



Turtle Tracks



Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

Volume 23, Issue 2

President's Message

Hello to trail users:

Hey, the summer is fast going by and a lot of the season has been wet for the MDH trail area. Progress is being made on many fronts this field season. Especially in the (Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grant area with the ND Park and Rec department (NDPRD). First we have completed the Coal Creek 2022 project with the exception of a final inspection by the U. S. Forest Service (USFS), NDPRD, and MDHTA.

The excavation is done on the **White Butte trail**, some 4500 feet to the highest point in North Dakota. That will leave the Coal Creek Loop trail project to follow, it is planned to be done in September. We had a work day on National Trails Day. Some 30 volunteers showed up and surfaced about 500 feet of the **White Butte trail** to help with our 20% share of that RTP grant. We received 2 benches, self-closing gate and kiosk supplies from the **Highpointers Club**, and **Slope County** who donated some 200 yards of gravel for the surfacing on this project, so **Thanks to them** we can meet our share of the project.

Then some more good news in the RTP department-MDHTA just received preapproval for the restoration and surfacing of the remaining 3 miles of the MDH from I-94 to the area past the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library for 2024. SO a very good season so far for MDHTA projects.

Thanks to the **USFS** for getting a **New Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** in place with the NPS, NDPRD and USFS. And also for hiring a mini excavator and cleaning up some old maintenance projects along the trail. A

bridge was lost in the Mile Post 19.5 area due to the heavy rains this season, so be careful in that area.

I want to thank all the **new or renewed members**, we really appreciate the past and future support for our organization, we would not be here if it were not for your donations. We have 3 new life members to **THANK** for their generous donations, they are **the Fraternal Order of Eagles Dickinson, Shannon Straight & Spring Bakke, and Earl Hill**. The new extensions of the Life member kiosk signs are ready in August so we will be installing them in September and have lots of spaces now for **new LIFE MEMBERS**.

MDHTA also replaced the 2 swing gates on the MDH south of Sully Creek camp, so now **all gates are self-closing**. Please turn in any gate problems you see to MDHTA.com or the USFS, so we can get them fixed and in working order again. The original gates were placed in 1996 so they are getting older. Thanks to **Jesse Hanson** for a gate inspection sheet to keep track of gate maintenance.

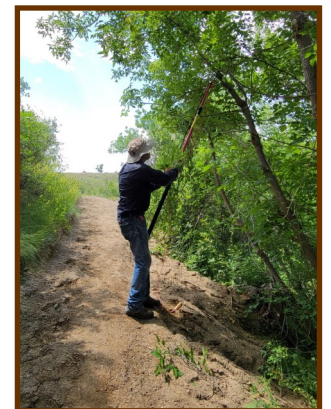
The **MDH book and maps** are still our biggest sellers on our website store, with the **Turtle Signs** a close third. We also sell a fair amount of MDH T-shirts and caps. Check out **MDHTA.com**, click on **STORE**, and place your order. Thanks to **Mark Zimmerman**, who picked up over 2000 MDH brochures to date to distribute to various park districts and National Park Service.

Thanks to Amy Vojacek, Glee Mayer and other board members for Guided hikes and rides on the MDH trail. More are being planned for late summer and fall for trail users, watch the MDH Facebook and website

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Point of Interest:

- *The oldest documented Plains cottonwood in North America was found in 2010 along the Little Missouri River in Roosevelt National Park. The tree was 368 years old at the time it was sampled.*

US Forest Service Update

by Rob Schilling, Recreation Program Manager, Dakota Prairie Grassland, USDA Forest Service

I am excited to report that we had a very dynamic year and completed multiple projects on the Maah Daah Hey Trail.

In May, the Forest Service issued a closure notice for the Maah Daah Hey trail between Toms Wash Trailhead and National Forest System Road 746 (mile markers 15.5-21.25). This closure is for public safety due to a trail bridge collapse near mile marker 19.5. Severe weather events and heavy rain caused major erosion alongside drainages of the Little Missouri River resulting in a massive headcut that collapsed the bridge. The Forest Service has identified a trail reroute around the collapsed bridge and plans to begin construction this fall. We appreciate the guidance of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association as we identified options for this bridge collapse and subsequent trail reroutes.



