



Turtle Tracks

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association



Volume 16, Issue 1

President's Message

First, it is dang cold out here in ND right now below zero and not much activity on the MDH trail system, except for the animals that use it year round. We still have news to report, number one the new website is up and running. By the increase in Paypal orders we know it is working so keep looking at it and seeing what is new and exciting about the MDH and other trails. It is a good site and getting better as we speak with trail elevations and more info along with new products we sell to enhance the mission.

Next all the planned water cache stations are in place for your use along the drier parts of the trail, these locations are shown on the website also, and a big thank you to the people, who made this happen, along with Dickinson Ready Mix and the Roughrider Electric RoundUP program.

We have four new life members for the 2015 year and that deserves some recognition, not only to the new members but the fact, the trail is getting important enough for people to become Life Members is really a great accomplishment. They are **Roger and Pat Ashley, Gregg Baranko family, Jesse Hanson and Lisa Kudelka, and Chuck Peterson family.**

Congratulations and the gate signs will go up when the temperature does later this year. We will recognize all the Life members on the website also. Your help in sustaining the MDH trail is really appreciated and **THANK YOU** very much.

We will be planning this year's activities in coordination with the Forest Service. We have had one productive meeting with them and another planned in early February to try to get back where the trail maintenance was over 6 years ago. Many things change over the course of years and we just have to coordinate so the necessary work gets put in place for all to enjoy what we have on the ground.

We are having the Annual meeting in Dickinson on April 9, 2016 at the Eagles Club so stay tuned for the agenda and schedule the date. We also will be having Trails Day on June 4th maybe at the Third Creek trailhead in southern Billings County on the Deuce with trail surfacing the main project. More later on this project, this will serve as our MDHTA share of the RTP grant that is being prepared by the Forest Service.

Nick Ybarra is also planning the next MDH 100 and various other runs are being planned as we speak on the MDH for this summer and fall. So get your calendar out and put down the dates to actually compete in the rides, hikes or volunteer to help with way stations for aid, water, etc. More to come on these efforts to promote and use the trail.

Curtis W. Glasoe, President MDHTA

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Special points of interest:

- *There are now 17 Life Members of the MDHTA*
- *In 2015 MDHTA contributed approximately 860 hours of volunteer labor to trail maintenance as well as trail infrastructure (such as water cache boxes). Total value is approximately \$20,000.*

Annual Meeting, Saturday, April 9, 2016—Dickinson Eagles Club

The MDHTA annual meeting will be held Saturday, April 9, 2016 at the Eagles Club, Dickinson. The Eagles Club in Dickinson is located at 31 1st Avenue East. The social will begin at 5 pm MT, dinner at 6 pm MT followed by the meeting.

The menu includes a salad bar, roast beef, deep-fried turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy and vegetable, with a price of \$20 per plate, price includes tax and tip. A vegetarian entrée,

Vegetarian Lasagna, is available if requested when you RSVP.

There will be a cash bar, silent auction and door prizes.

Please bring an item for the silent auction. Please RSVP by Friday, March 25 to Rod Mitzel at rmitzel@yahoo.com or call 701-227-4543.

We hope to see you there!



Winter Bike Ride on the Maah Daah Hey

by Nick Ybarra

When I pulled into CCC campground in the middle of January, I was not surprised to find it was completely empty. The sun was shining, the sky was blue, and the wind was as calm as it could be. I jumped out of my truck and took a deep breath of the crisp, twenty-degree air. The snow crunched under my boots as I walked to my tailgate and opened it up. I lifted my fat bike out of the back and I said out loud, as if talking to a friend, “this is going to be a good ride.”

I hopped on my bike and started pedaling down the MDH. I was suited up with enough clothes to keep me warm and dry on my winter adventure. As I rolled along I was leaving behind me more than just tracks in the snow. I was leaving reality, and heading into a badlands winter wonderland. With every pedal stroke I could feel the stresses and responsibilities of my day-to-day life fading farther and farther behind me. So I kept going.

