



# Turtle Tracks



Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

Volume 24 Issue 1

## President's Message

### Hello to trail users:

Hey, the snow is generally gone except in the shady areas, but I think there is more to come soon. What a winter we are having, enjoy it and get outside if you can fit that into your busy schedule.

First, a big **thank you** to all the **new or renewed members** who still 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 one new Life member, **Greg Rohde**, so the new extensions on the life member kiosk are getting used as planned. I will get his decal up as soon as it reaches 50 degrees outside, hopefully we will have more names to add to the kiosk when the temperature is that high. We also had one new member at the Trail Boss level, **Jessica Brooke** and three new members at the Founding level, **Dave Helphrey**, **Shelly Lentz** and **Brian Williams**. Thank you for stepping up to a higher level support for the trail.

The **MDH trail** is featured in the 2024 **North Dakota State Travel Guide**, the number of pages mentioning MDH increased to 12 out of 112 pages up from 10 in the 2023 issue. The **MDH TRAIL** is still a center point for tourists to come, see, and enjoy in western North Dakota.

We now have the signs for our **2023 RTP PROJECTS** in hand, **THANKS TO THE Forest Service** for purchasing the Coal Creek Loop signs, and the **Highpointers Foundation** for purchasing the kiosk signs for White Butte. As the weather warms up, we will be getting them on the ground for directions for all trail users. Numerous people have commented on the **White Butte** project, almost all positive at this point. Thanks to all who supplied materials, labor, and access to enable this project to happen and be completed last year.

We are working on the 2024 edition of the **MDH TRAIL Brochure** from The Printers, Inc. in Bismarck, which should be out in April. Again, if you encounter **problems** on the Trail, don't keep them to yourself, please relay that information to the Forest Service or our MDH Facebook page, along with a milepost or GPS location of the problem, a picture will help also in the planning to fix these spots. Also look for any self-closing gates that are in tough condition. We have a maintenance plan now to handle gate repairs with the FS.

As previously mentioned, the **MDHTA** has received preapproval for a 2024 **RTP** grant from the **ND Park and Recreation Department**. This one is about 3 miles of trail restoration surfacing of the trail from the south boundary of TRNP, south under I-94, past the new **TR Presidential Library** and tying in where we left off in 2022 with the Buffalo Gap RTP grant. The grant includes an approach to the new **TR library trailhead** off the MDH trail also, trail location still to be determined. We will be planning another **workday** for this 2024 project once the final approval is in place. **National Trails Day** will likely not be the workday to put on your calendar, due to many complications of scheduling that early in the summer season. There will be some **guided hikes** on National Trails Day hosted by MDHTA members. Stay tuned for a workday date.

MDHTA is applying for the restoration RTP grant for 2025 in late April, on the FS number 1 priority, covering some 4 -4.5 miles of badly eroded trail south of the bridge washout at MP19.5. The Forest Service has plans to replace the bridge at MP 19.5 in 2024 as well as reroute a small section of the trail approaching the new bridge so the trail can be reopened. Also, some additional restoration will occur south of Third Creek. During the nice weather, **Pat and Roger**

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### Point of Interest:

- *The Long X Trail was used by cattlemen in the 1880s to traverse the rugged terrain of the northern Little Missouri Badlands. Today a portion of the Long X in combination with the Maah Daah Hey Trail forms about an 11 mile loop.*

# Annual Meeting Scheduled for April 13, 2024 – Eagles Club, Dickinson

The MDHTA annual meeting will be held Saturday, April 13, 2024 at the Eagles Club Dickinson. The Eagles Club in Dickinson is located at 31 1<sup>st</sup> 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, deep fried turkey, roast beef, mashed potatoes, gravy and vegetable, with a price of \$25 per plate, price includes tax and tip.

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

Please bring an item for the silent auction. Please [RSVP by Friday, March 30](#) to Amy Tysver by texting (preferred) or calling 701-290-3397 or if no answer Curt Glasoe at 701-260-9459 or [curtglasoe@ndsupernet.com](mailto:curtglasoe@ndsupernet.com) to let us know to reserve your spot at the meeting. Let Amy or Curt know the number in your party attending. [Annual Meeting Program](#)

The keynote speakers will be John Bradley, Executive Director, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, and Shannon Straight, Executive Director, Badlands Conservation Alliance, Life Member of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association. The title of their presentation is *A Conservation Proposal for Western North Dakota*. For a hint of what they will be talking about in their presentation see Shannon's

*President's Message (Continued from page 1)*

**Ashley** have been working hard on the MDH trail condition surveys in the South Unit of TRNP and the proposed RTP project on FS Lands. A big **THANK YOU** to them for gathering this data to better prepare the project items and costs to do the projects.