Bridge collapse at 19.5—note bridge at center of picture in the wash out about 50 feet below the trail. Photo taken August 14, 2023 by Pat Ashley

Our first project this summer was installing a catch basin and culvert to divert water from an artesian spring near Plumley Draw. The artesian spring (mile maker 34.5) kept the trail tread saturated making it difficult and dangerous for trail users to traverse this section of trail. The Forest Service trail crew rented a mini-excavator to install the catch basin and culvert and reestablish the trail tread.

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for more information on these exciting adventures.

This season has been one of the wettest on record for the MDH trail system, which adds damage to the trail with additional gullies, washouts or blow downs. So I just want to say watch for ground conditions that make one slow down and look at the scenery around you. Most accidents are caused by driver error and of course, speed- going too fast for ground conditions. So be safe out there.

Here is to a great summer, what is remaining, and plan a trip

To compliment these trail projects, the Forest Service will be constructing a new trailhead south of Medora on the east side of East River Road. The “Crying Butte” trailhead will provide a safe, identified location for trail users to access the Maah Daah Hey Trail between Bully Pulpit and Plumely Draw. The Forest Service, in partnership with the Montana Conservation Corps, constructed a short trail reroute connecting the new trailhead to the Maah Daah Hey Trail. This trail reroute is open for use and the old section of trail has been closed. This project is funded through the Great American Outdoors Act.

In addition to the projects listed above, the Forest Service trail crew has spent countless hours mowing trail, restoring trail tread, maintaining

campgrounds and trailheads, repairing trail gates, and coordinating volunteer project work along the trail.

To conclude, I want to thank you for your dedication to the Maah Daah Hey Trail. I am proud of our partnership and the devoted volunteers who work countless hours to provide North Dakota with a world class recreation experience.

to the **MAAH DAAH HEY Trail** this fall, the most scenic time of the year in my opinion.

Also, **THANK YOU** to **Roger and Pat Ashley** for editing and preparing this Turtle Tracks Newsletter. Thanks to all who supplied information for this TT issue also.

Hope to See you on the Trail this fall.

Happy Trails.
Curtis W. Glasoe—President

Membership Recognition—Thank You!

Life Members:

Curtis Alkire
Bethany & Levi Andrist
Roger & Pat Ashley
Sandy Baertsch
Bahne, Kay, Charlie & Anna Bahnson
Gerard & Mary Kay Baker
Glenn & Jolene Baranko
Brittney Barnett & Daniel Dwyer
Bruce & Roberta Bishop
Chad & Emily Mitzel Brackelsberg
Bev Brierley
Richard & Lori Brierley
Doug & Kathryn Burgum
Adam & Barbra Curtis
Tom & Sherri Dickson
Kenneth & Norma Eberts
Kathy & Matt Fischer Valan
Stephen & Barbara Fix
*Fraternal Order of Eagles Dickinson
Curt & Carol Glasoe
Matthew, Carter & Chase Glasoe
Greg and Michele Gunderson
Jesse Hanson & Lisa Kudelka
Ron & Sheila Hartl
Dale & Jennifer Heglund
Heidi Heitkamp & Darwin Lange
*Earl Hill
William Hoeg
Dr. Tim & Amy Juelson
Ryan & Jo Marie Kadrmas
Christa Kron
Mike & Chandra Langseth
Mark Liebig
Ron Luethe
Noe Mateo, M.D.
Don & Susan Mayer
Medora Convention & Visitors Bureau
Rodney & Carolyn Mitzel
John R. Olson
Linda Pancratz Family Foundation
Mike Parke
Charles & Sandra Peterson
Hiram Rogers & Jean Gauger
Angie Seligman & Randy Krogstad

Brian Selland
Jason, Jennifer, Morgan & Elliot Stiefel
Diane Stoltz Family
Andrea Stomberg & Bruce Britton
*Shannon Straight & Spring Bakke
Vonne Tarnavsky
Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation
Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library
Foundation
Loa Tober
Glenny Ulschak
Ryan and Amy Vojacek
Steve & Janet Wieser
Nick & Lindsey Ybarra
Mark Zimmerman

