

Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex

2022 Newsletter

VOLUME 31



Sidebar photo credit:
Laura Mills Nelson

Invitation from your Lead Ranger

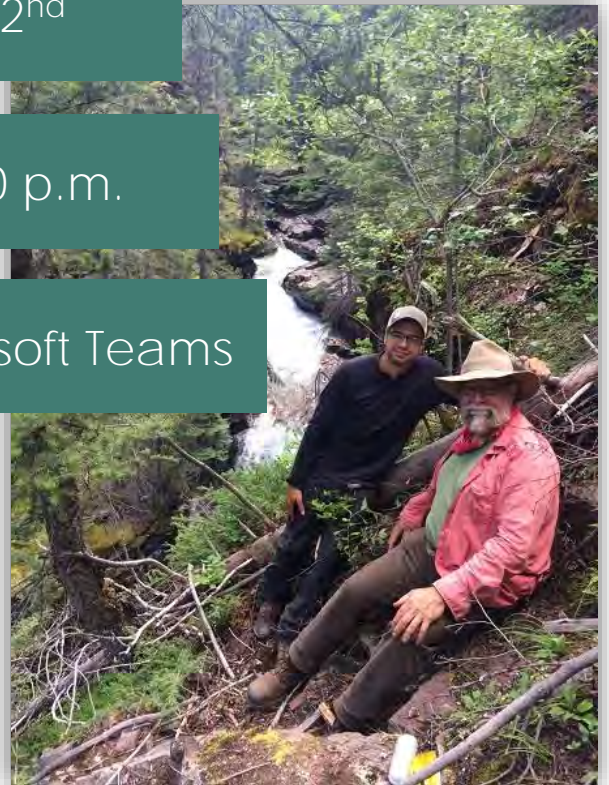
We look forward to visiting with you at our annual Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) public meeting and information-share this spring! This year, the meeting will once again be in a virtual format and will take place on Saturday, April 2nd from 9:00am to 1:00pm. I hope you can join us to share news and exchange ideas. Please email laura.millsnelson@usda.gov to obtain the virtual meeting link. I know I speak for all the Complex staff when I say that we value you leaning in with us on managing this magnificent treasure.

SATURDAY, April 2nd

9:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Scott Snelson,
2022 BMWC Lead Ranger
Spotted Bear RD,
Flathead NF





Introduction *from your Lead Ranger, Scott Snelson*

Coffee with friends is something I need to make more time for. Today, I made time to sit over a cup with the Backcountry Horsemen of the Flathead. After the usual ridicule about age and government, we got down to business. With the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act (co-sponsored by US Sen. Daines and Tester) and the Infrastructure Act (US Sen. Tester one of the lead negotiators of the bipartisan bill), we have the resources nationally to really provide the level of public service that is **deserving of one of the Nation's great Wilderness areas. The trick will be to have these resources pointed in the right direction with an eye toward sustainability.**

We so very much appreciate our long-standing partnerships with the variety of chapters of the Backcountry Horsemen, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, the Montana Pilots Association, the County Resource Advisory Committees, the Professional Wilderness Outfitters Association, the Montana Conservation Corps and our new partnerships with the Flathead River Alliance and the Great Old Broads for Wilderness. **I've missed a few and, the point is, there are a lot of folks that care a whole bunch about this Wilderness, and they pump their heart and soul into taking care of the place and its management. Think about joining their efforts.**

With the influx of over 20,000 new souls moving to the Flathead Valley since the COVID-19 era, the growing interest in outdoor recreation, and visitor restrictions at Glacier National Park, the arrival of **new resources couldn't have come at a more crucial time.**

Bob Marshall and his visionary friends foresaw a time when these wild places were going to become even more valuable, as development increased across the country. The Bob Marshall Complex is a place where the common person can go to seek physical and spiritual renewal. This Wilderness continues to provide ecological functions to serve Wilderness users and all those downstream that may never realize that this place even exists. It supplies them with clean drinking water, wildlife and fish refuge, carbon sequestration and so many other ecologic services. This is a place that deserves investment and thoughtful care.

Management of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex is facing an array of new challenges. With new equipment and growing interest, the ways folks are using the Wilderness is changing, especially in the mainstem river corridors. Folks are noticing more evidence of human waste and stock traffic to deliver rafting equipment and supplies for users. The river experience is getting more crowded, and graze availability is changing. Use of the Chinese Wall area is needing greater management attention. Change is here, and the Complex managers seek your help in shaping the future.

The Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park continue to work on a renewal of the Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP). CRMP will chart the course for how we manage the Wild and Scenic River use in the next decades for the Complex. This planning effort may be the most impactful document that we'll produce in my career, when it comes to how we are going to be able to enjoy this Wilderness. I hope you'll get and stay involved in its development. [Flathead National Forest - Home \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/flathead-national-forest-home). We'll be doing our annual Public LAC Meeting (virtually) in early April to hear from you; see the meeting notice on the front of the newsletter.

It's as exciting a time as I've seen in the Complex as far as resources. And it'll take folks letting the Complex managers and Regional Staff know what they want. With cup in hand, here's to another great season in the Complex and to an even better future. We'll see you down the trail.

Meet Your New BMWC Managers

Helena - Lewis and Clark National Forest

Emily Platt, *Forest Supervisor*



Emily Platt was named the new Forest Supervisor of the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest in January 2022. In early April, Emily will move from the Pacific Northwest Region in Oregon to start work in Helena.

In recognizing the Forest Supervisor role of joining the BMWC managers, Emily shared, “Large wilderness areas like the BMWC are one of the things that make National Forest System lands so unique and special. I’m looking forward to getting to know this landscape.”

Emily earned a PhD in Forest Resources at Oregon State University’s College of Forestry, where she studied Forest Service governance and landscape management for wildfire resilience.

Prior to her work as a special project coordinator, she served as District Ranger for the Mt. Adams Ranger District, where she and her team worked with partners to create a landscape more resilient to disturbances, such as wildfires, and managed a range of other issues from huckleberry harvest to dramatic increases in recreation use. The District also developed an effective partnership with Washington State that supported projects in the District’s most fire-prone forests. Emily began her career with the Forest Service through the Forest Service’s Washington Office policy analysis shop in 2012 and became a permanent employee in 2014.

Emily is an avid trail runner, loves reading, and enjoys anything that gets her twin three-year-olds outside – puddles, bikes, skiing, & camping. Welcome to the BMWC, Emily!!

Managers continued ...

Lincoln Ranger District

Rob Gump, *District Ranger*

Rob began his early Forest Service career as a primary firefighter on the Winema National Forest before working as a forester on the Custer National Forest, followed by the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

Family roots pulled Rob and his family back to Oregon and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, where Rob managed Recreation, Wilderness and Trails programs as a District Staff Officer; first, for the Whitman Ranger District for six years, then six more years for Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and Eagle Cap Wilderness.



Rob administered outfitter and guide permits, developed pack skills, and led mule strings in the backcountry, as well as developed sustainable relationships with recreation partners within the Wallowa Valley community and across Oregon.

Rob returned to Montana in 2008, becoming the Forest Silviculturist-Ecologist on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest for eight years. In 2016, Rob moved into leadership positions, first as a Forest Staff Officer on the Bitterroot National Forest, then to a Deputy Forest Supervisor position for the National Forests in Florida.

In June of 2021, Rob was able to return to Montana as the District Ranger for the Lincoln Ranger District, combining his passions for backcountry and wilderness with active restoration in the upper Blackfoot River.



Managers continued ...

Lincoln Ranger District

Madeline Rubida, *Trails Manager*

Bio contributed by Guy Zoellner, *SBRD*

The journey of a Wilderness trails person is never one of speed. Time spent in the woods often counts far more than anything else and it certainly pays the banker when it comes to running Wilderness crews.



In 2012, we welcomed a young student from Washington to the front desk at Spotted Bear Ranger Station. A year later, she had tired of taking radio calls and hearing about the adventures of the field crews. Starting the following season, in 2013, this individual began an 8-year span of productive, efficient, proud, and often entertaining public service in the upper South Fork, working out of Big Prairie Ranger Station. The last several seasons, she has taken on nearly every duty at Big Prairie and helped to grow a culture of skilled and passionate trail crews. Her public service-oriented mindset, unmatched work ethic, and everlasting grit serves to make a person the Forest Service is thrilled to throw the brand on.

