



# Turtle Tracks



Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

## President's Message

Hello to trail users:

Hey, we have gotten through the toughest part of the winter with more calm days in store for us if the forecasters are right. It is already March, so spring is just around the corner. Our MDHTA annual meeting is April 11, 2026, at the Dickinson Eagles, so hope to see you there. See page 6 in this issue for details of the meeting.

MDHTA store is still busy selling maps, books, caps and water bottles. We just fulfilled our 1300th online order! Now is the time to start planning! Order your MDH supplies at [www.mdhta.com](http://www.mdhta.com) for the 2026 season.

We want to extend a big thank you to our new Life members: Jason Bang, Don Kingston, Haley Bang, Jennifer Haller, Curt and Jackie Pearson; and new founding members Marty Neary, Teressa Olson, and Leonard Stanley. And In Memoriam: Bruce Bishop and Lester Albaugh (see article page ?) We also extend our sincere appreciation to both renewing and new members who joined this quarter. MDHTA values all of your support and efforts to promote and maintain the great MDH trail system. Recently, we received two substantial donations. Chord Energy contributed \$20,000 in support of our work on the MDH trail in McKenzie County, and Roughrider REC provided funds for a self-closing gate through their Roundup Dollar grant program. We sincerely appreciate your generous support.

Projects being worked on since the last TT issue include:

- ◆ Guided hike/bike along the MDH, watch Facebook page for date & details coming soon!
- ◆ Perform post and gate maintenance.
- ◆ Trail restoration in areas needing attention, including the trail to the largest Juniper tree in ND which is just off the MDH near CCC and Crying Butte trail reroute and trailhead updates.
- ◆ Coordination of trail marriage from TRPL to the MDH trail. Thanks to the ND Park and Recreation Department for the RTP grant on this project.
- ◆ Complete the ADOPT A TRAIL program on the Coal Creek loop out of Coal Creek Campground.

*\*Contact us if you're interested in helping maintain this section or any part of the MDH system\**

- ◆ Place sign-in sheets in the registers at the trailheads and clean out the water caches boxes.
- ◆ Update the MDH trail brochure, a new version to be released early in April.

The 2026 ND Travel Guide is now available. The MDH is featured across eight pages, which is slightly fewer than last year, but includes a two-page spread focused on the MDH experience. Take a look, there's plenty of valuable information inside.

We would like to kindly remind our members to be patient with the use of the MDH trail system early in the spring to help prevent trail damage. The trail will remain soft, especially in north and east facing areas due to slow snowmelt. The conditions will improve as they have time dry out, ensuring an enjoyable experience for all trail users.

Thank you to Angie Mikkelson for taking over editing duties for Turtle Tracks (TT) Newsletter from Roger and Pat Ashley. THANKS for all the great TT issues, Roger and Pat put together over the years. Please sign up for the TT email version, It really helps save a few dollars if you do that small project.

Check out page 8 for dates to remember and watch our Facebook page for trail conditions, updates and events!

Happy Trails! Curtis W. Glasoe – President, MDHTA

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### In Memory of Lester Albaugh:

Les was involved with the MDHT trail from its inception and served as an MDHTA Board Director from 2004–2007. He played a key role in promoting the trail during construction and spent many seasons as a camp host at Sully Creek (now Roughrider State Park), where he sold over 800 MDHTA caps in one season. Les presented the U.S. flag on horseback at the MDH trail's 1999 Grand Opening. A 35-year U.S. Army veteran, he passed away in January 2026 and will be buried at the military cemetery in Sturgis, SD.

## Backcountry Horsemen of ND Working Together to Support Trails and Public Lands in ND—by Tracy Hsu

Back Country Horsemen of North Dakota, is a chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA), a national grassroots organization dedicated to preserving America's backcountry traditions.

BCHA's mission, in short, is to perpetuate the common-sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's backcountry and wilderness; assist agencies in maintaining and managing those resources; educate the public in wise and sustainable use; and support strong state and local organizations.

