



Turtle Tracks



Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

Volume 23, Issue 3

President's Message

Hello to trail users:

Hey, the snow is early this year but should go with a little sunshine. Winter is on the way but here is hoping more fall like weather is in the near future.

First, I want to thank all the **new or renewed members** and other individual donors who support the MDH mission to **Promote and Maintain the MDH trail system**. Your support is really appreciated and makes our job easier to do. We have more than 175 paid members and we really appreciate all the support you folks give the MDHTA organization, Job well done.

Due to the large number of Life Members, we installed two new extensions to the original kiosk just south of Sully Creek State Park on Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation lands this summer. So we have lots of spaces now for more **LIFE members**. Thanks to Pat and Roger Ashley, Kevin Kirkey and yours truly, the construction went off nearly without a hitch, a slightly dented sign, which has been repaired. Also Thanks to **Vizion signs** of Dickinson for manufacturing the new signs to match the original sign.

The **MDH trail** is in the summer 2023 Highpointers Club's **Apex to Zenith Newsletter**, on page 27, highlighting our work on the White Butte trail to the highest point in North Dakota. This trail project has been in the news many times since last summer.

Outside of final signing, MDHTA completed both 2023 **RTP projects** and now are finishing up the paper work to get the reimbursements from the **Federal Highway Administration** in place. The new **Coal Creek Loop** now provides about a 2 mile loop trail out of Coal Creek

Camp for users to enjoy. The **White Butte** project has generated many compliments for the vast improvement to this trail. Like one lady from Kansas said "This is the nicest and easiest trail to walk that I have been on in over 30 highpoints in the US." And from Alabama, Michael and Deborah Jones commented on the view from the top of the butte and enthusiastically stated the White Butte trail was "the best highpointer trail in the country." We hope our work stays in place for many years to come.

The **MDHTA** has received preapproval for a 2024 **Recreational Trail Program (RTP)** grant from the **North Dakota State Park and Recreation Department**. This one is about 3 miles of trail restoration surfacing of the trail from I-94 past the new **Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library** and tying in where we left off in 2022 with the Buffalo Gap RTP grant. Some of you may have volunteered to work on that RTP project in the Andrews creek area in 2022. We will be planning another **Workday** for this 2024 project once approval is in place. **National Trails Day** will likely be the workday to put on your calendar, Saturday, June 1, 2024.

Guided hikes and rides along the MDH trail were held, **THANKS** to Glee Mayer, Mark Zimmerman, Amy Vojacek, Jesse Hanson and others, with more to come yet this fall. Follow us on our Facebook page and website MDHTA.com for more information on future guided hikes and rides on the exciting MDH trail.

We have our **Annual Meeting** scheduled for April 13, 2024, in Dickinson, at the **Eagles Club**, with our speaker to be determined. We also will be electing Board Members, catching up on local updates, have a silent auction, and presenting MDH merchandize for sale.

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Erratum

In the article found on printed copies of the *Turtle Tracks*, Summer, Volume 23, Issue 2, titled, "Trails Day 2023 at White Butte" found on page 6 we reported the Highpointers Club had acquired easements and donated several items used in the construction of the White Butte Trail. Actually, it was the Highpointers Foundation that acquired the easements and donated two benches, kiosk, and self-closing gate. Since Trails Day the Highpointers Foundation sponsored the materials used to construct a puncheon over a drainage way on the White Butte Trail. The Highpointers Foundation is dedicated to education, support and conservation of the highest point in each of the 50 United States. Thank you, Dave Covill for catching our error. We regret the error.

US Forest Service Update

by Rob Schilling, Deputy District Ranger, Dakota Prairie Grassland, USDA Forest Service

I wanted to inform you of a temporary staffing change within our Recreation and Trails program. I have accepted a 120-day detail as a Deputy District Ranger for the Little Missouri National Grassland, and Alex Manard has been selected to oversee the program during my absence.