Starting in 2022, Madeline Rubida will take over the Trails Manager role on Lincoln Ranger District. While her skillset and experience will be greatly missed on the Spotted Bear Ranger District, the folks on the southern end of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex have gained a top draft pick.

We appreciate all that Madeline did during her tenure with Spotted Bear and wish her great luck in adding time into the experience account of her Wilderness life.



Managers continued ...

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Franz Ingelfinger, Wildlife Biologist – Kalispell Area

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has a new wildlife biologist for the Kalispell area, which includes a large portion of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. Franz joined FWP in 2016, as a restoration ecologist charged with habitat management and river and floodplain restoration on the Flathead and Kootenai rivers. He worked with area partners and landowners to enhance floodplain function and wildlife habitat in northwest Montana and pioneered strategies for restoring cottonwood communities at functional scales in areas altered by dam-mediated flow regimes. Franz also assisted with numerous projects throughout the region, including recent efforts to re-introduce sharp-tailed grouse west of the Continental Divide (see photo).

This February, Franz transitioned into the area wildlife biologist position based out of Kalispell. He brings over 20 years of experience in the field working with wildlife and the public. Franz is excited to join a community of dedicated professionals, volunteers, and visitors committed to the stewardship of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. To contact Franz, email fingelfinger@mt.gov or call (406) 751-4580.



Franz helped move sharp-tailed grouse from eastern Montana to western Montana as part of a reintroduction project in late 2021.

New Investments & New Faces at the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation

By Allison Siems, *Operations Director*

2021 was another banner year for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation. Between our Volunteer Adventures and Wilderness Internships, we led 69 projects within the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, completing work on 540 miles of trail and 37 acres of noxious weed treatments. In a year with especially heavy blowdown, BMWF volunteer crews cleared 4,624 trees from trail corridors across the Complex.

337 volunteers joined us out there, including ten partner organizations and affinity groups. Nine young adults came from across the country to gain valuable hands-on career experience through our Wilderness Internships. We had a Packer Apprentice learning the ropes from our Master Packers, and three artists who enjoyed the wilderness residencies through our collaborative Artist Wilderness Connection program.



The Glacier-Two Medicine Alliance and their tools of the trade

This winter, Program Director Rebecca Powell made major strides to invest in our Noxious Weeds program. Rebecca met with each District to hear what needs and challenges the Complex is facing, as well as with outside experts to gain ideas on how to make improvements when it comes to invasive weed management.

From this feedback, BMWF has extended our Weeds Crew Leader to a six-month position whose expanded duties will include scouting and GIS work, in addition to volunteer stewardship projects. Zach Schlanger will join us in April as our first Invasive Plants Coordinator. Through these investments, BMWF hopes to be a better partner to the U.S. Forest Service by helping to coordinate each District's efforts to fight invasive weeds across the Complex.

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*Teamwork makes the dream work on the
Sierra Club Women's Trip in July*

New Investments & New Faces, continued...

BMWF was lucky enough to add a couple of new staff to our year-round office work, as well. Many of our USFS partners have already worked with Erynn Castellanos, our Education & Partnership Specialist who joined our team in June of 2021. Erynn is in the process of completing a new Education Plan for the Complex, compiling feedback from all five Districts to update the plan from its last version in 2016.

Now that the plan is in its review stage, Erynn is excited to lead expanded education efforts for BMWF this summer, bringing curriculum into the front-country to engage a broader audience in Wilderness education. Erynn recently completed her Master of Science in Environmental Studies with a focus in Environmental Education at the University of Montana and is expanding our outreach as our first year-round employee based in Missoula.



*Erynn Castellanos,
Education & Partnership Specialist*



*Angela Wonders,
Business Affairs Specialist*

Another new face you'll see in our corner of the Hungry Horse Ranger Station is our brand-new Business Affairs Specialist, Angela Wonders. Angela joins us after 15 years at Sportsman & Ski Haus, where she built strong ties to the community and found a passion for helping others connect to the outdoors. We're excited to have Angela's expertise to continue to improve and streamline our behind-the-scenes office functions and better serve our volunteers and supporters.

In December 2021, we said farewell to our dear Suzie Ranger (Sue Johnson) who decided to retire for a second time, after originally retiring from 30 years with Spotted Bear Ranger District over ten years ago. Sue has been an amazing asset to the Complex and BMWF over her career, and we know her friends at the USFS will miss seeing her around the station, as well. We wish her all the best as she takes some much-deserved time for herself!

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New Investments & New Faces, continued...

As we gear up for 2022, we're looking forward to another full summer of connecting people with the wild place that is the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. This year the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation celebrates our 25th summer of trail work, and we're honored to still be here, rolling up our sleeves to get more done for The Bob.

To learn more about BMWF's Volunteer Adventures and see our list of projects in 2022, please visit bmf.org/volunteer. We hope to see you out there!



BMWF volunteers clear trail near Halfmoon Park on the RMRD



CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH WILD PLACES

The **Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation** works to connect all Americans with their wilderness heritage by providing access to and stewardship of one of the world's most spectacular places. Help us give back to The Bob and inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.

Donate • Volunteer • Events • Gear Library • #lovethebob » BMWf.ORG

The Scapegoat Wilderness 50th Anniversary & Updates from Lincoln Ranger District

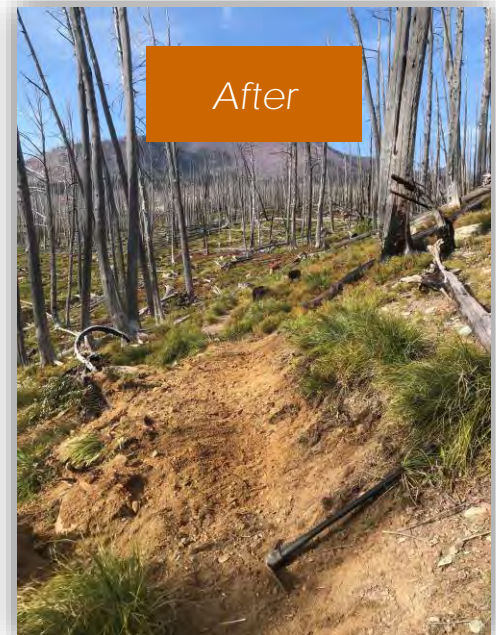
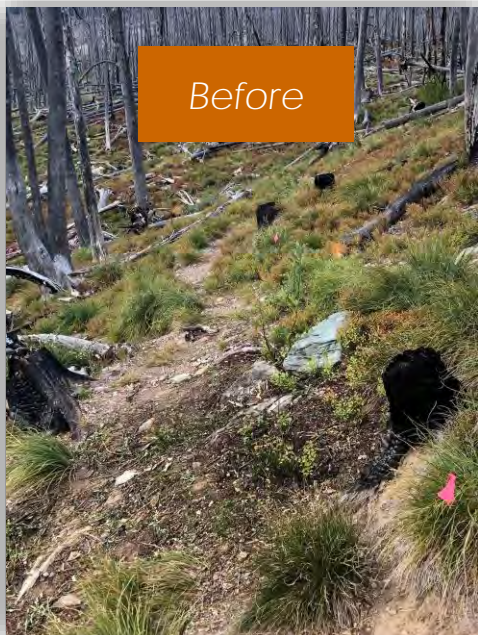
By Forest Moulton, *Lincoln Ranger District*

This August will mark the 50th Anniversary of Congress designating the "Lincoln Back Country" as the Scapegoat Wilderness, in the first community-initiated wilderness designation. 50 years later, the Lincoln Ranger District is situated in a good position to manage our portion of the Scapegoat with bolstered trails and wilderness programs. For the second year in a row, The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) is providing a significant boost in funding that will allow for a very large summer workforce.

On the trails side of things, we plan to hire three, 4-person trail crews and two partner liaisons to work on trails projects with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and Montana Conservation Corps. To supplement Forest Service Hiring, we plan to

hire three Student Conservation interns and two Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation interns. We'll also have one full MCC crew for the majority of the field season and several shorter partner projects with BMWF and Wild Montana.

With this surplus of labor, we should get all of our trails opened quickly, once the snow melts and rivers come down, which should leave plenty of time for project work. We have three construction projects slated in and near the Scapegoat Wilderness. The first is a continuation of our GAOA project that we started last season where we are reclaiming the tread on the Stonewall/Copper Lakes Trail #485. This trail was neglected after the 2003 fires and the tread is almost non-existent in spots.



