

# Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex

2014

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## Annual BMWC Public Meeting Agenda

- 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary wilderness activities and how to get involved
- Project information and scoping actions
- Forest Plan Revision update
- The 2013 wildfire season: effects on access and trail conditions
- Winter snow surveys updates
- BMWF opportunities for 2014
- Monitoring updates from LAC data
- Wildlife and fish updates

## Celebrate! Celebrate!

### It's the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wilderness Act!

Letter From BMWC Lead Ranger—Deb Mucklow

**You're Invited** to the annual public meeting for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex **Saturday March 29, 2014, at the Choteau Library meeting room, starting time 10 am.** The library is on Main Street and to best access the conference room, park directly south of Rex's Grocery Store and enter at the back of the library from Main Street. We'll have signs posted so all will be able to find us! Some of you recognize this as the "LAC" (Limits of Acceptable Change) meeting or task force. This year we are focusing on the "**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Wilderness Act**".

This annual meeting is for all interested parties to talk about the Bob Marshall, Scapegoat and Great Bear Wilderness areas. As wilderness stewards and managers, we need to hear what do you think is working, what is not and areas of concern you may have.

**Please** give me a call (406-387-3851) or email ([dmucklow@fs.fed.us](mailto:dmucklow@fs.fed.us)) to let me know what topics you'd like for us to present. As much as we think we have a good understanding – your direct input is really needed! Lunch will be on your own. Forest Service and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Managers will be present and all of us are looking forward to catching up and listening!

We'll also have an update from the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation. I've been asked to not have the Jeopardy games, so I'm turning it around and asking you **all** for your participation and engagement. With this in mind, I have a favor to ask; **each** of you needs to come prepared to share a history tidbit about the Bob Marshall, Great Bear or Scapegoat Wilderness and a story that has contributed to why the wilderness is so important or valued by you individually.

Getting philosophical, I think maybe as a society we need wilderness even more today than we did 50 years ago. I also worry at times that the next or current generations don't have this same passion. Each year I get the privilege of being in this position, I work with our younger workforce and partners and I'm reminded that they value this experience as much as I do. I also get to be with peers and those that have lots more experience than I do and they also keep me grounded. We may not all express it the same, but



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(*Celebrate!*, continued from previous page)

as the stories are shared I believe we'll hear a common theme and shared value of wilderness – the naturalness and the wildness.

In keeping with **Celebrating the 50th Anniversary – all are invited to the Spotted Bear Ranger Station on Saturday August 2, 2014.** We are hosting a Celebration of the People; those that have ties to the wilderness directly or indirectly. We wouldn't have the special places and stewardship we experience today if not for all of the people that have contributed. We're seeking out current, past, retired and future wilderness enthusiasts to come to Spotted Bear and celebrate with us. Maybe you had a Forest Service connection: family trips, working as a guide or an outfitter or participating in youth or partner trips such as Back Country Horseman. There will be oral interviews and living history captured, presentations, lunch, pictures, pack strings, more stories and visits and just overall fun. We're in the planning stage and welcome ideas to make this very special.

I'd like to close with a special **Thank You** to all the partners, volunteers, outfitters, employees and individuals that continue to bring their own passion for wilderness and management into each experience- both work projects and in visiting the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat Wilderness areas. Your help in clearing down fall, trail rocking, brushing, campsite clean up, respecting other wilderness users, weed inventory, weed eradication, other special projects, including phone line and airstrip maintenance- they all make a difference! **Thanks for the continued caring. I appreciate that we get to work hard and that we get to work with such dedicated individuals and enjoy the wilderness.**

I'm looking forward to seeing you in 2014! Please contact me or any of the District Rangers in the complex if we can help on an issue. Hope to see you at the annual public meeting March 29 in Choteau, Montana!

**Deb Mucklow**, Lead BMWC Ranger 2014



## Interactive Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex Maps now available on smartphones and tablets!

By Ivy Baker, Video & GIS Specialist, USFS

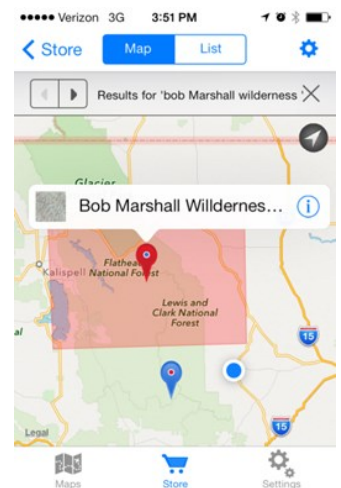
As of January 2014, there is new way to digitally interact with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (BMWC) Maps using your smartphone or tablet. Simply download the free Avenza PDF Maps App from iTunes or Google Play.

With the Avenza PDF Maps App installed on your device, you can utilize digital maps in the following ways:

- + View your location on the map using the built in GPS device on your phone or tablet
- + Record GPS tracks as you move
- + Find locations on the maps
- + Add your own placemarks to the maps

Both the North and South halves of the BMWC Map (as well as other Forest and BLM maps) are available for purchase from the map store on the Avenza PDF Maps App.

