



Turtle Tracks



Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

Volume 22, Issue 4

President's Message

Hello to trail users:

Hey, winter just arrived yesterday after some 70 degree temps a week ago, brr, now to get acclimated to the new season. Some great news, the three agencies that the MDHT occupies met and decided to continue the Memorandum of Understanding agreement. This a good start to continuing the coordination of all entities for the future of the MDH trail system. The MDHTA also met with the **Save the MDH, ND Park/Rec Dept** and the **USDA-FS Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG)** to continue our involvement in the promotion and maintenance of the MDH trail system. **Thanks to all** who have helped to make this effort possible, we are looking forward to many good years of coordinated effort in making the MDH trail as good as it can possibly be. The **MDH TRAIL** was also featured in the summer 2022 issue of **Midwest Living** magazine...Another press article, here is a link to a MDH article I found interesting <https://www.cntraveler.com/story/the-thrill-of-cycling-north-dakotas-maah-daah-hey-trail>

MDHTA received another **Life Member (#52)** thanks to the **Linda Pancratz Family Foundation**, which will help to complete many projects along the MDH trail, and make financing our future 20% Recreational Trail Program (RTP) project share much easier. Thanks also to **Alyssa Peck, Anthem Englehard** and **Christine and Darin England** for their generous donations. Thanks to **Glee Mayer** for maintaining the MDH Facebook page, it really is working as a great tool for information on the MDH Trail. Finally a **THANK YOU** to all new and renewed membership donations they really help our mission to **Promote and**

Maintain the Maah Daah Hey Trail system.

We have completed the **Buffalo Gap RTP** project which covered restoring and surfacing about 3.3 miles of the Buffalo Gap trail and north on the MDH from the Buffalo Gap junction. This was made possible by a large grant from the **ANDRIST Foundation**, Many thanks to those folks for their continued support of the MDH trail.

We also completed about 1.3 miles of the **Coal Creek Trail RTP**, with the help of some 20 volunteers September 24, **Western Sand and Gravel, USFS** staff supplied equipment, and **The Home on the Range (HOR)** many workers. The **HOR** people really helped out and the group completed some 600 feet of trail surfacing that day. A good lunch was catered by **Mulligan's** and T-shirts and other swag were handed out by the MDHTA to the workers. This RTP project has shut down for the winter and will be completed early next spring. Speaking of next spring, we will be working on two RTP grants: **Coal Creek New Loop** trail, and the restoration of the trail to **White Butte** (North Dakota's high point) from the new road and trailhead constructed by Slope County, to the top. We are coordinating with **Slope County** and **The Highpointers Foundation** to get all the essential pieces in place, from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to gates, posts, benches, signs, etc.

Guided bike and hikes are being planned so please let us know how they go and what can be done to continue or improve on these tours. Special Thanks to **Amy Vojacek, Glee Mayer, Jesse Hanson, Mark Zimmerman, Ryan Vojacek, and Lisa Kudelka.**

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View from top of White Butte

Point of Interest:

- The average rate of erosion in the badlands over the past 640,000 years is thought to be .5 to 1.25 inches per century. Most erosion occurs on slopes devoid of vegetation.

John P. Bluemle, *North Dakota's Geologic Legacy: Our Land and How it Formed*

“Maah Daah Hey Trail” Facebook Page

by Glee Mayer, MDHTA board member

Last fall the MDHTA board decided to create a new Facebook page. The reason for the new page was a change in page administration. It had been idle for quite awhile and we felt we needed to make some changes.

Since we created the new page titled “Maah Daah Hey Trail” we have had over 1,400 individuals ask to join our page. The interest continues to grow and as a board we are excited about the renewed/continued interest.

We realize that not everyone who is interested in the trail follows social media but it is a quick and efficient way for us to share information. We have asked our followers to share their experiences including pictures and the response has

been phenomenal. There are also a lot of questions being asked by our followers regarding trail conditions, water caching, shuttling, and quite a few just seeking general information about the trail. Who better to answer some of these questions than our trail users, be they bikers, hikers, or horseback riders, We hope to keep the flow of information going on this page and encourage you to share your questions, concerns, and trail experiences.

We also have a web page at MDHTA.com where you can ask questions and report trail conditions.

Happy Holidays and I hope you can get out and enjoy the trail in its winter beauty.

Submit your trail challenge log!

It's time to submit your trail challenge log before the end of the year. If you have a few miles to go bundle up, strap on your snowshoes, cross-country skis, or microspikes and get those miles in. Some trail users try to get a different badge every year and collect the five badges offered by the Maah

Daah Hey Trail Association. Copies can be downloaded from MDHTA.com, News, Trail Challenge 2002. The direct link to the log is [2022-MDHT-Challenge-Log.pdf \(mdhta.com\)](http://2022-MDHT-Challenge-Log.pdf(mdhta.com)).

