



BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS COMPLEX

2011 NEWSLETTER

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You're Invited...

To the Annual BMWC Public Meeting

When

Saturday, April 9th, 2011
10:00am - 3:00pm

Where

Choteau Public Library-
Meeting Room
17 Main Ave N
406-466-2052

Note: To get to the conference room, park south of Rex's Grocery Store. Signs will be posted. Lunch is on your own.

Your Direct Input is Needed!

Please contact **Deb Mucklow** for contributing ideas or for additional information:

406.387.3851
dmucklow@fs.fed.us

Off and Running!

LETTER FROM BMWC LEAD RANGER - DEB MUCKLOW

Annual Public Meeting

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (BMWC) is comprised of the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat designated wildernesses, and also has ties with adjacent lands that provide access and trailheads to the wilderness. As managers, we really value the opportunity to meet and talk with wilderness users, supporters and advocates. This annual meeting is for all interested parties to talk about those mentioned areas.

Some of you may recognize this as the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) meeting or task force. For this particular gathering, we also hope to include other areas of discussion, like the changes in federal funding we've been hearing in the media. We can anticipate further changes in funding coming our way. Because of this, I think hearing your priorities for the management of the BMWC will be especially important for this meeting.

Please give me a call or email me to let me know what topics you'd like for us to present and to be

As wilderness stewards and managers, we need to hear what you think is working, what is not, and where there may be other areas of concern.

prepared for. As much as we think we have a good understanding, your direct input is really needed! The Forest Service and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks will be present; all of us are looking forward to catching up and listening. We'll be hearing an update from the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, as well.

I'd like to remind all users of the BMWC to plan ahead for your trips. It remains important for visitors to safely have the adventure they hoped for. By knowing the trail conditions, areas of recent fires, high water, concentrations of blow-down, and existing restrictions, a visitor may avoid undue stress and complications.



One question we commonly receive regarding the Food Storage Order: So what? We expect all wilderness users to know how to properly store their food and to be compliant with the Order. It is also important to know the correct party size, stay limit, and stock feed requirements. If any of these raise questions to you, please ask us. There are no stupid questions! One very important heads-up is the number of hazard trees and snags across the landscape. We are hearing of many close encounters, so please be aware of the winds.

For those unable to participate in the upcoming meeting, we will be posting the monitoring reports from the meeting on the Flathead Forest WEB page. We will welcome further questions and discussion from anyone interested. 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. **I appreciate that we get to work with such dedicated individuals** and look forward to seeing you in 2011! Hope to see you at the public meeting in Choteau!

Deb Mucklow, BMWC Lead Ranger

THE FLATHEAD WELCOMES NEW FOLKS

Flathead Supervisor, Chip Weber

The joy of being in the outdoors led to Chip's career with the Forest Service. He grew up in New Jersey and spent lots of time camping in New England and the Adirondacks in upstate New York. He received a B.S. in forest management from Oregon State University and an M.S. in forest ecology and silviculture from the University of Washington.

His 24-year career with the agency has included assignments in Oregon, Indiana, Alaska and Montana. For the last nine years he has served as a district ranger on the Tongass and Willamette National Forests. He moved to the Flathead Valley in May 2010 and considers his new position as forest supervisor on the Flathead National Forest "his dream job in an awesome place."



Chip is married to Susan Weber. They have two daughters, ages 24 and 19. His hobbies are focused on the outdoors, specifically hunting and fishing. His favorite sport is college basketball, but enjoys all sports.



Resource Assistant, Chris Prew

Chris Prew is new to the BMWC as the Resource Assistant responsible for the Recreation, Wilderness, and Lands programs on the Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest. Chris comes to the Flathead from Leadville, Colorado where he worked as the Recreation, Wilderness and Winter Sports Manager on the Leadville RD of the San Isabel National Forest. He has worked in recreation for the Forest Service for 12 years in Idaho, Alaska and Colorado. While he is new to the Flathead NF, he is no stranger to Montana. Chris graduated from the University of Montana in 1999.

While attending UM he discovered the BMWC, and over the years has spent many days exploring the Scapegoat and Bob Marshall Wilderness Areas. He is excited to be back in Montana and working on the Flathead National Forest.



Recreation Program Leader, Becky Smith-Powell

Becky Smith-Powell is the new Recreation Program Leader on the Flathead Forest. Her duties include wilderness, trails, special use permits and developed and dispersed recreation. She has been on the Flathead Forest for the past 23 years working in recreation, trails and special use management.

"I'm really looking forward to adding wilderness management to my workload. Most of my past experiences, in the Bob, were dealing with cave resources. This new position will give me the opportunity to broaden my duties and work with other wilderness rangers and managers."