While the BMWC Managers find this technology intriguing, they encourage you to remember that navigation with smartphones or tablets only lasts as long as your batteries hold a charge. Please exercise caution in relying on these devices as your sole method of navigation. Another important consideration is use of mobile devices for backcountry navigation lies in somewhat of a grey area in terms of wilderness ethics. While some wilderness recreationists enjoy exploring with this kind of technology in the backcountry, other wilderness users may find it offensive. Be respectful and considerate of the Wilderness and other users!



# Wilderness 50 Activities & Events



## **“Visions of the Wild”**

*Artist-Wilderness-Connection, art exhibit at the Hockaday Museum of Art, Kalispell --* The exhibition will feature art created from the experiences of thirty-three artists that participated in the Artist-Wilderness-Connection program over the last ten years. This exhibit offers a unique opportunity to view wilderness through the eyes of a diverse and talented group of Montana artists. Program hosted by the Hockaday Museum of Art, Flathead National Forest, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and Swan Ecosystem Center.

Contact: Teresa Wenum, 406/758-5218

***July 24, 2014 — September 13, 2014***

***Artist reception & program – August 7***

## **Wilderness Fisheries Work Project**

Pack in native genetically pure Westslope cutthroat trout to Lena Lake in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Engage area youth to participate in this special project. Event is part of the ongoing Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation project led by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Region 1.

Contact: Pat Van Eimeren, 406/387-3863

***End of July, 2014***

## **“Go Wild” -- 50th Anniversary Community Celebration**

Join us for a fun family event with informational booths, displays, music, food, hands-on activities. Event hosted by many different community partners.

Contact: Teresa Wenum, 406/758-5218

***Saturday, September 20, 10am to 3pm at the Flathead County Fairgrounds***

## **“50 Miles for 50 Years”**

Special Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation trails project(s) with crew leaders giving evening ‘campfire talks’ on the Wilderness Act.

Contact: Carol Treadwell, 406/387-3847

***Summer/Fall 2014***

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Wilderness Act at Seeley Lake**

The Montana Wilderness Association and the Seeley Lake Ranger District will be hosting a 50th anniversary celebration of the Wilderness Act. There will be numerous activities planned for the weekend.

Contact: Lee Bowman,

***Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at Seeley Lake.***

*Celebrating 50 Years of American Wilderness  
Bob Marshall (1964) — Mission Mountains (1975) -- Great Bear (1978)*





# Raising Babies in the Bob

By Guy Zoellner, Lead Wilderness Ranger, Spotted Bear Ranger District

We've heard it too many times to count now: "I thought they were prayer flags...", "What do you need so many towels for?", "Who's the Buddhist around here?" Every time our answer falls on a surprised face: "they're diapers, clean diapers hanging out to dry." The expression that folks react with is priceless. Huge grins, heads on a swivel looking for the diaper-wearer and stories of their own kids. Interactions such as these make the diaper washing, lack of daycare and distance to groceries seem that much more benign. In fact, these conversations are a boost to the wonderful experience of raising children in a backcountry setting.

My wife and I get the exceptional opportunity of raising our children in the middle of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Each spring we make the trek from Spotted Bear Ranger Station to the remote work center of Big Prairie.



The next generation of trail crew at work at Big Prairie.

It's a thirty two mile trip from pick-up to bunkhouse, with lots of stops in between. To some it might sound like torture to prop a toddler on the saddle in front of you for eight hours. They snack, nap and ask questions incessantly. The tent gets crowded in a hurry and any attempt at order within the camp is reduced to forts and mini-mazes. To us this is the joy of wilderness child rearing.

In the place of street identification, we work on drainage recognition; Gordon Creek, Hahn Creek, Cayuse Meadows and Big Salmon Lake. The "why's" of our

two-year old revolve around where huckleberries grow and how far to the next thimbleberry patch. Plants are a big one; kinnicinnick, snowberry and Oregon grape. Fun names like purple penstemon and cow parsnip harness curiosity and help work on pronunciation. Last summer we took a weekend and spent it poking around on the Chinese Wall. This helps us have some groundwork done when it comes to the concepts of continental division.

Besides all the wonders that abound in a place such as the Bob, it's the people that visit it that make it such a special place to raise children. At first we were apprehensive about the social development aspect. But we soon learned that while we sometimes perceive it as socially barren, there is much to be said for who we get to interact with back here. The local outfitters and regular users substitute as extended family. No glass of Kool-Aid is poured without proper manners and dietary consistency is meticulously monitored. Lunch of cookies, no problem! They just set them up on the saddle with mom or dad and wish us luck. The trail crew is similar to having a quiver of older siblings. There is always somebody to play with and never a shortage of youthful energy to tap

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(*Raising Babies*, continued from previous page)

into. A favorite activity involves splitting wood with a plastic axe alongside someone re-handling a working axe or pulaski. The subtle qualities of hard work, perseverance, humility and pride shine through with every moment in the backcountry.