Our **Annual Meeting** is scheduled for **April 13, 2024**, in Dickinson, at the **Eagles Club**, with our keynote speaker being Shannon Straight and John Bradley. We also will be electing three Board Members, catching up on local updates from **USFS, TRNP, Save the MDH; TR Presidential Library, TRMF; ND Park/Rec; Horseman groups; CVBs**

## Trail Notes

### Hitch Rails Coming Soon

Hitch rails to tether horses at trailheads while owners shuttle vehicles and trailers to their final trailhead destination were suggested by trail users this past summer. The MDHTA board thought it is a good idea and pursued it with the Forest Service. The US Forest Service is looking into buying supplies for the project and MDHTA will be eventually installing the hitch rails at all the trailheads including one at the Petrified Forest Trailhead on Forest Service managed land just outside Theodore Roosevelt National Park. For 2024, plans are to install hitch rails at two to four trailheads and will be selected in consultation

article on page 4.

Trail reports from the organizations that support the Maah Daah Hey Trail System will be given. This includes Alexander Manard, Recreation Program Manager, US Forest Service; Philip McCall, Chief of Facility Management, Theodore Roosevelt National Park; Tracy Hsu, President, ND Back Country Horseman; Nick Ybarra, Director, Save the MDH; as well as representatives from the North Dakota Parks and Recreation; North Dakota Tourism; and Dickinson and Medora Visitor and Convention Centers. An election of three directors for the MDHTA Board will also be conducted.

### Silent Auction

A silent auction will be held during the Annual Meeting. This is a fun way to support MDHTA activities during the year. Support and fun can be found in bringing a small item as well as purchasing. In 2023 the Silent Auction brought in \$870 that was used to help match grants MDHTA received from the RTP Coal Creek loop trail on the MDHT.

MDHTA merchandise will be on sale at reduced prices along with a few remaining Forest Service signs.

We hope to see you at the MDHTA Annual Meeting!

from surrounding towns and any others that have a story or item to discuss. There will be a silent auction and MDH merchandise for sale. A side note-our gracious hosts, the **EAGLES CLUB** donated \$5000 since the last Turtle tracks. **Many Thanks** to them.

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

Hope to see you at your **annual meeting** and enjoy the nice weather so far this winter. Planning your 2024 trip to the **MAAH DAAH HEY Trail** should start now!!!

**Happy Trails.**

Curtis W. Glasoe, President, MDHTA

with the Forest Service. The hitching posts will be about 3 ½ feet high with a 7 feet cross rail. The structure will be all



wood except for the metal tie down. When the weather warms and the ground thaws the FS will

*(Continued on page 4)*

# 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  
\*Gregory Rohde

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:

\*Jessica Brooke  
Jason Signalness

## Founding:

Brittney Dennesch-Jackson  
Dickinson Convention & Visitors Center  
\*Dave Helphrey  
Donald Kingston  
\*Shelly Lentz  
Jeremy Mahowald  
Loren & Jennifer Morlock  
Shannon Raatz  
Leonard Stanley  
Robert Stein  
\*Brian Williams

## In Memoriam

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

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

# My Experience in the North Dakota Badlands

by Shannon Straight, MDHTA Life Member

Badlands Conservation Alliance has worked for 25 years to serve as a Voice for Wild North Dakota Places. Our mission is to preserve and protect the rolling prairie ecosystem of western ND's public lands, both state and federal. In May of 2023, I became the third Executive Director of BCA. I was a giddy teenager when I first backpacked and camped in the Badlands. The open space, big sky and rugged terrain instantly captivated me. "I want to work to protect this place," I thought then. Now I'm living my dream, and I still feel the same excitement and passion.

Being from Minot, I would attempt to get out to western ND a couple times each summer to go hiking or camping. During the pandemic, my seasonal food business had been canceled, but I knew the Badlands remained "open." COVID-19 took family and friends. My soul needed the escape. "I can definitely find social distance in the Badlands," I thought. I spent many days caching food and water along the scoria dirt roads to backpack the entire Maah Daah Hey Trail. I had to unplug and bathe in the Badlands.

