

Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex

2013 Newsletter

VOLUME 23



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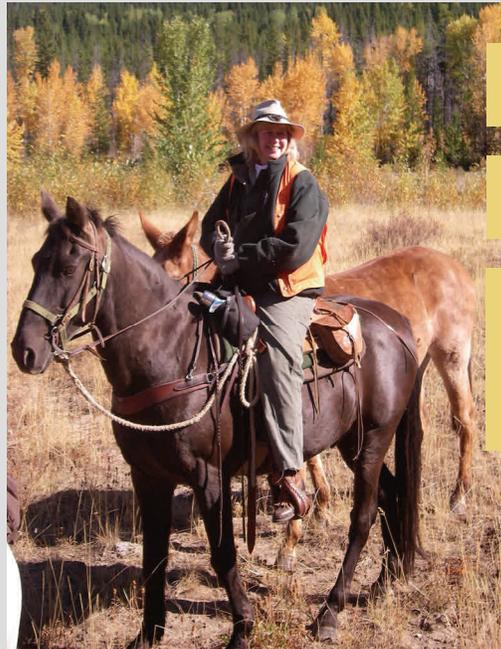
District Ranger: Deb Mucklow

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Invitation from your lead Ranger

"I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming **Annual Public BMWC Meeting** (or as it is commonly called, the "LAC Meeting"). Please give us a call or send us an email on any topic you are hoping will be addressed at the upcoming meeting. Happy Trails and keep thinking Wilderness!"

- Deb Mucklow



Deb Mucklow at Schafer Meadows

SATURDAY, APRIL 13th

10:00 a.m.

**Hungry Horse Ranger Station
Conference Room**

The Hungry Horse Ranger Station is located just south of Hwy 2 on the east end of Hungry Horse. Look for the large green signs on the highway indicating the turn .

... *A few highlights* ...

- MEET NEW BMWC STAFF, pages 3-4
- GIVING BACK TO THE BOB, pages 6-7
- FOREST CARNIVORE MONITORING, pages 10-11



Looking Back and Racing Forward

by Deb Mucklow, Spotted Bear Ranger District



It seems like just yesterday I was tracking down articles for the 2012 edition of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex Newsletter! Each year I have the privilege of working with interested groups and individuals who are passionate and committed in assuring the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat Wildernesses remain one of the premier Wilderness complexes in our national system. And each year I am re-energized and excited about the experiences we all get to have in this special place.

As you read this newsletter I hope you find it is meeting your expectations for information about the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. If it is not, this is your chance to share what could be included to make it more useful and valuable for you. You can let any of the managers know how we can do better. Please call or email any of us! In addition to your comments, if you have an idea for an article or message that you are willing to share, please consider stepping up and being part of the newsletter in 2014!

Looking Back – The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex has a rich history of committed groups and individuals all of whom enjoy the Wilderness for its adventures, while also stepping up to ensure it maintains the unique character that we have all enjoyed. For example, the Backcountry Horsemen, who were founded in the Flathead Valley forty years ago, will be hosting their anniversary celebration in Kalispell in April. This is a great example of their dedication and commitment to traditional skills, their understanding of available resources, and their awareness of the re-occurring need for trail maintenance. How exciting it is to be working with folks who were helping in the Wilderness forty years ago, and are still helping us today!

In 2012 we completed the fifth year of the fifth monitoring period (25 years) for implementing and monitoring the Limits of Acceptable Change Plan. This plan was built by a task force working side by side with the Forest Service. In today's terms, this effort would have been labeled as collaboration, as a diverse group of interested parties came forward to jointly figure out a solution. Again, several original members of this group are still participating in the effort today! We have gained recent partners in this effort as others have started to become interested and involved. Thanks to all for their work!

There is a phenomenal number of partners (groups and individuals) engaged in the BMWC. Of special note, I would like to thank all the retirees (including Forest Service retirees) who have joined in the effort to help out around the Complex. They have provided guidance and expertise for many other partners and volunteers. We are also noting an increase in the number of youth groups wanting to be engaged in the Wilderness. Boy Scout Troop #285 from San Antonio, Texas had a trip this past season. This wasn't their first trip to the BMWC, and they know the importance of planning ahead and being prepared. This past season they started their trip on the Lolo National Forest and crossed the Dry Fork of the Flathead Divide onto the Flathead National Forest. As they crossed the Divide, they noticed the lack of a Wilderness boundary sign. Upon completion of their trip they stopped at the Spotted Bear Ranger Station and inquired as to the whereabouts of the Wilderness boundary sign and if there was any way they could help replace the missing sign! Thanks to their observation and willingness to help, they purchased two Wilderness portal signs. We are now working with Fred Flint and some Montana troops to install the signs and further the partnership initiated by Troop #285. Thanks for the effort!

2012 reminded me of the need to ask all Wilderness and Forest visitors to understand and implement the Food and Attractant Storage Order. This past season we had the first black bear attack on a human that we are aware of. This bear was quickly removed. The Order can be met through several different means. We'll review this special order at the upcoming public meeting. If you cannot attend, or you have further questions, please call and ask!

Racing Forward – I'd like to ask everyone to be thinking forward in anticipation for 2014! This will be the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and seems like an appropriate time to both celebrate Wilderness and raise awareness about Wilderness areas. What ideas do you have for national, regional or local celebrations? How can you help contribute to the "on the ground" commitment to the BMWC? Is there an opportunity for you to partner with a Forest Service Ranger District or the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation? We face many challenges ahead and are hoping you will be there to partner with us and help us find solutions.

As you make plans to visit the BMWC, please remember to make contact with the ranger districts you are planning to visit. Plan ahead! This past fire season we noticed an increase in the compliance with area closures we had in place to allow for fire fighter and public safety. We appreciate everyone's effort to work with us to plan reroutes and trip alternatives. As visitors to BMWC in the past fifteen years have probably noticed, the hazard trees and snags continue to be a "watch out" situation while traveling the trails and selecting your campsite. Please pay attention to local hazards! I look forward to seeing many of you at the Public Meeting in April!

MEET YOUR NEW BMWC MANAGERS

The Northern Region area encompasses 25 million acres over five states. Included are 12 National Forests located within the perimeter of northeastern Washington, northern Idaho, and Montana; and the National Grasslands in North Dakota and northwestern South Dakota. The region is home to 16 congressionally designated Wilderness areas, six National Wild and Scenic Rivers, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and 2,539 miles of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and much more.

Of this land, the Great Bear Wilderness, the Bob Marshall Wilderness and the Scapegoat Wilderness form the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, an area of more than 1.5 million acres. This is the third largest wilderness complex in the lower 48 states.

They are managed by four national forests - Flathead, Helena, Lewis and Clark, and Lolo, and five ranger districts - Spotted Bear, Hungry Horse, Lincoln, Rocky Mountain, and Seeley Lake.



Faye Krueger was named as the Region 1 Regional Forester in June 2012 by Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. Her Forest Service career spans more than 30 years, giving her a deep understanding for both the local importance of Districts and Forests to rural and small-town economics, and the national emphasis on a collaborative strategy to natural resource management across boundaries and landscapes.

"Faye's experience and focus on collaboration make her an excellent leader for our northern regional office in Missoula," Tidwell said. "As a lifelong forester and outdoors enthusiast, she'll bring passion and common sense to our 25 million acres of northern forests and grasslands."

Krueger began her career in 1980 as a forestry technician on the Dakota Prairie Grasslands in Dickinson, North Dakota, working in forestry, oil and gas. She subsequently worked as a forester on the Gallatin National Forest in Montana, and Tongass National Forest in Thorne Bay, Alaska. In 1991 she became a Planner and worked on the Caribou and Payette National Forests, both in Idaho. Krueger became a district ranger in 1998 on the Council District of the Payette National Forest in Idaho. Six years later she was named the Forest Supervisor on the 1.6-million-acre Wasatch-Cache National Forest headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. From this position, Krueger was selected as the Deputy Regional Forester for the Southwestern Region beginning in 2008. Prior to coming to Region 1, Krueger was named as the Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System in August 2011.

Krueger holds a Bachelor of Science in forestry from the University of Montana and is married with two grown children and one grandchild.



MEET YOUR NEW BMWC MANAGERS

In October 2012, the Hungry Horse – Glacier View Ranger District employees welcomed their new Ranger **Rob Davies**.



He started his career in 1987 as a technician for the Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Research Station in Colorado working in water quality research. He spent most of his career as a specialist in water quality and fishery resources working on the Idaho Panhandle, Ochoco, Malheur, Dixie and Manti-La Sal National Forests.

In 2007 he switched his career focus to recreation, wilderness and special uses management on the Gallatin National Forest. He accepted a temporary detail as an Acting District Ranger in southwestern Oregon in 2011. During his career he has demonstrated an ability to work with multiple interest groups, develop partnerships, coordinate volunteer projects and secure non-federal grants.

