

# Turtle Tracks

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

Volume 10, Issue 3

FALL 2010

## Maah Daah Hey Trail Association Memberships

Please remember that the MDHTA has annual membership renewal in January of each year. For all address changes contact [QTranch@hotmail.com](mailto:QTranch@hotmail.com). If you are not a member of MDHTA, please consider making a commitment today. Thank you to all of our members for your support.

\$25 Individual/Family  
\$75 Individual/Family for 3 years  
\$75 Founding Member  
\$200 Trail Boss Member  
\$500 Mile Marker Member  
\$750 Gatekeeper Member  
\$1000 Life Member

See back page for membership Application

Susan Mayer, Executive Secretary

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Presidents Message – Don Mayer

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## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Hi Everyone: My wife Susan and I have had a chance to ride quite a few miles this year on the MaahDaahHey, Long X, Cottonwood, and the Deuce. After the fair amount of moisture, we expected the trails to be in tough shape, but although the creek crossing all had their moments, from a horseman's perspective, the trails were in pretty fair condition. There were a lot of areas that had some real gully washers, and some of the steep sections took a beating, and the bridge went out big time at Sawmill Gulch, but I think the biggest problem was probably the massive growth of sweet clover, that in areas totally obliterated the trail. The good folks at the US Forest Service probably spent more time than they ever anticipated, mowing the trail! For some of the creek crossings and so called dry gulches we took to carrying a pack shovel, for breaking down a small section of straight wall when we could not find a way around, and our horses just did not wish to jump up a three or four foot high straight wall.

Throughout the hundreds of miles we rode, the biggest thing I noticed was the lack of any kind of trash. We found dropped water bottles still capped or full, halter ropes, and other personal items that were unintentionally lost, but absolutely no litter. We have never ridden any other area that has been as clean, and I sure hope I can say the same thing years from now. I would also comment on the campgrounds along the trail, as we stayed at, or lunched at most of them more than a couple of times, and each time they were neat and clean. Once again the people of the US Forest Service and ND Park and Recreation deserve a big attaboy for their efforts.

Your board of directors has several projects on the board for this winter and into next spring. More about them in this newsletter, but if you have any suggestions as to projects for this association please let us know. If you would like to be more involved, just let us know, we are always short of help, and we will try to involve you in ongoing projects. We appreciate your support and hope that you have found time to enjoy the best trail in America, and remember it is not to late to get out there yet this late fall.

Happy Trails, *Don Mayer, President*

Maah Daah Hey Trail Association • P.O. Box 156 • Bismarck, North Dakota • 58502





**MAAH DAAH HEY TRAIL  
ASSOCIATION**

**Officers and  
Board of Directors**

Don Mayer, President

Roger Ashley, Vice-President

Steve Stelton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President

Mark Zimmerman, Treasurer

Bruce Bishop, Board Member

*Send inquiries or articles to:*

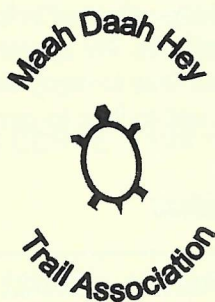
Maah Daah Hey Trail Association  
P.O. Box 156

Bismarck, North Dakota 58502

or

electronically— attn: Editor and  
Executive Secretary, MDHTA  
QTranch@hotmail.com

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.



*The MAAH DAAH HEY ASSOCIATION would like to thank Jo Marie Kadrmas for her years of work as our Executive Secretary. Jo Marie worked for the club from 2001 until 2010.*

*Thank-you Jo Marie*

***Memorials***

*Memorials in honor of the departed loved ones can be sent to*

*Maah Daah Hey Trail Association  
PO Box 156  
Bismarck, ND 58502*

**Good News!**

*The MaahDaahHey Trail Association applied for and was awarded a \$ 5,000.00 matching grant from ND Tourism. The grant is to be used for marketing of the MaahDaahHey Trail and promoting the trail. Funds will be utilized on updating our web site, expansion of sport type shows and seminars, and expanding the free hand out guide.*

**SPECIAL NOTICE**

**The FOREST SERVICE WILL REMOVE PUMP HANDLES FROM WELLS IN ALL CAMPGROUNDS ALONG THE MAAHDAAHHEY TRAIL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING DEER HUNTING SEASON.**



## Why I Hike and Why I am a MDHTA Member

Friends ask me why I hike when a person can ride a bike or a horse on the MaahDaah Hey Trail. My short answer is I am a cheap guy. Or at least when I first begin exploring the world a pair of sturdy walking shoes and a day pack was all I could afford. Since then throwing a pair of hiking boots in the car or in the suitcase is easier done than a bike or a horse. So you can say I am a lazy guy. Some people point out that hiking moves at a slower pace, few miles are covered in a day, and a person is exhausted at the end of the day. All true so just call me a slow guy. My philosophy is life is not a race and hiking provides the simple pleasure of seeing a larger part of the world as well as the opportunity to see nature at work, sometimes I might miss if I moved at a faster clip. Maybe I am not as fast on the uptake as some folks.