As a bottom-up national organization, BCHA is powered by local chapters like ours. While we are rooted in backcountry horsemanship, you do not have to own a horse to join. We welcome anyone who supports responsible trail use, stewardship, and continued access to public lands. Whether members are active riders, occasional volunteers, or simply supporters of our mission and values, every member strengthens our collective voice.

Our chapter focuses on supporting and improving access to public lands across the state, including state, federal, and local trail systems. We also recognize the important role that private land plays in recreational opportunities and work to build respectful relationships that promote responsible use wherever access is granted.

Our chapter is committed to:

- ⇒ Promoting safe and responsible backcountry and trail use
- ⇒ Encouraging education and stewardship
- ⇒ Assisting land managers with maintenance and trail projects
- ⇒ Protecting access to trails and riding opportunities for future generations

As a registered nonprofit organization, we also have opportunities that can benefit the broader trail community. Our structure allows us to pursue grants, coordinate volunteer labor, support educational efforts, and collaborate on projects that enhance and sustain trail systems like the Maah Daah Hey.

We recognize and appreciate the vital work of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association in maintaining one of North Dakota's most treasured trail systems. We believe there are meaningful opportunities for collaboration—whether through volunteer trail days, shared educational outreach, coordinated advocacy, or other partnership efforts that support safe and sustainable recreation.

We invite anyone who shares our values to consider becoming a member. Together, by working across organizations and user groups, we can strengthen our trail community and ensure that the Maah Daah Hey and other riding opportunities remain accessible and well cared for.

For more information, you may contact our Chair, Tracy Hsu, at 701-426-2015, email us at [backcountryhorsemennd@gmail.org](mailto:backcountryhorsemennd@gmail.org), or visit our Facebook page and group to learn more about upcoming events and opportunities.

We look forward to building a strong working relationship with the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association and its members.



Backcountry Horsemen of ND group ride from Rough Rider State Park.



## MDHTA.COM Updated Trail Guide Gets Praise

My name is Jim and I am a camp counselor at an outdoor adventure camp for kids. I lead back country camping trips with my campers and have been preparing for an upcoming summer trip. In my preparation I came across the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association website: <https://mdhta.com/> and just wanted to say thank you for putting this together.....I have several campers local to your area and it has been wonderful to find this trail guide and information to pass along to them.....I always encourage my campers' parents to take their kids outside and explore before our trips and it looks like there are some great day hike suggestions here! I hope one day I myself can make it out to explore your area.....the photos look amazing.

As a thank you I wanted to return the favor and share an article I found helpful, "First Aid and Injury Prevention for the Wilderness"..... I'll link it below. I thought it might be a great inclusion to your materials here and contains important information for hikers of all abilities to familiarize themselves with. It gives a brief overview of wilderness survival basics and first aid. I have used it to help prepare my junior counselors in addition to their professional course. You can never be too safe! If you are able to include it, feel free to let me know!

Keep up the important trail work,  
Jim

<https://www.hughesandcoleman.com/resources/first-aid-and-injury-prevention-for-the-wilderness/>

# Membership Recognition—Thank You!

## Lifetime Members:

Curtis Alkire  
Bethany & Levi Andrist  
Roger & Pat Ashley  
Sandy Baertsch  
Bahne, Kay, Charlie & Anna  
Bahnsen  
Gerard & Mary Kay Baker  
Haley Bang  
Jason Bang  
Glenn & Jolene Baranko  
Britney 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  
Brandon Emmons  
Kathy & Matt Fischer Valan  
Stephen & Barbara Fix  
Fraternal Order of Eagles,  
Dickinson  
Curt & Carol Glasoe  
Matthew, Carter & Chase Glasoe  
Greg and Michele Gunderson  
Jennifer Haller\*  
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  
Donald Kingston  
Christa Kron  
Mike & Chandra Langseth  
Mark Liebig  
Ron Luethe  
Noe Mahowald, M.D.  
Don & Susan Mayer  
Medora Convention & Visitors  
Bureau  
**Lifetime continued...**

