



# Turtle Tracks

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association



Volume 19, Issue 3

## President's Message

### Hello to Trail users:

First a big thank you to all the members that have renewed, and for those wondering if they are current, if you receive a paper copy through the postal service please review the date on the upper right of your address label that tells you when your renewal is due. If you receive an electronic copy you will receive an email about the time that your membership expires. We are a 501(c)(3) organization and all membership donations are tax deductible. The **MDHTA members** are what keep this organization going and doing great things on the MDH trail system.

I want to welcome new life members - **Kyle and Bev Brierley** - to that group. It is so sad, that Kyle passed away unexpectedly while doing trail maintenance. Our condolences go out to his family. Thank you very much for this donation.

Some updates, the two benches we received from REC Roundup grant, were installed at Wannagon and Elkhorn trailheads so enjoy a resting seat along the trail. Thanks to **Jesse Hanson** and **Rod Mitzel** for helping me to get them in place.

The MDHTA Board decided a few new things at its last meeting. 1. We elected a new Treasurer-**Jesse Hanson**; and a new Secretary – **Brent McCluskey** - thanks for stepping up to handle these two important positions on the MDHTA Board; 2. Added a person to help us with the treasure duties, **Amy Tysver** is the new person and is getting started getting the financial stuff transferred over from Rod, I want to thank **Rod Mitzel** for doing a

great treasurer job the last few years. 3. Don Mayer donated the used trail signs from the Forest Service replacement contract; they will be listed on the website for sale shortly. They will have to be picked up in Dickinson due to the high cost of mailing them. These are great mementos of being on the MDH trail. 4. Decided to order 100 more FS MDH trail maps and 500 more MDH trail stickers. 5. Decided to put in for REC grant in December and Eagles grant in January for surfacing, and keep working on a ND Heritage grant to cover MDH trail on all FS grounds when we get approval from the FS to do it.

Roger Ashley, Rod Mitzel, Don Mayer and I had a good meeting with FS Deputy Regional Forester Jane Darnell and discussed many items with her on the MDHTA position on trail maintenance and projects. Our main item was that we need the FS to agree for the MDHTA to do work with Grants and Moneys on Forest Service lands. We do not have an agreement yet to do this, and it is needed to apply for grants, and programs that we feel we could handle within our group. We also discussed the surfacing policy on the MDH as a positive solution to all weather trail use on the MDHTA trail. We have not heard back from the FS yet but expect to hear shortly on the results of this meeting.

On the list of something to do in every state, in North Dakota the item was to hike/ride the MDH trail, good press. Also Nick Ybarra had a film crew out from CNN to make a documentary of the Save the MDH effort on the trail in October, so stay tuned for that film clip.

As always fall is my favorite time on the MDH, but this fall has been challenging due

*(Continued on page 2)*

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### Special point of interest:

- *President Theodore Roosevelt authorized the 13,940 acre Dakota National Forest (near the present-day Logging Camp Ranch) on November 24, 1904. It was dissolved by President Woodrow Wilson July 20, 1917.*

# Forest Service Update

by Will Horneman, Dakota Prairie Grasslands Lead Trail Technician

Greetings Turtle Tracks readers! I'll keep it short and sweet this issue, I know how excited everyone is to get out and shovel snow! I will simply be touching up on some trails projects that were completed this year and some we have planned.

Firstly, I would like make sure everyone is aware of the Little Missouri National Grassland Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) maps that are available on Avenza. If you are not familiar with Avenza, this is how it works;

Avenza is a mapping app for your device that uses your GPS signal to locate you in real time. Simply download the app and search "South LMNG OHV Scenic Map" for the southern OHV trails. Or search "North LMNG OHV Scenic Map" for the Northern OHV trails. These maps were made possible by North Dakota Parks and Recreation and the US Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands.

Major projects completed this year include; NDPRD/USFS OHV maps, Wannagan Spur and Hanson Trails, trailhead informational kiosk installments, Devil's Pass/Ice Caves

Trail restoration, sign refurbishments, and trail maintenance. I would like to thank all our volunteers that assisted in these projects, as well as all the folks that get out there and use the trails.