Over my 47 years, I've seen and felt the changes in western ND from oil and gas development. Yes, it has been a boom for our state and at great cost. We could have oil and gas development for the next 50 years. Daily threats exist not only to the Little Missouri National Grassland, but also the trail. The Maah Daah Hey Trail is our state trail, our state treasure. It deserves our immediate attention. None of us

can take it for granted. We need to not only do our own part, but to work collectively to preserve and protect it.

The great conservationist John Muir once said "the mountains are calling, and I must go." The 144 miles of the MDHT had always been calling me. I backpacked alone for the 96 miles from Sully Creek to the CCC Camp — but really, I wasn't alone. I had the cows, wildlife, a few mountain bikers, and the constant wind, not to mention the oil field service trucks rumbling towards the random oil wells near the trail. A few hunters saved my hike by sharing band-aids, salves and a cold beer at Magpie Campground. In fact, I ran into Curt Glasoe three times during my days on the trail. He was out fixing signs and placing a bench while wearing a walking boot on one foot.

I have endless gratitude to Curt, the landowners that gave easements for the trail to cross their land, and to Gerard Baker for naming the trail as well as reminding us that indigenous people have been in the Badlands long before westerners. I'm thankful for the MDHTA and all of your work. I'm proud to be a lifetime member.

Now is the time for greater collaboration like the one that established the MDHT. We invite you to attend the MDHTA Annual Meeting on April 13, 2024 in Dickinson, where BCA and other conservation partners will share a proposal to preserve and protect the Badlands and ask for your support.

*Trail Notes (Continued from page 2)*

mark the locations so work can begin. Specified donations for additional hitching posts can be sent to MDHTA for future installations. Equestrian users should find these helpful, though those with pack animals including llamas may find these useful too!

## Trail Marker Posts in the National Park



Trail marker posts within Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) have been a challenge for trail maintenance for some time. Bison use trail markers for something other than to find their way around the park as these make really good rubbing posts to remove winter coats, and to relieve irritation caused by insects and ticks. Being the largest land mammal on the continent and needing a place to scratch, bison

have pushed out posts that are planted too shallow. This of course makes it difficult to follow the trail, especially at trail junctions. Mark Zimmerman and Glee Mayer hiked the trail more than 18 months ago with Mark Zimmerman and Curt Glasoe then visiting with National Park Service (NPS) staff shortly after. NPS staff turnover occurred since that meeting but current staff are aware of the problem. A chance meeting in late November 2023 presented an opportunity to survey trail marker condition a second time in December 2023. NPS is seeking volunteers for the project. Philip McCall, Chief of Facility Management, for TRNP will be on hand at the MDHTA annual meeting, April 13 to discuss NPS plans for trails.

## National Trails Day – June 1

Hold the date of June 1 for a celebration of National Trails Day on the MDHT. The project originally scheduled to be worked on this date has been postponed for later this summer and in its place a hike is being proposed. As details become available, they will be posted on MDHTA.COM, the MDHTA Facebook page and in *Turtle Tracks*.

*(Continued on page 6)*



# Trail Statistics

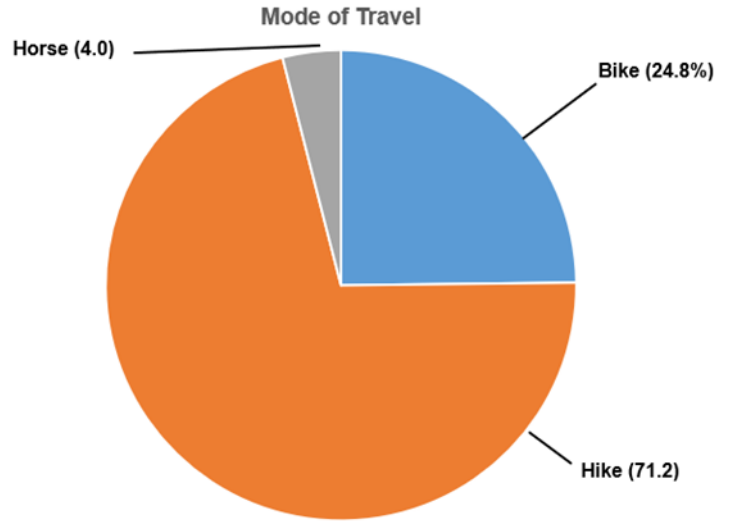
by Roger Ashley

Recently during an appointment in town, I visited the dental hygienist. She asked what I had been doing lately, and I replied working on the Maah Daah Hey Trail. She stated that she would use the trail but she thought it was only for bikers. Perceptions can be wrong. I responded that the trail is for all non-motorized uses, foot, bike, and equestrian, and actually more users identify their mode of travel as “foot” according to the trail registers at trailheads and now from trail counter data.