Rodney & Carolyn Mitzel  
John R. Olson  
Linda Pancratz Family Foundation  
Mike Parke  
Curt Pearson\*  
Charles & Sandra Peterson  
Hiram Rogers & Jean Gauger  
Gregory Rohde  
Angie Seligman & Randy Krogstad  
Brian Selland  
Peder and Tone-Lise Stenslie  
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:

Glee Mayer

## Trail Boss:

Jessica Brooke  
Thomas Dahbura  
Peggy & John Fiedler  
Eric Lane  
Brent Ravnass  
Jason Signalness

## Founding:

Kim & Joseph Callahan  
Chantel Casey  
Shawn Casey  
Dickinson Convention  
& Visitors Center  
Rob Hammer  
Kurt & Tonya Hanson

## Founding continued...

Dave Helphrey  
Patrick Higgins  
Daryl Hill  
Jeremy Mahowald  
Loren & Jennifer Morlock  
Marty Neary\*  
Teresa Olson\*  
Dave Peters  
Sue Schmitt  
Leonard Stanley\*  
Robert Stein  
Kerry Whip

## In Memoriam

Bruce Bishop\*  
Denton & Paulette Berntson  
Kyle Brierley  
Justin Hill  
Aileen Luethe  
Les Albaugh\*  
Morris Tarnavsky

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

## Donations since last Turtle Tracks:

Charles Bush  
Chord Energy  
Curt & Carol Glasoe  
Michael Gasell  
Bonnie Greenleaf  
Fidelity  
Dana Humphrey  
Roughrider Electric  
Andrea Stomberg  
Verita



## DPG Trails Program Update Project Highlights & Partnerships

Thank you to the volunteer groups who helped complete the Bear Creek Bridge replacement last summer. Your support was essential to finishing the project efficiently. This year, preparations for the summer season are well underway. Our partnership with the Montana Conservation Corps was a major success last year, providing valuable trail maintenance support on the Maah Daah Hey Trail. We are pleased to continue this partnership and expect to bring on three to four Conservation Fellow Interns.

### Summer Project Lineup

- Install additional trail posts along mile markers 68–72 of the Maah Daah Hey Trail to address navigation issues identified during last summer’s condition survey.
- Replace trail posts on the Cottonwood–Bennett Trail.
- Add gravel surfacing near the Bear Creek Bridge to improve travel through a low-lying section of trail.

- Complete trail condition surveys on the Long X, Cottonwood–Bennett, and Maah Daah Hey Trails.

In recognition of National Trails Day, DPG will host a volunteer workday. Planned projects include installing a new identification sign at the Crying Butte Trailhead and constructing a new bridge on the Buffalo Gap Loop Trail near the Buffalo Gap Campground. A specific date and time will be announced in the coming months.

Thank you for your continued support of the Maah Daah Hey. I look forward to seeing you on the trail.

Jeffrey Davis  
Trails Manager, Forest Service  
Dakota Prairie Grasslands  
Medora Ranger District



**CCC has been fully renovated in the last year! Check it out and make reservations here:**

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r01/dpg/recreation/ccc-campground>

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## MDHT Volunteer Opportunities

Several opportunities to volunteer and give back this year to help maintain the trail are in the planning process. Volunteers have a chance to set the date and pace at how these projects are done. If you want to volunteer for a specific project, contact the lead person listed in the project description. Volunteers will need more information about the project than what is presented here.

Trail to North Dakota’s Champion Rocky Mountain Juniper – During [location and](#) construction of the [Summit Trail](#), a huge Rocky Mountain Juniper (RMJ) was discovered, measured, and submitted to the North Dakota Forest Service for inclusion in the state’s Champion Tree program. To date no other RMJ has been found to have dimensions exceeding this tree in North Dakota. More about the tree can be found in the MDHTA.COM website, Turtle Tracks, Summer 2025, page 6, [TT-Summer-2025.pdf](#). The Summit Trail used to go right by it but since the Summit Trail was decommissioned by the Forest Service because of massive slumps about one mile west of the trailhead off of US Highway 85, posts were removed and two areas of the Summit Trail have gone back to Mother Nature’s care. There are still a few hearty souls using GPS that fight their way through the brush from MP142 on the MDHT to the tree. The USDA Forest Service has granted permission to MDHTA to brush, set marker posts and tread on the course of the old Summit Trail from MP 142 to the RMJ. Participants will need to hike, bike, or ride horse the two miles into the project area from CCC Trailhead and two miles return. Manual tools will be used to cut brush, set marker posts and any tread work, primarily to make the trail drain properly.