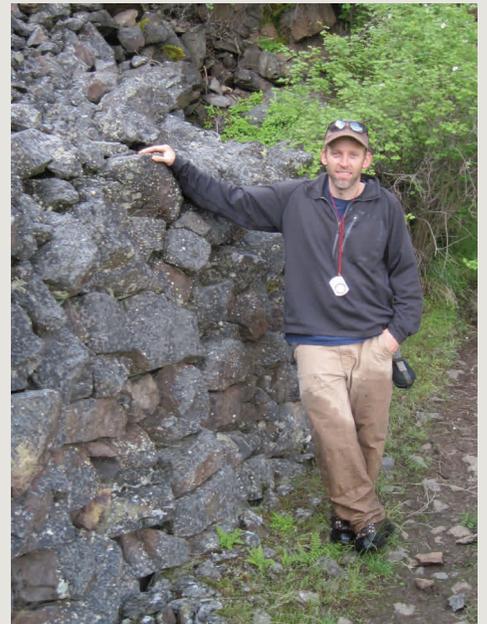
Rob graduated from Fort Lewis College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology (1984), and a Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries Science from the University of Idaho (1994). He has received graduate credits in Natural Resources Management from Colorado State and the University of Montana.

He moved to the Flathead Valley with his wife and two young children. He also has a daughter attending Portland State. His hobbies include telemark skiing (both back and front country), Nordic skate skiing, cycling (road and mountain) and fly fishing.



Please welcome **Mike Mullin** to the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. Mike has taken the Recreation Specialist position on the Lincoln Ranger District and has been here a few short months. Most recently, Mike comes to us from the Payette National Forest; yet has worked for the Forest Service in recreation, trails, and wilderness for 12 years.

Mike has a Bachelor's degree in environmental science from Washington State University and a Master's degree from Montana State University. It was while in Bozeman that Mike found his true passion in resource management while accompanying a good friend, and Gallatin National Forest Wilderness Ranger, into the backcountry for patrol work. Mike made sure to get himself a job on the trail crew the following year which turned out to be the beginning of his Forest Service career. After graduate school, Mike went to Alaska and worked on the Chugach National Forest for nearly two seasons before landing a permanent job as a trail crew foreman on the Tongass National Forest in Sitka. Mike eventually found his way back to the lower 48 on the Payette National Forest in Weiser, Idaho where he worked as an assistant District recreation manager for the Forest's West Zone. Mike feels his background in such diverse programs across the agency has served him well, yet acknowledges the many challenges he faces in this new job. Mike is anxious to learn this vast new country in Lincoln and begin building up a recreation program, particularly in trails. Since his arrival, Mike has been focused on the Blackfoot Travel Plan, preparing the budget for the upcoming season, catching up on outfitter & guide billing, getting to know the partnerships/projects that are in place, and hiring of new staff and trail crew. This summer he plans to spend a lot of time in the Scapegoat on the trail system, meeting and visiting outfitter camps, and working on the burned area rehabilitation project on the Arrastra Creek trail.



Standing alongside a retaining wall built by the CCCs on the Haley Ridge trail in Hells Canyon, Payette National Forest

Mike is married to Kate, a Montana native who he met in Bozeman, and they are both thrilled to be back in Montana. The couple has two children, Clare who is six and loves school as a kindergartener and Finn, an active three year old boy. The Lincoln Ranger District is pleased to have Mike on staff. He is a great addition to our Forest Service family.

Elbow Pass Fire Complex (2012) & Benchmark III

by Kyle Inabnit, Rocky Mountain Ranger District

On July 12th, 2012 a lightning strike wildfire was detected near Elbow Pass in the Scapegoat Wilderness. It was named the Elbow Pass Fire. The RMRD requested an initial attack response which was provided by the Missoula Smoke Jumper Base. On July 28th the Elbow Pass Fire was contained west of Straight Creek. From July 28th to

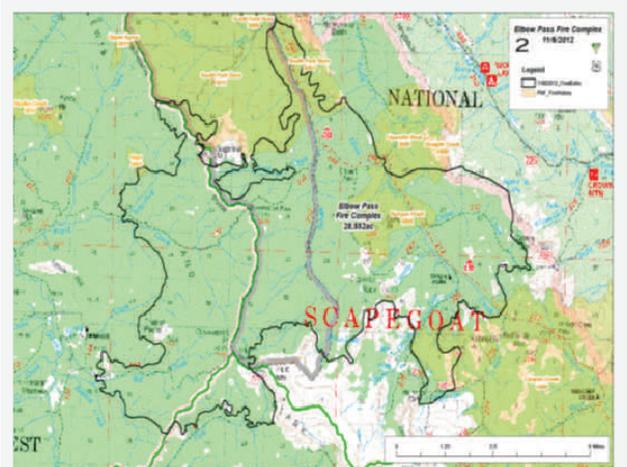


August 2nd, three more lightning strike wildfires (Rapid Creek Fire, Bar Creek Fire, and Triple Divide Fire) were detected in the area as they rapidly merged with the Elbow Pass fire. By August 5th the combined wildfires were burning on the Lolo, Flathead and Lewis and Clark National Forests. An evacuation of the Benchmark corridor, noted as one of the most, if not the most, readily used routes to access the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, was ordered by Lewis & Clark County Sheriffs. With the size of the combined fires, the complexity of coordination between three national forests, and the potential threat to the Benchmark corridor, Roy Hall's Type 2 Management Team was

requested to assume command. The wildfire was renamed the Elbow Pass Fire Complex.