Perspective on the Memorandum of Understanding

by Mark Zimmerman, MDHTA 2nd Vice President

Since the early days of the Maah Daah Hey Trail, there has been a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United States Forest Service (USFS), the National Park Service (NPS) and the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) for the management and operation of the Maah Daah Hey Trail System. The MOU is at the stage of renewal by the three partner agencies. I have been fortunate to attend two meetings regarding the MOU. One meeting that Curt and I attended was with the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Superintendent Angie Richman and her staff. There was discussion on the section of the MDH Trail that lies within the North and South Units of the Park as well as the use of the trail near the Elkhorn Ranch site. Concerns within the NPS continue to be staffing, funding, and scheduling of maintenance and improvements to the trail. The second meeting was held at

the USFS Medora District office in Dickinson. This meeting was attended by the USFS, NDPRD, the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association, and Save the Maah Daah Hey organization. There was a wide-ranging discussion on trail condition, protocols for trail repair work and continued mowing and maintenance. Curt Glasoe, Roger Ashley, Jesse Hansen, and I attended this meeting and were involved in a number of discussion points.

Always a benefit when groups involved in something such as the Maah Daah Hey Trail can come together and discuss concerns, proposals, and a way forward. I personally look forward to the completion of an updated MOU between the partner agencies and Maah Daah Hey Trail Association also the continued involvement of other volunteer organizations and many individuals to maintain and improve our beloved Maah Daah Hey Trail.

(Continued from page 1) President's Message

This is a great time to obtain **Christmas gifts** for you or your family Check out the STORE on MDHTA.com. for new items especially some pull over fleeces, click on **STORE**, and place your order. Shop early to assure prompt delivery in time for the holiday.

Here is to a great holiday season and start to plan for next season's adventure on the **MDH Trail**.

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
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
*Linda Pancratz Family Foundation
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
*Jason Signalness
Andrea Stromberg

Founding:

Tobias Anheluk
Spring Bakke
Jessica Brooke
Kim & Joseph Callahan
*Michelle Callahan
Brandy Chaffee
Paul Conrad
*Barb Fetters
Donald Kingston
Kevin Kirkey
Elda Martinez
Loren & Jennifer Morlock
Thomas Schneider
*Leonard Stanley
Robert C. Stein
Shannon Straight
Freida Tebelius
The Printers, Inc.
Tom & Sharon Tudor
Sarah Vogel

In Memoriam

Denton & Paulette Berntson
Kyle Brierley
Aileen Luethe
Morris Tarnavsky

* Denotes new member at this level since last
Turtle Tracks

The Beauty and the Beast: The Badlands and Erosion

by Jesse Hanson, MDHTA Treasurer

The colors in the badlands in 2022 were so brilliant it was hard to put words into what one was seeing. Thanks to abundant and in some areas, over abundant moisture an explosion of astonishing colors bloomed along with a natural side effect - trail erosion. Several areas along the MDH trail had significant impacts from the early spring snowstorm followed up with large spring/summer rain events.

The MDH trail passed its 23rd year of operation in 2022. The southern portion from Sully Creek State Park to the Burning Coal Vein campground, sometimes referred to as The Deuce, is not far behind in years of service. Twenty-three years of snow/rain runoff and recreational traffic continues to create trail erosion which the US Forest Service, National Park Service and volunteer groups grapple with annually. Areas of the trail that originally out-sloped allowing the water to sheet across the tread are now downslope funneling water down the trail tread washing out the tread causing gullies, or trail braiding, even across flat areas, as well as “headwall

cutbacks” that are recurring trail maintenance headaches.

Flourishing vegetation makes the actual trail route hard to distinguish from game or cattle trails creating safety concerns with people getting lost or in some cases short cutting trails are established.

In a recent partner meeting at the US Forest Service office in Dickinson a common theme among the government and volunteer partners was the challenge ahead of funding and workforce resources to address erosion and overgrown vegetation issues. An increased emphasis on partner groups working toward common goals in funding and volunteer support is an exciting prospect and necessary to keep the MDH the destination trail it has become. Erosion is the Beast but, without erosion we wouldn't have the beautiful badlands. The challenge now is devising coordinated efforts to tame the Beast and keep the trail the best of the best for the next 20+ years. Happy Trails.



Headwall erosion.



Erosion of a downslope section of trail



Trail braiding

2022 Trail Statistics

by Roger Ashley

The Maah Daah Hey Trail (MDHT) system includes the 144 miles of the MDHT from Burning Coal Vein in the south to CCC at the northern terminus and the spur trails. Spur trails allow users to enter and exit the main part of the trail and the Buffalo Gap Trail allows users (bikes are required) to by-pass Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Buffalo Gap Trail is approximately 18 miles long. The USDA Forest Service locates trail registers at all trailheads on Forest Service managed lands. There is a trail register located in Sully Creek State Park and two located in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, one in the South Unit across the river from the Cottonwood Campground, the other in the North Unit just inside the east gate along the trail.