This will be a joint project between MDHTA and the Badlands Conservation Alliance and the suggested time frame is in May or June. Please text or call Roger Ashley at 701-300-3315 or email [rogerashley@ndsupernet.com](mailto:rogerashley@ndsupernet.com) with your interest in the project or to ask a question about it.

Signs and Posts on the MP 69-70 MDHT Reroute – Sink holes developed along the original route of this section of trail. A few years ago, a reroute to a more stable area was identified and a new trail bed established. A few marker posts were salvaged from the original route and but not nearly enough to provide good guidance along the reroute. Many trail users followed wildlife and livestock trails that tend to run down fall lines and cause excessive erosion. In April we will scout the reroute, with the USDA Forest Service (FS), and determine the number and location of posts needed. In late June or early July posts will be dropped off on this part of the trail. Since this part of the trail is very difficult to get back to on wheeled vehicles the FS is asking for the use of the pack train to bring in the marker posts. Shortly after the posts are delivered to the site, we would like to get the posts set, turtle signs attached and the casual trails closed and reclaimed with native grasses. MDHTA and Badlands Conservation Alliance will work on this project. If you are interested in helping out with this project please call or text Roger Ashley at 701-300-3315 or email [rogerashley@ndsupernet.com](mailto:rogerashley@ndsupernet.com).

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

Adopt a Trail, Coal Creek Loop – The MDHTA adopted the Coal Creek Trail Loop last year. This loop includes the Coal Creek Spur which connects the Coal Creek Trailhead to the MDHTA; the Coal Creek Loop Trail which connects the Spur with the MDHT; and the section of the MDHT between the junction of the Spur Trail with the Loop Trail. The main work that needs to be done is improving the drainage along a portion of the trail so it doesn't erode. This project will be discussed during the MDHTA Annual Meeting on April 11 at the Eagles in Dickinson and a date set. However, if you aren't able to make the meeting and wish to be included on the notice to volunteers call or text Jesse Hanson at 701-390-2999.

## THAT'S A LOT OF GATES!

By *Jesse Hanson*

When you are traveling on the Maah Daah Hey trail (MDHT) and pass through a self-closing gate do you ever stop and wonder how many self-closing gates are on the entire MDH trail? Likely not. Since I suspect you are sitting on the very edge of your chair anticipating the answer, **102 self-closing gates are spread out along the 144-mile trail and adjoining loops.** That's a lot of gates!

Like any of the many components of infrastructure on the MDHT, self-closing gates are prone to wear, tear and fatigue from years of use, abuse and weather related deterioration.

Stress on the gate panels (the part that swings up when opening), tension springs which aid in raising and lowering the panels and the metal frames from continual opening/closing after decades of hard use are contributing to key components of gate function. Many gates along the trail need annual repairs, in some cases complete replacement of the full gate system.

Along with the metal components of the gates, wood posts anchor the gate frames and provide lateral support on each side of the swinging portion of the gate when closed. Again, some wood posts have been in place for 25+ years and have begun to show rot at the ground level.

I recently asked Jeff Davis, USFS Trails Manager based in the Medora Ranger District what is the most frequent maintenance issue with gates on the MDHT: Was it the tension springs? Gate panels? Frames? Wood support posts? Jeff's answer was "all of the above". Logically, gates that usually need more repairs are close to the Medora area due to heavier concentration of people and trail users in that area.

What's the solution to keeping 102 self-closing gates functional and safe? The public plays an important role by reporting damaged gates/posts either through contacting the Trails Manager at the Medora Ranger District or contacting the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association's website and leave a message on the "get in touch" page. Considering 102 gates on the trail and locations often being remote, information received from the public is a critical component to keeping self-closing gates repaired and safe for all users. Please report any gate issues by using the contact tab on our website <https://mdhta.com/contact/> or contacting one of our board members.