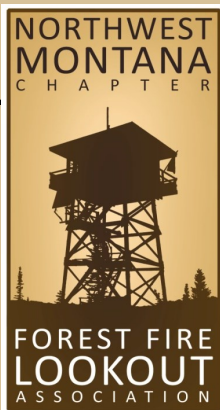
Whether it's on the trail or at the station, most conversations we have with folks handle themselves similarly. The women that we meet generally have the same reactions to kids as they would in a town setting; lots of positives, coo-ing and packages left in town for us with t-shirts and crayons for the kids. The people who are under 30, or don't have kids of their own, react as if it's a perfectly normal thing to see a baby crawling alongside a river thirty miles from a trailhead. It never fails though to watch a stoic, unshaven, wool-vest- in-the-middle-of-summer cowboy mutate into a grin wearing a silver belly hat when they see a kid back here. They often become children themselves, playing ball and discussing the merits of an orange cup versus blue, chewy Chips Ahoy or regular and the wonders of horses and mules.

I've heard these old timers refer to the wilderness as a place that cultivates a culture of wonder. This is especially true with children. Raising kids in the backcountry is not by any stretch of the imagination a unique thing. Besides pioneer families moving west the Bob Marshall has been the site of many youthful developments. The Diests, Owens, Stanleys, Marriots, Bennets and Chiltons have all raised children that have gone on to do great and wonderful things with their lives. I've spoken with many of these parents and they all seem to agree on the common sentiment that wilderness time as a child can provide a lifetime of memories. As our kids grow older and memories are solidifying, it is amazing to see what is important to them. What we often see as an afternoon spent passing the time is turning out to be highlight of the summer. It is this sense of wonder and adventure that keeps life in the backcountry such a valued and gratifying experience for us.



**Father and Son enjoy the view of the Upper White River.**





# Partnering for the Future of Fire Lookouts

By Volunteers Chuck and Mark Manning

**IN RECENT YEARS** the Forest Service started extensive restoration work on several historic fire lookouts on the Flathead National Forest and has brought these lookouts back from the brink of irreparable decay and into serviceable condition. Playing a minor role in this effort was a small group of dedicated volunteers who have long valued these historic structures. This restoration work was incredibly rewarding for the volunteers and served to heighten their reverence for these historic structures. The experience also served to reveal the amount of resources needed in both money and personnel to restore and

maintain these structures and this small group of volunteers took on the task of exploring ways to expand public participation in preservation efforts.

Through the **North Idaho/Montana Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association** that objective came to fruition and the **NWMT-FFLA**, now a nonprofit organization, is in the process of developing partnerships with both federal and state agencies to preserve the historic values of fire lookouts and other structures in Northwest Montana.

Hungry Horse Fire Management Staff lead restoration of Baptiste Lookout with assistance from volunteers. It is this type of project that **NWMT-FFLA** is looking to partner with in the future.



**Baptiste Lookout: Before Restoration**



**Baptiste Lookout: After Restora-**

The **NWMT-FFLA** mission is dedicated to supporting federal and state agencies in the restoration, maintenance and staffing of fire lookouts and other historic support structures on public lands in Northwest Montana. For more information go to <http://www.nwmt-ffla.org/#>



# Native Trout Restoration on the North Fork of the Blackfoot River

By Ron Pierce, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

*“Whether the targeted removal and replacement of native trout in the upper North Fork is pursued will depend on many factors including public acceptance of the project.”*

The North Fork Falls is located in the Scapegoat Wilderness in the headwaters of the Blackfoot River. Here, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in cooperation with the Forest Service and other conservation partners, are beginning to consider a native trout restoration project upstream of the Falls (see photo). If the project is pursued, it will mirror in some ways the native trout restoration project just completed in the South Fork of the Flathead River basin (see BMWC 2011 and 2013 newsletters) Like the South Fork



project, this high country area appears to offer ideal habitat conditions for native trout based on comparisons with nearby streams in similar environments. However, the upper North Fork currently supports low numbers of introduced hybrid (rainbow/Yellowstone/westslope cutthroat) trout. These hybrid trout pose risks to genetically pure native cutthroat trout downstream of the Falls, especially in the Dry Fork arm of the Upper North Fork. Because the hybrid fish are

found in very low abundance, it appears these hybrids are poorly suited to the high country environment. Their presence has been traced to historically planted hybrids, a process that ended about 50 years ago. As a result of very low numbers, these hybrid fish offer very little ecological value to fisheries-dependent wildlife. Likewise, the low abundance of hybrid fish offer limited angling opportunities upstream of the Falls.

Whether the targeted removal and replacement of native trout in the upper North Fork is pursued will depend on many factors including public acceptance of the project. Currently, FWP the USFS and other



partners will be gathering additional information over the next couple of years in order to develop the concept of replacing hybrid trout with native trout. If the project moves forward, a proposal will be developed with full public participation in order to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Please contact Ron Pierce at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks regarding the current status of this native trout conservation project. He can be reached at (406)542-5532 or [rpierce@mt.gov](mailto:rpierce@mt.gov).



*The trail in: Fisheries work requires both sampling of fish and long days in the saddle roving from camp to camp and from stream to stream.*



# One Story, One Memory, or One Special Place at a Time - Piece by Piece

*By Deb Mucklow, Spotted Bear District Ranger*

As we've been thinking about the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wilderness Act and how special the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex is, a group of us proposed a quilt as another means to celebrate. Salena Beckwith, a past Artist in Residence, will be doing the machine quilting. This will be displayed at



events along with a story board. I'd like to thank all that have contributed and hope all will enjoy the final product. It has been a great chance for me to keep my memories fresh and enjoy so many others!