Up until 2023, the only way we had to differentiate mode of travel was through self-reporting trail registers located along the MDHT at trailheads or visual site surveys conducted by Forest Service employees during the first few years of the trail. The self-reporting register results from the past four years are reported in the fall issues of *Turtle Tracks* 2019 ([TTFall2019.pdf \(mdhta.com\)](#)) and 2020 ([TTFall2020.pdf \(mdhta.com\)](#)), and in winter issues of 2021 ([TT-Winter-2021.pdf \(mdhta.com\)](#)) and 2022 ([TT-Winter2022.pdf \(mdhta.com\)](#)). The Forest Service also used trail counters along the trail but these counters could not tell between various modes of travel but the counters did point out not all users self-register – no surprise! We were able to develop a ratio of those who register to numbers recorded on the counters. These ratios were within what researchers have reported in trail studies outside the MDHT. One use that isn’t counted on trail registers are special use permits required of groups with 75 or more participants.

During the summer of 2023, counters that can only detect bikes were placed at two different locations and were paired with counters that counted all users. One pair of counters was placed near the northern terminus of the trail, CCC, and the other pair of counters on the Buffalo Gap Trail about 5.5 miles north of the intersection with the MDHT. One might think that the majority of trail users on the Buffalo Gap Trail, a by-pass of TRNP South Unit, would have a high percentage of bikes and that nearly all other trail users would use the Maah Daah Hey Trail through TRNP but according to the paired counters on the Buffalo Gap Trail, 36% were bikes with the remaining on foot or on horseback. There are a number of foot races and bike races that use Buffalo Gap rather than going through the park. Near CCC, the counters indicate 24% of the trail users from July through September were bikers and the

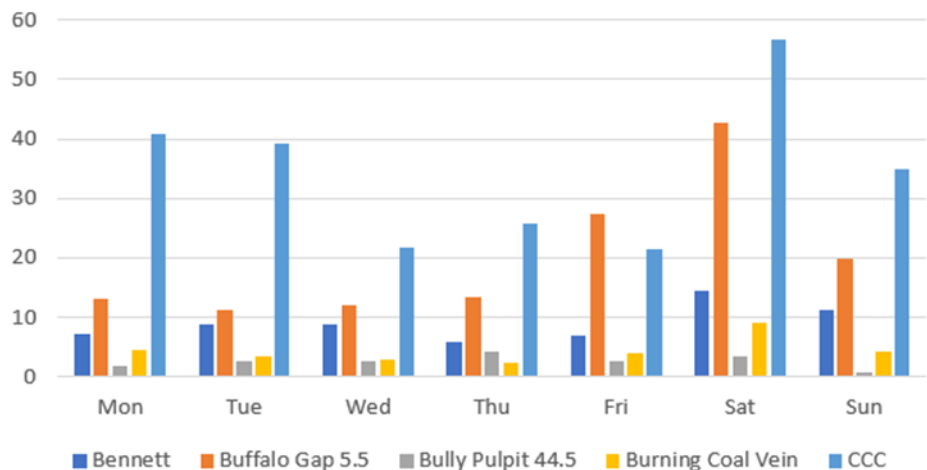
remaining were on foot or horse. The MDH 100, a one-day event, pushed August bike usage to 47% of the total users for the month.