Becky's office is located in the Forest Supervisors Office in Kalispell. She can be reached at **406 758-3538** or brsmith@fs.fed.us.

BIG CHANGES, NEW FACES AT THE BMWF



BMWf Staff trip in The Scapegoat Wilderness, BMWC, 2010. Executive Director, Keagan Zoellner, bottom right.

Nick Cheney, Program Director.

As The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation gears up for its 15th season in the field, they are also celebrating some exciting personnel changes.

In November, Paul Travis, Executive Director, stepped down and moved with his family to set up shop in Helena. He started with the BMWF in 2002 as the East Side Crew Leader out of Choteau, returned shortly thereafter to become Program Coordinator, and eventually took over as E.D. when Carla Cline-Belski left. Many of us have never known the BMWF without Paul on staff and his decency, competence, and love for The Bob will be seriously missed. Into those big shoes steps **Keagan Zoellner**, who most recently served as BMWF Program Director. Keagan brings a ton of field experience and BMWC knowledge to bear in her new position, including four seasons as a River Ranger for the Forest Service out of Spotted Bear. Her infectious fun attitude towards work and hard charging energy have left an impression on folks she meets and inspires others to lend a hand in The Bob Marshall Wilderness.

As the new Program Director, **Nick Cheney** hopes to maintain the continuity of program excellence established by Paul and Keagan. Nick served as East Side Crew Leader for three seasons, 2004-2006, and by that last summer just about had a handle on when to take Kraig Lang seriously. Field Crew Leaders Addy, Katie and Kelsey will be returning this year, so be sure to say a big "Thanks" if you see a group of their hard working volunteers on the trail!

Nick Cheney, Program Director, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation

program@bmf.org, 406-387-3808.



LINCOLN DISTRICT UPDATE

CRPL, Blisters, Slickers and Football

We all know how each year brings us the budget

woes, and we don't know how much funding will actually make it to the ground for field crews. But there may be a saving grace for the Lincoln Ranger District, called the Collaborative Forest Land Restoration Program (CFLRP). The money associated with the Act passed by congress could keep Lincoln's wilderness and trail crews pounding the ground providing trail maintenance and wilderness restoration for the southern portion of the Scapegoat for several years.



The funding that is directly linked to CFLRP is for restoration work like campsite rehab, trail rehab, and riparian restoration. The Lincoln RD projects for 2011 include the following: wilderness campsite rehab; puncheon rebuilds, and; the mainline trail restoration.

2010 was a whirlwind of crosscuts, blisters and slickers. May started out warm and dry

with lots of blow down from the 2003 Snow Talon Fire. After a couple of days clearing I made it to Webb Lake to find everything well. Late May I had some help from Ezra Shwalm, our game warden, and Bob Mikelson from the Helena District. We spent a week clearing the Mainline, Meadow Creek and the Meadow Creek cutoff. June brought the trail crew, training, orientation and a 10 day hitch. Much of the clearing was done in June and early July, taking care of the main routes and some of the secondary trails. By mid-July we rebuilt a puncheon on the mainline, and constructed a culvert out of native materials to take care of some water running down the trail. At the end of July, we made a trip to Bighorn Lake, clearing trail and catching up on maintenance. In between wilderness work we were able to clear a majority of the front country trails, both motorized and non-motorized.

"..there may be a saving grace for the Lincoln Ranger District, called the Collaborative Forest Land Restoration Program"

The fire crew was working hard on a fuel reduction project in the Alice Creek drainage, mechanically treating about 500 acres for a

wildlife burn. The trail crew and I spent several days resupplying them with food and fuel to their camp site. August was spent tying up loose ends and wondering where the hell the summer went.

All of the crew went back to school at the end of August, and I was coaching two-a-day practices and getting geared up for early rifle season. September 15 came and with it, many backcountry hunters. It was wet and wild the first couple of weeks with, quite a few elk harvested, loose mules and plenty of wrecks along the trail.

Special thanks to the BMWF for the projects they completed for us!

They spent a week working in the Upper Landers Trail clearing, grubbing trail, and installing water bars. In July they did some signing, more clearing, and water bar installation in the Valley of The Moon and along the Continental Divide. By August BMWF was at Bugle Mountain, grubbing in a reroute on Meadow Creek. The old trail was washed out due to beaver dams up river. Again, the work that BMWF accomplished was a huge help to the Lincoln program. Thanks again!