Looking ahead, we have some major projects planned for next season. These projects include; Cottonwood Trail restoration, construction of Sunset Trail, two MDHT reroutes at miles 125.5 and 128.25, and a low-water crossing at Andrew's Creek on the Buffalo Gap Trail.

As always, please do not hesitate to call or email in with any questions or trail condition updates. Have a great winter!

Will Horneman  
DPG Lead Trails Technician  
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[william.horneman@usda.gov](mailto:william.horneman@usda.gov)

## Meet The New Board Member



Brent was born in Grand Junction, Colorado in June of 1976 and essentially grew up in the National Park Service with three older brothers and one younger sister. Brent's father came from Washington State and his mother from Utah. Brent has four children Keala, Sloan, Kala, and Ethan. He

also has four grandboys, Keaton, Dillon, Sawyer, and Brandon, all living in Dickinson. Brent says he sees and enjoys them on a weekly basis.

Brent's father worked for the National Park Service for many years, so their family lived in many National Parks, Monuments and Sites in Utah before moving to Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site on the Montana-North Dakota Border southwest of Williston in 1985. Brent said, "We lived there during the time when the house and walls of

the Fort were built. We were also able to take part in the annual Rendezvous hosted on the Historic Site's grounds."

This is where Brent's interest for the outside activities began. These activities include camping, hiking, and mountain biking. In 1990 the McCluskey family had the privilege to move to Medora. "Living in this area of the badlands sealed my fate for the love of the outdoors. The MDH was a natural fit for me," said Brent. He is looking forward to taking a newly acquired camper, his wife, Anna McCluskey, and their grandboys, to explore and know the trail on a regular basis.

"I am also excited to see where and what the future holds for me and my family. But I do see that the area in and around the Badlands and Theodore National Park, North and South Unit, will be a big part of that future."

*President's Letter (Continued from page 1)*

to many inches of rain and now cold temps and snow also every night will make trail use somewhat difficult, I still get at least two phone calls a week on people going through and want to use a portion of the trail. I have been directing them to the south portion that has gravel surfacing on it and have

had no return complaints to date. Thank goodness.

So have a great FALL season and get ready for winter it is on the way. Again any questions please holler at me or any Board member. Happy Trails.

Curtis W. Glasoe – President - MDHTA

# 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  
Tom & Sherri Dickson  
Kenneth & Norma Eberts  
Curt & Carol Glasoe  
Greg and Michele Gunderson  
Ron & Sheila Hartl  
William Hoeg  
Jesse Hanson & Lisa Kudelka  
Dale & Jennifer Heglund  
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  
Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation  
Dwight & Loa Tober  
Glennys Ulschak  
Steve & Janet Wieser  
Nick & Lindsey Ybarra  
Mark Zimmerman

## Founding:

\*Richard Brierley  
Kim Callahan  
Paul Conrad  
Dickinson Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Bryan Lange  
Patrick McBride  
Hiram Rogers & Jean Gauger  
Eric Selle  
Freida Tebelius  
The Printers

## In Memoriam

Denton & Paulette Berntson

\* Denotes new member at this level since last  
*Turtle Tracks*



Photo credit: Roger Ashley

# Dickinson area cyclists first bikers to conquer Maah-Daah-Hey Trail; Badlanders can't wait until snow melts and more try the trail

by Deb Kantrud

This article originally appeared in *The Dickinson Press*, January 3, 1999, and is reprinted here with permission of James B. Miller, Managing Editor, Dickinson Press



Jason Hageness, Dale Heglund and Brad Davis. Photo by Dr. Vince Tan

New Year's Day came and went and Dickinson area bike enthusiasts were left dreaming about biking the Badlands.

With storm warnings and inches of snow in the forecast, Badlanders Bicycle Club members weren't able to make biking in the Badlands on New Year's Day an annual Tradition.

Club member Dale Heglund of New England said, "Last year it was 58-60 degrees, and we biked the Badlands wearing regular short sleeves."

This year the club's hikers find themselves peddling on indoor trainers.

It's not as enjoyable, Heglund said, especially for mountain bikers.

"Road bikers are used to looking at pavement. Mountain bikers like to look around and see the scenery," he said.

And some of the best scenery Heglund and two other Badlanders Bicycle Club members saw this year was the 120-miles of the Maah-Daah-Hey Trail.