To date I have about 80 "trees" returned. The three in this article were contributed by Claire and Harry Workman, Dave Owen and Vicki Bodfish. I'll have a door prize at the upcoming Public Meeting on March 29 in Choteau for the first person that tells me which block belongs to the Workmans. My thanks go to Claire and Harry Workman for sharing this story that follows:

....Howdy – did I ever tell you about my "other love"? Goes by the name of "Bob". I first met her in 1958 on a

fall hunting trip with my sister and brother-in-law.

I was soon living there much of the time. I loved her rivers, the trails and snowfields, the peaks and meadows – I was just plain in love with all of her – the elk & deer, ice cold springs – "Well, about my first love \_\_\_\_\_! (Sorry Hun, just ran out of room!)"

I've been in the "Bob Marshall" 56 years now, counting 2014 – only missing two or three years in early 60's and I love the BMW as much today as I did 56 years ago!

Began packing and guiding for Lloyd West in 1968 and continued on working for myself and others – Rhoda Cook at the KNL, Strackebain, Diamond R, Hawkins, Grand Domain Retreats and Dave Morris. Bought Dave out in 1982 so we've had the "Silvertip" camp for 32 years now, as well as permits for summer



pack trips since the 1970's. We've had several trail clearing and packing contracts for the USFS though out the years as well.

I'd like to challenge us all to continue to share the passion and caring for this landscape as the Workmans have. They not have only shared with the quilt and their stories, but in passing on their passion to many generations of family members. For those that are always connecting the dots, Harry Workman's father, Charles Workman, packed for the US Geological Service in 1919 before we had Primitive Areas or Designated Wilderness in what is now the Bob Marshall Wilderness. His family has saved letters from him, sharing the routes such as from the Old Condon Ranger Station coming through the South Fork of the Flathead to the Coram Ranger Station. His last trip in the "Bob" was 1972.



# Fifty Miles for Fifty Years; Commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Designation of the Bob Marshall Wilderness with 150 miles of Trail Maintenance

By Carol Tredwell, BMWF Executive Director



**Bear Lake Trail # 222 before clearing.**



**Bear Lake Trail after BMWF crew cuts through blow down.**

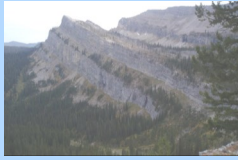
September 2014 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bob Marshall Wilderness and the passing of the Wilderness Act. In commemoration of this golden event the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation (BMWF) will restore and maintain 50 miles of trail on each of the Wilderness Areas in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex -the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat Wilderness areas. This includes trail work on five Ranger Districts: Hungry Horse, Lincoln, Rocky Mountain, Seeley Lake and Spotted Bear. Funding for these projects (30 total) will come from the Flathead County Resource Advisory Committee and the National Forest Foundation; funding from other grantors is anticipated. U.S.F.S. Region 1 will be providing volunteer recognition gifts (Wilderness 50 pins) for each member of these teams.

For 17 proud years the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation has worked in collaboration and coordination with the U.S. Forest Service to provide cost effective maintenance of trails within the BMWC. Each year the Foundation engages hundreds of hard-working volunteers, including youth, in projects that clear trails, restore heavily used areas, maintain historic structures and fight noxious weeds. Volunteers participate in week long trips that give back to the wilderness and instill an appreciation for public lands. Since its incorporation in 1997, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation (BMWF) and its volunteers have cleared 4,817 miles of trail. The value of this donated labor contributed to national forest lands is \$350,000 annually. Volunteers receive practical lessons in Leave No Trace camping, backcountry safety, proper food storage, behavior in bear country and trail maintenance. Evenings include “campfire talks” which cover natural and human history, flora and fauna of the area. As a salute to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a campfire talk on the history of the Bob Marshall Wilderness and the Wilderness Act will be presented on each trip.



**BMWF Volunteers from the American Hiking Society in front of Prairie Reef.**

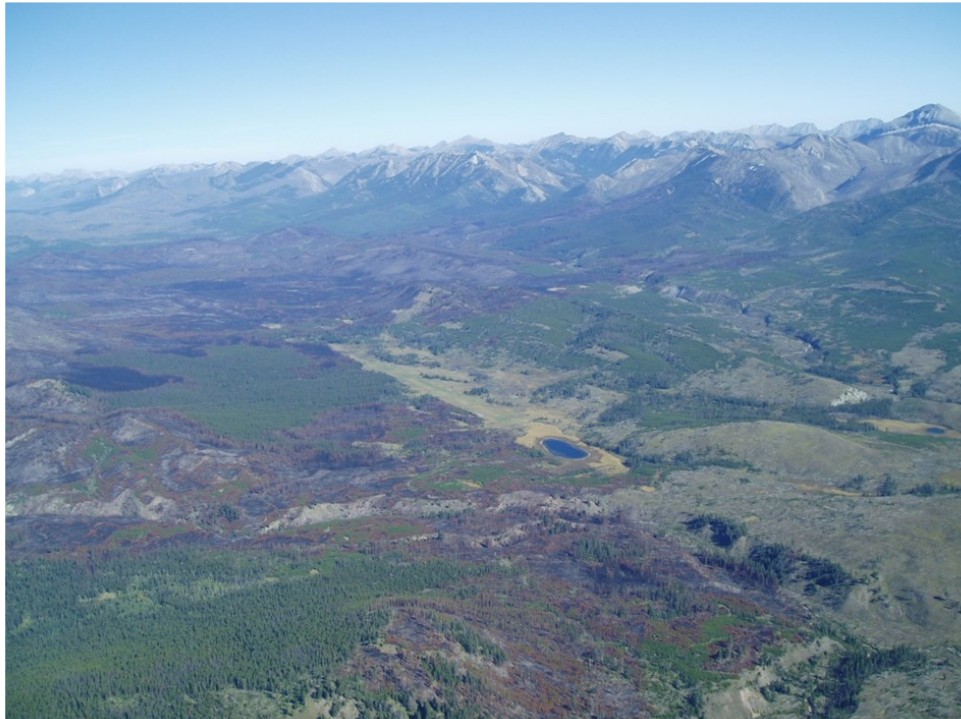
Each trip concludes by recognizing the efforts of every volunteer. For 2014 thank you recognition will include a special 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorative pin stuck on an 50<sup>th</sup> Wilderness Act interpretive card. It is hoped that this will instill an appreciation for the longevity of wilderness and Volunteers will feel attached to the 50 miles for 50 years that they contributed to.



## Rocky Mountain Ranger District- Red Shale Fire 2013

**By Michael Munoz, Rocky Mountain District Ranger**

On July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 4:30 in the afternoon, a lightning strike wildfire was detected by Beartop Lookout in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The fire was burning in the upper Red Shale Creek, west of the North Fork Sun River. It was just over two miles WNW of the Gates Park Administrative Site. The District Ranger and AFMO flew over the fire area that evening and sized the fire up at about five acres. The fire was burning within the 1988 Gates Park Fire area, in heavy downed and standing dead timber with pockets of thickly regenerating Lodgepole Pine. District personnel began formulating a plan to manage the fire for resource benefit. In addition, due to the remote and difficult access deep within the Bob Marshall Wilderness, a monitoring point protection strategy was recommended. On July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 six fire personnel were stationed at Gates Park Administrative site to initiate structure protection for the cabins and the Gates Park Pack Bridge. The fire had already grown to 710 acres. With fire personnel on the ground and at the Beartop Lookout, monitoring of the Red Shale Fire began.



District and Forest personnel, along with Regional fire management personnel, began developing a long-term plan for management of the Red Shale Fire for potential risks to public, fire personnel and resource damage. When considering how to manage the wildfire, assigned personnel consider the fuels, weather and topography and the fact that it was burning in the 1988 fire perimeter of the Gates Park Fire. Evaluating and mitigating the potential risk to the public, fire personnel and resources remained the top priority. Heavy downfall, abundant hazardous snags and dense young Lodgepole pine stands dominated the area within the fire perimeter of 1988.

The long term plan was completed on July 24<sup>th</sup>. The plan identified activities to slow progress and reduce intensity of the fire, while providing for public and firefighter safety and allowing the fire to play

**Aerial photo was taken looking north from the mouth of Rock Creek. Gates Lake and the Gates Park Air Strip are in the center of the photo. The fire's growth was greatly influenced by past fire activity, demonstrating the ability of past fire activity to limit future fire growth.**

its natural role as nearly as possible within the Gates Park Fire area of 1988.

The Red Shale Fire continued to burn on all fronts until mid-September, generally following the Gates Park Fire pattern of 1988. The fire had very minimal growth after September 13<sup>th</sup> and ended up creating a patchwork of burned and unburned areas (mosaic) with a final perimeter of 12,380 acres. The fire played its natural role in cleaning up the dead and down woody material and creating mosaic patterns within the regenerated Lodgepole Pine. The Fire was called out on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2013. The Red Shale Fire treated 12,380 acres at cost of \$65.54/acre.



# Elk for the Future?

## A BMWC elk update

*By Jay Kolbe, Wildlife Biologist, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks*

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex is one of the very few places in the U.S. sportsmen can still hunt elk during the rut with a rifle on a general elk license. This opportunity is available in the west-side Hunting Districts 151 (Upper Middle Fork Flathead), 150 (South Fork Flathead) and 280 (N. Fork Blackfoot); the Game Preserve is of course closed to all hunting while the Sun River, Badger/Two Med and lower Middle Fork Districts open with most of the State in late October.



This unique opportunity attracts large numbers of resident and out-of-state hunters to the Wilderness each fall, either guided or on their own. These hunters spend an average of 7,000 elk hunter-days within the west Complex each fall and support the operations of dozens of wilderness outfitters and their staff.

I've been blessed with the responsibility of managing elk that spend summer and fall in the Scapegoat Wilderness while my counterpart in Kalispell, John Vore, monitors the South and Middle Fork Flathead herds. We've both been fielding increasing numbers of questions and com-

ments about elk numbers and distribution in the western Wilderness; I suspect staff with other agencies have as well. I thought I'd share some of our data and perspectives that might help BMWC managers field these public inquiries.