-Casey Burns, Trails/Wilderness Ranger





Writer Joseph Kinsey Howard

got it right when he described Montana as high, wide and handsome. But why three adjectives when other states could be described with one? Because Montana provides unsurpassed opportunities to explore high mountains, wide valleys and handsome rivers; to see endangered wildlife in their natural habitat; and to relax and recreate in some of the most rugged and scenic country our nation has to offer.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail is one of those special outdoor opportunities to explore. In 1968, Congress passed the National Trails Act and designated the well-known Appalachian Trail and Pacific Crest Trail. In 1978, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) was included in these treasured landscapes.

The CDNST stretches from Canada to Mexico for 3100 miles, through five states (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico) and showcases some of the highest and most scenic vistas along the spine of the Rocky Mountains.

Yes, one can hike the entire distance, but no; the Trail is not complete by official standards. There is about 25% left to complete (with the largest "gaps" in Montana and Idaho which is only 56% complete as a region).

As a non-motorized trail the last connections on the CDNST mean getting the Trail onto singletrack and off of roads in some places, securing rights of way through private lands and completing environmental analyses to build new construction. That takes a lot of time and work!

That's why volunteers and partners are critical to our mission. CDTA has arranged about 40 volunteer projects this summer along the entire trail with 12 projects in Montana/Idaho. In fact, we have 2 maintenance projects in The Bob!

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation (BMWF) is a strong partner that already does great work in The Bob, so CDTA raised the money for the projects and BMWF will be leading them in the field. It's a great partnership. Now all we need is YOU. Sign up today!

2011 CDTA and BMWF partner projects:

- July 7-19: Bighorn Creek, Scapegoat Wilderness
- August 6-13: Bowl Creek, Bob Marshall Wilderness

Explore the backcountry of The Bob on the ridge of The Great Divide. It's sure to impress. Space is limited so register today before they fill up. Your support of wild, open spaces makes a difference. Thank you!



If you'd like a copy of the 2011 CDTA Volunteer Guide please contact the MT Regional Office or you can also find it online at www.cdtrail.org



CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL ALLIANCE

Montana Regional Office:
Shannon Freix - MT & ID Regional Rep
406.781.0627 • shannon@cdtrail.org

To sign up for a volunteer project on the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in The Bob this summer, please check out these sites:
www.cdtrail.org > **Get Involved** OR www.bmwf.org > **Volunteer** (406. 387.3808)

A Volunteer Opportunity

FINALLY, SUCCESS!

The Fight Against Invasive Weeds



Leafy Spurge

Herbicide application is most effective before seeds are produced, when true flowers are in bloom...

Success stories are always fun to share, especially when it comes to resource management. Even more especially, when it comes to the fight against invasive weeds. The lifting of the grazing restriction in Bar Creek Meadows is now eminent, and no longer just a topic of discussion. As we all know, invasive weeds are aggressive and stubborn. Established infestations can destroy productivity, crowd out available graze, and take years to contain, reduce, and with a considerable amount of resources and time, eradicate.

The Leafy spurge colony, in Bar Creek Meadows, on the southern portion of the Spotted Bear Ranger District, is one such infestation. Introduced to the area around the turn of the 20th century, it is commonly thought to be associated with the Danaher and McRae homesteads (c. 1898-1902). The Leafy spurge has been the root cause of the grazing restriction since 1987. Notorious for its extensive root system, which can reach depths of more than 20 feet, Leafy Spurge is a perennial weed of the family *euphorbiaceae*, commonly referred to as *Euphorbia esula*. Leafy spurge can spread by seed and by its horizontally growing roots, and is toxic if ingested by cattle and horses. Herbicides will only kill roots to a depth of 18 inches, so an integrated management program is crucial for any short or long-term success.

After several decades of some individual efforts to keep things in check, documented Forest Service efforts didn't take hold until the mid to late 1990's. Both chemical and biological control methods were implemented. Herbicide application is most effective before seeds are produced, when true flowers are in bloom, from mid to late May, through mid-June. Both Tordon and Banvel have shown effectiveness, as well as combining either one with 2,4-D.

The bio control releases from 1998 (*Aphthona spp.*, flea beetles) are still present and working slowly on the weeds. Adults, in aggregation, feed on leafy spurge leaves and flower bracts causing considerable damage. However, the primary damaging stage is the larvae, which feed on both the primary and secondary root system. In 2007, hawkmoth (*Hyles euphorbiae*) larvae were found on the plants. The USFS did not release these bugs; they must have either been released by a private party or naturally found their way to the infestation. Hawkmoth larvae defoliate leafy spurge plants after the plant has flowered, but this damage seems to have little or no impact on spurge populations.

-Tad Wehunt, Recreation/Wilderness, Spotted Bear

The following is an account of the treatment record for the 2010 season, from Eric Kroger:

We were able to make an early visit to Bar Creek meadows this year on May 12th, to assess the status of the Leafy Spurge. As the pictures show, the spurge was barely out of the ground and a little tougher to find. We concluded it would be a little too early to be effective spraying. (top, right)

On May 23rd, we revisited the site to find the Leafy Spurge tall enough to find relatively easily. We had a couple of 'six-guns' with us and were able to get our first application of herbicide. (p. 6)

We returned on June 24th, with our backpack sprayers to hit the area hard, and found all the mature plants in full blossom. We also took note of the plants we sprayed on May 23rd, they were looking very sick! (middle and bottom, right)



Leafy Spurge



This was the earliest we've been able to hit this site in a number of years, and I think it made a huge difference. It was great to have the ability to make this a priority this year, and we found the most effective time to spray this Leafy Spurge at Bar Creek Meadows, late May to early June. We were highly successful in our treatment on May 23rd, and plan to continue to make this a priority to hit early in the season. (above)



BMWF crew after a hard day's work pulling weeds



T E L L U R I D E
MOUNTAINFILM

An independent documentary film festival.
 A place to learn, be inspired and celebrate
 indomitable spirit. Come and check it out!

ON TOUR

SATURDAY, APRIL 16^h

GREAT FALLS, MT

Lewis & Clark Interp Center
 Doors open 8:30 - Films at 7pm

Pre-event tickets at
 Big Horn Wilderness &
 Mountain Front Market in
 Choteau - \$15

SUNDAY, APRIL 17th

BOZEMAN, MT

Emerson Cultural Center
 Doors open 6pm - Films at 7pm

Pre-event tickets at
 Barrell Mountaineering &
 Northern Lights Trading Post
 \$15

MONDAY, APRIL 18th

HELENA, MT

Myrna Loy Center
 Doors open 6:30 - Films at 7pm

Pre-event tickets at
 Blackfoot River Brewing
 \$15

TUESDAY, APRIL 19th

WHITEFISH, MT

O'SHAUGHNESSY CENTER-
 Doors open 6pm - Films at 7pm

Pre-event tickets at
 The White Room Mountain Shop
 & Rocky Mountain Outfitter
 \$15

Explore "The Bob" this summer!



www.bmwf.org

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



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

Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation
PO Box 190688 • Hungry Horse, MT 59919
406.387.3808 • www.bmwf.org

BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS COMPLEX

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RANGER DISTRICT

Managing Impacts in Wilderness

KEEGAN RUMSEY AND RYAN SMITH

CAMPSITES THAT NEED (THE MOST) MANAGEMENT:

Cable High Lines and
Rehabilitation Work

MY LAKE

4-2-3 005, 009

UPPER MOOSE CREEK

4-2-4 004, 005

HALF MOON PARK

4-4-3 009

LAKE LEVALLE

Over the past 5 years, we have been working and rehabilitating campsites on the **Rocky Mountain Ranger District** in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. With yearly maintenance, many of these sites maintain an acceptable level of wear. However, some sites do not recover and are showing unacceptable barren core, according to our Limits of Acceptable Change standards. We've chosen our top 4 picks to be managed with cable high lines and rehab work. We decided on these four due to their proximity to subalpine areas and lakes. Both areas will continue to see heavy use by visitors and are sensitive zones, especially to heavy stock use.

My Lake

My Lake receives use from people accessing the wilderness, both from the Spotted Bear Ranger District and the Rocky Mountain Ranger District. It is used as a day use "lunch spot" and as a campsite. There is no good graze at My Lake and no camping with stock within 500 feet of the lake. The site at the foot of the lake, shows extremely heavy wear from tying-to-trees. 95% of the trees in this vicinity show exposed roots. A cable high-line here would eliminate the need to tie to trees for day users, and could be used by campers at the 3 closest sites (which are all "high" campsites rated by the LAC standards).

Upper Moose Creek

The avalanche chutes at the head end of Moose Creek are the last good stock camps before the camping closure. They

are used HEAVILY by stock users, and show this by excess barren core, especially in site 4. A cable high-line in one to two of these sites could be used to help rehabilitate some of the barren core.

Half Moon Park

The main campsite in Halfmoon Park is consistently a high impact campsite, and shows excess barren core. It is a popular spot for outfitter roving trips, and they all seem to choose their favorite trees to high-line. A cable high-line here would encourage one area to be used, and some of the other areas could be rehabilitated.

Lake Levalle

Lake Levalle is another high lake in a sensitive subalpine zone. It is also popular and will remain so for day users and campers. This would be another good candidate for a cable high line.

