



Volume 17, Issue 1

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association



Turtle Tracks

President's Message

Hello,

Hope this finds you all warm and safe as the winter grinds to an end in North Dakota, we have a lot of snow and it has warmed up from our 3 weeks of below zero weather in early January, thank goodness. Anyway, it is time to think about trails, preparing for the spring season, and what the plan is for 2017.

Number one - Thanks to **JOHN R. OLSON**, and **ROD and CAROLYN MITZEL**, our latest new **Life Members**. Congratulations, your donations will be put to good use to further the MDH trail mission.

We appreciate all our members, so if you have not renewed your membership, please do so ASAP to get our trail news and activities via the *Turtle Tracks* newsletter, our quarterly newsletter. This also keeps you aware of everything happening on the MDH trail system.

Next, we have the 17th Annual MDHTA membership meeting scheduled for Saturday evening, April 22, 2017, at the Eagles club in Dickinson, ND so put that on your calendar and RSVP. We expect to have many organizations represented and a guest speaker for your benefit and enjoyment. More to come on that later. Some other important dates are: National Trails Day, which is June 3 this year, to be held at Burning Coal Vein Campground; the MDH100 foot race is July 29; the MDH100 bike race is August 5; and the MDH150 is September 9-14th. So mark your calendars to either volunteer to work at the races or

participate in them. Check out the website ExperienceLand.org for more info.

Next, we want to thank the RoundUp folks at Roughrider Electric for helping MDHTA sponsor the ND trail conference held last fall in Dickinson, and for the tent shelters purchased with the Roundup funds. Thanks to **Bruce Bishop** that handled the shelter purchases.

Also the MDHTA website is really working great, so look at it and review the merchandise we have for sale, it works real well to use the PayPal option and get your order very quickly. We also have new MDHT medallions and patches for your purchase and use, they are pretty neat. We are out of the MDH Trail Guide books and are working to restore our inventory of this item. A big thank you goes to **Roger Ashley** for all his work on the website.

We are meeting with the Forest Service before the field season to discuss projects and maintenance of the MDH trail system. They are working on the new trail map as we speak along with planning other project efforts. We will be updated our plan after our meeting with the FS this next month and be looking for any help we can get to further the mission on providing a great trail system for YOUR use in southwestern North Dakota in 2017 and the future.

Happy Trails,

Curtis W. Glasoe, President - MDHTA

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Special points of interest:

- *The 144 miles of the MDHT from Burning Coal Vein to CCC Campground was designated as a National Recreation Trail on December 14, 2016!*
- *Mountain lions are a "keystone species."*

Annual Meeting Scheduled – April 22, 2017 – Eagles Club Dickinson

RSVP by April 7

The MDHTA annual meeting will be held Saturday, April 22, 2017 at the Eagles Club Dickinson. The Eagles Club in Dickinson is located at 31 1st Avenue East. The social will begin at 5 pm MT, dinner at 6 pm MT followed by the meeting.

The menu includes a salad bar, roast beef, roasted turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy and vegetable, with a price of \$20 per plate, price includes tax and tip. A vegetarian entry is available.

There will be a cash bar, silent auction and door prizes.

Please bring an item for the silent auction. Please RSVP by Friday, April 7 to Rod Mitzel at rmitzel@yahoo.com or call 701-227-4543 or 701-690-9195. Or you can contact Curt Glasoe at curtglasoe@ndsupernet.com, phone 701-225-5796. Let Rod or Curt know the number in your party attending and if they want the regular or vegetarian entrée.

Annual Meeting Program

Trail reports from the organizations that support the Maah Daah Hey Trail System will be given. In addition to these

reports we will have two special presentations that should be of interest to all trail users and partners. First, Angie Mikkelson will give a talk/presentation about the *Endurance Ride at Buffalo Gap*. Angie is a member of the Back Country Horsemen of North Dakota. The second special presentation will be on *Mountain Lions in North Dakota* by Randy Johnson, graduate student, South Dakota State University. Randy provided the article found later in this issue to pique your interest. This will be a great opportunity to ask questions and interact with other Annual meeting participants.