Heglund, Jason Hageness and Brad Davis, both of Dickinson were the first bikers to complete the entire trail that extends from the U.S. Forest Service CCC campground in McKenzie County, 20 miles south of Watford City, to the Sully Creek State Park in Billings County, south of Medora.

The trail winds through the Badlands crossing public and private land. The trail, which was created for hikers, horseback riders and bikers, is a joint effort of the U.S.

Forest Service, National Park Service and North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department.

Heglund said club members wanted to be the first bikers to complete the trail. They have been working with the Forest Service for two years, helping with the trail development.

Keeping close contact with Forest Service personnel gave them the lead time needed to be the first on the completed trail. They planned a four-day trip setting up base Sept. 24, rising at 5 am Friday and hitting the trail by 8:15 am. They biked each day until about 4:30 pm. Heglund said they set a slow pace to assure they would complete the trail nonstop.

"We couldn't get just half way. Getting halfway .... Doesn't count," Heglund said.

The three had ridden up to 50 percent of the trail on different occasions and were ready for the virgin trail. Their goal for next year: Make the trip in shorter time.

"We can easily do it in three days," Heglund said.

Heglund said plans are underway to have at least 20 riders do the trail next summer.

"Brad Davis wants to sag," he said. With Davis setting up camps, bringing in meals and water, it'll mean the bikers will be able to travel with lighter packs.

"It'll make it fun for all," Heglund said.

"We carried 20 to 30 pound packs. We had to carry everything with," Heglund said.

The normal pack, which includes repairs, water and first aid kits, is 10 to 15 pounds, he said.

Heglund said the Maah Daah Hey Trail is impressive.

"The Forest Service did a nice job on the trail. Nothing is extremely difficult, and the trail is predictable," he said.

It makes for a safer trip when riders are able to anticipate what's coming up, he added.

And the scenery was awesome. Even the couple miles through the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park where riders are forced to carry their bikes because biking isn't allowed, wasn't bad because of the view.

"It's just too steep to go around.

The trail is nice and flat and easy to carry your bike," Heglund said.

The Forest Service has created a bypass route for bikers

*(Continued on page 6)*



## MDHTA 20 Years of Accomplishments

MDHTA celebrated its 20th Anniversary this year. Its mission laid out by the founders of this non-profit association was to provide and maintain 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. The turtle figure for the trail, adopted from the Lakota Sioux Indians, symbolizes patience, protection, loyalty, determination, steadfastness, long-life and fortitude and is emblazoned on the posts and signs that mark the trail. During the 20 years since the Association's birth MDHTA has participated in developing the trail's infrastructure, promotion, and maintenance. The Association has done this through memberships, donations, grants, and the sale of merchandise along with working cooperatively with the US Forest Service, National Park Service, North Dakota Department of Parks and Recreation, numerous groups, and private landowners through the badlands where the trail crosses. It is easy to forget over a twenty year period of time what others before us have done to make the trail a reality as well as a National Recreation Trail. Below is a partial list of what the Association has accomplished.

