



Turtle Tracks

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association



Volume 20, Issue 2

President's Message

Hello to trail users:

Summer is here, and it is hot as I write this, we are still alive and kicking even with the COVID-19, hot dry conditions and normal summer activities. COVID-19 has put a kink in our normal spring meetings, etc. We had to cancel our Annual membership meeting this year, but we have been able to continue with trail promotions and improvements due to the generous donations of many people. First we have four new Life members, **Will Hoeg, Dr. Tim and Amy Juelson, Adam and Barbra Curtis, and Vonne Tarnavsky**. Thank you very much. The MDHTA voted to add \$5000 to the existing RTP contract with these donations and the increase in merchandize sales. Primarily due to MDH maps sales, we have sold over 150 MDH maps the last 9 months. We now have 37 Life Members. These new names are on our Life Member kiosk and the kiosk is now up to date. We have a new post member also, **Jeanne and Ron Avey**, thank you. Also, thank you to all the other members that have renewed their membership. If you are wondering if your membership is current, please review the date on your Turtle Tracks address label, which shows your **renewal DATE**.

Some updates, we have worked with the **ND Parks and Recreation** on our 2020 **RTP grant** to gravel surface a couple miles of trail in the Sully Creek Park area, all on private lands. We have the final inspection scheduled for July 29. This project has received rave reviews from all trail users. They can now use this area of the MDH trail in all weather conditions. Our **Trail Day volunteer** event was held on June 27, with 61 people showing up and

providing surfacing on some 976 feet of trail in the 100 degree heat. MDHTA supplied a great lunch of pork, brisket, and chicken sandwiches, salads, chips, beans and dessert. These hours will be used as our volunteers share for the RTP grant. I want to especially **THANK** the **Boy Scouts** and their leaders out of Bismarck and the **Home on the Range** women who came to help with this project. I also need to thank the landowners for allowing us to perform surfacing on their lands. The 2020 RTP grant was a huge success because of the cooperation of the local landowners, especially **Doug Tescher, Randy Hatzenbueler** of **TRMF**, and **Charlene Binstock** and **Wayne Clark** of the **ND Parks and Rec Dept**. Thanks for all their input and the opportunity to complete the 2020 RTP by the MDHTA on these lands.

We have two more benches ready for installation at Magpie and Coal Creek trailheads. **Bruce Bishop** is still directing our **MDH Challenge**, so get your accomplishments into him for your badges. **Roger Ashley** is heading up the trail signage and trail counters programs with FS, more on that later. As the trail counters that **Roger and Pat Ashley** installed show the numbers are unbelievable. A little history here, when the **Forest Service (FS)** decided the trail counters had to be removed in late 2009, the new FS management did not remove one of the original counters, Roger found this counter while placing a new one. See the article on page 6 for total counts. Very Interesting. The MDH trail is really getting used by all trail users, especially an increase in back packing or hiking. We are applying for a Roundup REC grant in July for the last

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Special point of interest:

- *The US Forest Service renovated the trail from Burning Coal Campground to columnar juniper overlook.*

Turtle Logo Sign Project Update

Mark Zimmerman, Bismarck, ND, and his sister Glee Mayer, Minot, ND, have been practicing social distancing on the Maah Daah Hey Trail while volunteering their time and effort in hanging turtle logo signs on the trail this spring. Over time the turtle marker posts that had been burned into the distinctive wood marker posts has been eroded by the sun and weather making it difficult to know if you were on the MDH. About four years ago the Forest Service began attaching new turtle logo signs on the trail marker posts beginning at Burning Coal Vein, Mile Post (MP) 0. MDHTA volunteers picked up where the Forest Service ended the first season and have pushed the sign project further north to MP 121 and from MP 139 north to MP142. Mark and Glee took advantage of some great spring weather on March 27 and 28 to hang the signs from MP 139 to 142 and then came back in early June to hang signs from MP 115 to 121.

MDHTA is waiting for the remainder of the signs to arrive so that the remaining 16 miles can be completed. When these signs arrive members, who have expressed interest in helping to complete the project will be contacted. To express your interest in helping with this project please contact Roger Ashley at 701-300-3315 or rogerashlev@ndsupernet.com.

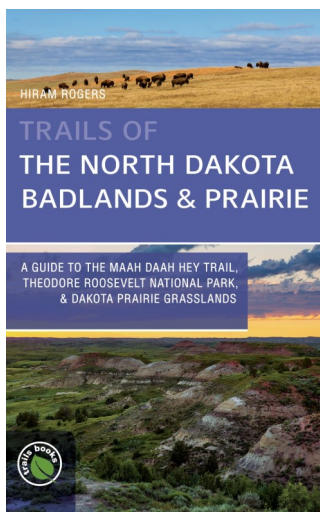


Photo by Mark Zimmerman



Photo by Glee Mayer

Long Awaited Trail Book Arrives in March 2021



Trails of the North Dakota Badlands & Prairies: A Guide to The Maah Daah Hey Trail, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, & Dakota Prairie Grasslands is the updated guide of the Maah Daah Hey Trail and other trails in western North Dakota by Hiram Rogers. The second edition is scheduled for release on March 15, 2021 and will be available on the MDHTA Store soon after. According to Hiram, “The book is 50% longer than the first edition and will include the portion of the Maah

Daah Hey Trail and associated trails south of Sully Creek State Park.” Also, there is expanded coverage of the Ice Caves and the Bennett – Cottonwood – MDHT Loop. Maps are included in this book but Hiram says, “You should also purchase the topo map such as the one you sell on your (MDHTA.COM) website to help in planning a trip to the Badlands.” The book has detailed descriptions of the trail with tips on choosing the right trip, preparing for the trail, and expert guidance along the way.

Also covered in this book are trails found in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, western North Dakota State Parks, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, and completed sections of the North Country National Scenic Trail.

When the book becomes available and the public will be able to order from the store on MDHTA.COM we will send out a notice to MDHTA members.

Membership Recognition—Thank You!

Life Members:

Roger & Pat Ashley
Gerard and Mary Kay Baker
Glenn & Jolene Baranko
Bruce & Roberta Bishop
Chad & Emily Mitzel Brackelsberg
Kyle & Bev Brierley
*Adam & Barbra Curtis
Tom & Sherri Dickson
Kenneth & Norma Eberts
Curt & Carol Glasoe
Greg and Michele Gunderson
Heidi Heitkamp & Darwin Lange
Ron & Sheila Hartl
*William Hoeg
Jesse Hanson & Lisa Kudelka
Dale & Jennifer Heglund
*Dr. Tim & Amy Juelson
Christa Kron
Mike & Chandra Langseth
Mark Liebig
Ron & Aileen Luethe
Don & Susan Mayer
Medora Convention & Visitors Bureau
Rodney & Carolyn Mitzel
John R. Olson
Mike Parke
Charles & Sandra Peterson
Brian Selland

Diane Stoltz Family
*Vonne Tarnavsky
Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation
Dwight & Loa Tober
Glennys Ulschak
Steve & Janet Wieser
Nick & Lindsey Ybarra
Mark Zimmerman

Post Marker:

*Jeanne & Ron Avey

Founding:

Richard Brierley
Kim Callahan
Paul Conrad
Dickinson Convention and Visitors Bureau
Andrew Howick
Hiram Rogers & Jean Gauger
Eric Selle
Robert Stein
Freida Tebelius
The Printers

In Memoriam

Denton & Paulette Berntson
*Morris Tarnavsky
* Denotes new member at this level since last
Turtle Tracks



Wild Bergamot,
Monarda fistulosa

Work Day, June 27 Recap

Due to COVID-19, Trails Day on June 6 was cancelled. However, a workday on June 27 provided the needed volunteer labor for the match required by the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) grant received through the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. MDHTA received a grant earlier this year to surface 2.5 miles of the trail around and through Sully Creek State Park. Sixty-one volunteers provided a combined total of 300 hours of labor worth \$6,000. During the day temperatures reached 105°F making it one hot day. Despite the heat and other difficulties experienced during the day volunteers laid down 976 feet of surface on the trail. While biking on the newly surfaced trail, David and Barbra Curtis from Cambridge, MN bought a Life Membership in support of the trail. Though it was hard work those who participated had fun making this project a reality.



