



Turtle Tracks

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association



Volume 22, Issue 3

President's Message

Hey, hasn't this summer been great, a little warm sometimes and what rain we have had, the Badlands have not looked this good since 2011, if you remember that year we really had moisture and a lot of slips, slides, and slumps to go with it. This year is not much different than then. The maintenance of the MDH trails system has been challenging to say the least, but the **Forest Service and other volunteers** have made the best of it. Quite a few people have called and/or contacted us via Facebook about trail conditions and we try to keep ahead of the problem areas, hopefully we get them fixed for the long term. **Thanks to all** who have helped in this effort to make the MDH as presentable as possible. Keep those memos coming on problem areas as you use the MDH trail.

Now on to the **Thank You's**, First MDHTA received a very large grant from the **ANDRIST family** trust, which will make financing our RTP projects much easier. It was given to further restore and surface the Buffalo Gap and portions of the MDH trail. That project has been completed with their help.

A big **THANK YOU** to new 2022 Life Members: **TR Presidential Library, Steve and Barbara Fix, and Noe B. Mateo, MD**; Thanks also to all new and renewed membership donations they really help our mission to **Promote and Maintain the Maah Daah Hey Trail system**. We also received a **ROUND UP** grant from **Roughrider REC** for the last self-closing gate south of Sully, so Thanks to them also.

Buffalo Gap and Coal Creek restorations are the **2 Recreational Trail Program grants for 2022**. We have completed the Buffalo Gap project which covered restoring and surfacing from Andrews creek east to the junction of the MDH trail, about 2.8 miles and about ½

mile of the MDH Trail north from the Buffalo Gap junction. The north portion of the Coal Creek project is also done as we speak.

Western Sand and Gravel is the contractor for these projects, and is doing a very good job. We held a volunteer workday on **National Trails Day** (June 4) on the Buffalo Gap project. We had 42 people show up and surface 1377 feet of trail. The **Home on the Range** boys and girls were really a big help, those folks know how to work for sure. A big lunch was catered by **Mulligan's** and T-shirts and other swag were handed out by the MDHTA to the workers. We are planning another work day at **Coal Creek Trailhead** September 24 on **National Public Lands Day**. More on this in another article. Hope to see you there!

MDHTA has received pre-approval for two 2023, **Recreational Trail Program (RTP)** grants from the **ND State Park and Recreation Department** that entails creating a **new loop trail** at Coal Creek Campground on Forest Service land; and restoring and surfacing the ¾ mile trail to **White Butte**, North Dakota's highest point, from the new road and trailhead constructed by Slope County to the top. We are also using their public Right Of Way to complete this project in 2023.

Two **Guided bike hikes on the Buffalo Gap trail** have been held thanks to **Amy Vojacek, Lisa Kudelka, and others**. They plan to hold more in the future so stay tuned.

Check out the **STORE** on **MDHTA.com**. for new items especially some pull over fleeces, click on **STORE**, and place your order.

Here is to a great fall and hope you plan to attend our **work day on September 24**.

A **BIG THANK YOU** to **Roger and Pat Ashley** for putting together this Turtle Tracks Newsletter.

Happy Trails.

Curtis W. Glasoe—President

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Attention:

- *The well at Burning Coal Vein is not operational and may not be functional this calendar year. Watch our MDHTA.com website for updates.*

Volunteers needed for National Public Lands Day on the MDHT— September 24, 2022

A work day sponsored by the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association will coincide with National Public Lands Day and will be held at Coal Creek Trailhead. In the spirit of celebrating National Public Lands Day, volunteers will be finishing a 400-foot section of surfacing on the north end of the Coal Creek Recreational Trail Program grant. The volunteers' labor will contribute towards meeting requirements of the grant. This is the last surfacing project MDHTA will do this season. People do appreciate the work MDHTA does in preserving the trail as seen in a recent note from North Dakota Parks and Recreation. Char Langehaug, Grants Coordinator for North Dakota Parks & Recreation, noted "Great work everyone! These restoration and resurfacing projects always turn out beautiful and are essential to preserving the Maah Daah Hey trail."