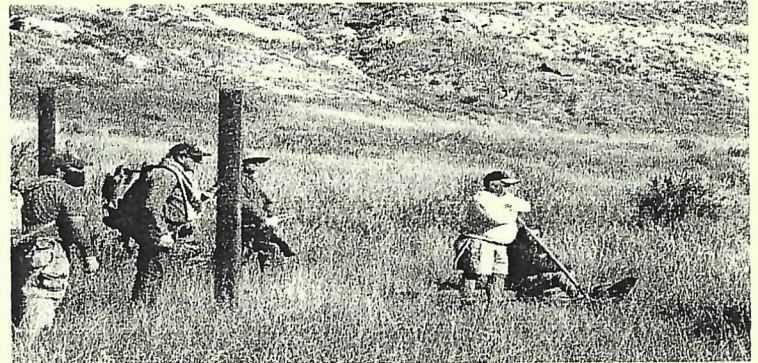
Friends also ask me why I am a member of the MaahDaahHey Trail Assoc. They point out the trails where it is, probably not going anywhere, doesn't sound very exciting, and its stated goal does not include the latest craze The trail is where it is because the badlands are where they are. People who came before me had enough foresight to see the possibility of a trail through the badlands rather than in the mode of crossing the badlands to get to the next destination resort. Other than the trail sliding down the hill once in awhile or a reroute to avoid a hazard the trail is likely to stay where it is. The US Forest Service and the National Park Service do what they can do in maintaining the trail with their limited resources. In terms of excitement members like me aren't ones to stay up into the wee hours of the morning bringing in the New Year or....you name it. "Networking" seems to be the current term (craze) used to describe what people do to accomplish a goal such as finding a job, improving ones social status, etc. The Maah Daah Hey is an organization that provides people with a common

interest, the trail sounds like networking! You might be surprised at the folks you will run into on the trail as well as who are association members.

MDHTA recently has been involved with some exciting happenings with the trail such as providing support for extending the trail beyond its original length, assisting with maintenance, and promoting the trail within the outside of ND. MDHTA has proposed additional improvements along the trail such as animal proof cache boxes for water and food as well as improved animal waste handling around the campgrounds along the trail. The Association Board is poised to request grants for these improvements from various granting organizations as soon as the US Forest Service completes a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with MDHTA. I've met with Paula Johnson, of the USFS, Bismarck, in June and again in September. To date it is my understanding that very little needs to be changed in the previous MOU and that it is on Paul's desk.

When it comes time to renew your membership or if you are considering joining MDHTA please do so. Your reasons are likely to be different from mine but the end result will be a real benefit to yourself, North Dakota, and the nation. Working as an association will likely accomplish more than what could be done as an individual.

By Roger Ashley



**THANK YOU! To the following volunteers who made the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association booth a success at the MN Horse Expo.**

**Rick Lagge  
Mike and Peggy Steed  
Bill and Rose Porter  
Don and Susan Mayer**



**THANK YOU to all the volunteers who helped in the recent trail service day in the TRNP south unit. Pictures and story will be in the next newsletter.**



## Kurt Hanson, Trail Builder - 1945-2009

Kurt Hanson passed away elk hunting in Montana last November. Kurt was a contractor that did all different kinds of construction, from stock dugouts to basements, to road grading, to oil field construction, to trail construction while living in DesLacs, North Dakota. He had his first Forest Service contract on the Buffalo Gap trail in 2000. This non motorized trail goes around the South Unit of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) for use by bicycles not allowed on the Maah Daah Hey (MDH) trail in the wilderness area of TRNP. This was the first of many FS contracts that Kurt performed on the Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG) with an efficient and quick way of getting the job done on the ground. He could always pick up a job gone bad and make the end product something we were proud of and with everyone happy when the job was completed.

