Summer 2026, Volume 26, Issue 2

Turtle Tracks

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

President's Message

Hello to trail users:

Hey, Summer is here, so get out and enjoy the MDH trail and the Badlands, they are just beautiful now with much of the area so green and the wildflowers are in full bloom. Our MDHTA annual meeting was held April 11, 2026, in Dickinson, 41 people showed up to celebrate the last year of happenings on the MDH trail system and made plans for the rest of 2026.

With the Forest Service giving MDHTA approval to do many items on the trail, we have a good start on fixing some slump areas (MP 141-switchbacks from Hell; MP34 Plumley draw area) and have contracted to complete a few more problem areas at MP 36 and MP9-10 later in the summer. We also have ordered trail signs for the CCC Long X loop. Also a bench and sign for the newly renovated portion of the Summit trail, going to the Largest Juniper tree in ND. This trail is located just off the MDH at MP142. These additions are compliments of the Chord Energy Donation we received last year. Many volunteers have cleared and remarked the MDH trail back to its original location in the MP142 area. Thanks to MDHTA members, Pat and Roger Ashley, and Shannon Straight. Badlands Conservation Corps and Montana Conservation Corps for your efforts on this project. Also, Jeff Davis, Trails Manager, Dakota Prairie Grassland needs to be thanked for providing leadership and training to these conservation groups in preforming this work. Jesse Hanson also completed replacement of rotted gate posts near the Long-X water box. Thanks for all your efforts.

A **BIG THANK YOU** to our new Life members: **Daryl and Joanne Hill** and new founding members Amy McCann and Kelly Sykora. Special thanks to Life members **Gerard and Mary Kay Baker** for their new additional Life member donation.

We extend our sincere appreciation to both renewing and new members who joined this quarter. MDHTA really appreciates all your support and efforts to promote and maintain the great **MDH trail system**. Check out the **STORE** on the **MDHTA.com** website to help promote the MDH Trail Association.

Our **MDH Board members** welcomed **Laura Weishoff and Terri Arnold** to the Board during the last annual meeting. They are a great addition to the BOD and look for a short Bio from them later in this issue. I want to give a Big **THANK YOU to Glee Mayer** for her Board service. She is going to continue helping with many duties the MDHTA is working on.

Thanks to **Amy Vojacek, Jesse Hanson**, and other MDHTA members for hosting a guided ride last month, More to see later in this issue.

We have the updated **MDH trail brochure** from the printers in Bismarck so if anyone needs some holler at me, thanks to **Jesse Hanson** for getting them to Dickinson.

Last I would ask all trail users to report problems along the trail, be it a gate, trail wash out, new slumps, etc. MDHTA will work with FS to get these opportunities to make the trail safer and more useable for all, we just need to know where (Mile Post) these opportunities exist now. Thanks to **Kim Callahan** for turning in some areas (we gave her a new hand saw for her efforts). MDHTA cannot fix them if we do not know about them.

Thank you to **Angie Mikkelson** for doing this issue of the Turtle Tracks (TT) Newsletter and anyone who has helped her do this job. Thanks again, keep up the good work.

Happy Trails. Curtis W. Glasoe – President - MDHTA

Inside this Issue:

Re-Establish MDH	2
Membership Recog.	3
Guided Bike	4
RRSP Update	4
New Board Members	5
Marker Posts	6
Membership App	7
Dates to Remember	8

Did you know??

You're walking on ancient underground coal fires?

At the southern end, the Burning Coal Campground gets its name from naturally ignited lignite coal seams that burned underground, in some cases for decades. The intense heat "baked" the surrounding clay into brick-like red rock called clinker or scoria, creating some of the most colorful hills in the badlands. Most visitors don't realize the bright reds and oranges in this area are the result of ancient underground fires.

