEAU

In mid-August, the ABWF once again spearheaded a five-day long trail-building effort high on the Red Lodge Creek Plateau above the junction down to Crow Lake. **Thirteen volunteers logged 415 hours** cutting new trail at 10,000 feet. This summer we had an added benefit—the Beartooth District blasted out a section of the trail prior to our arrival and made the pick and Pulaski work that much easier.



This was a joint effort with the Beartooth trail rangers—Allie Wood oversaw the project; Nolan Melin horse-packed in our food, tools and supplies. Amanda and Hannah Marchant, Shannon McGann, and Shannon Burdick are a small but formidable team of trail artisans who taught us how to build a beautiful trail! One of the crowning achievements of the ABWF to date, we have completed over a mile of new trail, and trail users are already starting to use it!

*Volunteers Gawain Lau and Lori Anderson pause from their trail work*

*Volunteers and Beartooth Ranger line up for a photo high atop the Red Lodge Creek Plateau.*



## OUR VOLUNTEERS

**Lori Anderson, Gawain Lau, Dave Sapp, and Charles Ward** of Billings; **David Blair, Kristen Hollum, Priscilla Neff, and Mark Robertson** of Red Lodge; **Alex Christensen and Dylan Malone** of Madison, Wisconsin and Houghton, Michigan, respectively; **Ronni Flannery** of Missoula; and **Linus Metzler** of Switzerland.

## OUR SUMMER-LONG VOLUNTEERS

We had 6 full-time volunteers working on various projects this summer for the ABWF. Between them they amassed an amazing **3000 hours of work** helping clear trails, build water bars, make visitor contacts, surveying whitebark pine, and helping run the volunteer projects. The three SCA volunteers, **Alex Haughton, Blaine Hartman, and Karen Holcomb** put in **1340 hours** working for the ABWF on the Gardiner, Yellowstone and Beartooth Districts—and were essential help for the severely depleted Forest Service crews. **Linus Metzler** also contributed **400 hours** of time helping in the office, with the website, and helping lead a number of the volunteer projects this summer.



## WHITEBARK PINE RESEARCHERS GATHER IMPORTANT DATA

If you hadn't noticed, whitebark pine has been very much in the news recently, and the ABWF is proud to have had a hand in this work. **Emily Francis** and **Max Grigri**—research fellows hired by Clean Air/Cool Planet and the ABWF—scarcely took a day off from surveying whitebark pine stands at 24 sites across the A-B Wilderness. If you met these two young research fellows, you were struck by their dedication to prevail at reaching all the sites before the October snows. And they did it, too! Together they clocked **1300 hours** studying the effects of blister rust and mountain pine beetle on the trees. Their missions often took three days of difficult travel to get to trailheads, and long backpacks into the high country before they could conduct six numerous surveys at each site. Up to this point, very little work on this broad a scale had been attempted in the A-B Wilderness. Because of their efforts, data has now been collected on the health of whitebark pine in our Wilderness! Max and Emily shared their methodology and findings at a professional conference in Bozeman on Whitebark Pine. They also led a remarkable hike into one of their study sites on the Line Creek Plateau that taught the 10 participants the ins and outs of the keystone tree species. The ABWF is proud that Emily's and Max's work will better contribute to our understanding of the ecolody of the A-B Wilderness.



*Emily and Max became seasoned mountaineers with all their trips into remote parts of the A-B Wilderness*



*Charles Ward on the Upper Stillwater Trail*

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR!

This unofficial award goes to **Chuck Ward** of Billings for his diligence on no fewer than three ABWF projects this summer! After warming up on the Palisades Trail project, Chuck joined both the Upper Stillwater and Red Lodge Creek Trail Projects, both five days in length. A retired BLM Ranger from Billings, Chuck loves good trail tools and physical work. You make a mean oatmeal breakfast, Chuck! Thanks for your diligence and **107 hours of work** this summer!

## MANY DIFFERENT WAYS TO VOLUNTEER

Thanks to **Jean, Everett** and **Katie Atherly** for taking our summer volunteer Linus Metzler into their home for two months and treating him like one of the family. The Atherlies answered the call to host the 18 year old volunteer from Switzerland for two months. There were perks. Linus turned out to be an outstanding baker of zopf (a braided bread) and is a helpful genius with computers and technology.

Thanks to **Lexy Adams**. She graciously allowed Max & Emily to use her 4WD Land Rover on many of their whitebark pine missions, saving the pair many extra days of travel and money renting a vehicle.

## THE NEW ABWF OFFICE

The Red Lodge Area Community Foundation has provided office space for the ABWF since March. It's a great opportunity to be so near the heart of the non-profit community in Red Lodge. The Community Foundation has been generating high school volunteers and brought me **Jack Fitzgerald** to help around the office. Thanks, Jack and the RLACF!



## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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

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P.O. Box 392  
 Red Lodge, MT 59068  
 Cell: 406-425-1944  
[info@abwilderness.org](mailto:info@abwilderness.org)

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