Alex joins us from the Dakota Prairie Grassland (DPG) Supervisor's Office where he has served as the Executive Assistant for the past 2 years. Alex grew up in Champaign, Illinois and looks forward to being a part of our recreation program. As a youth, Alex discovered his

love of the outdoors while involved with the Boy Scouts of America, including hiking treks at Philmont Scout Ranch and attending the 2005 National Jamboree. After graduating high school, Alex attended Western Colorado University in Gunnison, Colorado where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Recreation and Outdoor

Management with an Outdoor Leadership emphasis.

After graduating from Western, Alex worked seasonally for the United States Forest Service at the Saguache Ranger District in Saguache, Colorado, as a Recreation Technician, Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area in Manila, Utah, as a River Ranger, San Carlos Ranger District in Rye, Colorado, on an OHV Trail Crew and Krassel Ranger District in McCall, Idaho, as a Recreation Technician, before accepting the permanent position at the DPG as the Executive Assistant. He enjoys not just working for the Forest Service, but also recreating in the areas he works. In addition, Alex has experience in the private sector in management and customer service, along with recreation guide experience in several western states. Alex looks forward to offering these skills to the DPG Recreation Program, along with qualifications in Wildland Firefighting and as a Forest Protection Officer.

Alex can be reached by phone at (701) 390-2678 or through email at alexander.manard@usda.gov.

Please join me in welcoming Alex to the team!

AARP Hike on the Maah Daah Hey Trail

by Mark Zimmerman

A day hike on the Maah Daah Hey Trail is always an adventure. Just ask any of the 39 North Dakota AARP members who enjoyed an outing on the Maah Daah Hey from the trailhead at Sully Creek State Park to the overlook towering above the Bully Pulpit Golf Course. Although the badlands on the west side of the Little Missouri were shrouded in a smokey haze from Canadian wildfires, the meandering hike through the juniper stands and surrounding rugged terrain was a great way to spend a gorgeous early September afternoon in the North Dakota outdoors. For a few of the hikers this was their first outing



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(Continued from page 1) President's Message

Again if you see any problems you encounter on the Trail, don't keep them to yourself, relay that information to the Forest Service or our MDH Facebook page or the MDHTA.COM Trail Upkeep Form, along with a milepost or GPS location of the problem, a picture would help also in the planning to fix these spots.

With **Christmas** just a short distance away, please consider the **MDHTA store** for some neat Christmas items for your friends and loved ones. We have kept prices the same for next year even if the profit margins are a little smaller.

THANK YOU to **Roger and Pat Ashley** for editing and preparing this Turtle Tracks Newsletter.

Here is to a great fall, what is left of it, and a neat winter, you should start planning your 2024 trip to the **MAAH DAAH HEY Trail** now.

Have a great Holiday season.

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas to all.

Happy Trails. Curtis W. Glasoe –
President - MDHTA

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:

*Kevin Kirkey
Glee Mayer

Trail Boss:

Peggy & John Fiedler
Gregory Rohde
Jason Signalness

Founding:

Tobias Anheluk
Kim & Joseph Callahan
Michelle Callahan
Brittney Dennesch-Jackson
Dickinson Convention & Visitors Center
Donald Kingston
Jeremy Mahowald
Loren & Jennifer Morlock
Shannon Raatz
Leonard Stanley
*Robert Stein
Tom & Sharon Tudor

In Memoriam

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

* Denotes new member at this level since last
Turtle Tracks

White Butte Trail partners and the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

by Jesse Hanson, MDHTA Treasurer

As of this edition of Turtle Tracks, the new trail to White Butte in Slope County is complete and open. Here is the how and why the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association was involved. With the vision of improving access to White Butte, an initiative came about by a national organization, Highpointers Foundation, and the Slope County Commission to improve road access and trailhead parking along with obtaining a long-term private land lease to the butte. The missing component was designing and building a trail. That's where the MDHTA was asked to become involved with trail design, construction supervision and providing volunteer support. The board discussed pros and cons of appearing to step outside the organizations mission to assist Slope County and unanimously voted to oversee the trail development component. Main discussion points by the board which lead to our approval included:

- A growing number of people nationwide have a bucket list of state "highpoints." Providing a sustainable, well-marked trail to White Butte would showcase ND's highest point and entice new visitors to experience the MDH trail.
- With the close proximity of White Butte to the southern starting point of the MDH trail, a new user group could be enticed to camp and use the southern part of the MDH trail.
- MDHT Association's financial contribution would be minimal by using donated materials from Slope County, funds from the Highpointers Foundation, applying for and administering a Recreation Trails Program (RTP) grant and volunteer labor.
- Additionally, for many years interest has been expressed by

Slope County to extend the MDH trail from Burning Coal Vein to Amidon. Hurdles remain for that to become a reality, however, continuing a good relationship with Slope County would be mutually beneficial.

It may be a bit out of the ordinary for a trail support group with limited resources to step out for a project such as this, but the payoff by partnering with a neighboring county and a nationwide hiking group will pay dividends to the MDH Trail in the long run. The sustainable design and construction of the White Butte trail has made accessibility to the top of the states highest point a reality to a wide variety of users and user abilities.

Do yourself a favor and venture out and experience this new gem of a trail.

The project sponsors included:

Mary Dennis – Landowner who provided the legal easement guaranteeing long term access to White Butte.

Highpointers Foundation – Coordinated the easement with Mary Dennis and provided financial assistance to the project

Slope County Commission – Improved road access, constructed the trailhead parking lot and provided gravel for the trail tread.

Maah Daah Hey Trail Association – Provided trail NEPA studies, survey, design, and prepared, bid, and administered the construction contract. MDHTA also applied for and administered a RTP grant from the ND Park and Recreation via Federal Highway Administration.

ND Dept. of Transportation – Directional signing on Highway 85.



Photo by Roger Ashley

Photo by Jesse Hanson

Introducing Biking on the Maah Daah Hey

by Amy Jo Vojacek

Ten enthusiastic trail users showed up to learn about biking the Maah Daah Hey Trail on a beautiful mid-September day at the kiosk in Sully Creek State Park. Six of the attendees had never ridden a bike on the MDH trail so were eager to learn about and experience the trail. Temperatures started out in the mid-50°F but by the time noon arrived 70°F +, little wind and clear skies – a blue bird day in the North Dakota badlands.

The first order of business was to learn some of the do's and don'ts on this challenging National Recreation Trail. A few had an inkling of what it would be like but most thought it would be like riding a dirt road and the entire 14 miles could be ridden in an hour or two. Preparation to ride the trail is a must and needs to include conditioning prior to attempting to ride trails.

One participant admitted that “This trail kicked my butt!” Two experienced Bismarck trails riders became winded and exhausted by the end. Conditioning well before the ride is a must. Jesse Hanson and I discussed the next time we hold a guided ride for beginners, participants must have some bike riding experience and be in good physical condition. It will improve the enjoyment factor for all.

Having adequate water and food along is also a must. A couple of our riders did not bring anything along but fortunately for them, Jesse Hanson, our support crew, helped by supplying water and snacks to all. Bet they won't go out on the trail without water and food again!

Trail safety is another consideration. Bike riders should be sure to use bike helmets otherwise you increase your risk of

severe injury. Proper etiquette also reduces risk not only for you but also other trail users. Proper use of bike gears was briefly discussed as well as instruction on how to navigate switchbacks and proper braking. I also mentioned that since they were new to the MDH to take the descent slowly no matter how much fun it is to go fast, unless they want to break a collarbone! I am the first to admit that I went over my handle bars my first ride on the MDH. Ok, ok, and a few times after that. When speeding down a hill it is so easy to get your tire caught off trail and off you go!

After initial instruction, the group headed south from Sully Creek State Park towards Bully Pulpit Trailhead. One of the participants didn't make it up the first hill as his sciatica nerve was complaining. My daughter jumped off at Bully

Pulpit to ride shotgun with Jesse Hanson who was the support crew for the ride. At the new Crying Butte Trailhead site to be built in 2024, a participant decided she should turn around and ride back to Sully Creek. The rest rode the entire 14 miles to Plumely Draw Trailhead stopping often for snacks, refreshment and some additional pointers on biking techniques. I also described the next couple of miles while we rested. My son rode out ahead of us for the entire trip and I must say I

am impressed with the kid.