I recently looked at hunter participation, elk harvest and direct survey data from 1990—2012 for the “early season” hunting districts. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) develops elk hunter effort and harvest estimates using statistically rigorous telephone surveys during which we contact upwards of 90,000 Montana hunters each year. We also conduct aerial surveys of Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex elk on their winter ranges to track trends in population numbers, bull ratios and calf recruitment.

First, elk hunter participation has remained steadier within the wilderness districts than in the adjacent front country during recent years. The average number of sportsmen hunting the early season backcountry hunt-

ing districts during the last five seasons is around 97% of the long term average while elk hunter-days for all of west-central Montana's FWP Region two has declined by more than 25% over the same period.

This makes some sense. Outfitter use-days have not varied much and demand for those days tends to exceed supply. Also, unlike the front country, there is very little antlerless harvest in the wilderness districts; recent Regional reductions in antlerless hunting opportunity have not affected folks choosing to hunt the backcountry. I also suspect that private wilderness elk hunters are, by

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*(Elk, continued from previous page)*

nature and necessity, among the most committed in the state.

Many of the other questions/comments I get fall into two main categories. The first, from prospective hunters: “I’ve heard that the wolves have wiped out the elk back there, is it even worth going?” and the second, from experienced folks: “I just don’t find elk in the numbers or places that I used to”.

Overall, recent wilderness bull harvest is running about 90% of the long term average. That said, almost all of the drop off can be attributed to declining harvest in Hunting District (HD) 280 (the Scapegoat) where recent bull harvest is more than 20% below the 23-year average. HD’s 150 and 151 indicate no such divergence from the long term trend.

However, we have documented real and significant local shifts in the distribution of elk within the Complex. For example, when I began conducting radio-

***Only time will tell whether herds in the western Bob Marshall will continue to support the hunting opportunities visitors have become accustomed to.***

telemetry flights over the upper South Fork in the late 1990’s it was not unusual to see several hundred elk wintering in the broad open grasslands around Basin and the Danaher—nearly half the elk in HD150 were traditionally counted south of Young’s Creek. Now, those elk are nearly gone. Over the last five years, well under 10% of the South Fork herd has wintered upstream of Big Prairie. John has seen similar declines in the Middle Fork, too.

We can only speculate about the reasons for the changes. The severe winter of ‘96/’97 forced elk in the southern Complex (and presumably in the Flathead



forks) off traditional winter ranges. John cites several examples of elk herds failing to return after that event. We also know that elk may dramatically and almost immediately, begin to use habitat differently when wolves return to a system.

Researchers have been able to document these kinds of elk habitat-use changes most clearly in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. In both the Northern Range and Madison Valley, elk reduced their use of open grasslands following wolf recovery, opting instead for more timbered and topographically complex winter ranges, where their vulnerability to wolf predation was lower.

Unfortunately, these forested winter ranges expose elk calves to higher rates of lion predation and are generally less nutritionally productive than native grasslands. Both John and I have seen recent steep declines in elk calf recruitment in both the HD 150 and HD 280 herds. Calf production, even more than the trends in total elk counts, determines future bull hunting opportunity. Only time will tell whether herds in the western Bob Marshall will continue to support the hunting opportunities visitors have become accustomed to.

## The Wilderness Road, By Gene Persha

At some point, after Euro-American settlement, urbanization, industrialization and agricultural expansion, there came a realization of how much is too much; how much can be transformed from what was to what now is; from how much was needed to how much should be preserved. Resources are finite and once they are gone, they could easily be gone forever.

The awareness to preserve wild land and water in America was recognized early in the 1800's by men such as James Fenimore Cooper, Henry Thoreau and George Perkins Marsh. In 1872, Yellowstone National Park was established to preserve a special place. It was a first for any country. In the 1920's, the U.S. Forest Service decided to protect the wild character of some of its land by labeling them "primitive areas." In 1922, Aldo Leopold, a U.S. Forester, advocated that the Gila River Headwaters get wilderness designation. It happened in 1924: another first along the wilderness road. Bob Marshall came to the forefront in the 1930's and became one of the nation's leading proponents for preserving wild land from unnatural intrusions.

It was not until 1964 that the landmark Wilderness Act was passed, but not before a long journey that was to be taken down the wilderness road. The first wilderness bill introduced in Congress was in 1940. It died because the nation was focused on the economic and war conditions. In 1951, Howard Zahniser of the Wilderness Society put forth the idea of a wilderness preservation system. It was not until 1956 that a major wilderness bill was presented to Congress. It took sixty-five separate bills over eight years to get the Wilderness Act passed in 1964. The Bob Marshall Wilderness was part of the original group of areas to get formal wilderness designation. In 1968 the U.S. Senate held hearings for the proposed Scapegoat Wilderness. The Scapegoat Wilderness bill became law in 1972. And finally, in 1975, another bill was introduced in Congress for designation of the Great Bear Wilderness. In 1978, this was accomplished. Today these three wilderness areas make up what is known as the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex with over 1.5 million acres of protected land.

In this 50th Anniversary Year of the Wilderness Act, a look back shows a long journey on a seemingly endless road to get where we are. When we look at the results today, was it worth it? Today, we have 662 wilderness areas, about 2% of land in the lower forty-eight states, totaling about 109 million acres. Yes, the road was long, but now the wilderness trails are even longer. We have now fifty years of continuing highlights for the nation and for the world. As former justice, William O. Douglas said, "The soul of a people invariably makes an indelible imprint upon their land."

## Managing a Special Resource: Westslope Cutthroat Trout

*Update from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks by Matt Boyer*



Morning on Lena Lake.

The Bob Marshall Wilderness and, in particular, the South Fork of the Flathead River offer a truly spectacular fishing experience. As evidence, you can go online and view the countless testimonials from anglers who rave about the scenery, crystal clear water and abundant native trout eager to take a fly. Or, better yet, if you haven't made the journey into The Bob, go experience for yourself this incredible wilderness fishery.

It's true we are fortunate to be able to recreate in such a wild and beautiful place. For those of us who have the privilege of working here there also comes the responsibility of managing this wilderness resource for the enjoyment of future generations.

(Continued on next page)



Accomplishing this task is seldom simple, requiring wilderness managers to balance social, biological and ecological issues using tools and approaches that minimize impacts to wilderness character.

Current efforts to restore native westslope cutthroat trout in the South Fork Flathead River drainage provide one example of the types of challenges facing wilderness resource managers. This native trout has declined to less than 10% of its historic range due to habitat degradation and hybridization and competition with introduced nonnative fishes.

Remarkably, the South Fork Flathead watershed comprises approximately half of the remaining interconnected and genetically pure populations within this fish's range. To secure this drainage as a stronghold for native trout,

ly pure fish) is being used in an additional three lakes as an alternative strategy to restore westslope cutthroat. Most recently, crews completed a rotenone treatment at Lena Lake in the Big Salmon drainage.

*“Conservation efforts for this native fish demonstrate a commitment to preserving the character of the Bob Marshall Complex now and into the future.”*

For safety reasons, containers of the piscicide were flown by helicopter to the lake; however, pack stock were used to transport the remainder of the gear to

Lena Lake and pack out the empty rotenone containers and equipment used for the project. We thank members of the Flathead Chapter of Back Country Horsemen for their expertise and assistance with this sizable packing job. Lena Lake will be restocked in summer 2014 with a local source of westslope cutthroat trout collected from nearby Danaher Creek.

Looking ahead to September 2014, crews are planning a rotenone treatment project at Koessler Lake in the Gordon Creek drainage using a similar approach to the one taken at Lena Lake. Sunburst Lake is the last wilderness lake project in the South Fork Flathead and is planned for fall of 2016.

Westslope cutthroat trout are an important part of our natural heritage and an integral part of the wilderness aquatic ecosystem. Conservation efforts for this native fish demonstrate a commitment to preserving the character of the Bob Marshall Complex now and into the future.



**Back Country Horseman member, Chuck Allen, packing rafts and gear for a westslope cutthroat restoration project at Lena Lake.**

biologists with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the US Forest Service have worked cooperatively to eradicate the threat posed by nonnative trout in 21 headwater lakes that were historically fishless, but planted with fish as early as the 1920's. Eleven of the 21 lakes are within wilderness and, to date, rotenone has been successfully used to remove nonnative trout in six lakes and genetic swamping (annual stocking of large numbers of genetical-

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: 751-4556, email: [mboyer@mt.gov](mailto:mboyer@mt.gov)).



# Introducing Nikki Drewry & 50<sup>th</sup> Wilderness Celebration

*By Amber Kamps, Lincoln District Ranger*

Personnel and positions are in flux on the Lincoln Ranger District, including the staff managing our recreation and wilderness programs. One such new face on the District is Nikki Drewry. In October, Nikki took on our Wilderness Ranger/Trails Technician position which was previously held by Casey Burns. Nikki comes to us most recently from the Tongass National Forest where she was serving as the Lead Wilderness Ranger. She has also worked for five seasons as a wildland firefighter. Nikki has ample experience working with and caring for stock, which will also serve her well as she embarks on her new adventure in Lincoln and the Scapegoat Wilderness. And, Nikki is a Montana Grizzly so we welcome her home too.

Nikki has been actively involved working with the community and organizations in the planning of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Wilderness Celebration. There are several events that are being planned specifically in Lincoln and around the Scapegoat portion of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. One event is a public showing of the Scapegoat Wilderness movie that was made last summer. This is an agency sponsored film that was created in partnership with Backcountry Horseman and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Outfitters to highlight youth, the More Kids in the Woods national initiative and wilderness. I have seen a preview of the movie and it is very well done, focusing on the wilderness values we all hold near and dear. Because the release date has been pushed back to early fall, we will plan on doing one showing during the school day for the Lincoln Public School and one in the evening for the community sometime next winter.