The River Corridors

Certainly the areas previously mentioned are not the only concerns on the district. Narrowing the "hammered" camps to only four is a bit of a challenge. As use increases, we are definitely seeing more damage along the river corridors. In this category, we are choosing the most crucial ones to do rehabilitation work and more encouragement to the public to use only one stock area. This could be by signage, or eventually, if necessary a temporary high line or hitch rail. All of these sites would be good candidates for volunteer groups to help do more extensive restoration work.

BMWC Backcountry Mounted Enforcement Patrol, 2011 Report



2010 in the BMWC proved to be yet another busy year back there in regards to Law Enforcement issues. It has been 3 years since the inception of my position as the Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer with the Bob Marshall Wilderness as my primary responsibility. My patrols are conducted via horseback. During my time back there I enforce all Forest Service laws and regulations, as well as all state laws that apply. I also spend time helping out the various districts around the complex with the work projects they are completing.

I was able to spend 63 days working in the BMWC throughout 2010. I rode just short of 800 miles and made approximately 471 contacts. I didn't have many if any law enforcement issues with the majority of the contacts I made. However, that being said I still routinely issued citations for Food Storage, Sanitation issues, Stay Limit, and Cutting/damaging live trees. I also issued a few citations for violating State hunting and fishing regulations.

There still seems to be some confusion amongst several people in regards to carcass storage. Carcass storage regulations are covered under the BMWC Food Storage Order. All parts of the carcass including the head must be stored in an approved bear resistant manner while the carcass is in camp. Simple camp occupancy during the nighttime does not meet the carcass storage regulation.

I would also like to remind people that horse pellets (not hay cubes) along with ALL food attractants (including beer and pop) must be stored in a bear resistant manner when the camp is unoccupied. The BMWC Food Storage Regulation is in place to help minimize human/bear encounters, provide safety for all the user's and minimize the number of habituated bears. All it takes is one time for a bear to get a food reward, then it's a safety issue for all folk's in the backcountry, including personal injuries and a very high probability of a lot of torn up camp equipment and gear.

I also encourage all users to stop in or call the respective Ranger District's that they will be recreating on and inquire and obtain all of the rules and regulations for that area before going.

Since there is a lot of country to patrol I sincerely appreciate any information that I get from BMWC users in regards to violations that they observe or have information about. That information can be passed along directly to me, individual Ranger Stations, or anonymously through 1-800-TIP-MONT.

-L. Kevin Arnold, Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer,
BMWC



“Simple camp occupancy during the nighttime does not meet the carcass Storage Regulation...”

Fisheries: The South Fork Flathead Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation Program

The South Fork Flathead watershed contains some of the last remaining interconnected habitat for westslope cutthroat trout and provides a world-class fishery for this native species. Although wilderness designation has protected much of this drainage from human related threats such as habitat degradation and fragmentation, hybridization and competition with introduced trout species remains a persistent threat to Montana's state fish. In an effort to preserve this important piece of Montana's natural heritage Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, US Forest Service, and Bonneville Power Administration implemented the South Fork Flathead westslope cutthroat trout conservation program. This program is aimed at restoring westslope cutthroat trout populations in 21 high mountain lakes, approximately half of which lie in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex.

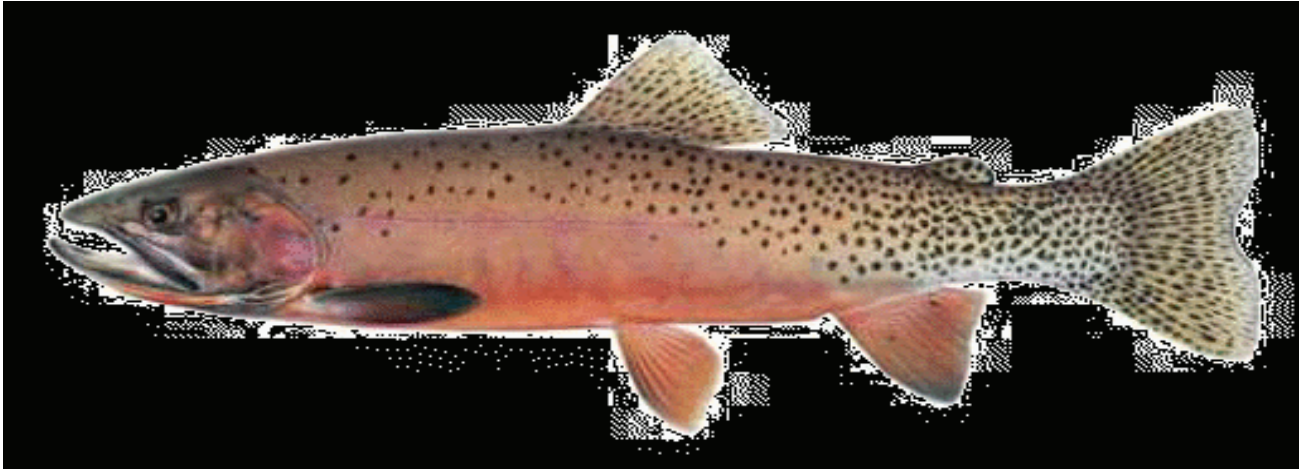
To date, rotenone has been successfully used in six lakes to remove sources of nonnative trout and reestablish westslope cutthroat fisheries. In some instances, genetic swamping can be an effective alternative to chemical treatment and is being used in six lakes (including George, Woodward, and Pyramid) to restore populations of westslope cutthroat trout. The past two years volunteers with the Backcountry Horsemen have assisted fisheries crews with this effort by transporting westslope cutthroat fry to stock in Pyramid Lake. Partnerships such as this one have been vital to the success of this large scale native fish restoration.

In fall 2011, rotenone treatment is planned for Necklace Chain of Lakes (also known as Smokey Creek Lakes). Application of rotenone will take two days to complete and during this time there will be temporary restrictions on trail use in the area. Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and Spotted Bear Ranger District will post information concerning this project at trailheads.



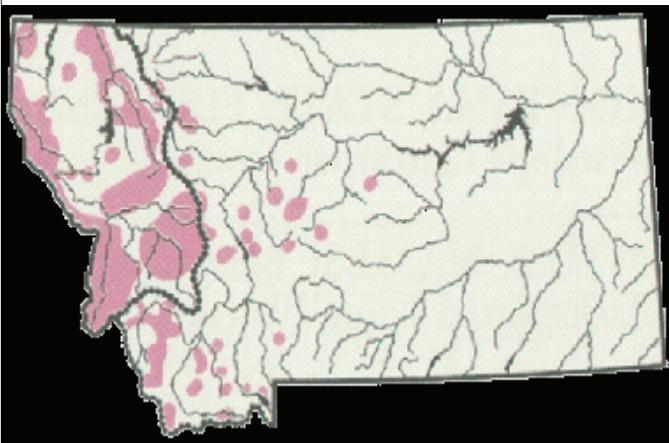
Volunteers with the Backcountry Horsemen stock westslope cutthroat trout fry in Pyramid Lake, Bob Marshall Wilderness.

For Detailed Information, visit the South Fork Westslope Cutthroat Trout Project website (<http://fwp.mt.gov/r1/wctproject/default.html>) or contact fisheries biologist **Matt Boyer** 751-4556 mboyer@mt.gov



Elsewhere in the Complex, fisheries work is directed at conserving genetic variation among westslope cutthroat trout populations in the South Fork. Genetic diversity is critical for long term persistence of a species; consequently, efforts are underway to create a short term broodstock using genetically pure westslope cutthroat trout from Danaher Creek. In 2009 and 2010, nearly 700 juvenile fish were captured and transported live by packstock from the wild to Sekokini Springs Genetic Conservation Facility near Coram. This spring mature fish will be spawned to produce fry to restock Necklace Lakes in summer 2012. Future plans include conserving unique genetic variation from additional westslope cutthroat populations within the wilderness to preserve the evolutionary legacy of this native fish.

“...wilderness designation has protected the [westslope cutthroat]... from habitat degradation”