I remember he picked up a portion of the North Country Trail (NCT) after we had a real tough time with the contractor and local landowners. Everything we did was a change order or a disagreement so we finally terminated the original contract by mutual agreement. Kurt was awarded the job and we did not have any more problems. He had a knack for getting all people to work together to get the project on the ground. He did come up with innovative ways to complete a job, on NCT, he developed a front end loader blade to just excavate the topsoil 3' wide and 4" deep, and then a bottomless trough to place the gravel surfacing in just the right depth. He also made a metal box to hold the gravel in so there was no waste or gravel lost in the surrounding grasslands, much to the satisfaction of the FS. He went on to do many different projects from placing large 10' diameter pipes, constructing trail bridges, putting out coal vein fires, fixing badly rutted roads, to other trail contracts for the FS. We could always count on Kurt to figure out how to get the job done quickly and with the least ground disturbance possible. On the Iron Springs trail bridge, he installed the 50' bridge in one piece in just under an hour once the abutments were in place. In 2004, for all his efforts on the DPG trail projects, he was selected as the Forest Service Region One **"Trail Contractor of the Year"**. This area covers FS projects in North Dakota, part of South Dakota, Montana, and North Idaho covering some 4 million dollars worth of trail contracts annually. Probably his biggest accomplishment on FS ground was the relocation of the Summit trail on our McKenzie Ranger District. This trail traverses the toughest badlands, the FS has to offer on the DPG. He worked through many serious steep slopes and other real problem areas to construct a safe and usable trail from the Summit camp to the existing MDH trail. Kurt did not complain very much. His short spouts of dismay lasted very few minutes, then he was back to being the joking, get along, get the job done, type guy he was. He always expected to be able to figure out how to get the project done and on board as soon as possible. Kurt Hanson has a legacy of trail building on the DPG, and he will be remembered for all his efforts by placing a memorial somewhere on a trail that he constructed on the DPG. FS contracts Kurt worked on were: Buffalo Gap Trail; North Country Trail; Iron Springs trail bridge; MDH switchbacks from Hell; Summit trail; extinguish Burning coal vein fires; subcontracted on Cottonwood trail; Indian creek road restoration; Wildlife drop structure; Bullion Butte large CMP; Denbigh septic system; Skyline trail at Denbigh; and others.

Kurt will be missed by the FS, and will be remembered by everyone who uses the many projects he completed over his construction years. *Written by Curt Glasoe*



## Greetings From Indiana

*First of all I would like to congratulate the MDH Trail Assoc. on the beauty of the trails . If it wasn't for their hard work people like us wouldn't be able to enjoy the horse trails. The views on the Maah Daah Hey are breathtaking and the trails are kept in great shape. The memories of this trip will last a long time. We have many stories to take back to Indiana to share with our friends.*

*On Saturday, October 2, 2010, we had an opportunity to meet several members of the Assoc. for the Maah Daah Hey marker replacement and re-routing. Don and Susan Mayer along with my husband Mike and I surveyed the south park entrance of the trail to the Knutson Creek Crossing looking for markers needing repair, several were found and Don and Mike then drug markers on horseback to designated areas. Several other hikers, Roger, Park ranger, Valerie and Anthony, carried the markers and dug the postholes. I'm thinking we had the easiest part.*

*Anyone who knows Don knows he loves to take people on butt puckering trail rides. On our first day visiting Susan and Don for our two week vacation we rode south out of Elkhorn camp toward Wannegan. We shuttled south about 12 miles and rode back to Elkhorn. The spirit of Teddy Roosevelt was with us, we could witness first hand the impact Roosevelt made on this beautiful part of North Dakota.*

*We camped at Elkhorn and on the second day we we rode another 12 miles north to the river and then shuttled back to Elkhorn.*

*Our next trip that week we rode the first 10 miles of the Deuce south of Sully Creek. We rode along some of the same ground that Custer traveled on his way to the Little Big Horn.*

*Susan and Don have been very gracious hosts for our two week vacation. They know the MDH trails well and continue to find new trails. Susan and Don make sure we have an adventure every day.*

*We are fortunate to be able to experience the MDH trails with our good friends.*

***Mike and Peggy Steed  
Valparaiso, Indiana***



# READERS

You can get published in Turtle Tracks! Each quarter, our readers contribute to the following departments:

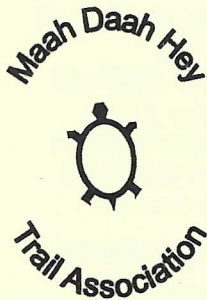
"Volunteer Action"

"My Day on the Maah Daah Hey"

"On the Web"

We also invite original articles and photographs depicting your unique recreation interest (i.e. hiking, biking, equestrian, other non-motorized), your technical tips (i.e. map-reading, selecting hiking boots, eating freeze-dried food), safety messages, trail conditions, and opinion/editorial pieces.

Model contributions after what you have seen published in this and other issues of TT. Limit article length to 500 words or less. Send items to our address or editor's email printed on page 2, lower-left.



Maah Daah Hey Trail Association  
P.O. Box 156  
Bismarck, ND 58502

## Membership Application

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

- \$25 Individual/Family Member
- \$70 Individual/Family Member for 3 yrs.
- \$75 Founding Member     \$200 Trail Boss Member
- \$500 Mile Marker Member
- \$750 Gatekeeper Member     \$1000 Life Member

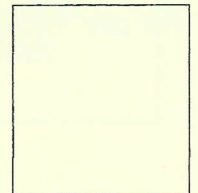
*Make Checks Payable to:*

MDHTA, P.O. Box 156, Bismarck, ND 58502

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE 100% TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED