

# Turtle Tracks

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

Volume 9, Issue 1

Winter 2009

## Boy Scout Troop 6 Explores the Maah Daah Hey

### Mark Zimmerman, MDHTA Board Member

The temperature dropped rapidly and the 50-mile-per-hour wind whipped the tents into a frenzy. Would they hold through the night?

How did we wind up here, way out on the Maah Daah Hey Trail, tired from hiking more than twenty challenging miles in the last two days and still being a long way from the nearest warm bed?

Those thoughts and others went through the minds of Scouts and adults as we hunkered down at the Elkhorn campsite Saturday night and waited for daybreak.

It had been just two days since the troop set out in mid fifty-degree temperatures and bright sunshine for an adventure in the Badlands over the October teacher's convention school break. From the Magpie campsite, the crew backpacked south along the Maah Daah Hey Trail, enjoying the remarkable scenery at landmark areas such as Devils Pass. A late Friday afternoon crossing of the Little Missouri River was a cold, but necessary, experience as we followed the winding trail. Friday night's camp was hard along the river — with the

Scouts using backpacking stoves and lanterns for a welcome late night meal of soup and wraps.

Short on water, the crew broke camp Saturday morning without breakfast, hiking to the water cache and taking time for a meal of oatmeal and hot chocolate. Eagles greeted us overhead as we traveled the trail, enjoying the sweeping vistas from atop buttes or the aspen- and cottonwood-lined trails of the ravines and river banks.

The highlight of the trek was exploring the Elkhorn Ranch Site two days before the celebration of Roosevelt's 150th birthday. A unit of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the Elkhorn Ranch Site preserves the site and tells the story of the impact the Badlands had on Roosevelt's life and his conservation ethics. It was magical to stand at the ranch site, look at the outline of the buttes in a ranch photo on a park service interpretive panel, and then look up at the actual buttes and see no change. We were seeing the Badlands just as Roosevelt did with no power lines, no roads, no houses, just the great outdoors.

Sunday morning dawned still windy and cold, bringing the Scouts and adults unexpectedly close to earning their Zero Hero badges, if you factored in the wind chill! With a quick camp teardown and a hot breakfast, the crew headed back to Bismarck, driving the back roads of the Little Missouri National Grasslands and being reminded of why Roosevelt so loved the Badlands.

If your unit is interested in an outing on the Maah Daah Hey Trail check out the following Web site for information: [www.mdhta.com](http://www.mdhta.com) or feel free to contact Mark Zimmerman at [mzimmerman@nd.gov](mailto:mzimmerman@nd.gov).

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**Maah Daah Hey Trail Association • P.O. Box 156 • Bismarck, North Dakota • 58502**



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MAAH DAAH HEY TRAIL  
ASSOCIATION

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Don Mayer, President

Roger Ashley, Vice-President

Steve Stelton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President

Darcy Sandstrom, Board Member

Mark Zimmerman, Member at Large

*Send inquiries or articles to:*

Maah Daah Hey Trail Association  
P.O. Box 156  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58502

or

electronically—attn: Editor and Executive  
Secretary, MDHTA  
[jokadmas@yahoo.com](mailto:jokadmas@yahoo.com)

The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing and maintaining a linear, non-motorized, sustainable, recreational trail system in southwest North Dakota, through voluntary and public involvement, and in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.

*MDHTA logo used with permission from USDA  
Forest Service*



Boy Scout Troop 6  
2008



Boy Scout Troop 6  
2008



Boy Scout Troop 6 on MDH Trail, 2008

## A Word from Our President—

Don Mayer  
President, Maah Daah Hey Trail Association



Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone is dreaming of past warm summer days, enjoying your day on the trail as you shovel just one more scoop of snow this winter. It is important to keep hope alive: that the sun will warm us again, the grass will turn green, and we will be back on the trail. Outside it is snowing again, so I am going to soothe myself before tomorrow's cleanup by remembering one of our last horseback rides on the trail.

My wife Susan and I have had such great experiences riding, and some of the most memorable moments involve encountering wildlife on the grasslands and in the National Park. From being a little too close to buffalo or a wild horse herd, to rattlesnakes, deer, antelope, coyotes, and others, each encounter is thrilling. A particular ride happened to us in early November. It was one of those rare western North Dakota days, when the temperature was going to sore, and with no wind to speak of, we had to get out on the trail. At that time of the year, we assumed it might be our last ride of the year (we know now that it was the last truly nice day of 2008), so we called friends, and invited our son to join us, too. The temperature was near sixty degrees with bright sunny skies—it was a great day to enjoy the trail on horseback.

As the ride progressed, we forgot about the chores left undone at home, and riding quietly, just enjoying the quiet solitude of the badlands, we rounded a sharp bend. Just ahead of us, silhouetted along a ridge, were a nice group of bighorn sheep! This was a first for us. We've had hundreds of rides and never a glimpse of bighorn sheep. As we stopped and took in the scene in front of us, the ram with almost a full curl and the dozen or so other sheep seemed as interested in us as we were in them. As we rode parallel to them, they decided to move on, and with one smooth effortless motion, they jumped over a nearby fence and bounded up and over the steep ridge. This is a memory that will last me not just through this tough, snowy, cold winter, but for the rest of my life.