The Maah Daah Hey looks very different when it is covered in snow. Although no one was around, I saw the evidence of other trail users. At first there were human footprints, but those only lasted for a half-mile or so. Once they ended, there was a mixture of deer and coyote tracks crisscrossing the trail here and there. Reminding me that as tough as I think I am for getting out and enduring the elements for a couple hours, I am not as hearty as the ND wildlife that survives outside everyday, while we are warm and cozy in

our homes.

As I pressed on, I was surprised how well my 4.6” wide fat bike tires floated through the three inches of untouched snow. It was almost surreal when I climbed up at least half of the big set of switchbacks a few miles south of CCC. I was not expecting to be able to ride up any of the steep sections of the trail. What stopped me dead in my tracks was the view of the moon over the snow-covered badlands below the trail at the top of the climb.

No picture can fully do the breath-taking beauty of the badlands justice, but I used my iPhone to try to capture what I saw in front of me. The snow glittering on the juniper trees, the almost full moon rising in the cold blue sky, the fiery glow of the setting sun, lighting up the wall of badlands on the distant horizon. It is moments like that where all I can do is thank God for creating such a beautiful place as the ND badlands, and be grateful that the Maah Daah Hey takes me right through it all.

After I finished watching the sun set, I turned on my bike light and followed my own tracks back to the empty CCC campground. I loaded up my bike, jumped in my truck and drove back towards reality, thankful and refreshed. Life is too busy to not have a winter adventure on the Maah Daah Hey. Get out there and see the trail before spring comes, you will be glad that you did.

Membership Recognition—Thank You!

Life Members:

Roger & Pat Ashley

Glenn & Jolene Baranko

Tom & Sherri Dickson

Ken Eberts

Curt & Carol Glasoe

Jesse Hanson & Lisa Kudelka

Dale & Jennifer Heglund

Mark Liebig

Ron & Aileen Luethe

Don & Susan Mayer

Medora Convention and Visitors Bureau

Charles & Sandra Peterson

Brian Selland

Dwight & Loa Tober

Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation

Glennys Ulschak

Nick & Lindsey Ybarra

Trail Boss:

Tim & Tammy Bohan

Stephen & Janet Wieser

Founding:

Curtis Alkire

Bruce & Roberta Bishop

Dickinson Convention & Visitors Center

Kelly Krohn

ND Department of Commerce/Tourism

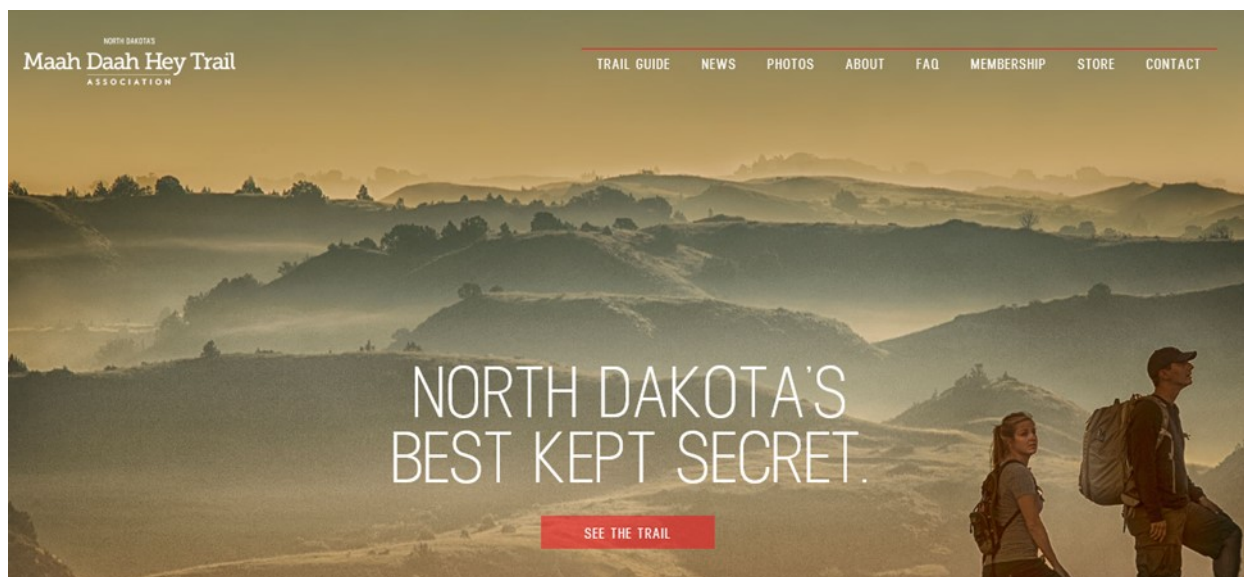
Darcy Sandstrom

Kevin Stankiewicz

Robert C. Stein

Larry & Freida Tebelius

MDHTA.com—Stay Connected!



MDHTA.COM went through a major overhaul in December. This updated version provides MDHTA the ability to update the website on the fly with current trail information, river levels, water cache box locations and news. A link to the ND

Department of Agriculture website listing of certified weed-free hay suppliers is also included. Frequently asked questions (FAQ) and much more. The store has also been added so you can buy your favorite MDHT gear.

Membership Application

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

- \$25 Individual/Family Member
 \$70 Individual/Family Member for 3 years
 \$75 Founding Member Cap or Tshirt S M L XL
 \$200 Trail Boss Member - S M L XL Denim shirt
- \$500 Mile Marker Member
 \$750 Gatekeeper Member
 \$1000 Life Member

Make checks payable to: MDHTA, P. O., Box 156, Bismarck, ND 58502

PLEASE PRINT

Date: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

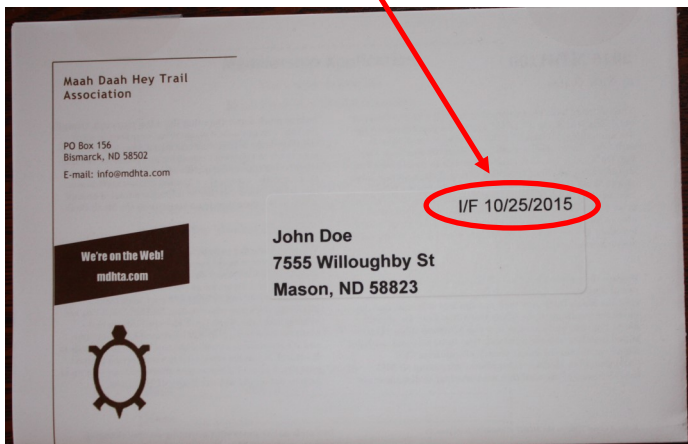
Membership Renewal – It May be Time!

“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; G = Gatekeeper; and Life) as well as your membership expiration date is given. If your membership has expired please complete the membership application form found above 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.



Thank you Roughrider Electric Charitable Foundation

MDHTA received a \$1,500 grant from the Roughrider Electric Charitable Foundation to help purchase shade tents to be used at trail events. Please thank the Roughrider

Electric Charitable Foundation. Thank you cards can be sent to Curtis Glasoe, President, Roughrider Electric Charitable Foundation, Inc., PO Box 1038, Dickinson, ND 58602.

Forest Service / Seasonal Trail Positions

by Rodney Mitzel

The condition of the MDHT is a concern of the members and directors. Over the past few years we have seen a deterioration of the trail. With a limited maintenance crew and the help of some members and volunteers it, for the most part, continues to be useable.

During the past years the MDHTA Board of Directors have been meeting with the Forest Service. The trail maintenance has been and continues to be one of the main topics of discussion. The next meeting is scheduled for February 2016.