Post Marker:

Glee Mayer

Trail Boss:

Peggy & John Fiedler
*Gregory Rohde
Jason Signalness

Founding:

*Tobias Anheluk
Kim & Joseph Callahan
Michelle Callahan
*Brittney Dennesch-Jackson
Barb Fetters
Donald Kingston
*Jeremy Mahowald
Loren & Jennifer Morlock
*Shannon Raatz
Leonard Stanley
Tom & Sharon Tudor
Sarah Vogel

In Memoriam

Denton & Paulette Berntson
Kyle Brierley
*Justin Hill
Aileen Luethe
Morris Tarnavsky

* Denotes new member at this level since last
Turtle Tracks

MDHTA Bike Ride Planned for September

by Amy Jo Vojacek

Interested in learning to bike on the MDHT? Bring your bike and meet us at 9 AM Mountain Daylight Time on Saturday, September 16th at the Sully Creek State Park campground trailhead. To get to the starting point from Medora to Sully Creek State Park turn south from Pacific Avenue on to the East River Road and travel about 2.4 miles to 36th Street. At this point there will be a brown sign indicating to turn for the State Park. Follow 36th Street 0.2 miles to the park entrance. After entering the park on your left will be a parking area and trailhead.

The purpose of the ride is to introduce outdoor enthusiasts to biking on the Maah Daah Hey. Participants will learn some of the skills needed to successfully navigate this challenging National Recreation Trail. After a short introduction and

comments, we will head south on the trail with opportunities to get off and be shuttled back to Sully Creek State Park at Bully Pulpit, Crying Butte and Plumely trailheads. The estimate trail distances to Bully Pulpit, Crying Butte and Plumely from Sully are about 2.6, 4.5 and 13.9 miles so this will be a good opportunity to learn and gauge your abilities in trail riding. Persons interested in participating should RSVP to Amy Jo at 406-939-3789 text or call, or email amyjo49@hotmail.com so we have enough shuttle space.

Please note an entrance fee is required at Sully Creek State Park. The daily fee is \$7. If you already have a North Dakota Parks and Recreation Annual past you are covered. Also dress appropriately for weather and trail conditions as well as bring some water and a snack.

Trail Notes

Lost and Found

Tom Tudor, long-time MDHTA member and frequent trail user lost his phone on the MDHT while running on the trail segment between 85.5 and 88.75 on Monday July 24. Tom said, "It must have fallen out of my pack when I stopped for some water. When I discovered the phone missing, I was really discouraged. I wasn't looking forward to getting a new phone." Tom tried pinging the phone in an attempt to find the location of the phone but since there really isn't any cell coverage on that part of the trail, that didn't work. He went back to the section of the trail where he lost the phone on Thursday, July 27 and did another search for the phone. No such luck finding it. Late that afternoon he sent out a request to let it be known that his phone was lost. Meantime



Terry, Travis and Tim

three bike packers Terry Breaux and Travis McIntyre both from Seattle and Tim Mallon from Switzerland had found the phone and turned it into Jennifer Morlock, owner of Dakota Cyclery in Medora,

and a member of MDHTA. Jennifer said the name on the phone was familiar and followed it with a call to Tom on Friday, July 28. The phone has been reunited with Tom. Tom said trail users are really good people for looking out for each other and that he wants to thank all who helped find and get the phone back to him.

MDHTA Board Members 2023-24



l-r: Jesse Hansen, Amy Jo Vojacek, Glee Mayer, Curt Glasoe, Mark Zimmerman, Britney Barnett

Discover Opportunity and Adventure in North Dakota!

The Forest Service will soon be hiring Trail Technicians for our 2024 summer season. Trail Crew Technicians are responsible for construction, maintenance, reconstruction, and restoration of the Dakota Prairie Grasslands non-motorized trail system, including the famous Maah Daah Hey National Recreation Trail and the North Country National Scenic Trail. Work as part of a professional team to manage trails, volunteer, and public events on public land throughout North and South Dakota.

Positions will be advertised on [USAJOBS.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) October 6—13, 2023. For more information contact, Rob Schilling at 701.227.7837 or Robert.Schilling@usda.gov.

Reading MDH Trail Posts

by Roger Ashley

The Maah Daah Hey Trail officially opened in 1999 and like most non-motorized trails in the badlands is marked with wooden posts which have a distinctive 45° beveled top. In the early days of the trail, the US Forest Service mowed between posts but most of the time you had to “read” and follow the posts with few clues as to the where the real trail was. It would make for some anxious moments, am I on the trail or not, until you reached the next post. If your primary trail experience was in forested areas, you are familiar with paint blazes and above the tree line, rock cairns. In many recreation areas where trails are not very long, posts with signs pointing with an arrow the direction one should travel are used. However, trails in the badlands are not lined with trees and rocks for cairns are few. Wood posts are used to mark the trails but signs such as arrows indicating where the trail changes direction are generally not used. If you aren't familiar with how to read the posts you could become lost.

Since the trail was laid out and posts placed, usage has worn a path through sod making it less difficult to find the trail but confusion about where the trail is located does occur. Also mowing along the trail has provided another visual clue as to where the trail is but sometimes even the mowers become lost because of trails created by wildlife, livestock and folks who “shortcut” trails. Overtime repairs have been made using a mixture of gravel and clay more resistant to erosion than the surrounding native soils. Gravel is rare in the North Dakota grasslands and should give you an idea where the trail goes though abandoned gravel roads or two tracks can lead a user astray.

With all of the visual clues trail users still get lost. Livestock and wildlife can wear trails into the sod as well as crop grass short obscuring some of the clues as to what trail should be followed. Also, if you are a trail user in the winter, snow can hide the trail. Wood posts provide a sure bet in finding the trail when other clues are obscured.

The first thing you should know about post markers is the US Forest Service places about 10 to 12 post markers per mile. So, on the average there is a post marker every 400 to 500 feet. If you have traveled more than 500 feet since you last passed a post you may be headed down a wildlife, livestock or casual trail. You may also come across a downed post. If you do, stop and determine the location of the downed post and report to the US Forest Service or MDHTA. You should be able to see the next post from the current post you are at.

The bevel on the marker points down to the trail. The trail should pass on the lowest side of the bevel. Some posts are placed on a clay knob above the trail so the post is visible from a distance but the trail still passes the post on the low side of the bevel. If the post is several yards away from the

post it is likely the trail has shifted from its planned route and the trail user should bring this discrepancy to the attention of the Forest Service or the MDHTA. In many instances casual trails were created to “shortcut” the trail and trail enthusiasts continue to use this casual trail which will erode deep ruts making it difficult for all concerned. The few steps the shortcut may save will create deep ruts that are difficult to navigate.

The short side of the bevel should always be parallel to the trail and your direction of travel. As you approach a post and a corner of the post is pointed back at the direction you came



from this should be a good indication that a turn in the trail is imminent. When the trail approaches the post and the bevel is turned to the left, the trail turns to the left. When the bevel is turned to the right, the trail turns to the right. Remember the post

bevel points down to the side of the post the trail passes. There are a number of cases when a wildlife, livestock, or casual trail will continue going straight and the trail you want actually turns. If you are going along at a fast clip, you could miss a change in the direction of the trail. Slow down and read what the post position is actually telling you.

How do you know if you are off the trail? Before any trip you plan, review a trail map and become familiar with the terrain and landmarks you will be nearby. On the trail, if you've gone more than 500 feet (less than two football field lengths) since you last passed a post, stop and look for the marker post. Continuing forward without knowing where the next post is will likely take you further from your desired route. Scan for a marker post likely to show above or partially hidden behind vegetation. You may need to look out in the distance to see a post silhouette. It takes some training and practice to pick out posts from prairie vegetation and badlands landscape. If you don't see where your next marker post is turn around and go back to the last marker you passed. Then scan for the next post. I have had to do this a couple of times and I see the trail at a walking pace.

As always be aware of trail conditions as these can change rapidly. You may be the first person to see a washout, a headwall collapse, or a slump. It is still the trail user's responsibility for their own safety, and please turn any newly found problem areas and data to MDHTA.com or the USFS.

Trails Day 2023 at White Butte

by Roger Ashley

Trails Day 2023 was held on Saturday, June 3 at White Butte, North Dakota's highest point, south of Amidon, North Dakota. What a great day to do trail work! Sunny, cool, and breezy. The first 500 feet of the trail beginning at the trailhead was surfaced that day. In the afternoon and after a MDHTA sponsored lunch, a good part of the 30 crew members hiked to the top of White Butte for the view. MDHTA wants to thank the youth from Home on the Range (HOR), Sentinel Butte, for their participation in the day's activities and especially thanks to the young men from HOR, *running* a bench to the top of the butte in record time! This was the first time I have ever seen someone run up a steep rough hill carrying a heavy bench with such purpose. Also, the group encountered a 3-foot rattlesnake, with 8 buttons, along the trail, which made the trip that much more interesting to all.



Photo by Pat Ashley



Photo by Bethany Ihle

The Highpointers club acquired the trail and road easement from Daryle and Mary Dennis for public access in 2018. Slope County obtained this easement from the Highpointers

for all future Public use. Slope County reconstructed the access road, and constructed and fenced the trailhead parking area in 2021. The MDHTA reached out to the Highpointers to improve the trail access. To make the rest of the project come to life, Curt Glasoe MDHTA President, shepherded the project through all of the hoops.

With the approval of Slope County and Mary Dennis, MDHTA obtained a Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grant to restore and surface the trail from the trailhead to the highpoint. This meant that MDHTA was on the hook to come



Photo by Ryan Vojacek

up with 20% of the cost to excavate and surface the trail to the highpoint. To cover MDHTA 20% share of the project, the Highpointers Club providing two benches, a self-closing gate, and a Kiosk. Slope County provided the easement and gravel for surfacing the trail, and MDHTA provided the expertise in developing information about the trail for signs on the kiosk, as well as volunteer labor and engineering, a portable toilet, and machinery rental during Trails Day. A necessary activity that needed to be completed prior to the beginning of trail work was a NEPA study to survey the area for cultural artifacts, endangered plants, and wildlife species, including eagle nests. MDHTA contracted with Meadowlark Environmental, LLC, a third party, out of Carson, North Dakota, to conduct the study. This company found no significant impacts to the environment by this activity, so the project could begin this spring. This restoration and surfacing project was contracted to Western Sand and Gravel out of Dickinson, North Dakota. Currently the project is under construction and is planned to

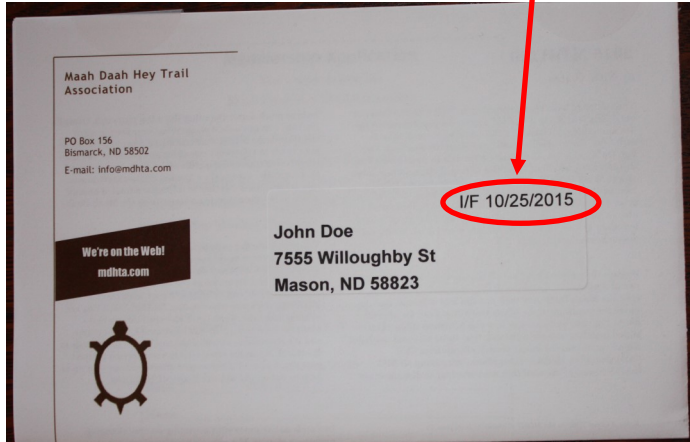


Photo by Curt Glasoe

be completed by Labor Day weekend, weather permitting, with the Kiosk construction soon, after all the data is collected for the kiosk signs.

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 - trail map & turtle pin | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please do not send a thank you gift, apply it all to the trail | |

\$250+ Corporate Membership

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—Amy Vojacek
2nd Vice President—Mark Zimmerman
Secretary/Treasurer—Jesse Hanson
Britney Barnett—At Large
Glee Mayer—At Large

Dates to Remember

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sept. 6, 2023 | AARP, Introduction to MDHT— Medora |
| Sept. 16, 2023 | MDHTA Guided Bike Ride—see p. 4 |

Mission Statement: 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 