When considering how to manage the wildfire, the management team and Forest personnel considered the anticipated fuels, weather and topography. A large consideration with respect to fuels was the South Fork of the Sun River Prescribed Fire. A large landscape (16,500 acres) prescribed fire implemented in 2003, 2009 and completed in 2011. It had reduced the fuels and fire spread potential in the South Fork of the Sun River drainage. This allowed the management team to focus the containment strategy along the Wood Creek Hogback Ridge, preventing establishment of fire in the Benchmark corridor, and in turn reducing firefighter exposure and risk for injury. The weather was forecasted to stay hot and dry into October. The topography remained rugged and remote, with limited access. The wildfire continued to burn into nearly mid-November. Although the fire threatened backcountry administrative cabins and resulted in area closures to the public, it only touched on fringes of the Benchmark corridor. The Elbow Pass Fire Complex burned 28,552 acres.

Multiple fires, including the Elbow Pass Fire Complex and the South Fork of the Sun River Prescribed Fire, have transformed the fuels in the Straight Creek Drainage and the South Fork of the Sun River Drainage. The change in fuels will allow future wildfires in this area to be managed with less risk to firefighters, reduced cost, and allow wildfire to naturally affect the landscape. The challenge that remains is when a fire becomes established in the Benchmark corridor's gentler terrain, continuous fuels, and considerable human development for recreational use. The Benchmark III Fuels Reduction Environmental Assessment is available for review on the LCF website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/lcnf/landmanagement/projects>.





Giving Back to the Bob

by Carol Treadwell, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation

Each summer the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation engages approximately 400 volunteers from around the country in wilderness adventures that give back to our trails, open spaces, and treasured landscapes. For the U.S. Forest Service this translates into donated labor valued at \$350,000. Volunteers gain an appreciation for public lands and learn a wilderness ethic. For some the experience is life changing. Over its 16 year history BMWF has shared the trail with 1000's of volunteers and collected their feedback and personal stories. Here's a few that have stood out:

Brandi Hoersten, Volunteer of the year 2012:

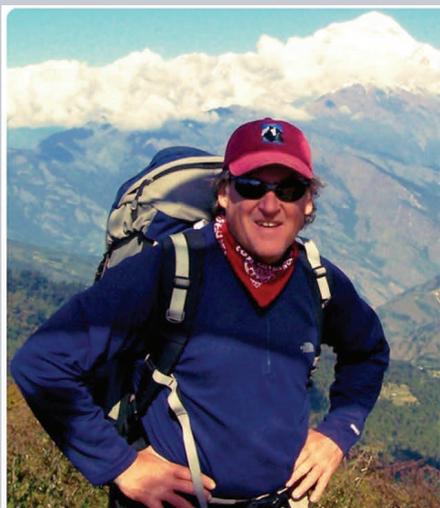
Brandi came to the Bob to unwind and give back; she left a changed person with memories that last a lifetime. Recently divorced, Brandi sought a volunteer experience where she could make a difference. Parks and Wilderness funding is in decline so this is where she wanted to put her effort. Brandi helped clear a trail into the Scapegoat Wilderness by cutting monster logs with a crosscut saw. The crew would lie on their backs and push the logs downhill using the strength of their legs. That was cool! During her week in the Bob, Brandi discovered a resiliency she didn't know she had. When she left the wilderness she was mentally, physically, and emotionally stronger than when she came. "Wilderness soothes the soul and helps people regenerate; it is important to keep it protected and maintained, not only for wildlife but for the peace it brings humans."



Mike Maronick, Volunteer of the year 2011:

Mike Maronick is a 4th generation Montanan and has been a BMWF volunteer for eight years. He also helps the Foundation bring Mountain

Film to Great Falls each year, and has recently been elected to the Board of Directors. Over the years he's volunteered on 9 trail projects and even lent a hand just before tying the knot in the summer of 2012.



"I've hiked many places throughout Montana and the world, including all of Glacier Park, the Himalayas, and the Alps. I had very little experience in the Bob so I took a weeklong trip and was incredibly awed by the mystique, grandeur, ruggedness and quiet of the Bob. I promised myself I would hike and visit every year. The Bob Marshall Wilderness has a personality and splendor that can't be outdone by anyplace in the world and Montanans are fortunate to have it as part of our backyard."