Statistics reported here currently contain numbers from Forest Service and Sully Creek State Park registers but not the National Park. A total of 1,989 trail users signed the registers in 2022. This is an increase of about 9.6 % over the 2021 season but a decrease of about 22% compared to 2020 when people were getting outside to isolate from Covid.

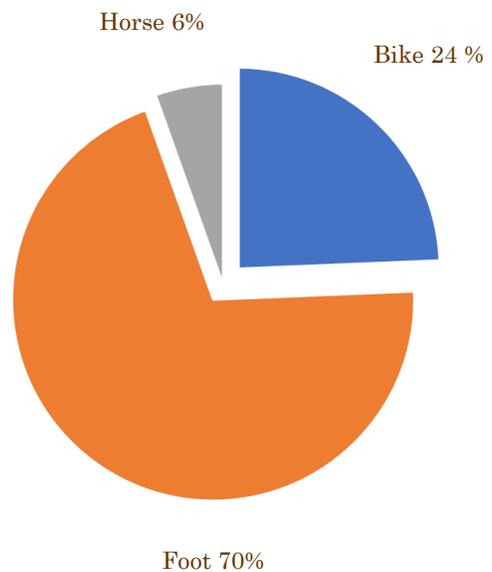
Trail registers are located at established trailheads along the Maah Daah Hey Trail system. Users voluntarily sign-in providing date, city, state, number of people in party, where they are starting their trail use, ending point as well as mode of travel such as foot, bike, or horse. It is thought there are a large number of users who never register at trailheads for various reasons. Trail counters have been used in past years as well as this year to provide additional data on the number of users on the trail but counters currently used are unable to distinguish between mode of travel, what part of the world users come from or where the user started and ended on the trail. Counter data for the current year was unavailable at the time this summary was written but in 2018 for every one user that registered 15 did not register, in 2020 that number was about 22 and in 2021 it was about 19. Taking a weighted average of those three years, for every person who registers there are about 18.7 users that did not register. If the relationship between registered and unregistered trail users holds true throughout the trail, then there were over 37,000 trail users during the months of March through October in 2022. People continue to use the MDHT during November through February but are not actively counted.

Also, the Forest Service collects data directly from organizations with group activities. These include outfitters who reported this past season 1,057 trail users were on horses and 275 trail users were on bikes and 1,750 mixed trail users.

Trail registrations indicated in 2022 that 70% of the users were on foot, 24% on bike, and 6% on horse. These percentages were nearly the same as found in 2020 and 2021 (see *Turtle Tracks* Vol 20, Issue 3, page 6 and Vol 21,

Issue 3, page 6 in MDHTA.COM, “News” tab). In 2018, 60 % of the trail users were on foot, 34% on bike and 6% on horse (see *Turtle Tracks* Vol 18, Issue 3, page 6). June is still the most popular time of the year for trail use, though April use was suppressed by two snow storms the last two weeks of that month and above normal rainfall during the first half of July. Trail users came primarily from North Dakota and the adjacent states and prairie provinces but five users came from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, one from Thailand, one from New Zealand (this individual in their trail register comments indicated this was on their “bucket list” to do the whole trail), two from the Dominican Republic, and one from Australia. The most heavily used trailhead was Sully Creek State Park followed by CCC. The least used trailhead was 3rd Creek. We thank the USDA-FS and Sully Creek State Park for providing trail registration information. We also thank Sully Creek State Park, North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department for the 2021 counter data and the USDA-FS for the 2018 and 2020 counter data.

Mode of Travel 2022 Trail Registers



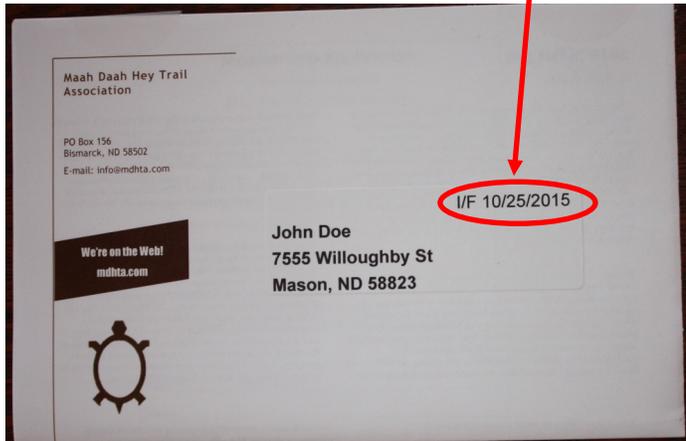
National Public Lands Day on the MDHT Recap

A day of sun, light breeze, and temperatures in the mid 60's made for the ideal day for surfacing trail north of Coal Creek on National Public Lands Day, September 24. Participants ranged in age from 9 months to 76 years young. The 9 month-old supervised mom and the eldest supervised everyone else on the crew. Youth from Home on the Range were tremendously helpful and 600 feet of trail received a packed layer of gravel.



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 2023	MDHTA Annual Meeting—TBA
June 3 2023	National Trails Day—Possibly Coal Creek

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 