Editor's Note: This program was provided without charge to participants and the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association wants to thank Jesse Hanson and Amy Jo Vojacek and her family for volunteering to assist with organizing, conducting the ride, and shuttling participants back to the starting point.



Photo by Jesse Hanson

(Continued from page 2) AARP Hike

on the Maah Daah Hey Trail and for many it will not be their last. Several hikers talked about hoping for additional guided hikes on the trail as a way for those less experienced hikers to access more miles on the Maah Daah Hey Trail. Check the **“Maah Daah Hey Trail” Facebook page** for updates and schedules for upcoming hikes on the trail.

Editor's note: This program was provided without charge to participants MDHTA wants to thank Glee Mayer and Mark Zimmerman, both MDHTA board members, for

leading the hike, a big thank you to Sully Creek State Park for hosting the start and finish of the hike and to AARP for requesting MDHTA to conduct the hike.



White Butte Trail Puncheon

by Roger Ashley

What do you do on a foggy morning followed by an overcast sky at the highest point in North Dakota? Build a puncheon. You would think the trail leading up to the highest point in North Dakota would be high and dry and during most of the year this is the case. But western North Dakota can have intense isolated thundershowers dropping from a few tenths of an inch to several inches of rain in less than an hour. The entire trail is passable under some of the moistest conditions but one dry wash that can turn wet in an instant can be challenging. A puncheon was installed on Tuesday, October 17 to improve the accessibility of North Dakota's highpoint.

Curt Glasoe, in consultation with Dave Covill, Lead Director Highpointers Foundation, discussed the need for a surface puncheon for this popular destination. The Highpointers Foundation provided the materials and MDHTA provided the volunteer labor for the project. Curt enlisted his Dickinson based grandchildren (their parents are also Life members) into drilling holes in the stringers and mud sills prior to transportation to the site.

Weather can be unstable during this time of the year so notification to volunteers was short. In less than 24 hours of notification the work crew was on site with materials and equipment. Tom Tudor, long time MDHTA member and runner, changed his plans to be there to "give back." He couldn't make it to White Butte for Trails Day in June but he found a way to be there to construct the puncheon. The first order of business was to move a "baby" rattlesnake from where the puncheon was to be built. Footings were dug for supporting mud sills, and stringers installed followed by placing deck and running plank materials. Replacing the excavation soil and gravel for the approaches completed the project. The puncheon has made North Dakota's high point more accessible.

It's amazing how many people are drawn to White Butte. In the four hours the volunteers were there on a day that was less than ideal for viewing the area from the top of the butte, there were four separate groups of people, some from out of state that utilized the trail.



Photo by Curt Glasoe



Photo by Pat Ashley



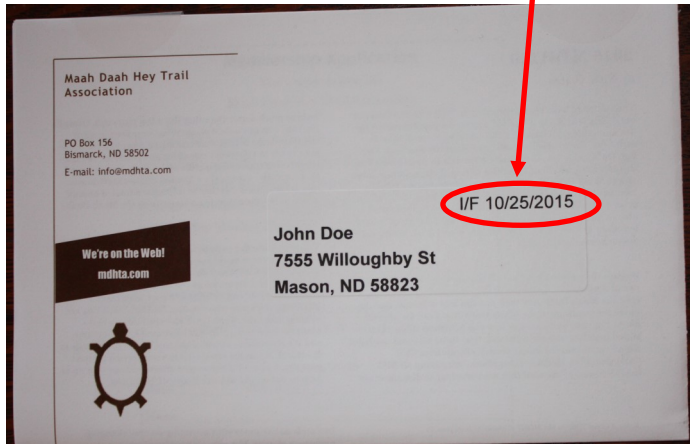
Photo by Curt Glasoe



Photo by Curt Glasoe

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**

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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

| | |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 13, 2024 | MDHTA Annual Meeting, Eagles Club, Dickinson |
| June 1, 2024 | Trails Day, near Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, Medora |

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 