The Forest Service has had a problem of retaining a maintenance crew for the MDHT. They have stated that it is due to the oil boom in western North Dakota and lack of affordable housing, thus the availability of applicants and workers have been greatly reduced. The Forest Service is presently seeking applications for the 2016 season:

- **BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE AID/FORESTRY AID/FORESTRY TECHNICIAN (RECREATION)** These positions are responsible for general site maintenance & visitor contact, including but not limited to cleaning restrooms, collecting trash, mowing & weed whacking, weed spraying, installing & posting signs, talking with visitors, enforcing rules. Typical work days are Monday through Friday. Limited overnight travel, weekend and/or holiday work may be required. Pay depends on experience; you must apply for each grade/pay level you wish to be considered for. A valid driver's license is required. These positions will be filled as soon as possible, so apply at USAJOBS now! For more information on applying please contact Rob Schilling

- **BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE AID/FORESTRY AID/FORESTRY TECHNICIAN (TRAILS)** Up to four trail crew positions will be filled. The trail crew is responsible for constructing & maintaining all of the trails on the Dakota Prairie Grasslands including the Maah Daah Hey Trail and the North Country National Scenic Trail. Typically, the crew works Monday through Thursday, 7:00 am – 5:30 pm. Some overnight travel/camping will be required. Pay depends on experience; you must apply for each grade/pay level you wish to be considered for. These positions will be filled as soon as possible, so apply at USAJOBS now! For more information on applying please contact Greg Morel, Trails Manager, Forest Service 701-227-7854 or gsmorel@fs.fed.us.

The Board is very concerned about the maintenance of the MDHT system. We will ask the Forest Service for a full crew of 8 to 10 seasonal workers. We are also asking all MDHTA members to help by getting the word out about the Trail Crew for 2016. We feel it is a great opportunity for anyone who is looking for summer employment. If housing is a concern, let's be creative by using Dickinson, is there a friend or relative available? A full crew would get our MDHT System back to its Glory Days.

We are also asking your assistance to report areas of the trail that need to be repaired. Please document the problem/s on our website (comments section), and location (nearest mile marker) or GPS coordinates.

A Winter Walk

by Roger Ashley

Winter sometimes provides a treat to get outside to enjoy the MDHT. This winter we have had several occasions. During parts of the year after a rain or when the snow begins to melt the trail can turn to the muddy side making walking difficult. But in winter when temperatures are subfreezing some of the best walking can be had in the badlands. A walk we like to take this time of the year originates from the Peaceful Valley Ranch parking area within Theodore Roosevelt National Park South Unit. Catch the Big Plateau Trail to the junction with the Elkhorn Trail. Stay to the right on the Big Plateau Trail to walk up an incline to the Big Plateau. Cross the Big Plateau to the junction with the MDHT. Turn south (left) at the junction on the MDHT, loop back to the parking area. Total distance is about 5.2 miles.

When we take this loop we often find bison and/or elk on the plateau as well as sign of coyote and mountain lion. This year on January 3 was no exception. Up the trail we went and had only seen a lone bison silhouetted against the sky until we came out on top of the climb to the Big Plateau. Did

we see a bison herd! Most of the bison appeared to be content, laying down chewing their cud. We continued on the trail towards the junction with the MDH. We were about halfway across the plateau when we glanced around, stopped in our tracks and saw a portion of the bison herd thundering towards us though after watching for a moment or two we decided they were actually running parallel to the trail. These bison stopped and grazed once in a while. The bison were of interest to us and we were of interest to the bison. We were very intent in watching for aggravated bison (raised tails) but fortunately for us our presence did not evoke an alarm response. The bison continued to move parallel to us until they were well by us and then they wandered on to the trail. Their trail use helped pack the snow for the remainder of our trek to the junction of the Big Plateau Trail and the MDHT. The bison continued going north on the MDHT while our route took us south on the MDHT. We did see coyote and deer tracks along the trail and the rest of our trek was uneventful but pleasant.

**Maah Daah Hey Trail
Association**

PO Box 156
Bismarck, ND 58502
E-mail: info@mdhta.com

We're on the Web!
mdhta.com



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

President—Curt Glasoe
Vice President—Rod Mitzel
Second Vice President—Nick Ybarra
Secretary—Bruce Bishop
Treasurer—Roger Ashley

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

February 3-9	Forest Service Job Applications due at USAJOBS.gov
March 25	RSVP deadline for Annual Meeting
April 9	MDHTA Annual Meeting
June 4	National Trails Day 3rd Creek TH
August 6	Maah Daah Hey 100 (experienceland.org)