Tread
re-establishment on
the Copper Lakes
GAOA project

Lincoln Ranger District, continued...



*Trail Crew Members
Meagan Moore and Scotty
Martell digging tread on the
Copper Lakes Trail
GAOA project.*

The second project is also a continuation of a project started last summer that involved fixing several puncheons on the Mainline Trail #481. We will finish installing step approaches and running boards on these series of puncheons as heavy horse traffic has caused the decking to get worn enough for holes to develop. The other wilderness project will be on the Landers Trail #438. We will target the last five miles of this trail, where it goes from Bighorn Creek over the ridge through “Chap’s Gap” to the Upper Landers Trail #479. This project will mainly involve heavy retreat, brushing, and drainage.

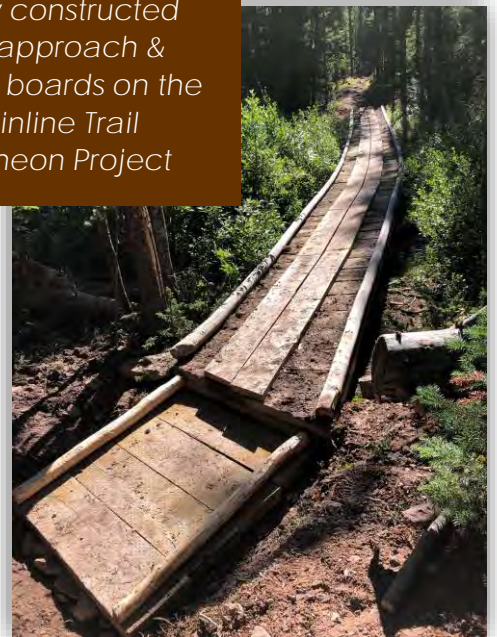
For the wilderness program, we will once again have a new wilderness ranger, who will be paired with a BMWF intern to accomplish a variety of projects including secondary trail

clearing, backcountry invasive weed treatment, and wilderness character monitoring utilizing our new tablet apps for data collection.

On the personnel side of things, we have had some shuffling, as Josh Lattin moved on to the Pintler Ranger District. I (Forest Moulton) took his spot as the head of Recreation for the District, and Madeline Rubida will be filling into my old position as Trails Manager, starting at the end of March. Last summer, Rob Gump joined us as the new District Ranger. See bios for Rob and Madeline on pages 4 – 5.

Lastly, 50th Scapegoat Anniversary events and celebrations are in the works for Lincoln. Wild Montana, the Wilderness Society, and the local community will be working to host several events, tentatively slated for the 16th and 17th of September. Feel free to contact Forest Moulton at (406) 362-7011 for more information as we get closer to those dates.

*Newly constructed
step approach &
running boards on the
Mainline Trail
Puncheon Project*





Rocky Mtn RD Happenings for 2022

By Ellie Fitzpatrick, *Rocky Mountain Ranger District*

The 2022 field season is shaping up to be a busy one for the Rocky Mountain Ranger District. High winds have dominated the landscape on the eastern front for several months now, leading to large amounts of blowdown across our trail system. Consequently, timely and efficient trail clearing will continue to be a priority for our crews.



*Maintenance on the Gates Park pack bridge will occur in 2022, barring any events that prolong general trail clearing, including clearing itself.
Photo by Peter Lane, Fall 2021.*

The pursuit of deferred maintenance will commence as we complete the clearing of trails. A wide breadth of projects exceeds the time between snow melt and snow return, but some things on our list include maintenance on the Gates Park pack bridge on the North Fork of the Sun and addressing failing puncheons along the Chinese Wall from Salt Mountain to My Lake. Keeping up with these projects will improve longevity of the structures and reduce the demand for maintenance in the near future.



*Failing puncheon to be addressed.
Photo: Kibb Mills, 2021.*

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Rocky Mtn RD Happenings continued....

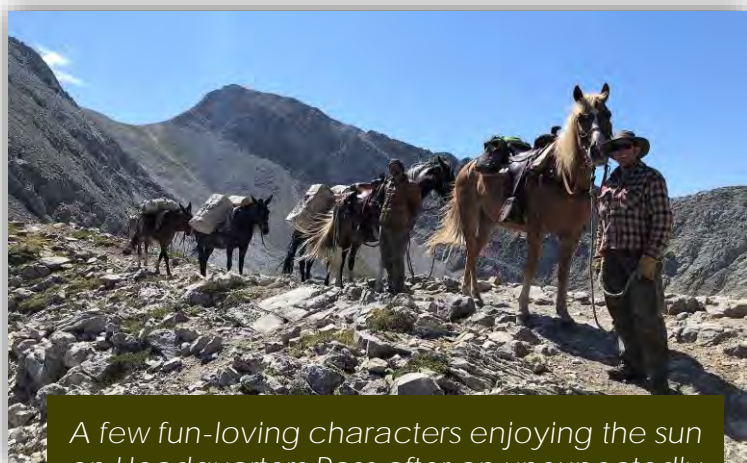
Our crews also have big shoes to fill this year in the public outreach realm, as we continue to see an increase in recreational use along our most popular routes to the Chinese Wall, as well as throughout the RMRD. As many of you know, with increased recreational use comes more impact to the wilderness resource, and we will be on the ground advocating for Leave No Trace tactics that will lessen the blow of increased backcountry travel, especially to our subalpine and alpine vegetation.

To assist our crews with visitor contacts and solitude monitoring efforts, we have the pleasure of hosting a Forest Service volunteer who will spend the height of the season in the West Fork and South Fork of the Sun drainages. We also hope to have routine patrols to capitalize on educational opportunities and visitor contacts in this area after trail clearing is complete.

Along with our Forest Service volunteer, we want to acknowledge and say thanks in advance to our other volunteers and partners that are lined up to help with the ever-present workload this year. BMWF and MCC will be joining us for several projects and some good old-fashioned fun. We are excited to work alongside them and to share a backcountry sunset or brushing duties on a trail that needs some love.



Lack of vegetation at highly impacted sites along the Chinese Wall, 2021.