1. Elkhorn water well – MDHTA contracted and paid for the well, approximately \$27,000, with some shared money from the National Park Service, about \$5,000 with the rest of the dollars raised by fund raisers, merchandize sales, and donations to MDHTA,
2. Recreational Trail Program (RTP) – supplied the 5% share of private funding for US Forest Service RTP grants. The value of these grants varies from \$100,000 to \$150,000 annually over the past 20 years (1999-2019). The supplied share of funding from MDHTA of about \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually has been in the form of volunteer labor, primarily provided during National Trails Day. Given the Association has been doing this for twenty years the contribution from MDHTA is approaching \$150,000.
3. US Forest Service inspection – MDHTA donated the inspection services of about 10 person days on one RTP contract (Hanley surfacing).
4. Water Cache Boxes – MDHTA purchased and installed eight water cache boxes along the driest parts of the MDHT. Each water box cost about \$800 or about \$6,400. Water cache boxes were installed with volunteer labor using donated prefab concrete slabs. Water cache boxes are cleaned in the spring and again in the fall using two volunteer days each time.
5. Trailhead Benches – MDHTA purchased and installed eight benches at MDH trailheads at \$600 each through generous donations and fundraisers.
6. Tree Trimming Parties – Over the years MDHTA volunteers have trimmed and cleared brush on more than 20 miles of trail.
7. Sign Hanging Parties – At this date, MDHTA volunteers along with the help of the US Forest Service has hung turtle signs on 115 miles of the MDHT.
8. Trail Gate Maintenance – Over the years MDHTA has repaired and maintained over a dozen self-closing gates on the MDHT.
9. Trail Post Markers – Ten MDHTA volunteers spent two days ferrying trail marker posts across the Little Missouri River to the MDHT and then installing these posts by hand in the Wilderness designated area of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park – South Unit.
10. Mark Creek Crossings – MDHTA provided adequate marking of the creek crossing on Knudson Creek on the Buffalo Gap Trail, a part of the MDHT system. Marking the proper route for crossing creeks reduces negative impacts such as casual trails.
11. Second Creek Crossing – MDHTA, US Forest Service, and Save the MDH joined forces to construct a boardwalk and puncheon over 2<sup>nd</sup> Creek near Burning Coal Vein.
12. Trail Bridge Maintenance – Repaired Magpie bridge abutment twice – 11 person days plus equipment time donated by MDHTA members.
13. Trails Day, Grand Opening, and Anniversary Celebrations – MDHTA organizes and has held National Trail Day annually since 1999. Trails Day has also been a part of the Grand Openings (MDHT and The Deuce) as well as the Anniversary Celebrations. These events require about four to five person days each to plan, schedule, and hold these events.
14. Trail Promotion – MDHTA volunteers have participated in sport shows in North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.
15. ND Outdoors Day – MDHTA volunteers have participated at this event held at the Capital for several years.
16. MDHT Challenge – MDHTA sponsors the MDHT Challenge which provides patches to trail users for completing various mileage challenges along the MDHT system.
17. Website – MDHTA sponsored the development of the MDHTA.COM website. The site provides an interactive map of the trail system, downloadable GPX map files, current trail news, and a store.
18. US FS and MDHTA Meeting – These meetings held usually twice per year, takes about five volunteer person days, usually board members, to coordinate trail maintenance and infrastructure activities.
19. Volunteers answer about two phone calls or emails per week about the trail and trail conditions.
20. Volunteers fill orders for MDH trail merchandise. The big item is trail maps.
21. MDHTA annually sponsors the free “MDH Trail and the Deuce Information Guide” brochure.

where the trail crosses the Petrified Forest in the wilderness area of the National Park.

“We’re lucky to have it this close,” Heglund said. He doesn’t anticipate the Badlands trails will ever become destination spots for bike enthusiasts, but it’s a wonderful place to stop if traveling from Montana or Minnesota.

People from around the state should be flocking down here, Heglund said. It’s a great opportunity to be alone with nature. We biked 120 miles and didn’t see another user in 3 ½ days,” he said. The snow may be piling up outside, but members of the Badlanders Bicycle Club are thinking positive.

“We’ll be able to ride easily in March. That’s not far away,” Heglund said.

## Trail Notes

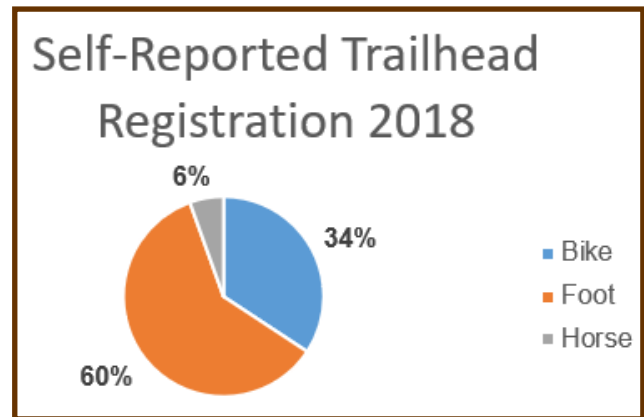
### 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Video

During the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Maah Daah Hey and MDHTA, Emily Perhus-Zarak recorded a video of the program held on June 1, 2019. Since then the video has been uploaded to YouTube. If you did not attend or if you did attend and want to hear again what the speakers had to say at the program follow this link: [https://youtu.be/-awbI6\\_kdO8](https://youtu.be/-awbI6_kdO8). Curt gives a short history of how the trail was developed about 23 minutes into the video and Gerard Baker tells how and why the trail got its name at about 30 minutes into the video.