A hole in this gate frame shows damage to the structure of the gate.



A broken gate support post caused the fence to go down at this gate, so someone was wired it directly to the gate, making it impassable.

# MDHTA ANNUAL BANQUET

Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> → 5pm Social → 6pm Dinner  
Followed by Annual Meeting  
Eagles Club, 31 1<sup>st</sup> St, Dickinson

## Dinner:

- Due to kitchen remodel, dinner will be limited to Pulled pork sandwiches, chips coleslaw, beans, pickle and dessert bar.
- Cash bar.

## Keynote Speaker:

- **Sierra Schmidt**, with the ND Badlands Horse will join us to talk about the group's role and her experiences in the TRNP with the wild horses.

## Annual Meeting:

- Trail reports from our supporting organizations including the US Forest Service, TR National Park, Backcountry Horsemen of ND, Save the MDH, ND Parks and Recreation.
- Representatives in attendance from ND Tourism, Bowman & Medora Convention and Visitor Bureaus, TR Medora Foundation, Badlands to Badlands Association, TR Presidential Library, Dakota Cyclery & USDA FS Bismarck.

## Elections to be Held:

- 3 Board of Director terms are up this year: Brittany Barnett, Mark Zimmerman & Glee Mayer. There will be an election for these positions.
- To remain compliant with our bylaws at least ONE of these positions must be filled.

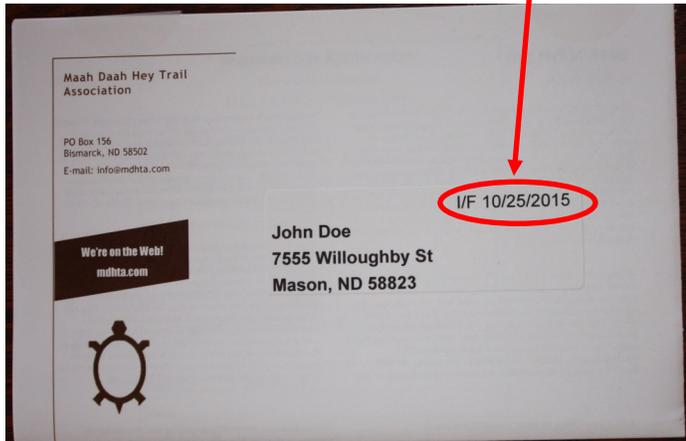


Please RSVP by Friday, March 27 to Amy Tysver by text (preferred)/call at 701-290-3397 alternatively call Curt Glasoe at 701-260-9459 or email [curtglasoe@ndsupernet.com](mailto:curtglasoe@ndsupernet.com)

★ Include your name, how many in your group and how many dinners ★

# 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.

**SAVE TIME RENEW ONLINE!!**

**WWW.MDHTA.COM**

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this a renewal? Yes/No

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Email newsletter: Yes  This option puts more resources towards the trail

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



# MDHTA



**PO Box 156**

**BISMARCK ND 58502**

**EMAIL: [hello@mdhta.com](mailto:hello@mdhta.com)**



## Officers and Board of Directors

President—Curt Glasoe

Vice President—Shannon Straight

2nd Vice President—Amy Vojacek

Treasurer—Jesse Hanson

Secretary—Britney Barnett

Director at Large—Glee Mayer

Director at Large—Angie Mikkelson

## Dates to Remember

| DATE     | EVENT                                       |
|----------|---|
| April 11 | MDHTA Annual Meeting                        |
| May 1    | Water turned on at campgrounds (approx.)    |
| May 23   | Guided Hike Tour, details soon via Facebook |
| June 6   | National Trails Day                         |
| June 20  | Guided Bike Tour, details soon via Facebook |
| July 4   | TRPL Grand Opening                          |

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.

**Website:**  
**[www.mdhta.com](http://www.mdhta.com)**

**FIND US ON  
FACEBOOK**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/247224027272578/>