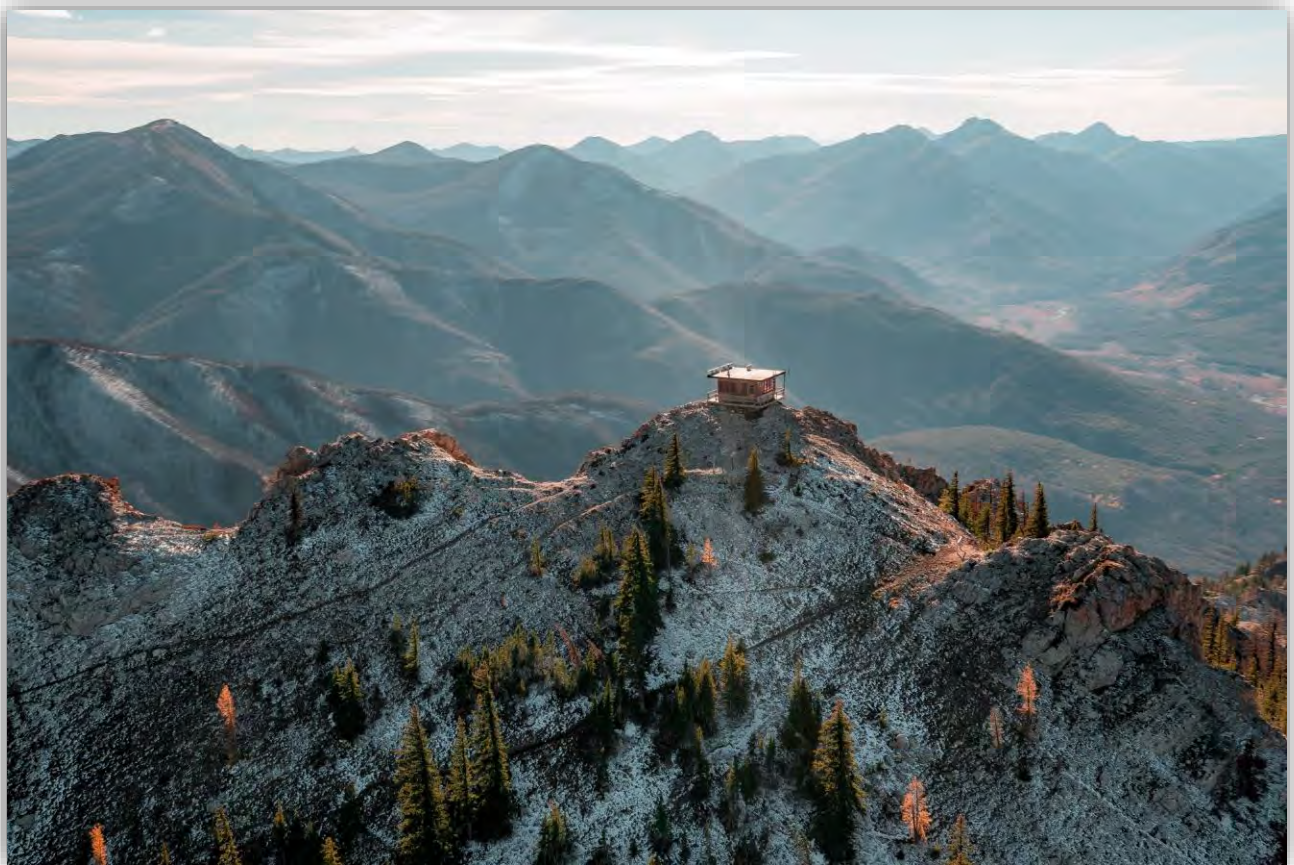


A few fun-loving characters enjoying the sun on Headquarters Pass after an unexpectedly wet August trip.

As for those weekend warriors, the through-hikers, the day trippers and the seasoned travelers, we look forward to running into you on the trails, or maybe just seeing your footprints in passing. We hope you share stories from the day with your travel partners over dinner, or maybe just enjoy the solitude of a secluded meadow with your favorite four-legged companions. Whatever defines your wilderness experience, we hope you have many in the months to come!

A View from Jumbo Lookout

By Jason Monroe, *Spotted Bear Ranger District*



An aerial view of Jumbo Lookout.

By Forest Service, USDA - 20190329-FS-FlatheadNF-YFYF-068, Public Domain

The Jumbo Fire Lookout -- established in 1937 and suspended almost 8,300 feet above sea level -- and other lookouts like it are a critical part of the wilderness story where humans are merely guests upon the land. Stories of fire lookouts invoke pictures of backcountry rangers watching hundreds of square miles of breathtaking country, scanning for those tell-tale plumes of smoke.

These days, some lookouts are staffed by volunteers, while others are located on the few Forests that still have paid employees staffing the towers. It can be a lonely life, but it is often the solitude that appeals to those who staff fire lookouts.

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Jumbo Lookout continued...

As Caleb Padgett sums up his experience staffing Jumbo Lookout on the Spotted Bear Ranger District:

“Jumbo Lookout is one of the most remote fire lookouts in the lower 48, 21 miles by foot or mule from the nearest trailhead. 2022 will be my fourth season there. I chose it because of its solitude and its challenge. 12 days alone at a time, and a 3-day round trip to get a fresh apple? I’m in! I wanted to have time and space to confront myself and know more about who I am and what I’m capable of. I’ve had a few moments to do that and, in that time, have found myself enough to know what it means to have warm relationships in my life and to share what matters. I’m happy to call the South Fork home for the summer because it helps me see that solitude only becomes important when it gives way to deeper connection and when the missing piece, I’ve (hopefully) found at Jumbo, makes its way across the Danaher and back to Big Prairie for dinner.”

If you ever find yourself in the area and have the time to travel and visit the lookout, it would be well worth your time and effort for the views. It’s staffed mid-June through late September or early October (depending on the weather) and Caleb, or whoever is staffing the lookout, would sure appreciate the company and conversation.

To learn more history about the Flathead National Forest, lookouts, and fire on the landscape, please visit the below link for a chapter titled “Fire Detection, Suppression, and Prevention”, which is part of a larger document called “Trails of the Past: Historical Overview of the Flathead National Forest, Montana, 1800-1960”.

<https://foresthistor.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/TRAILS-OF-THE-PAST.pdf>

2022 Hunting Season Changes & Updates

By Brent Lonner, Ryan Rauscher,
Franz Ingelfinger, & Liz Bradley



In an effort to broadly simplify various components of MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MT FWP) hunting regulations, the 2021/22 biennial hunting season setting process proved to be one of the most substantial efforts in recent time. Through an extensive process, beginning in summer 2021 and ending with the February 2022 Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting, many changes were proposed and either eliminated, modified and/or adopted throughout Montana. Given the scope of this newsletter, it is important to share and/or reiterate some of these changes specific to at least the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. Included below are brief summaries of such changes. For further information on these changes or other questions, please contact the pertinent individuals listed at the end of this summary.

ELK –

Minimal changes to elk hunting seasons, licenses, and hunting district (HD) boundaries within the Wilderness complex were adopted for the upcoming 2022 hunting season. For HD 441, regulations for the Wilderness portion of this HD changed from either-sex elk to brow-tined bull/antlerless elk opportunity on a general elk license. Similarly for HD 415, which is not within the Wilderness but is immediately adjacent to it, this HD also changed from either-sex elk to brow-tined bull/antlerless elk opportunity on a general license. Both changes were proposed to provide consistency in regulations between adjacent HDs and FWP regions. HD 281 removed a limited antlerless elk permit valid within this HD, although this ultimately affects only a small amount of Wilderness given the HD boundary configuration. Within the Wilderness Complex, no other changes to elk hunting regulations were adopted.

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Hunting Season Changes, continued...

MONTANA **FWP**

DEER –

Only two changes to mule and white-tailed deer seasons were adopted for the 2022 season. In HD 281, the unlimited mule deer permit (281-50) was eliminated and changed to an antlered buck only season opportunity on a general license. As stated for elk, this ultimately only affects a small portion of this HD specific to Wilderness given the HD boundary configuration. East of the continental divide within MT FWP Region 4, there is now an additional, but limited, region-wide antlerless white-tailed deer B license. This license replaced several HD specific B licenses and is in addition to the standard over the counter regional antlerless white-tailed deer B license. Within the Wilderness Complex, no other changes to deer hunting regulations were adopted.

MOOSE –

Two changes to moose hunting seasons were adopted, both on the east side of the continental divide and pertinent to at least portions of the Wilderness Complex. For moose HD 441 (northern Rocky Mountain Front), the season type was changed from an either-sex season to an antlered bull season opportunity. This change was, again, to provide some level of regional consistency in season types, where necessary, and eliminates any potential antlerless moose harvest that could occur via an either-sex season, albeit very limited.

The other change was the creation of a new moose HD located along the southern part of the Rocky Mountain Front with a current quota of one license (HD 422-50 – antlered bull). Given a growing moose population over this broad area (sustainable to at least limited bull harvest) and good public access opportunity to include at least portions of the Wilderness Complex, it was deemed appropriate to create this new opportunity.

MOUNTAIN GOAT –

Due to uncertainties of mountain goat abundance and distribution within mountain goat HD 442, this HD was closed beginning in 2018. However, given most recent efforts to better understand mountain goat distribution, abundance, and other demographic variables east of the continental divide, mountain goat HD 442 was proposed and approved to re-open to one either-sex license for the 2022 season. As with the majority of mountain goat hunting in Montana, any mountain goat is legal to harvest under this season type, however, heavy emphasis is placed on harvesting a billy. As a reminder, in MT FWP Regions 1, 2, and 4, which includes the Wilderness Complex, it is unlawful to take a female mountain goat accompanying a kid or a female in a group that contains one or more kids.



Hunting Season Changes, continued....

BLACK BEAR –

Within the Wilderness Complex, there were no changes adopted for the black bear hunting seasons. Although hound hunting for black bears is now legal in at least portions of Montana, given the presence of grizzly bears within places like the Wilderness Complex, this opportunity is not warranted in those areas.

For black bear harvest reporting, there is now a 48-hour reporting requirement for all black bear harvest (1-877-FWP-WILD or 1-877-397-9453 or through MyFWP). In addition, west of the continental divide and within MT FWP Region 1 (including pertinent Wilderness Complex areas), the requirement for physically having to bring a harvested black bear to FWP personnel for inspection is no longer necessary. Instead, hunters are required to report their **harvest as described above, and in addition, extract two of the bear's premolars for aging purposes.** Extracted teeth need to be returned to FWP by mail or dropped off at an FWP office within 10-days of harvest. For further information related to this process, contact MT FWP Region 1 headquarters at (406) 752-5101. All other MT FWP regions still require a physical in-person inspection of their black bear harvest.