Now, back to MDHTA business. It is time to set the time and place of our annual meeting. I will be talking to the rest of the board and will let everyone know the details as soon as possible. If you have interest in serving on the board, or would like to recommend someone to serve, please let us know. Remember, the MDHTA annual meeting is when the membership votes on the board membership. If you have any ideas or suggestions for our annual meeting please let us know, all input is valuable. Until then, stay warm, and keep shoveling!

Happy Trails!  
Don

## Bismarck Sports Show

The MDHTA will be hosting a booth at the Bismarck Tribune's 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Sports Show. The Sports Show is held at the Bismarck Civic Center near Kirkwood Mall. The Sports Show will be held on Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup> (3 pm – 9 pm), Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup> (10 am – 7 pm), and Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> (12 noon – 5 pm). If you are interested in volunteering at the MDHTA booth, please contact Ron and Aileen Luethe at [ron.luethe@bis.midco.net](mailto:ron.luethe@bis.midco.net).

## Maah Daah Hey in the News

The Maah Daah Hey Trail was featured in the Billings Gazette this past year. Chris Jorgensen wrote a great article about the MDH Trail titled "Maah Daah Hey offers sweeping vistas, searing climbs". To view the article, please visit:

<http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2008/10/02/features/outdoors/18-maahdaah.txt>



**Maah Daah Hey 2007 Ride Report Continued, from Gregg's perspective**  
*Gregg Pattison, MDHTA Member*

**Day 5:**

This is the day to say goodbye, pack up camp, and get in the last ride b/4 driving the nine hours home. Craig, Gord, Tom & I took a spin out to Devils Gap again. Are you seeing a familiar theme here? Devils Gap is a favorite ride. We enjoyed our last ride together for another year. My data displayed about 15 miles.

I checked my total ride time as 150 miles, and about 15,000 feet of climbing. I was in great shape, and it REALLY added to my enjoyment of the trail. No saddle sores, no ibuprofen, no crashes. My heart rate was almost always in check except for the moment I saw my beloved bike fall off the top truck rack and tumble down the road at 50 mph. My nutrition was on, I recovered each day, but I was slowly depriving myself of sleep. Gord was in the best shape I've ever seen him. It was real nice to see that guy kick out some serious trail.

Gord and Mike B. were actively filming with DVD camcorders during this trip. They have helmet cam shots as well as panoramic clips. They are working on putting together separate commercial movies clips of the MDH trail, as well as other trails. I am very much looking forward to the DVD release date so I can have a copy of this epic adventure. Perhaps a reunion is in order. LONG LIVE LONG RIDES.

*The Riders:*

Mike B., Mike G., Amber, Cameron, Karl, Nicole, Steph, Tom A., Gord, Craig, Tom Q., and Gregg Pattison

This ride report is about the adventure from my perspective. Thanks for reading these ramblings. I'm sure Denise will scrap book this for the great grandchildren to read some day in the future. LIFE IS GOOD.



## **United States Forest Service (USFS) Dakota Prairie Update**

Curtis W. Glasoe, Grasslands Engineer

There are a couple of important items to report on the **Maah Daah Hey (MDH) Trail** from last calendar year (2008). First, the NEPA for the Wolf Trail extension on the north end of the MDH was approved last fall. This trail is the start of the MDH around the west side of the North Unit of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP). When in place, this segment will allow bikes or other non-motorized users to come from Watford City to Forest Service lands north of the TRNP, then go through the park on paved roads back to Watford City. Second, the Sawmill Gulch Bridge was replaced with a new bridge. Third, the MDHII extension project was started from either end of the MDHII, some nine miles south from the Medora golf course and eight miles north from Burning Coal Vein (BCV) Campground. These sections are now in place with self-closing gates and necessary excavated tread making them ready for use. In addition, the well at BCV was completed with the well pad to be completed this spring, providing potable water at BCV the summer of 2009.

There are many plans in place for the summer of 2009. The money to reconstruct the BCV campground taken for fire fighting last summer was restored, and the FS will be contracting that project shortly. Also, the FS was successful in obtaining a Recreation Trail Program (RTP) grant through the ND Parks and Recreation Department in 2008 for construction of fifteen miles of the MDHII. Furthermore, the preliminary indications for the USDA-FS fiscal year 2009 budget include thirteen miles of construction on the MDHII and some four miles on the Wolf Trail. If everything goes as planned, another thirty+ miles of the extension would be virtually in place this coming fall. **Keep your fingers crossed!!!**

Other Forest Service projects include the following items: The designs for the Coal Creek camp/trailhead are being worked on, along with five drainage structures (bridges) and five trailheads on the MDHII, and if money becomes available they should also be contracted this calendar year. The NEPA process is scheduled to be completed this year on the four mile Initial Rock Trail from MDH II to Initial Rock, and the twelve mile Amidon extension of MDHII on FS lands south of BCV.