Silent Auction

A silent auction will be held during the Annual Meeting. This is a fun way to support MDHTA activities held during the year. Support and fun can be found in bringing a small item as well as purchasing. In 2016 the Silent Auction brought in \$526 that was used to help match grants MDHTA received to support trail events as well as to help sponsor National Trails Day.

We hope to see you at the MDHTA Annual Meeting!

National Trails Day on the MDHT – June 3, 2017

The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association will be hosting the National Trails Day event at the Burning Coal Vein Trailhead, the southern terminus of the Maah Daah Hey Trail. This year's project will include the construction of a puncheon through a seasonal creek and surfacing the approaches to this puncheon. Persons interested in participating in this National Trails Day event should arrive at the trailhead at 9 am Mountain Time. Lunch will be served about noon followed by a Trail University Event. Directions and additional information will be sent in the spring edition of Turtle Tracks.



Membership Recognition—Thank You!

Life Members:

Roger & Pat Ashley
Glenn & Jolene Baranko
Tom & Sherri Dickson
Ken Eberts
Curt & Carol Glasoe
Jesse Hanson & Lisa Kudelka
Dale & Jennifer Heglund
Mark Liebig
Ron & Aileen Luethe
Don & Susan Mayer
Medora Convention and Visitors Bureau
Rodney and Carolyn Mitzel
John R. Olson
Charles & Sandra Peterson
Brian Selland
Dwight & Loa Tober
Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation
Glennys Ulschak
Nick & Lindsey Ybarra

Mile Marker:

Tawna Boyko

Trail Boss:

Carol Carter
Heidi Heitkamp and Dwain Lange
McKenzie County Tourism
Stephen & Janet Wieser

Founding:

Curtis Alkire
Bruce & Roberta Bishop
Kim Callahan
Dickinson Convention & Visitors Bureau
Eric Selle
Freida Tebelius
Mark Zimmerman



Mountain Lions – Return to the Badlands

by Randy Johnson – Graduate Student, South Dakota State University

Did you know that mountain lions living in North Dakota are in fact the same species as the iconic Florida panther? Furthermore, did you know that mountain lions are indeed native to North Dakota? Historically, mountain lions ranged statewide, with the vast majority occupying the rugged parts of western North Dakota. However, by the early 1900s, mountain lions had been persecuted to the point of no longer existing in the state. Decades passed without mountain lions, until 1958 when a mountain lion was spotted near Killdeer. During the decades that followed, the population slowly and naturally recolonized the Badlands region, until present, when a relatively small, stable population of mountain lions once again exists in western North Dakota. North Dakota is fortunate to have such an important species once again roaming its wild places, and fulfilling its ecological role. Of course, mountain lions bring with them other concerns as well, including human safety, their effects on prey animals, and their impact to local ranchers and pet owners. My goal here is to replace some misconceptions and fears with facts and knowledge, so that people can better appreciate and understand this mysterious animal.

I am a graduate student at South Dakota State University studying wildlife science, and I have been fortunate enough to assist the North Dakota Game and Fish Department in studying the mountain lion population in the Badlands. Over the last

several years, we have been live-capturing and placing GPS collars on individual mountain lions. This data reveals many of this cryptic cat's secrets, including movement patterns, survival, habitat use, and predation patterns. Much of what we have learned about the population in North Dakota is consistent with research conducted in other states. Mountain lions cover vast territories, with males often having a home range exceeding 100 square miles. Mountain lions are most active at night, and routinely move several miles a day. Mule deer and whitetail deer make up the majority of mountain lion diets, but they also prey upon elk, bighorn sheep, porcupines, turkeys, and other small mammals. They are also known to occasionally attack livestock and pets, but evidence of this occurring regularly in North Dakota is lacking.