Photos by Pat Ashley

Trail Notes

MDHTA has submitted two more restoration and surfacing projects for next year to the Recreation Trails Program administered by the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. The first is for the second phase of the Sully Restoration and Surfacing project. This project will do 2.5 miles of trail from the point south of Sully Creek State Park where the previous project ended past Bully Pulpit Trailhead to about Mile 44.5. The second project is the Coal Creek Restoration and Surfacing Project. This project will restore and surface the Coal Creek Camp spur trail and a portion of the MDH trail north and south of the Coal Creek spur trail, about Mile 27.5 to Mile 29.25.

The US Forest Service submitted an application for a grant from the Recreation Trails Program to reroute a portion of the MDHT around a collapsed part of the trail. See the Spring Edition of *Turtle Tracks*, Volume 20, Issue 1, Page 5, Trail Notes for more details about the collapse. Rob Schilling, during his presentation to the NDPRD Advisory Board, said if the Forest Service temporary fix were to remain in place that it would be only a matter of when the next significant precipitation event occurs that the trail would be washed out. The Forest Service proposed reroute of the trail will take the trail well away from the area that is prone to collapsing and make the trail a safer place for trail users. The Advisory Board for NDPRD will meet on or about August 5 to rank RTP projects in the State.



Forest Service Proposed Reroute in red

President's Message (Continued from page 1)

two benches on the MDH trailheads, thanks to **Roger Ashley**. We successful received an **Eagles** grant last spring to help with our surfacing share on our RTP grant.

We also saw some excellent results after our FS meeting last spring. The FS has given the MDHTA permission to do work on FS lands, so we have applied for two RTP grants in 2021. They are to finish the surfacing of the Sully creek area on private and federal lands, then another project at Coal Creek Camp to surface about 2.5 miles of MDH trail in that area, all on FS lands. I gave presentations on these projects via the web July 15, so cross your fingers we are successful. We may know about August 5 how our proposed projects rank with other RTP projects in the State.

I still get phone calls on: When will the Summit trail be opened? When will the MDH be extended to Amidon and White Butte? and I have a conference call this week with Makoshika State Park in Montana to connect with the MDH trail in North Dakota. There is still a lot of interest in long

trails.

The MDH trail was featured as the number 4 of 8 **Under Appreciated Outdoor Places** in the **ND Outdoors** magazine in **June 2020**, great spread, and **Dickinson Press** June 17, 2020 issue, the MDH trail is the **Second of Four Day Trips** in North Dakota. These are a few of the articles I saw the last few months; watch our Facebook page and MDHTA.com for other trail news.

A big **THANK YOU** to **Jesse Hanson** and **Amy Tysver** for keeping up the books and paying the bills, great job.

Another big **THANK YOU** has to go to **Pat Ashley** for editing and getting the *Turtle Tracks* Newsletter out on time.

Curtis W. Glasoe – President - MDHTA

Trail Usage Is One Key To Grants

When the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association applies for grants to improve the trail experience the organization providing the grant will not only ask how the money will be spent but how many and what type of users (foot, equestrian, bike) are found on the trail. Providing this information has been difficult so MDHTA relied on old data to make their case for grants. But recently granting organizations are asking for more current information. Trailhead registration sign in sheets are provided and a few users will sign in. A summary of the 2019 trail use numbers was developed from trailhead self-registration and reported in last fall's issue of *Turtle Tracks*, Volume 19, Issue 3, page 6, Trail Notes. Trailhead registration does provide an indication of the number of users, type and where they are from but many people fail to go through this volunteer self-registration process. The US Forest Service up until about 2010 placed counters along the trail to monitor and collect number of user information. The usage of these early monitors was discontinued and were pulled from the trail we thought. For the past decade the US Forest Service has relied solely on trailhead registration. This spring the US Forest Service purchased five infrared trail monitors to supplement data collected through the self-registration process. The counters use a beam of infrared light, not visible to the human eye, to determine when a user passes by. With this method we can't tell if the user was a bicyclist, hiker or horseback rider, a long-distance user or a day user but the user will be counted. Counters are set to detect users that are at least four feet in height. Set lower than this the counter can detect deer, turkeys, and other wildlife. Trail data will be downloaded and analyzed for unusual counts. For example, if we saw a large number of counts within a short period of time and a trail race hadn't been in the area at the time the counts were made the counters may have detected cattle.