MOUNTAIN LION –

Changes to mountain lion hunting seasons and regulations are still to be determined. Once any potential changes are finalized (likely in April), please check the MT FWP website or contact a MT FWP regional office for further information.

CONTACT INFORMATION –

Contact information for pertinent MT FWP wildlife biologists that cover portions of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex:

Franz Ingelfinger (Wildlife Biologist) – MT FWP Region 1, (406) 751-4580, fingelfinger@mt.gov

Liz Bradley (Wildlife Manager) – MT FWP Region 2, (406) 542-5515, lbradley@mt.gov

Brent Lonner (Wildlife Biologist) – MT FWP Region 4, (406) 467-2488, blonner@mt.gov

Ryan Rauscher (Wildlife Biologist) – MT FWP Region 4 (406) 271-7033, rtauscher@mt.gov

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Are we preserving wilderness character?

By Kimi Zamuda – *Wilderness Fellow*

The central mandate of the Wilderness Act is to preserve the wilderness character of every wilderness for present and future generations. Now the question is, are we? To answer this question, the Forest Service (along with BLM, NPS, and USFWS) is studying wilderness character over time. Launched in 2015, the interagency Wilderness Character Monitoring (WCM) strategy is uniformly monitoring wilderness trends across the nation. While this monitoring is nationally consistent, it also allows for local monitoring to meet specific wilderness needs—for example, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex created a measure focused on fire management. Another great aspect of WCM is that the project utilizes data the BMWC already collects (whether from U.S. Forest Service staff, or wilderness partners, state agencies, etc.). In determining if wilderness character is being preserved or degraded, WCM will quantify what the current (and future) threats are to wilderness, the gaps in wilderness knowledge, as well as wilderness successes. This project can improve how BMWC monitors the long-term condition of wilderness and aid in wilderness stewardship by quantitatively highlighting places to focus management on in the future.

The BMWC has partnered with the Society for Wilderness Stewardship (SWS) to complete this project. At SWS, our aim is to promote excellence in the professional practice of wilderness stewardship, science, and education to ensure the life-sustaining benefits of wilderness. Through this partnership, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex began the baseline portion of its WCM project in January of this year. This portion of WCM (baseline data compilation and the reports) should be completed during 2022. It has been a great experience working with the BMWC and exciting to be part of the wilderness stewardship of such a beautiful and special place.





BMWFC Fire History & The Dry Cabin Fire: Effective Impacts from Managing Past Wildfires for Resource Benefit

Contributions by *Mike Muñoz, Matt Walter, & Laura Mills Nelson*

Those who manage fire in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex are very familiar with the long-term management opportunities that are available to them based on past wildfires that have been managed for the landscape's benefit. This Dry Cabin Fire Update from September 1st, 2021, is just one example of those opportunities and the effective impacts that managing fires for resource benefits can have. An excerpt from the fire's fact sheet below and the Fire History map that follows on the next page show the details of one such management opportunity last season in the BMWFC. The fire created a final mosaic of 3,600 acres. No fire management actions were necessary, due to prior wildlife events, which greatly reduced unnecessary exposure of fire personnel.



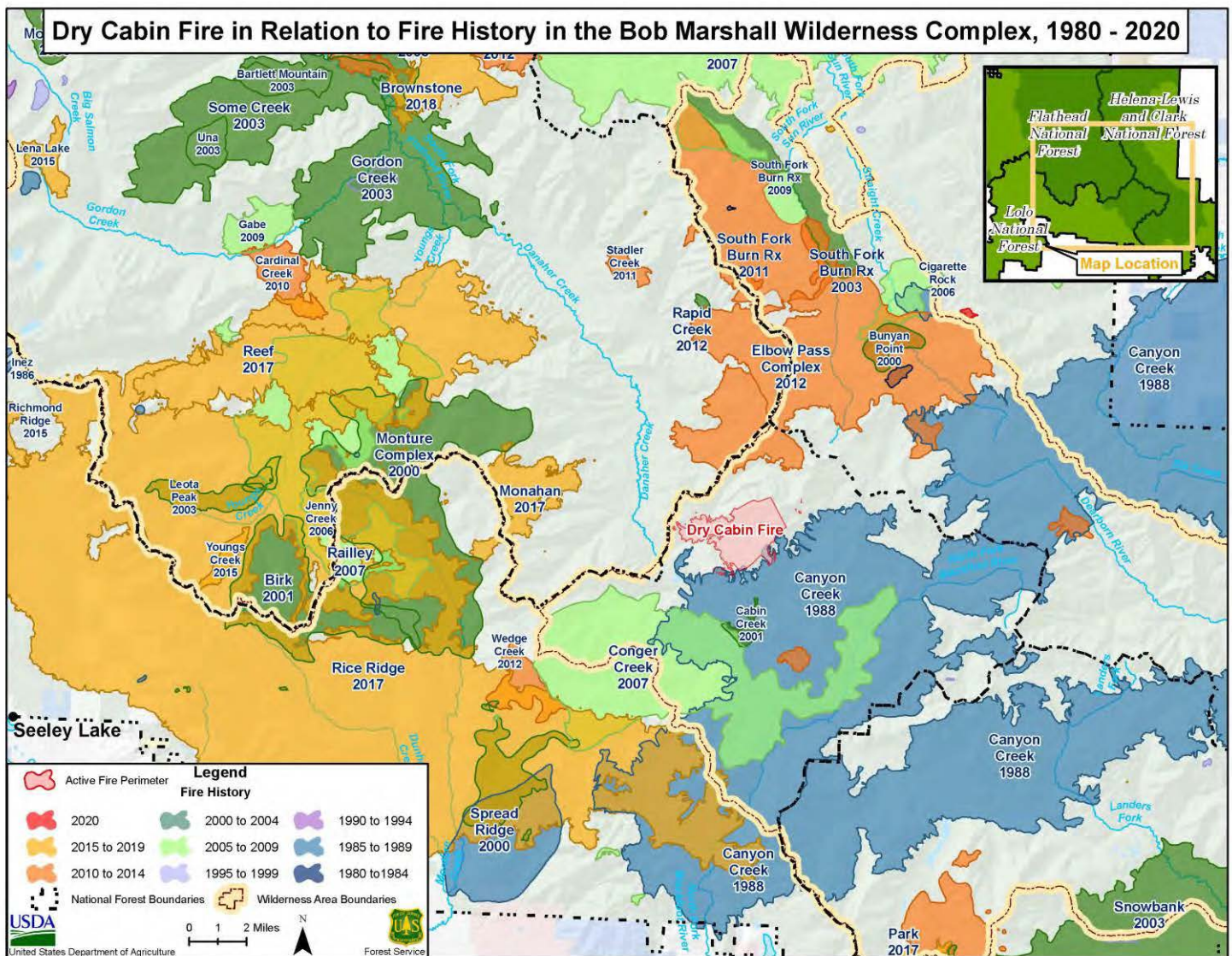
Dry Cabin Fire Update Wed., Sept 1, 2021
 Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, Montana
 See ranger district contact information below
 InciWeb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7660/>
 Email: 2021.drycabin@firenet.gov

Quick Facts:
 Location: 20 miles north of Ovando, MT, in the Lolo National Forest.
 Detected: July 11, 2021. Cause: Lightning.
 Legal Description: T18N, R11W, Sec. 36 Lat/Long: Lat. 47.278, Long. 112.956.
 Current size: 3,460 acres Containment: 0%

Fire Summary: The Dry Cabin Fire is located within the Scapegoat Wilderness on the Lolo National Forest. Managers are conducting fire management actions with the safety of fire personnel and the public as the number one priority. Fires in the area have a history of high intensity crown runs after long periods of low fire behavior. Fire personnel will use the prior 1988 Canyon Creek wildfire disturbance to aid in their strategy by using the area's extensive lodgepole sapling tree regrowth that has proven to slow the current fire spread and overall fire behavior. The greatest fire activity occurred when mature timber initially burned the first week. As seen in many of these second and third entry fires, the landscape is less likely to sustain extensive stand replacement fire runs in comparison to continuous stands of mature timber. The opportunity to use the confine and contain, along with point protection strategies helps to reduce unnecessary exposure of fire personnel to hazards, as well as overall cost. A portion of the 40-year BMWFC fire history map is attached, showing fires mostly managed for resource benefit, that are proving effective today.