We often hear about the negatives, whether real or perceived, associated with the return of mountain lions to North Dakota, but it is important to realize there are many benefits associated with their return as well. Mountain lions

are a 'keystone species', meaning their presence has a major influence on their environment, even if the population itself is small. Ecosystem benefits provided by mountain lions include keeping prey populations in check, thereby reducing overgrazing, degradation of riparian habitat, and disease outbreaks; this, in turn, allows sensitive species of plants and animals to flourish. Furthermore, their kills provide food for many species of scavengers, including eagles, magpies, and foxes, and redistribute nutrients throughout the ecosystem, allowing a variety of decomposer and floral communities to thrive. We also should acknowledge the intrinsic value associated with having these fascinating creatures back in the shadowy depths of the Badlands. What dollar value can be assigned to cutting a set of mountain lion prints in the mud, or to catching a once-in-a-lifetime glimpse of a wild mountain lion disappearing back into its own otherworldly existence?



A collared female mountain lion accompanies her large kittens, cautiously moving through a wooded draw in the North Dakota Badlands. Photo by Randy Johnson.

Many of you are avid hikers and bikers, particularly enjoying the beautiful Maah Daah Hey Trail. Perhaps some of you have found mountain lion tracks while out hiking, or even caught a rare view of a lion, but all who have used the trail have potentially hiked right past a nearby mountain lion, without ever being the wiser. Their uncanny ability to remain hidden allows them to survive and hunt, but it is also precisely what invokes

fear in many people. Mountain lions certainly deserve our respect, but they don't necessarily deserve to be feared. Their primary instinct is to avoid people at all costs, and will readily retreat in most encounters. Even still, there are a few things you can do to reduce the chances of having a negative encounter, particularly while hiking. Hike in groups on the trail, and don't let kids (or pets) get far out in front or lag behind. Avoid hiking at dawn or dusk, or at night, when mountain lions are most active. A good rule of thumb is to make some noise while hiking, to avoid surprising a lion, and to let them know you are not prey. Also, carry a sturdy walking stick, as it could be used to ward off a lion. In the rare event of a lion acting aggressively, do all you can to convince it that you are not prey. Don't panic, and don't turn your back or run; oftentimes, the mountain lion is also scared, and if you give it an escape route, it will take advantage and leave. If it does

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continue to advance, stand tall, raise your hands over your head, yell and throw rocks, and if need be, fight back with all you have, as people have successfully fought off an attacking lion. It pays to be prepared and knowledgeable; but, also know that to date, there have been zero recorded attacks on people in North or South Dakota, so with proper caution and respect, the odds of a dangerous encounter with a mountain lion are exceedingly low.

I hope this article has shed some light on this secretive inhabitant of the Badlands, and perhaps even calmed a few nerves! When knowledge and respect replace myth and fear, man and mountain lion can coexist with little consequence. I'll leave you with this thought. Imagine if we could see the sights that the mountain lion has witnessed, how vastly different would our view of the Badlands be?



A glimpse into the life of a mountain lion, moving about in the North Dakota Badlands. Photo by Randy Johnson.

Hiking and Biking Winter Training Tips

by Michelle Orton, West River Community Center Personal Trainer/Wellness Coach

This time of year makes outdoor training tough and it is common for the summer hiker or mountain biker to feel a little lost due to the freezing temps. Well, I'm here to tell you that it's a great time to prepare for the upcoming season by following an indoor training plan to make you stronger, faster and keep you in good shape.

We all have our preferences as far as what types of exercises we like to do or equipment we like to use, but I am going to provide just a few tips to help you get started or add something different to what you might already be doing. This can be accomplished by incorporating cross training into your training program. Cross training involves activities such as indoor biking, swimming, running and strength training to help build your cardiovascular endurance and your muscular strength. This article highlights the benefits of each of these areas.

SWIMMING

Swimming is considered to be one of the greatest total body workouts. This is possible because it builds cardiovascular endurance and muscular strength all at once. Even though it is non-weight-bearing, it can help build bone mass and tone muscle by increasing bone density like strength training. Swimming laps can have the same impact as running or biking, but can get your heart rate up without the impact on joints. The last benefit to mention is that depending on the intensity and duration, swimming can burn just as much or more calories than running.

BIKING

Spinning is a popular form of indoor biking in a structured class setting. A vigorous spin class can burn almost 750

calories per hour. This type of class can be fun and intense at the same time. You burn calories and improve cardio without impact. The nice thing about spin class is that you can set your own pace and still gain stronger legs, abs and core.

RUNNING

Running is one of the best types of cardio training you can do in addition to your riding or hiking. It helps improve your posture and feel for standing pedaling. It's also a great way to introduce true low intensity training to your program. For hikers, running can increase stamina, upper and lower body strength for backpacking and long days on the trail. The important thing to remember is that adding in some running to your program can help improve your performance and overall health.

STRENGTH TRAINING

A consistent weight training program will help prepare muscle groups all over your body for a long day of physical activity during a hike or mountain biking. Adding strength training at least 2 times a week to your program can train your muscles to be less susceptible to injury and can build muscular strength and endurance.

So as you start preparing for your activities and events this year, make sure you get a jump start on spring with a solid training regimen. The good news is that most of these activities are actually fun in and of themselves; the biking and hiking benefits are just a great bonus!

Volunteering for Forest Service Fall 2016

by Curt Glasoe

I had the opportunity to volunteer to help the Forest Service with some contract inspection on the southern portion of the MDHT from Third Creek Road to the area just east of the Tom's Wash Trailhead. This area of the trail includes the Hanley Creek Bridge, which is in great shape considering the rain and downpours we have had in the last 5 years or so since the bridge was constructed. A fox was disturbed by our looking under it one day, I don't know who was more surprised him or us.... This surfacing went down without a hitch working with Western Sand and Gravel, the contractor. We have had positive comments about this project but a few individuals do not want any trail surfacing, saying it is hard on horse's feet and takes away the wilderness experience of the trail user. Trail use has become so great that the protective sod has been worn through to bare soil. Sodium found in badland soils binds with the clay mineral making soils less resistant to slumping and erosion. Add to this the landscapes found along the Little Missouri and



eastern end is very scenic and some large petrified rocks are located near the trail, and going west there are some large steep badlands formation with huge sandstone formations just south and west of the trail location. An

enjoyable hike for sure, but bring your water, there are no water sources on this portion of trail.

The second portion of my volunteer time was spent between Elkhorn and Wannagon camps developing some trail restoration specifications for future restoration of this area of the MDHT. Some areas of the trail have