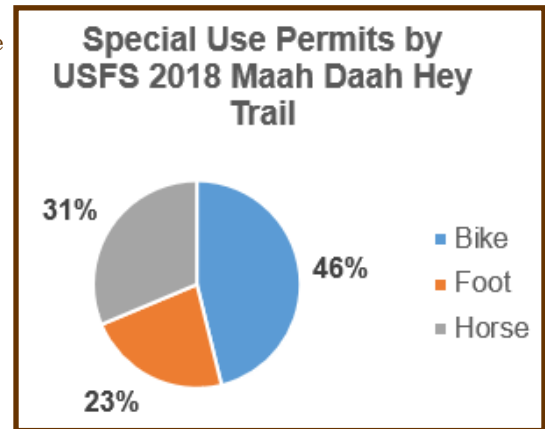
### Trail Usage

The USFS began collecting self-reported (trail registers) trail use a few years ago. Trail users sign in providing the number of people in their group, where they are hiking to, and where they call home. All registers collected trail use data generally from April on into November. Not everyone registers so these numbers are not exact so the numbers used to develop the pie charts are rough numbers. None the less the numbers do provide a rough estimate on how the trail is used. A higher percentage of users registered as hikers followed by bikers and then equestrians (horse). The majority of trail use occurred June through September with some usage recorded in May and October. Typically, the USFS stock the registration boxes in April and pull the sheets in November so November through March is not reported. Nearly half of the trail use was by people that lived outside of North Dakota. As a side note to in state and out of state trail usage, about 75% of the maps sold by MDHTA are sent to out of state addresses. Trail self-registration numbers and map sales emphasize the importance of the Maah Daah Hey Trail system as being a planned destination attraction for North Dakota.

In addition to tracking trail usage through self-registers at trailheads, the USFS tracks use by individuals and organized groups where revenue is involved through a permitting process. Not all events permitted with the Forest Service are associated with trail use. Events can be a race, a guide service, a pipeline, a transmission line, etc. The USFS receives a percentage of the revenue generated. The pie chart represents only those activities that directly involve with using the Maah Daah Hey Trail.



An increase in the use of facilities along the trail such as camping can also be used to indicate trail use. Camping continues to grow along the trail. An organized campground such as Sully State Park campground has reported an increase of 15% in the past four years to 3048 camper nights.



### Maah Daah Hey Challenge

There is still time to collect and record miles on the Maah Daah Hey Trail system for the Maah Daah Hey Challenge patches. Miles can be from biking, hiking, horse, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. Download your record sheet from <http://mdhta.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019-MDHT-Challenge-Log.pdf>, record your miles and mail it into MDHTA, PO Box 156, Bismarck, ND, 58502 and Bruce Bishop will send your patch to you via return mail. Additional information about the Challenge can be found at <http://mdhta.com/maah-daah-hey-trail-association-2019-trail-challenge/>.

## MDHTA Sign Sale

This past summer many of the road signs used to indicate the location of MDHT trailheads, road numbers, and directional signs were replaced. Over time signs weather and must be replaced. These one-of-a-kind signs, salvaged by Don Mayer, are being made available to raise money for trail projects. You may have a desire to own a part of history or give a gift for Christmas as well as to contribute towards projects that improve the Maah Daah Hey Trail system. Trailhead signs are \$50 each, directional signs are \$15 each and arrow signs and road number signs are \$5 each. Since these are one of a kind, signs will be sold on a first come first serve basis. Signs will not be mailed or shipped commercially. Buyers will need to be picked up the sign at Dickinson, ND or make arrangements with a board member to deliver the sign. See MDHTA.com for more signs. Call Don Mayer at 701-225-9404 for availability and to put a hold on the sign of your choice. All sales are cash, check or money order. Checks are to be made payable to MDHTA.



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

*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](mailto:hello@mdhta.com)

**We're on the Web!**  
**[mdhta.com](http://mdhta.com)**



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

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

Dates to Remember

January 6, 2020	Deadline for sending in your MDHT Challenge forms
April 25, 2020	MDHTA Annual Meeting, Eagles Club, Dickinson
June 6, 2020	Trails Day!

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.

Find us on 