For Mike, BMWF trips serve as the perfect vehicle to experience different parts of the Bob each year. Each trip gives him a sense of accomplishment and memories that last forever. "It's the hardest work you'll ever love." Mike loves to give back through volunteerism and feels that in the Bob he gets much more out than he puts in.

Carl Kohnstamm, Youth Volunteer of the year 2011:

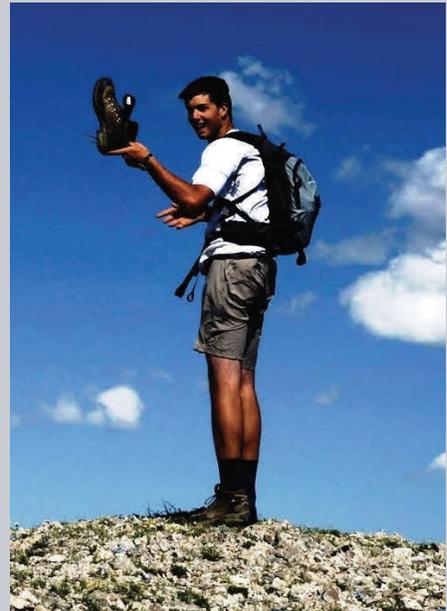
Carl wanted to spend the summer outdoors so he volunteered on four BMWF trips during the summer of 2011. The experience and skills he learned that summer helped him find employment with the Forest Service the following summer. (Continued on next page)

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One of his most memorable days in the Bob was spent clearing downed trees across a trail using a crosscut saw then finishing the day by hiking over two mountains. Upon his return to camp the crew leader handed him a plateful of steak and baked potatoes. For a teenage guy it doesn't get much better than that! "These trips are truly what you make them. Whether it is your day off or in the middle of the week, take the opportunity to explore the Bob."

Carl's favorite type of trail work is sawing; it's a problem solving activity that requires understanding the tensions in the log and keeps your mind active. He has a hard time choosing a favorite place in the Bob; it is so diverse and endless. The greatest wisdom he gleaned from his summer in the Bob came from the packers. Horsemen are hilarious and the lessons are endless: horses, grilling over the open fire, politics, religion, and philosophy. Classes you could take in college with a woodsy flair.

For Carl volunteerism is a community service and a way to give back in return for the hiking opportunities in northwest Montana. It creates a deeper respect for the gift of wilderness.



Partners

In addition to dedicated individuals, BMWF partners with groups to accomplish trails and weeds projects. These groups include youth, youth-at-risk, church, backpacking, wilderness, and horsemen.

BMWF group partners for 2013 are:

- ◆ American Hiking Society
- ◆ Backcountry Horsemen
- ◆ Sierra Club
- ◆ Great Bear Outfitters
- ◆ New Generation West
- ◆ National Smokejumpers Association
- ◆ MWA -Continental Divide Trails
- ◆ Boy Scout Troop #17
- ◆ Upward Bound of Salish Kootenai College
- ◆ Schreiner University
- ◆ Building Bridges
- ◆ U of M - Outdoor Program
- ◆ MSU-Billings
- ◆ Montana Academy

Volunteers are the heart of BMWF and the actions of BMWF volunteers are supported by membership donations, corporate sponsors, and donors to the Foundation's endowment. The Foundation generates a large portion of its annual project budget from grants and fundraisers. Wilderness lovers can also support the cause by purchasing "Bob Gear" (Hats, T's, Bob Blend Coffee, or Montana State license plates). All proceeds go towards keeping trails open in the Bob, engaging youth in life changing backcountry experiences, and projects that preserve the heart of wilderness.

Join us and be part of the legacy at www.bmwf.org



East Fork Fire

by Amber Kamps, Lincoln Ranger District



It has been since the Canyon Creek Fire in 1988 that the Lincoln Ranger District has had fire of any significance in the Scapegoat Wilderness. The Lincoln Ranger District portion of the Scapegoat doesn't receive a lot of lightning, which may be because of the '88 burn – so it is rare to receive fire of any kind, much less a long term event such as the one we experienced last summer and fall .



Evening of August 22nd

The East Fork Fire was discovered on August 22nd, a day after a thunderstorm rolled through the area and the fire had already grown to 2-3 acres in size. The fire was located more than a mile inside the Scapegoat Wilderness in the East Fork of Meadow Creek drainage, but grew to over 4,666 acres and breached the Wilderness boundary in several locations. Firefighters were not able to safely fight this fire due to lack of safety zones & escape routes, heavy dead standing and down trees, and steep terrain. Red Flag Warning conditions plagued the East Fork Fire for over a month, with low relative humidity, warm temperatures and very strong and gusty winds. Spotting on the East Fork Fire was substantive & challenging in the heavy fuels of standing dead and down subalpine fir, creating multiple spot

fires outside the Wilderness boundary in Copper Creek and Arrastra Creek drainages. Although minimal resources were available to assist on the East Fork Fire, local firefighters continued to monitor and suppress fire outside of the Wilderness boundary along with helicopters assisting when needed.