Reestablishing the MDHT north of MP142 and Summit Trail to Big Tree *by Roger Ashley*

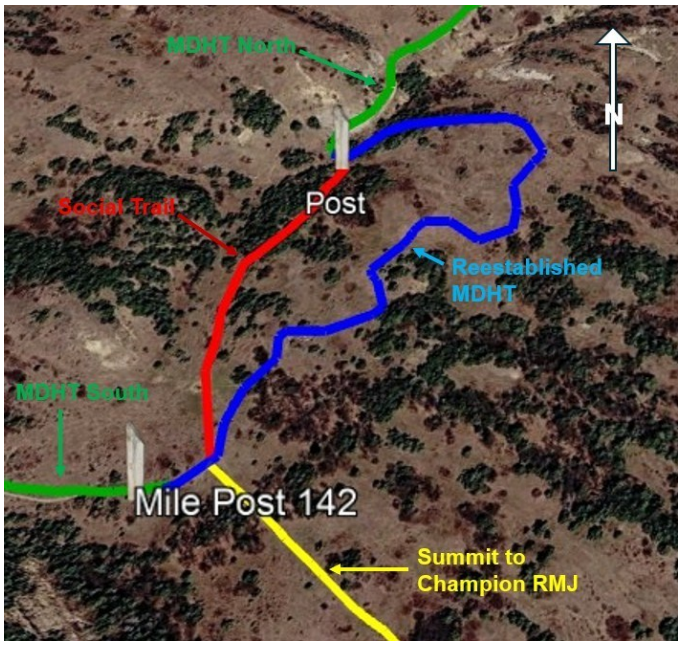
The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association and the USDA Forest Service along with the Badland Conservation Corps (BCC) and the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) worked to reestablish the Maah Daah Hey Trail (MDHT) back to its originally designed corridor and to cut brush along the Summit Trail from the junction with the MDHT to the North Dakota Champion Rocky Mountain Juniper (RMJ). The beginning of one of the projects was literally within a few feet of the end of the other project so it made sense to work on both while the resources were there.

When the original MDHT was laid out and constructed, the trail went a few hundred feet to the east to avoid a livestock water tank and the tank's overflow, as well as snow melt and rainfall drainage from the adjacent hills into a ravine. Over time, trail users started to short cut the trail through this ravine thinking it was a good idea and spent time cutting brush and trees on the new social trail. With use of this social trail, the ravine has become wider and deeper. Overtime less and less trail traffic went up the intended route of the MDHT and mother nature was reclaiming that part of the trail. Though the grass and brush had grown back into the original trail bed the location marker posts that were set more than 30 years ago are still standing.

MDHTA members began cutting brush in April this year in preparation to bring the MDHT back to its original route. Later Jeff Davis, Trails Manager, Dakota Prairie National Grasslands and Nick Ybarra, Save the MDH laid out a track on or near the original track. Then in mid-June Jeff with the MCC and Shannon Straight with the BCC along with members of MDHTA completed the brushing and cutting tread along the original corridor. The social trail will be closed after the newly cut tread has a chance to settle.

Upon completion of the reestablishment of MDHT north of mile post 142 the crew went to brushing the 0.4 miles of the Summit Trail from MDHT to the RMJ. People were still finding their way back to this large tree but they were beginning to use easier alternative ways because the brush had grown into the trail. Marker posts, trail signage of the entire Long-X loop, additional work on a slump, and installing a bench and sign at the RMJ are on the agenda to complete this project.

Chord Energy has graciously donated the dollars to purchase the bench and trail signs for this project.



Sign pointing to the re-established/original MDH trail and away from the "social" trail that has developed over the years.

