

Bighorn National Forest

2015 Annual Report

From the Forest Supervisor

I am proud to present the fiscal year Annual Report for the Bighorn National Forest. This report highlights a fraction of the work we accomplished on the Bighorn in 2015.

- Road and trail crews performed maintenance on 358 miles of roads and 626 miles of trails.
- Grants from the Bighorn Resource Advisory Committee (\$20,161) and Wyoming State Trails (\$24,000) allowed us to complete reconstruction of the Porcupine Falls Trail with a Student Conservation Association volunteer trail crew.
- Our cost share partnership with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation contributed \$20,000 in a matching agreement to improve wildlife habitat in the Medicine Wheel Ranger District.
- The Powder River Ranger District entered into a new cost share agreement with the Bighorn Climbers' Coalition to develop a master development plan for rock climbing in Tensleep Canyon.
- Range management specialists monitored 50 of the Bighorn's 74 active grazing allotments.
- Twenty-eight new heritage sites were evaluated as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- Through a partnership with the Cloud Peak Chapter of Wilderness Watch, bare ground surveys were conducted on more than 350 known campsites in the Cloud Peak Wilderness.
- The Medicine Wheel / Medicine Mountain National Historic Landmark was visited by over 11,200 people

The Bighorn National Forest continues to provide recreation opportunities for camping, fishing, hunting, viewing wildlife and scenery, and motorized and non-motorized trail enthusiasts. I am particularly grateful to the groups and individuals who help us maintain these uses. We look forward to more great work in 2016.

Bill Bass

The Bighorn's FY 2015 Monitoring and Evaluation Report is on the web at <http://1.usa.gov/1WbiPOE>.

Inside this issue

Forest facts—page 2

Sheep Creek Fire—page 3

Buckskin Ed Creek—page 3

Volunteers & partners—page 4

Community connections—page 4

Meet new faces—page 5

Steve Brady, Sr. ceremony—page 5

How to contact us—page 6



FOREST FACTS

General

Forest land area	1,115,161 acres
Land types	About 60 percent forested About 40 percent shrub, meadow, or rock
Average annual budget	\$8 million
Elevations	Lowest—5,500 feet Highest—Cloud Peak at 13,175 feet
Special areas and designations	Cloud Peak Wilderness—189,000 acres Rock Creek recommended wilderness—33,850 acres Bucking Mule Falls National Recreation Trail Four research natural areas—6,400 acres Three scenic byways Medicine Wheel/Medicine Mountain National Historic Landmark



Goods and services

Payments to counties (2015)	Big Horn \$292,516 Johnson \$183,206 Sheridan \$172,288 Washakie \$24,626
Commercial livestock grazing	74 active allotments on 874,275 acres 70 term grazing permits Animal unit months permitted 90,006 Animal unit months authorized 75,736

Resources and vegetation management

Forest management and timber	Timber volume sold 11,291 Ccf on 720 acres Vegetation improved 510 acres Forest regeneration 231 acres
Annual allowable sale quantity	Forest Plan—27,183 Ccf Fiscal year 2015— 8,518 Ccf
Other forest products	1,998 cords firewood 270 Ccf post and pole 2,073 Christmas tree permits

Fire and fuels management

Staffing	Three engines, two initial attack modules, Black Tooth Fire Module Wyoming Interagency Hotshots
Hazardous fuels reduction	2,796 acres
Wildland fire history (1910 through 2015)	Average fires per year 16 (47 percent lightning, 53 percent human caused) Average acres per year 1,195 Largest wildfire Bone Creek 13,450 acres in 2007



SHEEP CREEK FIRE

The Sheep Creek Fire northwest of Dayton burned 1,655 acres in August 2015.



The Sheep Creek Fire was a model of interagency coordination and cooperation.

The Sheep Creek Fire was managed with the cooperation of the Dayton Fire District, Sheridan County, U S Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Forestry Division, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Projects that reduce vegetation across land management boundaries help create more resilient ecosystems and helps us be more effective fire managers.

BUCKSKIN ED CREEK HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

A project to improve habitat for Yellowstone cutthroat trout was completed in 2015.

Installation of an ATV bridge at a low water crossing was the last of three stream crossing projects to improve fish habitat in the South Paintrock watershed where native Yellowstone cutthroat trout were recently introduced. The project was completed in partnership with the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and the U S Fish and Wildlife Service.

Forest Service contribution: \$14,000

Partner contribution: \$58,000



Before: shallow, over-widened channel at low water crossing where poor channel habitat retarded upstream fish passage.



After: narrowed stream channel with reconstructed banks for improved aquatic habitat.



VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS

The stark realities of the national economy mean that strong community relationships, partnerships, and collaborative work are more important than ever. Many individuals and groups work in partnership with us to make a difference in sustaining the forest's resources. We rely on these strong, collaborative relationships to help us accomplish our work.

In 2015, volunteers provided over 8,000 hours of labor valued at \$115,314 for a variety of recreation, heritage, and trails projects.

Overall, the Bighorn has entered into 15 partnership agreements with local community groups, state agencies, and national organizations. The estimated dollar value of these partnerships is \$559,591.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Bighorn National Forest employees are dedicated to public service. Every year we compile a report that summarizes the year's achievements in helping people in local communities appreciate and understand the value of the national forest and to learn more about public land management.

In 2015, employees made presentations at elementary and high schools, day care facilities, all manner of club meetings, Sheridan College, the YMCA, and a retirement home. Wildlife biologists, firefighters, timber foresters, Smokey Bear, and specialists in recreation and range management provided information and education to 948 children and 860 adults. Presentations ranged from Bugs in the Park, terrestrial sustainability, and wildflowers of the Bighorns.

Larger groups are reached through interpretation and education efforts at the Shell Falls Interpretive Site and the Medicine Wheel / Medicine Mountain National Historic Landmark. Over 16,000 theatre goers in Lovell saw forest-related educational and safety messages at the Hyart Theatre.

Fire managers met with people in local communities to promote understanding of wildfire risks and to encourage property owners to adopt Firewise practices around structures. Fire personnel help provide training for volunteer fire departments in Buffalo and Lovell.



MEET NEW FACES



Lette Benson came to the Bighorns as a pathways student in May 2015 and was hired as the timber sale prep forester in January. She graduated in December, earning a bachelor's degree in forestry with a GIS minor from Utah State University. Lette has worked seasonally on timber crews in the Fishlake and Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests.



Kevin Grubb was hired as a temporary visitor information specialist in May 2015 at the Powder River Ranger District in Buffalo. In September he accepted a permanent, full time position as the office automation assistant. Kevin grew up near the Bighorns and enjoys working for the Forest Service in the area he loves.



On a beautiful day in August, over 50 members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe gathered with forest personnel at the Medicine Wheel to install a commemorative plaque honoring Steve Brady, Sr.'s lifetime commitment to preservation, education, and cultural understanding.



We're always interested . . .

. . . in your thoughts and concerns about the Bighorn's programs and activities, so feel free to stop by, give us a call, or send an email to bighorninfo@fs.fed.us.

Supervisor's Office

Forest Supervisor Bill Bass
bbass@fs.fed.us

2013 Eastside 2nd Street
Sheridan, WY 82801
Telephone 307.674.2600

Tongue Ranger District

District Ranger Amy Ormseth
aormseth@fs.fed.us

2013 Eastside 2nd Street
Sheridan, WY 82801
Telephone 307.674.2600

Powder River Ranger District

District Ranger Mark Booth
mbooth@fs.fed.us

1415 Fort Street
Buffalo, WY 82834
Telephone 307.684.7806

Medicine Wheel Ranger District

District Ranger Dave Hogen
dhogen@fs.fed.us

95 U.S. Highway 16/20
Greybull, WY 82426
Telephone 307.765.4435



Are you interested in working in the great outdoors? The Forest Service offers a variety of job opportunities—both paid and unpaid—ranging from student and volunteer programs to full-time employment for men and women with skills in many areas. To find out more, visit the Forest Service website at www.fs.fed.us/working-with-us/jobs.

The 2015 Annual Report was published by the Bighorn National Forest from the Supervisor's Office in Sheridan, WY.

The USDA is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