Mother Nature gave us a long dry spell and active burning conditions well into October. The Lincoln District kept trails open in the Scapegoat for as long as possible; but eventually had to close the mainline trail #481 into Webb Lake, close the southeastern portion of the Scapegoat Wilderness, and reroute people heading in from Indian Meadows trailhead.



Helitanker with water drops

Only one outfitter, Brett & Julie Todd's K Lazy 3, was directly impacted by the fire and his camp at Meadow Lake was relocated to the Middle Fork. Although the fire never touched the camp, the fire burned the majority of the East Fork & Meadow Creek drainages to the south. Brett Todd was great to work with throughout this long fire event and together, in partnership were able to keep his operation functioning. Wade Durham of Mineral Creek Outfitters was also affected, not with his camp, but had to move his trailhead operations from Indian Meadows to the North Fork. We also appreciate Wade & Nancy Durham's understanding in this and the accommodations other outfitters made at the North Fork.



Local trail crew of Caleb Cyr & Lane Fleming providing stock support to the fire

The community of Lincoln, who is no stranger to wildfire, was also great to work with during this long term fire event. Because the East Fork fire suppression efforts were limited, particularly to those portions that grew or spotted outside the Wilderness; it took a great deal of understanding from the public in accepting the role of fire, our critical efforts in keeping fire fighters safe and effective on the ground, and trail/area closures during hunting season. This was especially true on active burning days when one or two columns of smoke were quite visible and looked to be closer to town than it really was.

It was in the early morning hours on October 2nd the fire made a push toward the mainline trail #481 of 300+ acres. The next morning, fire fighters awoke to 3-6 inches of snow, finally putting the fire to bed for the winter.

There is much work to be done on approximately four miles of the East Fork trail #483 that was heavily damaged by the fire. Funds have been secured under the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation program to restore this trail this summer.

- 50th Anniversary National Wilderness Conference -

by Gene Persha

An important date is looming large down the trail for wilderness. On Sept. 3, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the landmark Wilderness Act that has protected wild lands in a special way all across America.

On Oct. 15-19, 2014, there will be the "50th Anniversary National Wilderness Conference", held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Some of the goals of the conference are to:

Discuss the concept of wilderness and its related values: ecological, aesthetic, spiritual, and symbolic.

Provide a forum for discussing the growing challenges for wilderness today.

Deepen participants' engagement in wilderness stewardship.

Out of these goals will come about five themes to lend both breath and inclusion of multiple topics. These are listed under the areas of civic engagement, education, experience, science, and stewardship. These, hopefully, will allow for varied and interactive presentations.

Deb Mucklow, Spotted Bear District Ranger, and Gene Persha, an engaged wilderness user of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, are on the national planning committee to represent our users and caretakers of wilderness. They want ideas, suggestions, or questions to make the conference fit the desired needs of the participants. All ideas will be presented to the total planning committee for consideration and possible involvement in the program.

There also will be more news about 50th Anniversary celebrations locally and regionally. The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex leadership team along with Steve Kimball, regional wilderness liaison, are receptive to ideas as well.

It is important that our diverse wilderness user groups involve themselves with this important wilderness event. It is especially important to register support on a national level to reflect strong support for all wilderness areas across America



Southwestern Crown of the Continent FOREST CARNIVORE MONITORING

by Carly Lewis, Lolo National Forest

Background

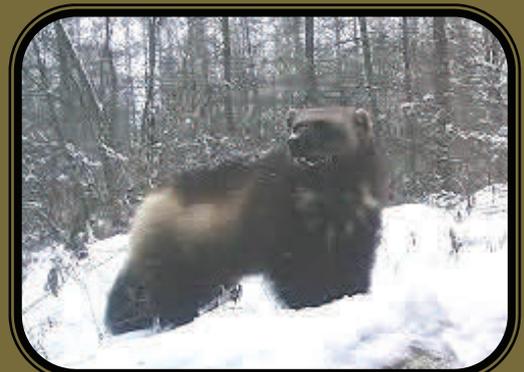
The Southwestern Crown of the Continent (SW Crown) forms the southern boundary of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex in western Montana, and encompasses forests and communities in the Blackfoot, Clearwater, and Swan River valleys. The Southwestern Crown Collaborative (SWCC) is one of the first 10 groups nationally awarded funding under the Collaborative Landscape Restoration (CFLR) program to implement fuels reduction, forest restoration, and multi-party ecological, social, and economic monitoring. Forest carnivore monitoring is one of over 20 monitoring projects supported with CFLR funding in the SW Crown.