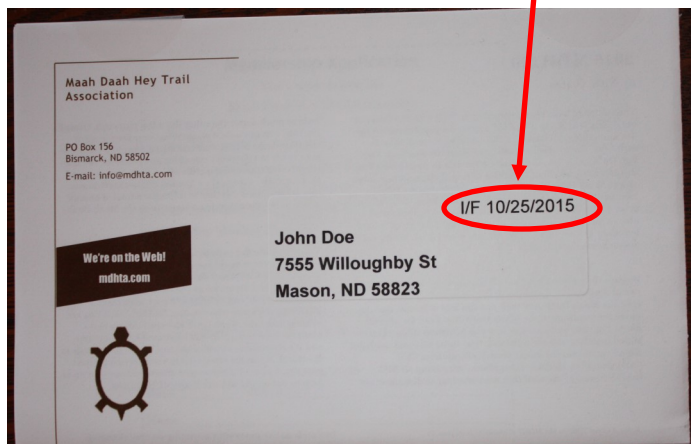
been relocated by users over the years, creating some unique maintenance measures, in all but one case I recommended the trail be put back on the original location and ground measures be put in place to make sure users continue to use the original easily maintainable location. The area needed quite a few waterbars, not the tank trap version, but, normal separation in grade, ones to deflect the water off the trail. Remembering to always funnel the water to the downhill side of the trail is key to a proper functioning waterbar. There is a fair amount of clearing to do along this portion for bikers and horse back riders. A hiker will have no problem with the existing vegetation but other users could get bush wacked by juniper branches or other trees. When pruning trees, a six foot wide area and high enough for horse riders to clear without losing their hat is the goal. The newer portion of the trail just east and south of the Elkhorn camp is in great shape and offers a really good view of the drainages there, but they could get muddy if the weather is rainy and wet. This area is not surfaced yet. Along this segment of trail are many neat scenic areas, and crossing Dry Creek offers a real challenge for any user. This crossing should have a bridge placed over Dry Creek, just a suggestion to the Forest Service, and heavy trail maintenance in the immediate area. All in all the restoration survey was a neat experience and I hope the recommendations can be followed up in the next field season.



precipitation of 6 to 24 inches per year and gullies will soon form where the trail was. Then to avoid gullies, another trail is formed or braided, paralleling the existing trail, now a gully. When these areas are surfaced the erosion and gully do not become established and we have a safe useable trail for all users for a long time, with no braiding or new trails being established. Now one can traverse the MDHT from the Tom's Wash Trailhead east all the way to the Third Creek road in any weather and not worry about traversing a muddy gumbo trail. The

Membership Renewal – It May be Time!

“When do I renew my membership?” All memberships are one year in length except the three year Individual/Family Memberships and Life Memberships. To determine when your membership is up for renewal check the upper right corner of the mailing label on your newsletter.



Your current membership level (I/F = Individual or Family; F = Founding; T = Trail Boss; M = Mile Marker; G = Gatekeeper; and Life) as well as your membership expiration date is given. If your membership has expired please complete the membership application form found in this newsletter or go to mdhta.com/membership to complete the requested information. Include a check made out to MDHTA or if you wish to use a credit card go to mdhta.com/membership.

Moving? Changing your Email address?

Don't forget to contact us with your new postal address or email address. Stay connected.

Thanks to all those that have renewed to date!

Membership Application

Yes! I want to join the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual/Family Member | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Mile Marker Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$70 Individual/Family Member for 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> \$750 Gatekeeper Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Founding Member <input type="checkbox"/> Cap or <input type="checkbox"/> Tshirt S M L XL | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Life Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Trail Boss Member - S M L XL | |

Make checks payable to: MDHTA, P. O., Box 156, Bismarck, ND 58502

PLEASE PRINT

Date: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____ Email newsletter: Yes No

Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

PO Box 156
Bismarck, ND 58502
E-mail: info@mdhta.com

We're on the Web!
mdhta.com



MAAH DAAH HEY TRAIL ASSOCIATION Officers and Board of Directors

President—Curt Glasoe
Vice President—Rod Mitzel
Second Vice President—Nick Ybarra
Secretary—Bruce Bishop
Treasurer—Roger Ashley

The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing and maintaining a linear, non-motorized, sustainable, recreational trail system in southwest North Dakota, through voluntary and public involvement, and in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.

Dates to Remember

March 17	North Dakota Outdoors Day 8am-1pm, ND State Capitol
April 7	RSVP for Annual Meeting
April 22	Maah Daah Hey Trail Association Annual Meeting (MDHTA.com)
June 3	National Trails Day, Burning Coal Vein Trail Head (MDHTA.com)
July 29	Maah Daah Hey Trail Run (experienceland.org)
August 1-2	ND Trails Conference, Lake Metigoshe State Park
August 5	Maah Daah Hey 100 MTB Race (experienceland.org)
September 9	Maah Daah Hey 150 (1 day race) (experienceland.org)