Volunteers will need to meet on Saturday, September 24 at 9 am at the Coal Creek Trailhead located about 12 miles south of Medora on the East River Road. Directions from Medora are: From the intersection of Pacific Avenue and the East River Road, turn south to cross the railroad tracks following the East River Road 4 miles to the intersection with Sully

Near MP 1 on the Buffalo Gap Trail. Four satisfied trail users, bikers Brady and Burkley Jensen of Bismarck at the gate, and Nicole Fitzgerald and Matt Habschmidt, hikers from Fargo. Photo by Curt Glasoe.

Andrist Grant

At first all MDHTA President Curt Glasoe could say upon learning about receiving a John & Elaine Andrist Charitable Trust Fund grant was "Wow!!" The grant of \$20,680 was used to match the funds for the 2022 Recreation Trail Project (RTP) for restoration and surfacing on the MDH and Buffalo Gap Trail. The Association has used this donation for restoring the tread and surfacing with gravel on the Buffalo Gap and Maah Daah Hey Trails in the area west of the Medora Burning Hills Amphitheatre. These dollars used with the RTP grant and the volunteer labor provided by MDHTA members and others during the National Trails Day program on June 4, 2022 extended the length of the all-weather surface on the

Creek Road. Turn right to stay on East River Road for another 7 ½ miles to Coal Creek Trailhead parking. Watch for the MDHTA canopy at the Trailhead. Restroom facilities are available at the adjacent Coal Creek Campground.

Participants should dress appropriate for working outside, along with work gloves and sturdy shoes. A free hearty lunch will be served to participants and they will also have a chance to win valuable trail prizes. With 400 feet of trail to surface we are likely to be done by lunch. **Please contact us with the number of volunteers** you will bring by September 19 so we can plan enough food for all. Contact Curt Glasoe via email: curtglasoe@ndsupernet.com, phone: (701) 260-9459 or Amy Tysver email: atysver@ndsupernet.com.

Early fall is a wonderful time of the year to do this kind of work as mosquitoes, ticks, flies and the heat have subsided. It's a great time of the year to finish this project on and then enjoy a hike or ride to observe a splash of fall color in both the grass and trees on Sunday. It's also a great time of the year to get in some of the last warm season camping of the year.



MDH trail system in the area. Trail users really appreciate a trail that is surfaced and can be used in any weather condition.

The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association really appreciates the donation the Andrist family gave to support the MDH trail system. Glasoe noted, "That with the coming of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library to this area of the trail, we will see increased trail use and this surfacing project will preserve the trail tread and prevent erosion for years to come. The Andrist grant couldn't have come at a better time."

The large donation shows the affection the Andrist family has for the Medora area and the MDH trail.

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
*Stephen & Barbara Fix
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
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
Mike Parke
Charles & Sandra Peterson
Hiram Rogers & Jean Gauger
Brian Selland
Jason, Jennifer, Morgan & Elliot Stiefel
Diane Stoltz Family
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
Andrea Stromberg

Founding:

*Tobias Anheluk
Spring Bakke
Jessica Brooke
*Brandy Chaffee
*Paul Conrad
Brittney Denesha Jackson
Donald Kingston
Kevin Kirkey
Jeremy Mahowald
*Elda Martinez
Loren & Jennifer Morlock
Matt Pekuri
Thomas Schneider
Robert C. Stein
Shannon Straight
Freida Tebelius
The Printers, Inc.
*Tom & Sharon Tudor

In Memoriam

Denton & Paulette Berntson
Kyle Brierley
Aileen Luethe
Morris Tarnavsky

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

Forest Service Update

by Devin Olson, Trails Manager, Little Missouri National Grassland, USDA-Forest Service

Another busy season on the Maah Daah Hey Trail for the U.S. Forest Service trail/recreation crew! This season has been vastly different from last year with all of the heavy rain and moisture. As many of you probably could tell while hiking the trail, there have been a lot of erosion problems throughout the trail system. We as a trail crew have tried to keep up on all of the sloughing and washout issues as they were brought to our attention.