Membership Recognition -

Life Members

Curtis Alkire
Levi & Bethany Andrist
Roger & Pat Ashley
Sandy Baertsch
Bahne, Kay, Charlie & Anna Bahnson
Gerald & Mary Kay Baker
Shannon Straight & Spring Bakke
Haley Bang
Jason Bang
Glenn & Jolene Baranko
Daniel Dwyer & Britney Barnett
Roberta Bishop
Chad and Emily Mitzel Brackelsberg
Beverly Brierley
Rich & Lori Brierley
Doug & Kathryn Burgum
Adam & Barbara Curtis
Tom & Sherri Dickson
Fraternal Order of Eagles, Dickinson
Kenneth & Norma Eberts
Brandon Emmons
Stephen & Barbara Fix
Hiram Rogers & Jean Gauger
Curt & Carol Glasoe
Mathew, Carter & Chase Glasoe
Greg & Michele Gunderson
Jennifer Haller
Lisa Kudelka & Jesse Hanson
Ron & Sheila Hartl
Dale & Jennifer Heglund
Daryl & Joanne Hill*
Earl Hill
William Hoeg
Dr. Tim & Amy Juelson
Jo Marie & Ryan Kadrmas
Donald Kingston
Christa Kron
Heidi Heitkamp & Darwin Lange
Mike & Chandra Langseth
Mark Liebig
Ron Luethe
Noe Mateo, M.D.
Don & Susan Mayer
Medora Convention and Visitors Bureau
Rodney & Carolyn Mitzel
John R. Olson
Linda Pancratz Family Foundation
Mike Parke
Curt & Jackie Pearson
Charles & Sandra Peterson
Gregory Rohde
Randy Krogstad & Angie Seligman
Brian Selland
Peder & Tone-Liske Stenslie
Jason, Jennifer, Morgan & Elliot Stiefel
Doug Stoltz
Bruce Britton & Andrea Stomberg
Vonne Tarnavsky
Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation
Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation
Loa Tober
Glenny Ulschak
Kathy & Matt Fischer Valan
Ryan & Amy Vojacek
Steve & Janet Wieser
Nick & Lindsey Ybarra
Mark Zimmerman

Trail Boss

Jason Signalness

Founding

Dickinson Convention & Visitors Bureau
Tonya & Kurt Hansen
Jeremy Mahowald
Amy McCann*
Marty Neary
Teressa Olson
Leonard Stanley
Robert Stein
Kelly Sykora*

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 the last Turtle Tracks

Gerard & Mary Kay Baker
Jesse Hanson
Greg Rohde
Robert Stein

On Saturday, June 13th, board members Jesse Hanson and Amy Vojacek hosted a guided bike ride. Twelve riders departed from the Buffalo Gap trailhead and rode into Medora on a cool, breezy morning with the wind at their backs. The group included riders of varying ages and experience levels, including three who were on the trail for the first time.

Ever wonder how many miles it is from A to B? Thank you to Roger Ashley for putting this together!!

Distance in Miles

Cities

	Amidon	Beach	Dickinson	Medora	Watford City	CCC CG	Summit CG	Bennett CG	Magpie CG	Elkhorn CG	Wannagan CG	Buffalo Gap CG	Cottonwood TRNP CG	Rough Rider SP CG	Coal Creek CG	Burning Coal Vein CG
Amidon																
Beach	77															
Dickinson	50	54														
Medora	52	26	38													
Watford City	101	96	87	83												
CCC CG	86	94	72	69	17											
Summit CG	82	89	67	64	20	6										
Bennett CG	84	91	69	66	27	13	8									
Magpie CG	73	80	59	55	57	42	37	40								
Elkhorn CG	95	47	81	44	82	90	92	100	100							
Wannagan CG	84	28	70	34	97	101	96	99	88	22						
Buffalo Gap CG	60	19	45	9	91	76	72	74	63	37	27					
Cottonwood TRNP CG	58	31	43	6	87	74	70	72	61	49	39	14				
Rough Rider SP CG	54	28	40	3	85	71	66	69	57	47	36	11	9			
Coal Creek CG	29	37	49	12	95	80	75	78	66	56	45	20	18	11		
Burning Coal Vein CG	15	59	65	29	115	100	82	99	73	73	62	37	35	27	17	

Approximate distance via interstate , state highways, county and US Forest Service roads. Does not include routes with low water crossings
Route chosen between campgrounds along the Maah Daah Hey Trail based on fastest way in terms of minutes., not necessarily the shortest in terms of miles.
Campgrounds are listed north to south along the trail.
Note Summit is not directly linked to the MDHT by a trail.