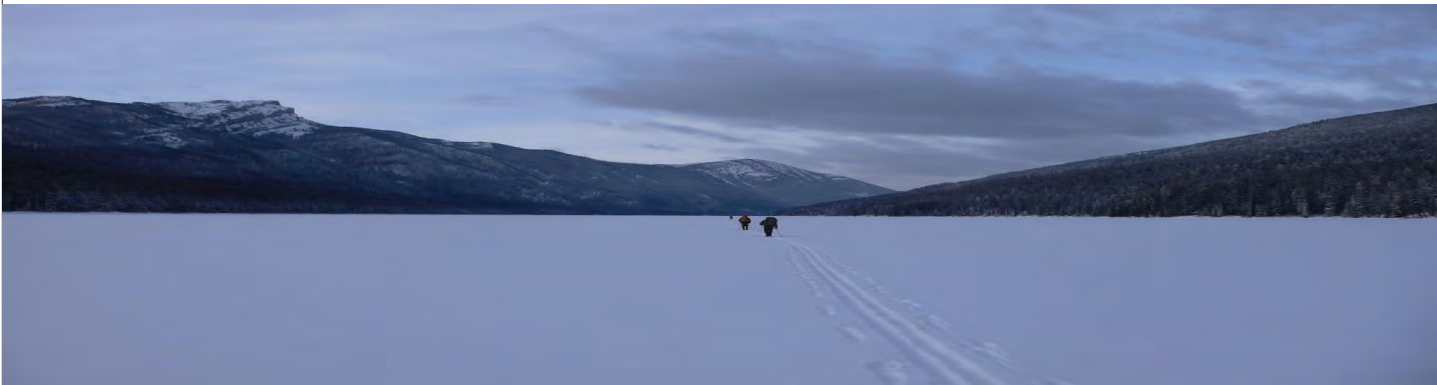
Species distribution



Pack train with coolers holding live westslope cutthroat trout from Danaher Creek.

Spotted Bear Snow Survey Update

“In the precarious venture of the snow survey, we’re hoping for slightly warmer temperatures, more wildlife sightings, good skiing conditions and warm cabins.”



At twenty-eight below zero it's hard to get people to go outside. It can be even harder to get your skis, bindings, backpack buckles, radios and fingers to work. For the last two snow surveys, however, that's how the game has gone; frozen appendages and all. For the past thirty years Spotted Bear Ranger District has conducted two to three on-the-ground mid-winter snow surveys. The Natural Resource Conservation Service would then perform two additional aerial surveys. This year, however, Spotted Bear is doing two more on the ground surveys. So that brings four lucky souls to the old Holbrook cabin site on the first of every month from January to May.

The basic layout of these trips is to cross country ski to the snow course, take the ten measurements, call out to the National Resource Conservation Service with the data and then ski out. On average this takes about seven or eight days of variable skiing conditions, headlamp mornings and nights, shoveling down to get into the cabins and depending on the route, several mountain passes.

Beyond the raw data collected on snow depth, snow water equivalent and % snowpack, the added benefit to the district is the opportunity to check on cabins, shovel roofs if needed or cleaning up any wintering rat nests. In addition, it's a first glimpse at what the windfall is looking like and to plan for summer trail clearing priorities.

So far this winter we've covered approximately 150 miles of trail and stopped over at six out of eight backcountry cabins in the South Fork Drainage. There are generally three to four people on each trip, and most recently a Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks employee doing a fur-bearer survey. It's been above zero for only two of the fifteen total days spent in the backcountry. The elk are looking good, we've marked GPS points for nineteen marten, six lynx, six mountain lion, two wolverine, one Fisher and two moose. In the precarious venture of the snow survey, we're hoping for slightly warmer temperatures, more wildlife sightings, good skiing conditions and warm cabins.

-Guy Zoellner, Wilderness Trails Manager, Spotted Bear Ranger District

Cardinal Creek Fire Update, by Jim Flint

The Cardinal Creek fire was detected on July 25, 2010 at about 3:30 in the afternoon approximately one mile east of the mouth of Cardinal Creek in the Gordon Creek drainage. Initial size up by a nearby trail crew indicated a two-acre fire actively spreading downstream to the east. By 4:30 pm, a detection airplane from the Helena National Forest assessed the size as 20 acres and rapidly spreading in heavy fuels. At 6:00 pm, the fire was estimated at 300 acres burning in dense timber with a significant percentage of dead trees. The Gordon Creek and Cardinal Peak Divide trail along with Cardinal Creek, Cabin Creek, Kidd Mountain and Pilot Peak trails were closed for public safety with the fire actually crossing the Gordon Creek, Cardinal Peak Divide, and Kidd Mountain trails in the first day. On July 26, crews began to secure and mop-up the fire on the north side of Gordon Creek as well as starting repair work on the trail. On the afternoon of July 30, with moderating weather, crews were able to allow limited access on the Gordon Creek trail. On August 1, the Gordon Creek trail was opened to the public, although crews remained on site to monitor the fire for any increase in activity and to keep the trail cleared. The Youngs Creek trail to the south remained open throughout the summer and the fire was easily visible to visitors and eventually burned within a mile of the trail. The fire remained active burning in pockets of fuel throughout August.



How the FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT Benefits the *BMWC*

More and more people recreate on national forests and grasslands every year, and this is certainly true for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. Meeting the increasing needs of these visitors, delivering quality recreation, heritage and wilderness opportunities, and protecting natural resources has become challenging.

To help address this issue, President Bush signed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) in 2004. Among other things, REA allows the Forest Service to charge and collect fees for outfitters and guide permits, and keep 95% of those funds for use at the district or forest where they were generated, rather than returning them to the Department of Treasury for redistribution.