MDHTA volunteered this year to set and monitor the counters. Locations used in these counts required that posts

and/or trees needed to be aligned and within a few feet of the trail. This was a challenge at first but as we became more familiar with the equipment, we were able to install the equipment in about 15 minutes after the location was found. We've been back to the Sully Creek counter location a couple of times since it was installed on June 10. On June 27, the counter had detected 1,258 trail users since its installation. The table below provides the latest counts since monitor installation. Providing granting organizations information on reliable trail use information will improve the chances of MDHTA and other trail organizations the ability to bring much needed dollars for trail maintenance.

| Location | Install Date | July 21 count |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| W. Tescher Ranch | June 12 | 920* |
| Sully Creek | June 12 | 2,673 |
| Long-X | June 15 | 3,458 |
| Beicegel | June 15 | 4,000** |
| Bear Creek | June 22 | NA |

*Counter had fallen from tree sometime between installation date and July 21.

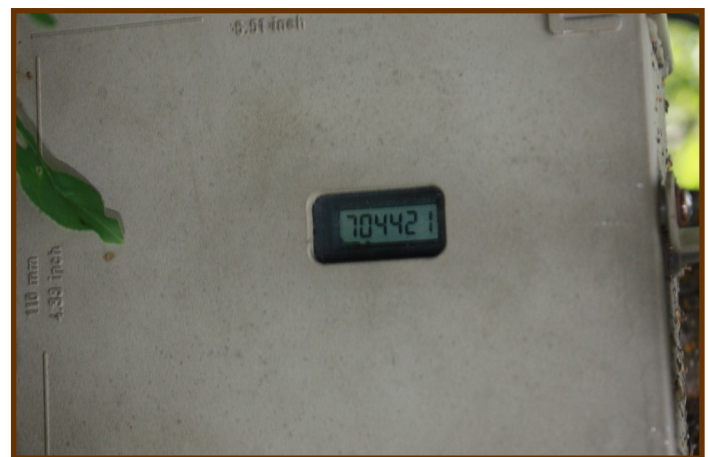
**Counter reached its limit by July 21.

Eureka!

Near the end of placing one of the new counters on the trail one of the original US FS counters was found along the trail. The counter had been undisturbed over the past decade with the tree growing around the steel plate the counter is mounted on. Also, the brush had grown up across the path of where the infrared beam would have been projected to detect trail users and the batteries were dead. The counter hadn't counted anything for some time. What was the count at the time the counter quit working? Check it out yourself.

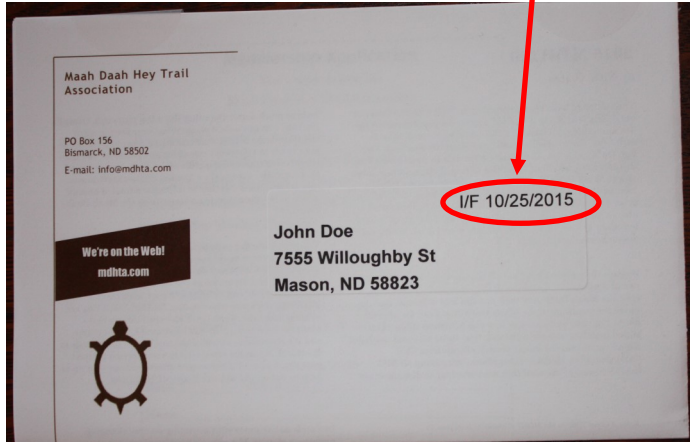


Look what we found! The tree is beginning to grow around the counter and check out the number on the right before the batteries died.



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; 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 - turtle pin | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Post Marker Member - wood sign on post or for home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$70 Individual/Family Member for 3 years - turtle pin | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Life Member - turtle sign & name on kiosk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Founding Member <input type="checkbox"/> Cap or <input type="checkbox"/> T-shirt S M L XL | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Trail Boss Member - Denim shirt 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: hello@mdhta.com

We're on the Web!
mdhta.com



**MAAH DAAH HEY TRAIL ASSOCIATION
Officers and Board of Directors**

President—Curt Glasoe
Vice President—Roger Ashley
Secretary—Brent McCluskey
Treasurer—Jesse Hanson
Nathaniel Bishop

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

| | |
|----------------|--|
| December 31, | Trail Challenge Logs Due |
| 2020 | |
| March 15, 2021 | <i>Trails of North Dakota Badlands & Prairies</i> release date |
| April 2021 | MDHTA annual meeting |

Find us on 