There have been some great accomplishments in 2022 on the MDH. We designed and constructed the new Buffalo Gap trailhead and Spur trail. This new access to the Buffalo Gap trail will allow day users and campers a new sustainably designed 0.4 mile trail to access the Buffalo Gap and ultimately the MDH trails. Along with the trail comes a new trailhead parking area and new trailhead kiosk pad and information station. We are also planning on installing a new bench at the new trailhead in coordination with the MDHTA and its donors.

The Pioneer Gulch reroute near Mile Post 69 is officially completed and is fully open to the public. This reroute is nearly 1.5 miles in length and encompasses some different terrain. It will bring more miles to the MDH and has a great sustainable design with machine-built quality. There were many different work groups within the Dakota Prairie Grasslands that had a role in the construction and design of this new section of trail. USFS Medora Ranger District fire crew helped with clearing and brushing new portions of the reroute alongside the trail crew. Design and layout was done in house by our engineering team along with the trails

manager.

Between Mile Posts 115-133.5 on the MDH is currently having long overdue maintenance and small reroutes being constructed by a local contractor using a mini excavator. This work is well over due and will help the long-term sustainability of the trail. This section of the MDH is very rugged and was in dire need of attention. We anticipate this work to be completed by early Fall.

The Magpie trailhead bridge collapsed in July and has since been decommissioned and removed by the DPG fire crew. A temporary sustainable reroute was built by the trail crew to get around the drainage and is open for business.

The new CCC campground is under final review and approval. At this time we don't anticipate construction to begin on the campground until weather allows in 2023.

We are trying to keep up on all of the trail problems that have arisen and we know that there will be plenty more in the future. Thank you to all of the great volunteer work this season out on the trail and keep letting us know when you come across more trail problems.

Editor's Note: We just learned that Devin will be leaving the Little Missouri National Grasslands for a position in another state. Devin accomplished a great deal working on the MDHT, although his time here was short. MDHTA appreciates all the work he did.

MDHTA Guided Mountain Bike Outings a Success

By Jesse Hanson, MDHTA Treasurer

The MDHTA sponsored two guided mountain bike rides this summer. The rides were in response to comments received from people who were curious about trying a ride on the trail but were not certain of their abilities on the trail and apprehensive about venturing out on their own.

The route picked was from the Buffalo Gap campground trailhead to a point where the MDH trail crosses under I-94 between Mile Posts 52 and 53. With a convenient stop point on old Highway 10 at Buffalo Gap MP 3, riders could decide if this first 6 miles was enough for their first time out or they could choose to continue onto the full 13-mile trek.

Comments heard from the riders was how beautiful the badlands look and the perspective seen from the trail is much more intense than from a road. Most said riding the trail was much more difficult than they expected. Still, all were pleased to have the opportunity to experience the MDHT with the help of the MDHTA.

Leading the ride and event, Amy Vojacek summed up the sentiment of the Association with this statement "I like providing an opportunity for people to enjoy the badlands

and improve their health and fitness. The thrill of rolling down the descents after working hard on the climbs is addictive. I can't think of a more enjoyable workout for the body and mind."



June outing photo by Jesse Hanson

Joining Amy as guides, mechanics and support on the trail were Ryan Vojacek and Lisa Kudelka. Rodney Brown and Jesse Hanson provided shuttle service from the two stop points along the trail. A fun and enjoyable event both for first time riders and MDHTA members who helped them along. Look for 2023 guided rides in next year's *Turtle Tracks* or on the Association's Facebook page.

A Challenge to Keep the Trail in Good Condition

by Roger Ashley

Two or three consecutive dry years of well below normal precipitation and it's easy to forget some things, like how important it is that proper trail design is required to divert water off the trail rather than allowing water to run down the trail, and how a properly designed, surfaced, and drained trail can be used soon after a precipitation event. Two Colorado lows came through western North Dakota the last half of April dumping 20 plus inches of wet snow and normal rainfall in May changed the season's outlook from extremely dry to mud. There are areas in the badlands where water doesn't penetrate the hard ground and runs off. One such area on the Maah Daah Hey is north of the Magpie Trailhead where the MDHT crosses Magpie Creek with a bridge. The bridge was damaged by a runoff event that undercut the bridge abutments and approaches in the