Dry Cabin Fire: Effective Impacts continued...

A portion of the 40-year BMWC Fire History Map, showing fires mostly managed for resource benefit, that are proving effective today:



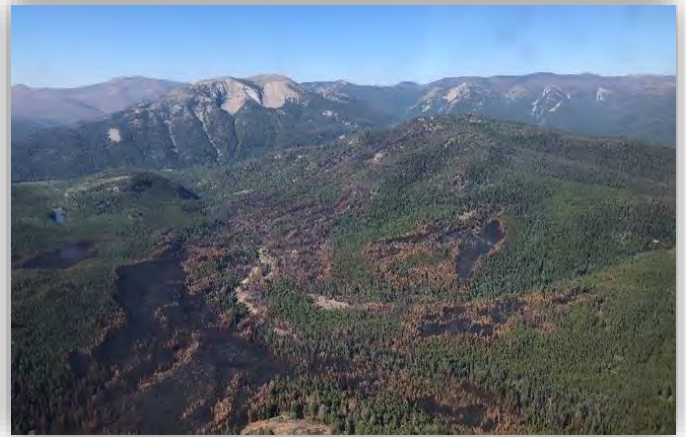


2022 Update from the Seeley Lake Ranger District:

By Jeremy Watkins, *Seeley Lake Ranger District*

Hello Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex community, greetings from the Seeley Lake Ranger District!

Summer of 2021 didn't disappoint for providing the District with challenges both old and new. Though wildfire, drought conditions, debris slides, heavy blowdown, and outbreaks of COVID-19 did hamper our output some, we were able to resume hosting partner and volunteer projects with Wild Montana, Backcountry Horsemen, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, and the Montana Conservation Corps. While we did get the bulk of our normal annual maintenance completed in the Wilderness and District as a whole, deferred maintenance and other noteworthy projects were hard to come by.



Dry Cabin Fire showing the mosaic burn pattern



Trails Technician Jeremy Watkins with Smoke Elser, presenting on the History of Forest Service Stock at Big Larch Amphitheater

The largest impediment to work within our portion of the Scapegoat came with the Dry Cabin Fire. The Dry Cabin Fire was detected on 7/11/21 in the country between Cabin Creek and the Upper Dry Fork. The immediate area had no post 1980 fire history, however, the terrain, a lack of fuel density at higher elevations, and previous fire history (1988 Canyon Creek and 2012 Elbow Pass Complex) ended up limiting its spread to 3,600 acres (fairly small compared to past fires in the complex). The result of the Dry Cabin Fire was a patchwork mosaic of burned and unburned acres within the perimeter.

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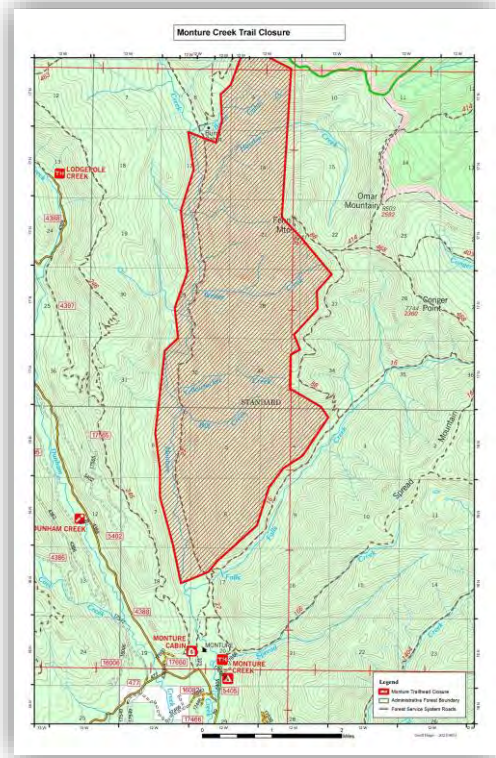
Seeley Lake Ranger District, continued...

For public safety and infrastructure/historic preservation, trail and area closures for most of our portion of the Scapegoat were put in place, as well as structure protection efforts on two cabins (North Fork and Carmichael) and two bridges (North Fork Cabin Bridge and Broadus Creek Bridge). Trail closures were lifted just before opening day of the backcountry rifle season, with official containment occurring 10/21/21. During much of the fire season, we experienced a severe drought, and our District Trail crew and Wilderness Rangers assisted the Seeley Fire Crew in IA preparedness.



Trail Crew wrapping the Carmichael Cabin in the Scapegoat Wilderness

Another fun, but not entirely unexpected curveball, was yet another round of washouts in the greater Monture Creek drainage. While in the past, Yellowjacket, Spruce and Dunham Creeks have bore the brunt, this time it was Spread and Bill Creek's turn.



Area Closure for the Monture Trail from the debris flow. Crews worked to re-open the trail for a week after the event.

The Bill Creek washout (about 4 miles up from the trailhead) caused a temporary closure of Monture Creek trail, until the crew was able to create a short go-around. A larger and more long-term issue was the blowout of Spread Creek, which buried (and frankly destroyed) the trailhead water system at Monture Creek Trailhead.

Any users planning on camping with stock at the trailhead this summer should either plan on being able to supply their own water or walking stock up the trail to Spread Creek for water. The District is looking into options for a permanent fix for this issue.

Seeley Lake Ranger District, continued...



Monture debris slide near trailhead



Monture Creek Trail inundated with mud from debris flow

These washouts are a result of the high intensity 2017 Rice Ridge Fire. After consulting with the Lolo NF Hydrologist and Soil Scientist, the consensus is that we will continue to have washout issues, until the slopes can stabilize. On a positive note, the Spotted Bear Ranger District was able to cut through the avalanche debris just on the other side of Hahn Pass, making that route open for the first time in a few seasons.

So, what will the 2022 season have on hand for the Seeley Lake Ranger District? We are currently looking at a trail crew of six seasonal employees, one seasonal packer, as well as two Wilderness Rangers. One of these positions is funded through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). We are planning on our normal volunteer and partner group projects which includes

Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation volunteers and WCC, Back Country Horsemen, Wild Montana, and four hitches of Montana Conservation Corps crews. At the time of writing this update, much of this region is under a severe avalanche warning, so time will tell what may or may not come off the hillsides.

Due to the afore-mentioned Dry Cabin Fire, the roofing and phase 2 restoration project of Carmichael Cabin was once again postponed. I'm beginning to sound like a broken record, but we are once again planning on completing this work in 2022.

Well, that pretty much catches folks up on what we have going on around here. As always, we encourage people to call us with any questions, inquiries about current conditions, AND information regarding conditions that we may not be aware of. We hope you all have a great spring, and maybe we'll see you out on the trail.



Trail crew heading in

Tempered Expectations: *Clearing trail isn't what it used to be*

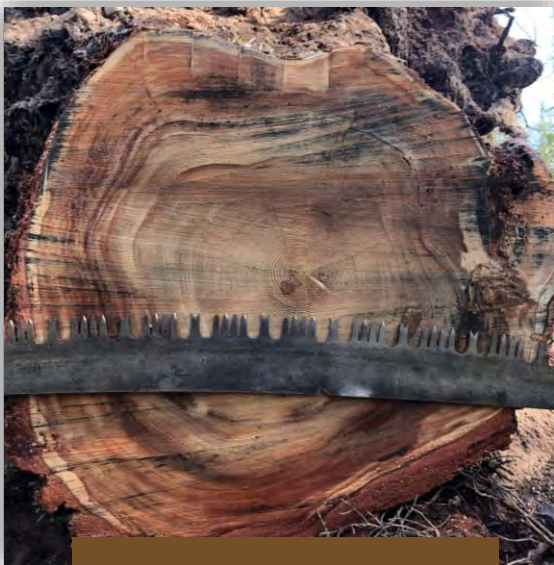
By Rich Owens, *Spotted Bear Ranger District*

The swish of a crosscut and the thwop of an ax hitting wood could be heard echoing through the trees along with some good-natured ribbing. The crew moves the logs, sheaths their tools and jaunts on. There was a time in the northern intermountain west when clearing trail was just that easy and local Districts could keep up the maintenance of their trail systems. Trail crews could eventually turn their attention to repairing and stabilizing tread and fixing muck holes. I should know, I started working trails in 1996 and have been clearing trail and running crews ever since.

Sometime between 1880 and 1930, approximately 335,692 acres burned in the area now known as the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. For much of the 20th century, we had a young forest over much of the Complex. Most fire experts agree that we entered the next sustained



SB Trail Crew (Sarah, Jeremiah, Fischer, & Ben) clear the West Side South Fork Trail near Snow Creek. Photo credit: Jeremiah Knudsen.



Measuring the cut. Photo credit: Jeremiah Knudsen.

burn period in 1988, the year of the Canyon Creek burn. However, fire seasons were irregular until the 2000 fire season. Between the years 2000 and 2015, 459,077 acres have burned in the Complex. By comparison, from 1930 to 1980, only 11,618 acres burned within what is now the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. While the fires have done amazing things for wildlife habitat, water retention and stand health, it has also opened areas for hiking, exploring, and hunting that before were impenetrable. A lot of what remains of live stands of trees are old and decadent and very prone to windthrow. The upshot of all this is that it has made keeping trails open tougher, particularly as the impacts of

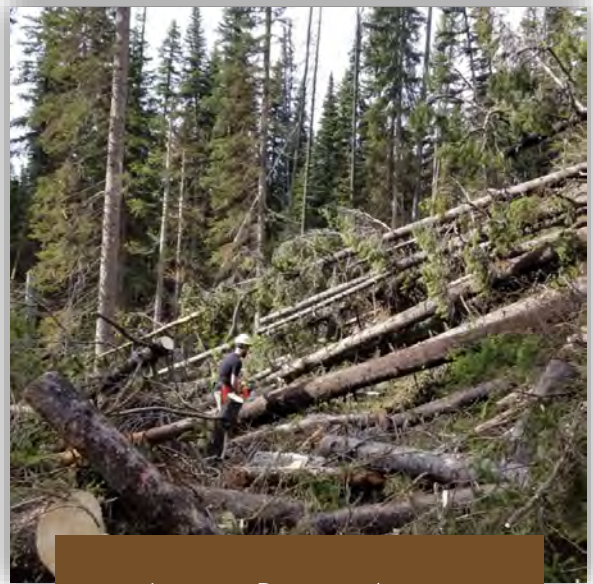
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Tempered Expectations, continued...

these fires have coincided with an era of disinvestment in Wilderness and trails by the agency. If we could still field the crews we routinely had before 2012, we would have been able to stay on top of trail opening at a satisfactory rate, but consistent budget cuts and de-prioritization of our Wilderness and trails programs have made it very difficult. During my early trail dog years, some crews could average 8-10 miles a day during spring opening, now a three-mile day is considered average. The repercussion is then felt by all aspects of trail work and Wilderness management. On our District, as on all the other Districts around the Complex, because the trail clearing takes everything we have, it leaves little time for larger trail projects and Wilderness Ranger work such as campsite and social monitoring.



Sarah, Jeremiah, and Ben (SB Trails) complete work on a rock wall on Mid Creek Trail



Jeremy Rust navigates blowdown in the Middle Fork

Thanks to many of you challenging our leadership and advocating on our behalf, congress passed the Great American Outdoors Act in 2020. This did infuse a lot of money into trail programs all over the country, and we are excited about the prospects of having this funding for the next few years. We couldn't be more grateful to those of you that helped push through this legislation. On the Spotted Bear Ranger District, you will see major deferred maintenance work on the Pendant-Big Salmon Creek Trails, the main South Fork Trail (East and West) and possibly some other trails on the south end. In the Middle Fork, the Morrison Creek Trail, Strawberry and Bowl Creek Trails, and the Trilobite Lakes Trail should see some projects, as well. Another area of concentration for us will be some front country trails, such as the Gunsight loop and Green Mtn - Trail Creek loop.

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Tempered Expectations, **continued...**

These are lofty goals when you consider that the GAOA funding merely fills the hole that the budget cuts over the last 10 years have created. Expectations need to be tempered about the GAOA funding being miracle money. The funding does allow us to hire the trail crew size that was routine before 2012, but as basic trail clearing has become exponentially more difficult, it will only be through our grit and determination that we accomplish the many deferred maintenance projects described above. That grit and

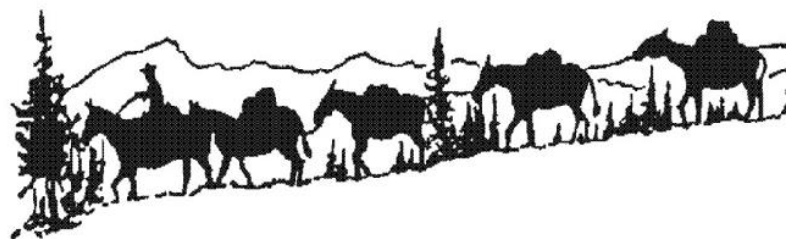


Double rainbow at Big Prairie Ranger Station, captured by Mike Reavis after a June storm



Nate Bush of SB Trails at Ibex Pass

determination is what has kept me fueled through my 26 years of working in Wilderness and trails, being surrounded by people that go the extra mile, ignore the pain, and attack the work laid out before them in a passionate manner. I've experienced this time and time again in the trails world. It truly is a dedicated group of folks who continue to be asked to do more with less. But there are some indications that an emphasis on our trail systems may be on the horizon, and the Great American Outdoor Act may be the tip of the iceberg -- we have you, our partners and advocates, to thank for this.





Climate Change Impacts in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex

By Craig Kendall, *Watershed & Fisheries Program Manager – Flathead National Forest*

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex is certainly not immune to climate change impacts. Research across the Pacific Northwest has documented numerous climate-driven effects on precipitation and streamflow. Declining snowpack, reduced streamflow, and the timing of precipitation are common themes in the scientific literature. In 2018, an assessment was completed to determine how the South Fork Flathead region is responding to climate change. The results are consistent with patterns across the Flathead National Forest and broader Pacific Northwest. The following trends are apparent.

- April Snow Water Equivalent is decreasing, and snowmelt is occurring earlier.
- Summer precipitation is decreasing.
- March and October precipitation is increasing.
- April flows are increasing.
- Annual peak flows are decreasing.
- May, June, July, August, and September flows are decreasing.
- April-November water yield is decreasing.

Snowpack data has been gathered at three snow courses (Upper Holland Lake, Spotted Bear Mountain, and Holbrook) since the late 1940s. The Holland Lake site is just outside the drainage divide in the headwaters but is certainly representative of snowpack at high elevations throughout the South Fork. Figure 1 on the next page displays trends in April Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) at these three sites. The average decline in April SWE for these locations is 0.09 inches per year.

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Climate Change Impacts, continued....