REA funds are to be used to for projects and improvements that will benefit the recreating public and outfitters in those areas. Wilderness managers in our area seek to use these funds for projects that will benefit as many people as possible. Often REA funds are used as “matching” dollars to bring in additional support from organizations like Resource Advisory Committees and other granting organizations.

Recent FLREA project examples:

Funding Wilderness Rangers, Station Guards, and River Rangers to perform visitor contacts at campsites, back-country stations and cabins, and trailheads. These contacts provide information to the public about routes, safety hazards, wilderness ethics, and Special Orders emphasizing the food storage order and fishing regulations.

Maintaining trails that are heavily used or have had recent fires and now require additional work to clear and maintain.

Completing noxious weed inventories and treatments in critical areas, including big game winter range.

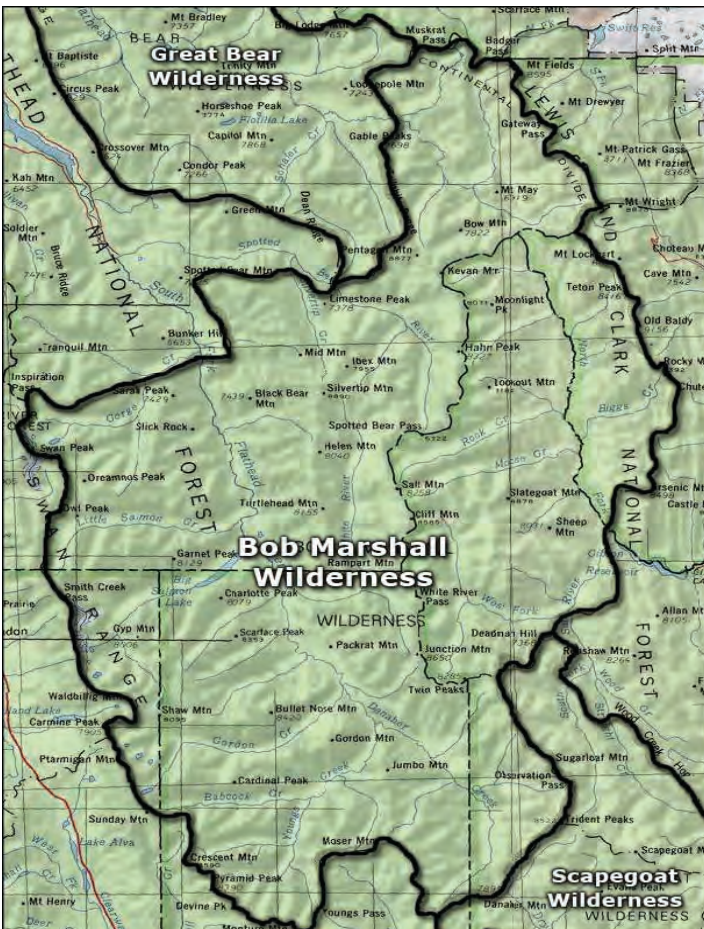
Maintaining the historic phone lines between Black Bear and Danaher, which improves communications for Forest Service work crews, volunteers, partners, and outfitters and guides.

Check out previous years' accomplishment reports for REA projects throughout Region 1 at http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/recreation_r1/rea-reports/rea-reports.shtml

Learn more about REA and the other ways it is used to benefit outdoor recreation at <http://www.fs.fed.us/passespermits/accomplishments.shtml>

Please give feedback to your local wilderness manager on how you would like to see REA funds used in your favorite areas. We want to ensure your support for this program.

-Colter Pence





American Recovery and Reinvestment Act



In 2010 the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act resulted in significant funding for several important trail projects on the Spotted Bear Ranger District. Items funded by Recovery dollars include the awarding of three trail construction contracts, one Forest Service crew (trail construction) and the employment of numerous seasonal employees charged with trail-corridor brushing targets.

Many trails in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex historically receive inadequate funding for brushing and corridor maintenance. Recovery dollars served the district well in this arena. Funding was requested for specific trails and targets were met with all accomplishments documented and subjected to upward reporting requirements. 219 total miles of Recovery brushing were completed on the district with an additional 50 miles brushed with this specially funded workforce.

Two large trail construction projects were completed in 2010 with Recovery dollars. The work was performed by Forest Service employees and the cooperative efforts of the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC). In the upper Middle Fork of the Flathead, the East Fork of Strawberry Creek trail #371 received a much needed overhaul. The needed tasks were primarily tackled by a Kalispell based MCC crew and supervised by a Schafer Meadows trail foreman. Accomplishments involved the construction of numerous segments of turnpike, extensive reroutes to establish an appropriate grade, one minor trail bridge, one retaining wall, and extensive drainage and trail corridor work.