fall of 2015. MDHTA volunteers spent several hours repairing damage beginning in the late summer of 2016 and then the repair completed in April 2017. The repair process can be found in Turtle Tracks Volume 16, Issue 4, Page 3 ([TT-Vol-17-Is-2.pdf.pdf \(mdhta.com\)](#)) and in Volume 17, Issue 2 Page 6 ([TT-Vol-17-Is-2.pdf.pdf \(mdhta.com\)](#)). This included hauling in rock, wire reinforcement and gravel, a substantial improvement we thought at the time that would remain in place for years. Though as predicted in the 2017 article, "More work is needed in this area to solve long term problem of water erosion on the trail." In a flash, a flash flood that is, in 2022, the abutments were gone and the bridge became unusable. With the complete washout of the bridge this was more than what MDHTA could handle with volunteers.

The definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over expecting different results. Fortunately, the crossing has been temporarily relocated with a permanent fix planned by the Forest Service.

Other problems have been exposed on the trail where erosion has cut gullies across and down the trail indicating some additional water bars and resurfacing for proper drainage is required. In some instances, the Forest Service has relocated and marked the trail to avoid a repeat of the problem. The old abandoned part of the trail is then reseeded and restored. Casual trails created by people who do shortcuts generally cause more damage than if the trail user would have remained on the surveyed trail location. Casual trails also will need to be restored to prairie.

A Pleasant Surprise – or – I Forgot What Rain Can Bring to the Badlands

by Roger Ashley

There is an upside to rainfall in the badlands. In July over 5 inches of rain, much of it during the first half of July resulted in a spectacular display of native grasses and forbs. The grass is certainly welcomed by ranchers for the feed it provides cattle and conservationists for the reduction in erosion. The forbs/wildflowers provide a spectacular show that can be appreciated by all if they take the time to look. Trail users who are only interested in going from Point A to Point B as fast as they can will likely miss this display by Mother Nature. Near the end of July in the Coal Creek area a plethora of flowers from wild bergamot, purple coneflower, scarlet globemallow, wavy-leaf thistle, prairie coneflower to purple prairie clover and great many more were present.

The next time we have a period of good rainfall in May, June, July, or August, I'll let some time go by, maybe a week or two and then plan a day on the trail.



Trail Etiquette

by Roger Ashley

With 144 miles of the Maah Daah Hey Trail as well as over 29 miles of connector trails and about 35,000 plus users spread out over the year there should be few conflicts, if any. When a conflict does occur, there may be a comment or two made but fortunately to date we haven't had any serious altercations. Just as there are rules of the road there are rules of the trail or to be more polite, trail etiquette. On the road, cars yield to pedestrians, other situations also call for vehicles to yield. You can imagine if these established rules of the road weren't followed, we could have some catastrophic results. Many trail users don't realize there are established rules of the trail. On a single-track trail such as the Maah Daah Hey, it should be obvious to folks that without these rules or protocols, serious injury could result even though the intention was not to cause injury but just get past other trail users.

Trail users should remember if you hike or bike you need to yield to the horse. To yield and get the other's attention you should say something as you approach, such as "Hello" or "Hi, it's a nice day on the trail." Or something primarily so you can get the horse and the rider's attention as well as let the horse know you are another human, not an animal that may attack. We have hiked trails in other states where mixed users, that is hikers, bikers, and horses, are allowed on the same trail. At Sleepy Hollow State Park in Michigan,