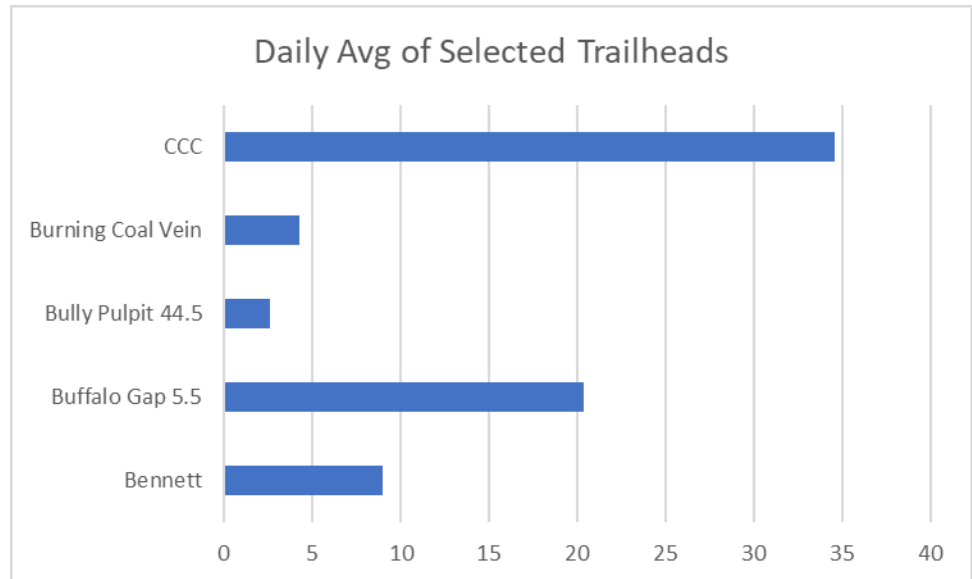
Comparing the compiled trail register data percentage for mode of travel from all available trail registers from April through October, the mode of travel appears to be similar to what the CCC counters indicated. That is about 24% of the usage on the trail can be attributed to bikes. The remaining traffic can be split between foot traffic, 71.2% and horse traffic, 4% based on trail registers.

June, July, September, and August, in that order are still the most popular months to use the trail. Counter data indicate that the most popular days of the week to visit the trail are on the weekend though you can extend that to include Monday and Tuesday for CCC.

## Trail Use by Day of Week



Are there some trailheads more heavily used than others? Trailheads such as CCC and Sully Creek (not shown) are used extensively while others not so much. If a user is looking for more solitude during June through September, they should consider starting at trailheads such as Bear Creek, Bully Pulpit, Wannagan, or Third Creek. During other times of the year solitude can be found about anywhere along the trail.



### Burning Coal Vein Campground Well

This past week we received a call from a horse group from Iowa and a group from Minnesota inquiring about the availability of water at Burning Coal Vein. Apparently, they had seen the notice on MDHTA's website that has been posted since June 2021. Alexander Manard, Recreation Program Manager, Dakota Prairie Grasslands said it is on his radar, and he will be contacting the Forest Service zone sanitary engineer out of Bozeman to help resolve the problem with this well. Alex said to keep in touch with the Forest Service through their web site on [Dakota Prairie Grassland - Alerts & Closures \(usda.gov\)](https://www.dakotaprairiegrassland.com/alerts-closures) to see when water is available at all Forest Service campgrounds.



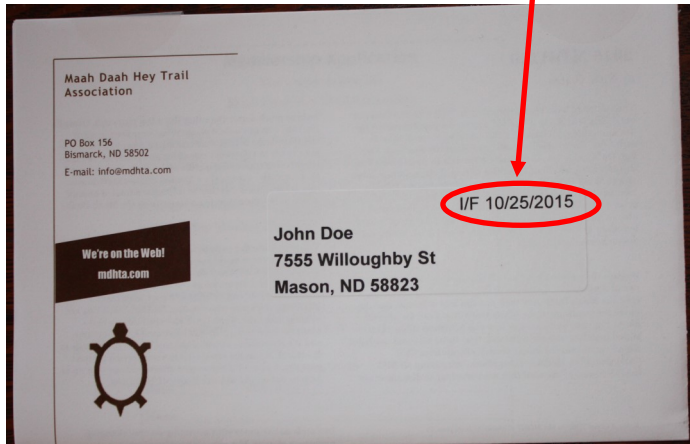
### Volunteer Campground Hosts Needed

The US Forest Service is looking for volunteers to serve as campground hosts at Buffalo Gap Campground and CCC Campground from May 27 through September 2, 2024. The details and applications for these volunteering opportunities can be viewed on [Volunteer.Gov](https://www.volunteer.gov) or contact Alexander Manard, email: [alexander.manard@usda.gov](mailto:alexander.manard@usda.gov), phone: 701-390-2678. This looks like a great opportunity to explore and spend time in the badlands.



# 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. An expired membership will also be highlighted.



If you receive *Turtle Tracks* via email the email will indicate if the membership has expired.

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](http://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](http://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

Phone No. (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**Maah Daah Hey Trail  
Association**

PO Box 156  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
E-mail: [hello@mdhta.com](mailto:hello@mdhta.com)

**We're on the Web!**  
**[mdhta.com](http://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, TBA
July 20-21	MDH horse Endurance Ride from Sully Creek. Contact Angie Mikkelson at 701-690-1563

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 