Nikki is will also be hosting an educational hike for the 50<sup>th</sup> Celebration. It is scheduled for Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10 a.m. at the Indian Meadows Trailhead. This should be a great time of year to view wildflowers as well. The hike will be on the first few miles of trail outside the wilderness and will be stopping at the wilderness boundary to ensure we adhere to the group size limitation. At 2 pm a potluck barbeque is scheduled at Indian Meadows Cabin with both demonstrations and speakers planned. These may include: Leave No Trace practices, backpacking essentials and packing with stock.

The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Lincoln Ranger District will also be hosting a 1 mile, 5k, 10k Fun Run themed around the Wilderness Celebration. This is quite appropriate as the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce understands the value of wilderness to its community as demonstrated in its slogan of "Part Wilderness, Part Paradise". This event is tentatively set for August 30<sup>th</sup> and will include a community-wide BBQ as well.



Nikki Drewry

# Back to Basics: Bridging the Traditional Skills Gap



By Jacob Long, Seeley Lake Ranger District

*“These trainings are important and need to continue. They provide an avenue to develop an array of skills that apply to both small and large projects in remote areas, decrease cost, improve capacity and increases safe abilities.”*

At the end of last season, the Seeley Lake Ranger District hosted a traditional skills workshop that focused on rigging. Rigging is a skill dating back to the first sailing vessels. For over two centuries the logging industry has used these skills to move heavy timber off steep mountainsides. Since the designation of wilderness, the Forest Service has been using rigging to assist in moving heavy timbers and other objects in the construction of backcountry structures where motorized equipment is not permitted or appropriate. Through the use of rigging, trail workers can safely and efficiently move heavy material. With the assistance of the Northern Region Trail Coordinator Garry Edson and the Northern Region Wilderness Program Manager Steve Kimball, the Forest Service is teaching these skills to the up-and-coming wilderness and trail managers.

The training occurred at Monture Guard Station north of Ovando Montana in September of 2013. The project consisted of replacing a rotten bridge on the heavily used Monture trail. The bridge spans Falls Creek approximately 1 mile from the Monture Creek Trailhead. The location of the bridge replacement is outside of wilderness and mechanical and motorized equipment would have been an appropriate option; however, we wanted both to learn how to accomplish replacing a bridge with traditional skills and to teach these skills to other units.

Ian Barlow led the course with his vast knowledge of

rigging and climbing, assisted by Doug Olive and Kirby Matthew. There was overwhelming interest and over 25 students showed up to learn the dos and don'ts of rigging and to help the district build the structure. There was some classroom time but nearly all the time spent was hands on at the construction site.

There are three well known and practiced methods of rigging in trail related work, the direct pull, the skyline, and the high-lead. The course focused mainly on two different designs, the skyline and the high-lead. The skyline system was placed to move rock material down off the steep mountainside, which was used for the gabion baskets and retaining walls. The high-lead was used to move the 33-foot, 1000 pound bridge stringers across the creek and into place on the sill logs. Other components were also discussed and demonstrated such as climbing and fall protection, spur tree selection, equipment selection, new technologies and safety. All the students went away from this course with a brand new bag of skills and capabilities.

These trainings are important and need to continue. They provide an avenue to develop an array of skills that apply to both small and large projects in remote areas, decrease cost, improve capacity and increases safe abilities. By providing the skills and ability to transport a wider variety of materials, we can offer more options to trail managers that will fit both wilderness and non-wilderness needs.



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## **By Bert Lindler**

from "A Wilderness Original: The Life of Bob Marshall" by James M. Glover

### **Notes from Bob**

*Sharing these recollections is a little inconvenient, given my untimely death, but I feel obliged to do so in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act—Robert Marshall (1901-1939).*

#### **The Making of a Camp Cook**

Panther Creek, WA 1924—I've been spending long days measuring experimental plots during my summer "field assistant" job with the Forest Service's Wind River Forest Experiment Station. My boss, Richard McArdle, is helping this Eastern city boy get a little field experience.

I love to work in the woods, but wanted to show that I was willing to help with camp chores, such as cooking. My requests to take a turn with the skillet weren't well received, but on our last night in camp, McArdle finally relented.

"Bob," he told me, "There's not much food left. Use whatever you need to, but leave something for breakfast."

I started by toasting all of the bread we had left, a laborious undertaking over an open fire, one slice at a time. The toast went into our kettle, along with three cans of evaporated milk, two cans of peas, and two cans of salmon. We had half-a-dozen lemons left, so I squeezed the juice into my soufflé.

I put the kettle into our largest frying pan, which I partially filled with water to form sort of a double boiler.

McArdle was sure surprised to see what an excellent job I had done. I thought the soufflé tasted fine.

McArdle must have liked it too, because he said it tasted like lemonade with salmon and peas.

Of course, I needed to show the boss what a good job I would do with breakfast. We had some flour, so I made hot cakes and stacked them on a log beside the fire. I hard boiled all of the eggs we had left, peeled them, and deep fried each one in a pan filled with grease.

"Richard," I said, "I think these broiled eggs are going to become the national dish."

McArdle never said whether he liked them, but I know he wanted to try them because he had a knife on one before it bounced off into the brush.

After completing my duties that summer, I climbed Mount Hood then headed east to Harvard, where I had been accepted for graduate studies in forestry.

Good thing I was able to show my enthusiasm and cooking skills that summer because McArdle later became Chief of the Forest Service.