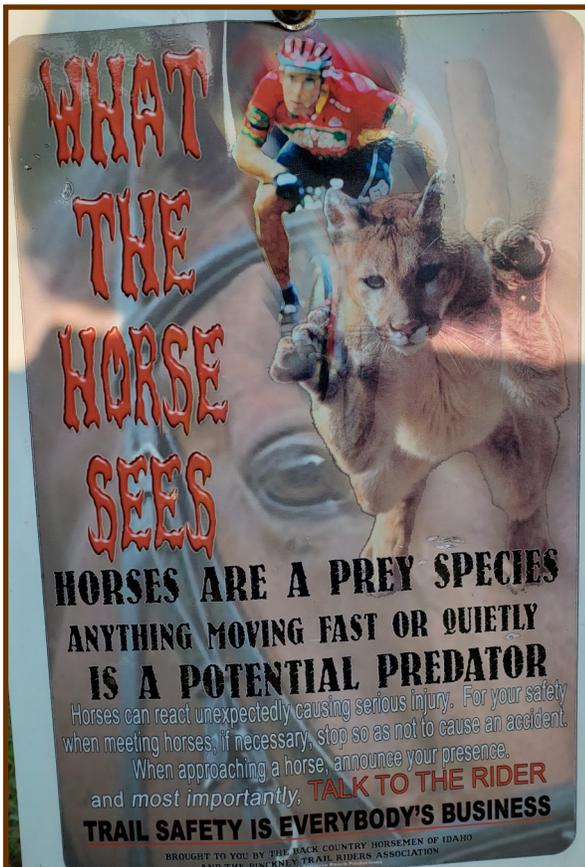
they use a unique sign to explain why bikers and hikers must yield to horses. The sign relates the thought (this is horse psychology) that in situations where a biker or hiker suddenly overtakes a horse, the horse may think it is being attacked by a mountain lion or some other animal. The horse could bolt injuring not only the horse rider but the other trail user. In addition to hailing the horse rider, the biker and hiker need to step off the trail on the downhill side of the trail. To do otherwise you will again put the horse in the situation where it becomes anxious and more likely to cause an accident. Of course, the horse rider, when they are hailed by another trail user should respond back to the approaching trail user and tell them what side they are expecting the approaching trail user to step off to. It is just good courtesy.



The biker, in addition to yielding to horse riders, needs to yield to hikers. Again, hailing the approaching hiker and the hiker responding should indicate the impending encounter. If no response is received bikers or for that matter any type of trail user should not

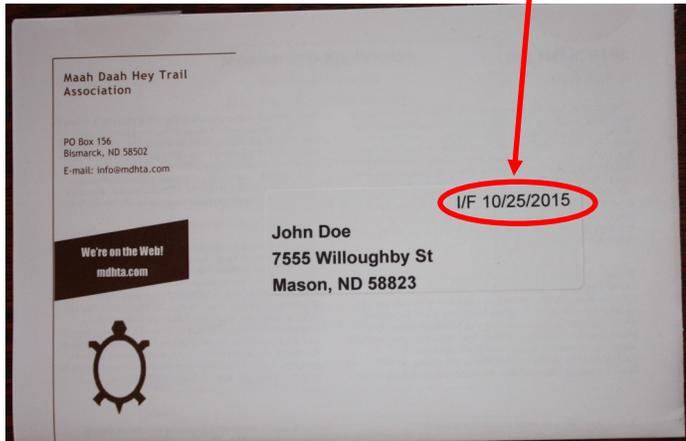
consider it permission to pass on the trail. The trail user could be in deep thought or they could have a hearing impairment, or have some other impairment. After the biker hails the hiker, the biker needs to yield the trail to the hiker by stepping off to the side. Bikers approaching from behind the hiker still needs to hail the hiker and step off to the side of the trail to pass. In hailing the hiker, the biker should indicate what side of the trail they will pass on. Again, the biker will step off or ride off the trail when passing the hiker. The biker needs to understand that they are likely traveling at a greater speed than the hiker and therefore combining their weight and inertia will have greater force and cause considerable injury to the hiker and possibly the biker too.

In addition to yielding on the trail, trail etiquette includes observing and properly responding to trail conditions. After rainfall or melting snow/ice the trail can be extremely wet. Parts of the trail that are unsurfaced or newly surfaced (within one or two years) will be muddy and users can leave deep imprints on the trail. When the trail dries it will make the trail rough and difficult to use. Stay off under these conditions. Even well-seasoned surfaced areas can be muddy immediately after a rain but can be useable within a few hours after the rain. Staying off the trail until the trail is dry enough to where little to no imprint is left will be good for you and other trail users.



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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We're on the Web!
mdhta.com



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

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

September 24, 2022	Public Lands Day at Coal Creek Trailhead
November 5, 2022	MDHTA Guided Hike—Magpie Trailhead to Ice Caves, about 8 miles total. Wear orange for safety during hunting season. Meet at 10 am Mountain Time. More information on Facebook. Contact Glee Mayer glee.mayer@gmail.com

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