Across the SW Crown's 1.5 million acre landscape, a variety of mid-sized carnivores roam, including animals in the cat family (mountain lions, lynx, bobcats), the dog family (wolves, coyotes, foxes), and the weasel family (wolverines, fisher, marten, ermine). While some of these species are fairly abundant and have widespread distributions across the state, others are more rare, or less is known about their distribution and abundance.

Of particular interest to the Forest Service are lynx (listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act), wolverines (listed as Threatened), and fisher (a "Sensitive" species in the Northern Region of the Forest Service). Maintaining or restoring a healthy landscape that supports these species is a primary focus of National Forest Management and CFLR in particular. As such, forest managers consider the impacts to these species before implementing any major forest management, including building or removing roads, fuels reduction, forest restoration, and timber salvaging projects.

Monitoring Goals

Monitoring forest carnivore distributions and relative abundances in the SW provides baseline "pre-treatment" monitoring data and provides insight into the functioning of the ecosystem. Monitoring will continue after restoration work is implemented within the SW Crown to assess whether restoration efforts are effective and to determine if they modify carnivore distributions or relative abundance. (Continued on next page...)



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A second goal of the monitoring project is to increase community awareness of and appreciation for these rare, elusive creatures that call the forests home, and about conservation measures that can be taken to ensure their persistence on the landscape.

Multi-Party Monitoring Partners and Cooperators

Multi-party monitoring increases public awareness and appreciation for the species we monitor. It builds trust, transparency, increases the Forest Service's capacity, and results in a better product in the end. The bulk of the monitoring work is currently being conducted by Northwest Connections, a Swan Valley-based organization dedicated to ecological monitoring, field based education, and collaborative conservation, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, with participation from wildlife biologists and technicians from the Flathead, Lolo, and Helena National Forests. Genetic samples are analyzed by the Rocky Mountain Research Station, with support from the Northern Region of the Forest Service.

Additional cooperation, funding, and/or participation has come from a variety of other organizations, including Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, Montana Department of Transportation, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the US Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station, the Nature Conservancy, Wildlands CPR, and others.

Carnivore Monitoring Methods

Searching for elusive, far-roaming creatures has its challenges. Monitoring the occurrence and distribution, much less abundance, of forest carnivores requires utilizing a variety of methods. In 2012 and 2013, the focus has been on non-invasive detection of these species.

Highly trained and skilled technicians conduct snow-track surveys, traveling by foot or snowmobile, in a systematic fashion, and recording the precise locations of any carnivore tracks they detect. For focal species (lynx, fisher, and wolverine), they will also backtrack the animal and attempt to collect genetic samples (hair or scat) that have been left behind. This animal "waste" actually provides scientific verification of the species as well as additional information about the individual animal.

Baited hair-collection stations also help with detecting species and non-invasively collecting genetic information (hair gets caught in wire brushes when the animal climbs the tree to eat the bait).

For More Information

To learn more about the Southwest Crown Collaborative, including the full suite of collaborators and their visions, landscape restoration strategies, and other monitoring projects, visit www.swcrown.org.

For more detailed information about the forest carnivore monitoring project, contact Scott Tomson, wildlife biologist on the Seeley Lake Ranger District, at (406)677-3725, or stomson@fs.fed.us.



Technicians measured and photographed these tracks, and followed them for 3/4 of a mile until they found a spot where the lynx brushed up against a tree and left behind a clump of hair.



All that remains of this bait station is a partial bone (once a whole deer leg), and 12 wire brushes covered in hair that will be sent to a genetics lab to determine which animal(s) ate the bait.

Native Trout Restoration Project

by Matt Boyer, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Our nation's wilderness areas provide a broad range of social and ecological benefits. Managers of the wilderness resource work to minimize actions that are intrusive to wilderness character, while at the same time must engage in management actions that preserve the 'natural' condition of wilderness. The management of nonnative invasive species within wilderness presents a particularly challenging set of issues, the complexity of which stems from the inherent difficulty of controlling invasive species (plant or animal) coupled with the urgent need to eradicate or contain them before they have significant and lasting effects on native species and ecosystems.

One example of this management challenge is a project aimed at removing sources of historically introduced nonnative trout from headwater lakes and restoring populations of native westslope cutthroat trout within the South Fork Flathead River drainage. These native fish are important components of wilderness character and, for many visitors to wilderness, angling is an important part of their backcountry experience. With its miles of pristine rivers and streams and dozens of alpine lakes, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex is home to healthy and abundant populations of native fish that provide some of the best angling opportunities anywhere.