Rough Rider State Park Renovation Update *by Angie Mikkelson*

My husband and I stayed at the newly renovated Rough Rider State Park, formerly known as Sully Creek State Park, during its first weekend open. Although construction was not completely finished, most of the major updates were in place.

Non-Horse Camping Area

The non-horse camping area now has several additional sites. New sites were added where the original campground was located, and the area has been extended into the trees where the horse camp used to begin, creating even more space for campers.

Horse Camping Area

The horse camp also received several new sites, including more single sites and quite a few additional pens. However, as of July 21, not all of the pens had been fully assembled. Some sites currently have one very large pen with no separation.

Work Still in Progress

The new park office, hay shed, bathrooms, showers, and groundskeeping are still works in progress. I hope the park is able to empty the manure pits, set up the horse corrals properly, and address the weed problem in the coming months.

Overall Impression

Overall, I think they did a great job with the setup. Now they just need to finish the remaining work.

Watch our Facebook page for updates. I will be posting pictures and information as things continue to progress.

Meet your new MDHTA Board Members

Laura Weishoff

I live outside of Ray, ND and am a Licensed Clinical Addiction Counselor and am owner of my private practice Weishoff Alcohol & Drug in Williston, ND.
I grew up in the Little Missouri State Park area Badlands on horseback. My family provided horseback trail rides for over 40 years so I've put in many hours on those trails through the years. In recent years I have become active on the Maah Daah Hey Trail day hiking, backpacking and some mountain biking. In 2020 I started my first backpacking adventure at Burning Coal Vein Trailhead. This was my first time on the MDH and I marveled at the mowing of the trail that made it easy to follow and the beauty of the trail. Of course badlands make me happy but this trail captured my heart. Since that time I have spent many hours hiking and backpacking on the trail. I have introduced my grandchildren to the trail and hopefully one day more generations of mine will leave footmarks there as well. As a result of my love for the MDH trail I have gotten involved in the Save the Maah Daah Hey yearly "Big Push" where volunteers mow, string trim and prune trees/bushes to keep the trail easily findable for all users. I am now excited to be on the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association board and keep doing my part to keep this amazing and one of a kind trail available for horseback riders, bikers, hikers, runners and backpackers for many many years to come.
I am a proud mother of 2 sons, 1 step-son and a step-daughter, I have 3 granddaughters and 2 grandsons. I love to be in the great outdoors, hiking, backpacking, riding horses, biking and adventuring with family and friends. My husband, Mark, is an avid mountain biker and also enjoys many hours on the MDH trail each year.
I look forward to meeting you out on the trail one day!!

Terri Arnold

I currently live in Bismarck ND, and work in a temp position as a driver's license examiner.

I grew up as an Army brat so I have lived in quite a few different places. I came to ND while in college and settled here. I have 4 children and 10 grandchildren.

I started doing trail work on the Maah Daah Hey about 10 years ago after falling in love with the ND Badlands and the MDH Trail. I spend as much time as I can in the park and on the MDH Trail hiking, running and some mountain biking.

I'm happy to have the opportunity to serve on the board of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association and getting involved in different aspects of the trail and keeping it sustainable for many years to come.

MDHT Marker Posts *by Roger Ashley*

A part of the trail that is overlooked or taken for granted is the marker post also known as an assurance post. These posts can be found about every 1/10 mile or 530 feet along the entire length of the MDHT as well as connector and spur trails. Even trail users with GPS devices look for the marker posts to verify that they are indeed on the trail. During the warm parts of the year when vegetation may canopy over, hiding the trail tread or during the cold of winter, snow laying deep across the landscape, marker posts provide the evidence as to where the trail is as other clues associated with the trail are obscured.

The distinctive treated wooden 4 x 6 post with a 45° beveled top is about 5 ½ feet tall that you see along the trail. What you don't see is the bottom of the post that is buried 2 ½ feet below the ground. Since wood is a natural product, quality can vary considerably from post to post and from supplier to supplier. When the USDA Forest Service receives posts from suppliers the posts come in bundles and after the bundles are broken, individual posts are inspected for imperfections such as warping, cross grain, knots, localized slope of grain and pitch pockets. Good quality wooden marker posts will last 20 to 30 years, sometimes longer. It only takes a minute or two to inspect in the lumber yard. With this in mind, defective posts are rejected so the effort is not wasted in transporting and setting defective marker posts that will fail within five or ten years.