One other item worth mentioning is that 11,678 users were counted on the MDH Trail during the period of January to December of 2008. This is a substantial increase over the 8,448 users in 2007. The largest increase was in the Long X area due to the recent reconstruction of the Summit Trail. The area with the highest traffic, Buffalo Gap, also showed a significant increase in usage from 2007 to 2008.

I hope your winter is going well, and that it is getting shorter as we speak. It is a great time to start planning your trip to the **MDH** for this coming summer.

## **Reflections**

Steve Stelton, MDHTA Board Member

Now that 2008 has come and gone, we can look back on each of our personal great rides or hikes on our famed Maah Daah Hey (MDH) Trail. Whether it be sharing stories or photo's of your adventure with family, friends or co-workers, rekindling the memories of your favorite 2008 MDH adventure, can and will "warm your heart" on these cold and snowy January days.

I am personally looking forward to another great year on the MDH Trail....and hopefully my year will consist of many more bicycle rides than I got in last year. I am also looking forward to the annual National Trails Day trail work event – this is a very rewarding and fun day. I urge everyone to come out this coming June and lend a hand.

A new adventure will greet many of us this coming spring, and that will be our first chance to ride or hike some of the new MDHII, south of Medora. This will probably be one of my first rides this coming year.

I sincerely wish you all the best in 2009. Make sure you make some time to support and help the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association in all of its endeavors; there are plenty of opportunities to volunteer or show your support by purchasing some clothing, hat or other items. Please take the time to renew your membership and encourage all of your friends, neighbors and co-workers to join and support the Association as well. Your support is vital to keeping the Maah Daah Hey Trail one of the finest in the United States..... heck, even the world.

With that said....I wish you all "good riding", be it on horseback or bicycle and "good hiking"!

See you on the Trail!



## **Medora's Badlands Trail Run**

**August 29, 2009**

For more information,  
please contact:

***Wade Westin***

*Marketing & Public Relations  
Director*

*Theodore Roosevelt*

*Medora Foundation (TRMF)*

***Bismarck Office: 701-223-4800***

***Medora Office: 701-623-4444***

## ***Maah Daah Hey Trail Association***

### **Annual Meeting**

***Tentative location: Dickinson, ND***

**April or May 2009**

**Please contact MDHTA  
President, *Don Mayer*, with  
any questions, suggestions,  
or if you are interested in  
serving as a MDHTA board  
member at  
[westernsg@hotmail.com](mailto:westernsg@hotmail.com).**

# ***MAAH DAAH HEY TRAIL ASSOCIATION*** **MERCHANDISE**

**TURTLE PIN - \$5.00 (Free w/membership)**  
**BANDANA - \$8.00**  
**CAPS - \$10.00**  
**T-SHIRTS - \$10.00**  
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**MDH MAP - \$10.00**  
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**FANNY PACK - \$15.00**  
**WATER BOTTLE - \$5.00**  
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**SCARVES and NECK/EARWARMER**  
**FLEECE - \$10.00**

Please contact Jo Kadrmas at [jokadrmas@yahoo.com](mailto:jokadrmas@yahoo.com)  
to place an order.

# READERS

**You can get published in Turtle Tracks!** Each quarter, our readers contribute to the following departments:

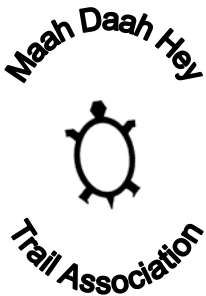
“Volunteer Action”

“My Day on the Maah Daah Hey”

“On the Web”

We also invite original articles and photographs depicting your unique recreation interest (i.e. hiking, biking, equestrian, other non-motorized), your technical tips (i.e. map-reading, selecting hiking boots, eating freeze-dried food), safety messages, trail conditions, and opinion/editorial pieces.

Model contributions after what you have seen published in this and other issues of TT. Limit article length to 500 words or less. Send items to our address or editor’s email printed on page 2, lower-left.



Maah Daah Hey Trail Association  
P.O. Box 156  
Bismarck, ND 58502

## Membership Application

**Yes! I want to join the  
Maah Daah Hey Trail Association**

- \$25 Individual/Family Member
- \$70 Individual/Family Member for 3 yrs.
- \$75 Founding Member    \$200 Trail Boss Member
- \$500 Mile Marker Member
- \$750 Gatekeeper Member    \$1000 Life Member

*Make Checks Payable to:*

*MDHTA, P.O. Box 156, Bismarck, ND 58502*

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE 100% TAX DEDUCTABLE!

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

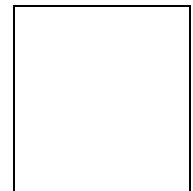
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