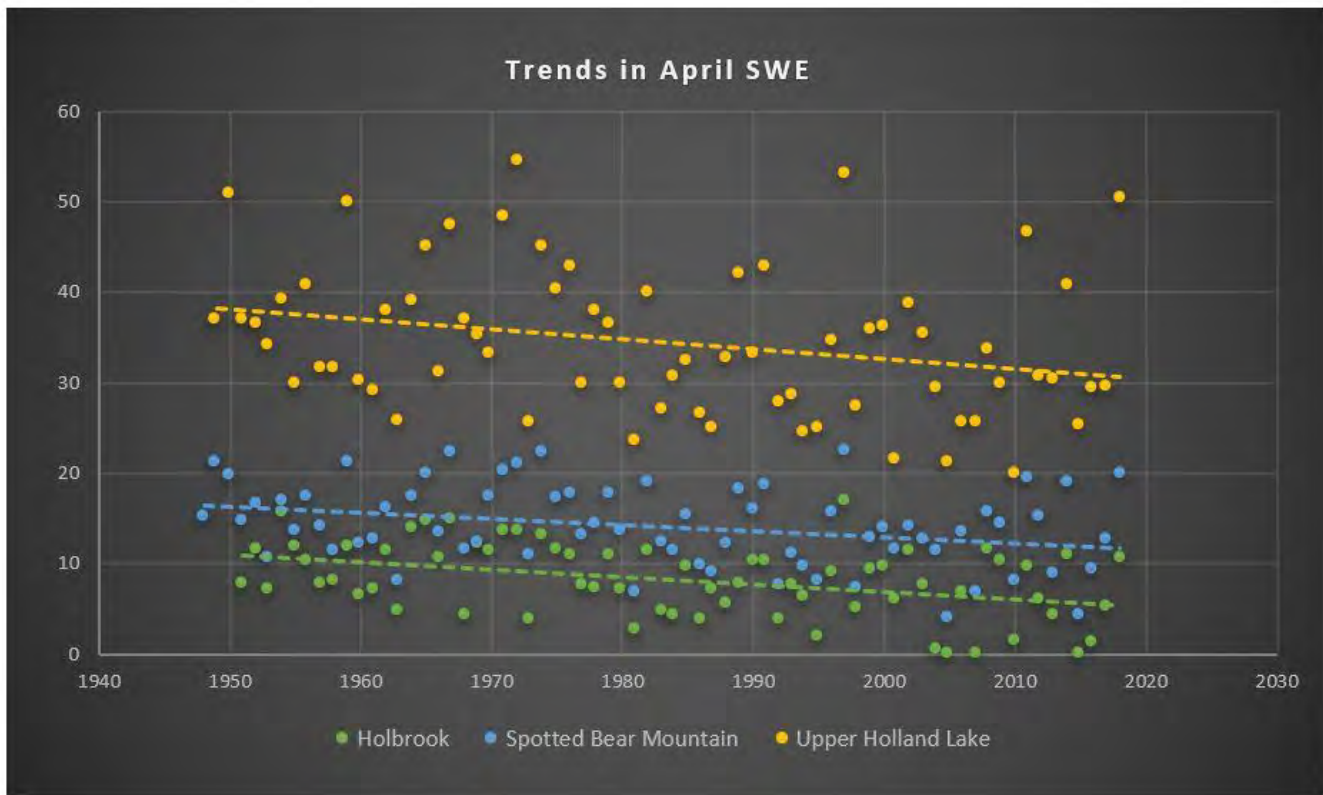


Figure 1. Trends in April Snow Water Equivalent (SWE).

While there are no year-round precipitation gages in the South Fork, there are seven SNOTEL sites scattered across the upper Flathead River Basin. Data from these sites indicate that precipitation is decreasing in July, August, and September, but increasing during the shoulder seasons, particularly March and October. The Pike Creek SNOTEL site near Marias Pass indicates that July precipitation is decreasing about 0.05 inches per year.

The precipitation trends described above are causing changes in South Fork Flathead River flows, measured at the Twin Creek gage. Average daily flow values were queried for two periods, the first covering water years 1965-1991 (26 years) and 1992-2017 (25 years). The comparison between these two periods (April-November only) is shown in Figure 2 on the next page. Several patterns are apparent in the comparison between the two periods. The latter period exhibits higher flows in the early spring, lower peaks, more rapid return to base flow, and lower summer/fall flows. Total water yield (acre-feet) has decreased by roughly 17 percent between 1965 and 2017.

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Climate Change Impacts, **continued...**

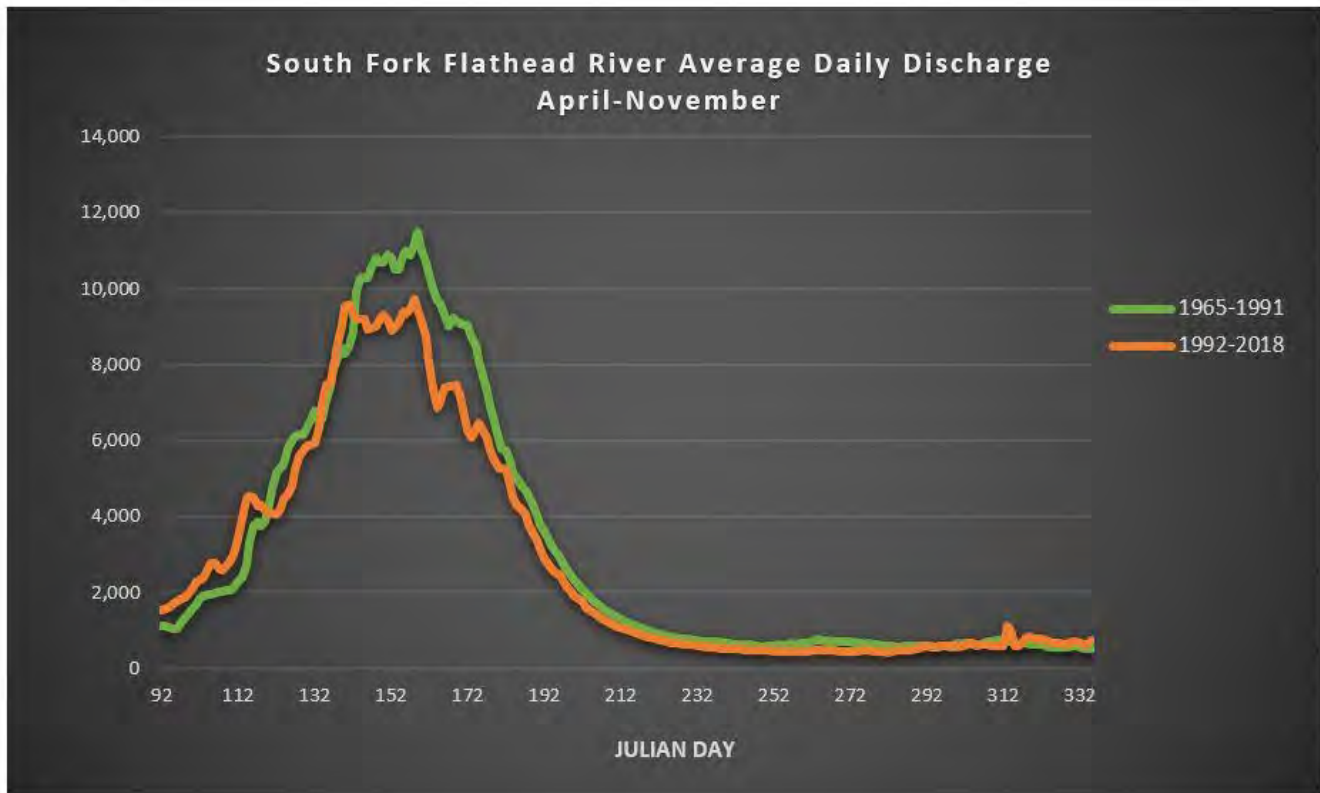


Figure 2. Average daily flow during the first and second halves of the record.

The precipitation and flow data clearly indicate that rain is playing a larger role in shaping hydrologic patterns at monthly and annual scales. The combination of warmer air temperatures and increasing rainfall are reducing the influence of snow in shaping the annual hydrograph (Figure 2). It is likely that flow trends (positive and negative) are more pronounced in the tributaries.

Approximately 381,000 acres have burned upstream of the Twin Creek gage since 1984. Fires can increase water yield by reducing evapotranspiration (water use by trees), decreasing snow interception, and changing snow redistribution patterns. This may occur in small tributary watersheds, but there is no evidence that indicates increases in yield at the Twin Creek gage. Climate change likely plays a much larger role in shaping the hydrology of the South Fork Flathead River system. However, fire effects are much more pronounced in the smaller tributaries.



Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex

NATIONAL FORESTS

Helena - Lewis and Clark NF

Helena, MT 59602
(406) 449-5201
Forest Supervisor: Emily Platt
Deputy Forest Supervisor:
Sara Mayben

Flathead NF

Kalispell, MT
(406) 758-5208
Forest Supervisor:
Kurt Steele

Lolo NF

Missoula MT
406-329-3750
Forest Supervisor:
Carolyn Upton

DISTRICTS

Rocky Mountain RD

(406) 466-5341
District Ranger:
Mike Muñoz
michael.munoz@usda.gov

Hungry Horse RD

(406) 387-3800
District Ranger:
Rob Davies
robert.davies@usda.gov

Seeley Lake RD

(406) 677-2233
District Ranger:
Quinn Carver
quinn.carver@usda.gov

Lincoln RD

(406) 362-7000
District Ranger:
Rob Gump
robert.gump@usda.gov

Spotted Bear RD

(406) 758-5376 (summer)
(406) 387-3800 (winter)
District Ranger:
Scott Snelson
scott.snelson@usda.gov

Website

<https://go.usa.gov/xd6pU>



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