Posts are set along the trail with the bottom of the 45° bevel facing the trail. That is if you follow the top to the bottom of the bevel the bevel points down to the trail. Posts are set on the high side of the trail about six feet perpendicular to the trail so pack animals will not bump up against the post and posts are more visible to trail users. For switchbacks the posts should be on the inside of the curve with the bottom of the bevel facing out towards the trail and outside of the curve. This will help keep trail users from cutting corners or short cutting the trail.

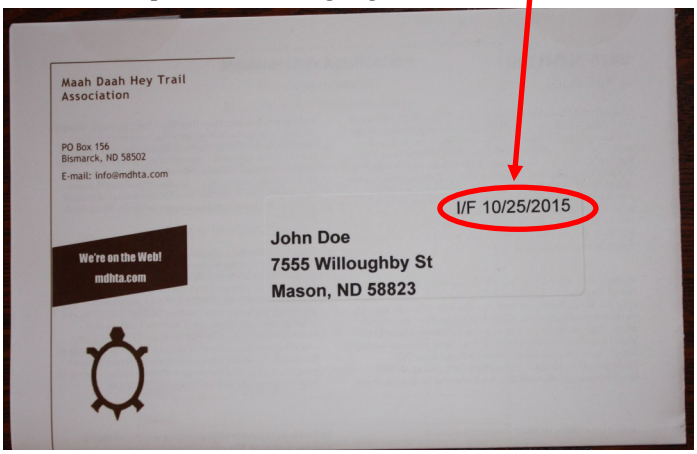
Exceptions where posts are set more than 500 feet apart include where tread is excavated, surfaced or in tree/brushy areas. Trees/brush and land forms help keep people on the trail as well as posts. Exceptions where posts are set closer than 500 feet are where cow or wildlife trails are well worn and intersect the trail. Posts will make it clear as to what trail to follow. Also, you may find more marker posts where two track roads and trails intersect the MDHT. More trail users seem to get lost in this circumstance than most any other situation. Part of this is that they need to be aware of their surroundings. If you haven't seen a marker post within the last 500 or 600 feet, stop and look for the marker post. Continuing forward without knowing where the next post is will likely take you further than your desired route.

What trail are you on? If you are on the MDHT the turtle emblem will be found near the top of the post on either a metal or wood sign. Originally when the posts were first set the turtle was branded directly on the post but with the high UV of the western North Dakota summers and exposure to the weather the brands have weathered. Other trails have their own distinctive brand but these too are fading so you need to look carefully.

If you are interested in learning how to "read" the posts see "Reading MDH Trail Posts" in Turtle Tracks, Vol 23, Issue 2, page 5. A direct link on the MDHTA.COM website is TT-Summer-2023.pdf. Additional technical information on marker posts will be posted on the MDHTA.COM site later this year.

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 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.

SAVE TIME RENEW ONLINE!!

WWW.MDHTA.COM

Membership Application

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

□$25 Individual/Family Member - turtle pin

□$70 Individual/Family Member for 3 years - turtle pin

□$75 Founding Member □ Cap or □ T-shirt S M L XL

□$200 Trail Boss Member - trail map & turtle pin

□$500 Post Marker Member - wood sign on post or for home

□$1000 Life Member - turtle sign & name on kiosk

□ 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

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—Teri Arnold

Director at Large– Laura Weishoff

Director at Large—Angie Mikkelson

Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENT
7/24	MDH Trail Run—100 mi start 12pm
7/25	MDH Trail Run—All others start 6am
8/1	MDH Bike Race—start 6am
8/31	Happy Labor Day
9/11-12	BCHND Poker Ride—starts at Bar X

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

FIND US ON **FACEBOOK**

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