**Lick Lake below Ptarmigan Mountain.
Photo courtesy of Jim Deraleau.**

Since 2007, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and the Forest Service have been working to restore westslope cutthroat trout to twenty-one mountain lakes in the South Fork Flathead drainage, nine of which are located within the Bob Marshall Complex. In fall 2011, four lakes in the Necklace Chain were treated with rotenone to remove nonnative trout and have since been restocked with westslope cutthroat from a source founded from wild fish collected from nearby Danaher Creek. In upcoming field seasons fisheries crews will monitor fish growth and document signs of natural spawning by this newly established native fish population. Last fall, nonnative trout were removed from Lick Lake and westslope cutthroat will be restocked in summer 2013. Located at the top of the Gordon Creek drainage in a glacial cirque basin below Wolverine and Ptarmigan peaks, Lick Lake is an outstanding alpine lake fishery.



Westslope cutthroat caught from a mountain lake in the South Fork Flathead. Photo courtesy of Kris Tempel.

This large-scale native trout restoration project would not be possible without involvement from many groups and individuals. Continued support from user groups such as the Backcountry Horseman will be crucial to the success of the remaining projects and the conservation of this unique part of Montana's natural heritage.

For more information please visit the South Fork Flathead westslope cutthroat trout project website (<http://fwp.mt.gov/r1/wctproject/default.html>) or contact fisheries biologist Matt Boyer (phone: 406-751-4556, email: mboyer@mt.gov).

MUCH PROGRESS ... MUCH CONCERN !

A South Fork Weeds Update

by Tad Wehunt and Eric Kroeger

I know this looks like a typical 'government' title to an article, but please let me explain. 2012 was another highly productive field season for our weeds crew in the South Fork corridor, in the "Bob". We were able to make leaps and bounds in our efforts to inventory and map the river corridor for Spotted Knapweed infestations and have continued to refine our control methods to be more effective and more efficient. For example, after several years of late-season seed head burning of the Houndstongue around Black Bear, there were just a few mature plants and mostly rosettes this year; we have changed tactics for the yellow toadflax at Little Salmon Park by switching from Tordon to Telar XP with a surfactant and are just doing a fall treatment (the smaller patch on the floodplain below the park has been gone for two years now); we have been able to significantly reduce the density of some major knapweed patches along the river corridor, and were able to get up the Youngs and Gordon creek drainages and spray Shoestring and Shirttail Parks (Gordon Cr.) and the Cabin and Babcock creek areas (Youngs Cr.).

With all of our successes, 2012 also brought forth new and continued challenges. Fire activity continues to be a main challenge to our weed management in the South Fork. Less than two years after lifting the grazing restriction in Bar Creek meadows, due to the Leafy Spurge population, the Bar Creek Fire made a late season run across the meadow, burning approximately 40 acres of the meadow proper. In the 2009 Gabe Creek Fire and the 2011 Hammer Creek Fire, Canadian Thistle has dominated parts of the open ground left by the fire. Though not listed as noxious weeds, we have seen a large spread in pasture weeds like White Hawkweed, tumble mustard, silver cinquefoil, and pennycress; a far cry from the expected post-fire fireweed regime. These areas will continue to be a point of emphasis in the years to come. Tall buttercup, Ox-eye daisy, Sulfur cinquefoil, and Orange and Yellow Hawkweed continue to be fairly sporadic, which is a good thing, but also requires diligence as isolated and sporadic infestations are not as obvious to spot!

Recent research has confirmed that weed spread will overwhelm sporadic management efforts. Granted, this is not a ground breaking revelation, but in these days of budget uncertainty, or partnerships with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, various RAC grants, the BMWF, outfitters and other volunteers will continue to be crucial for us to remain consistent in our non-native noxious weed management efforts. We are continually using the minimum requirements analysis to monitor our existing efforts and look to the future for other possible modalities to help protect this important wildlife habitat and winter range, as well as to preserve the wildness and natural condition, while using the minimum tool necessary.



Yellow Toadflax



Ox-eye Daisy



Tall Buttercup

Explore "The Bob" this summer!



www.bmwf.org

Get outdoors and join a Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation volunteer project this summer. Explore the rugged and gorgeous country of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, Great Bear Wilderness, Scapegoat Wilderness and Rocky Mountain Front.



We provide food, group gear and adventure. You bring your personal camping gear and a willingness to explore! Check out the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation website for a calendar of projects, frequently asked questions, and registration information. Be sure to sign up early - projects fill up fast!

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