Volume 14
Spring 2004

BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS COMPLEX NEWSLETTER

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Invitation:

BMWC Public Meeting
April 17, 2004 10:00 am
Stage Stop Inn @ Choteau, MT

Planned Topics:

Agency Updates, including:
DNA project
Outfitter /Guide Permit Reissuance
Fires of 2003 and restoration activities
North Fork of the Sun Prescribed Burn
West Slope Cutthroat Restoration
Trail conditions

Bob Marshall Foundation
Other Public Topics

Forest Plan Revision:
Working Group
Proposed Action
Wilderness issues specific
Review history of Allocation

Complex LAC updates

Lunch will be on your own
For additional information contact Deb Mucklow 406-387-3851

FOREST PLAN REVISION

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you as the LAC group for continuing to function as a collaborative group ñ you have the record in starting working groups to work with the Forest Service in wilderness management and continuing to meet with us on an annual basis or more as needed. And in doing so have helped us have a wilderness recreation plan for the BMWC complex that continues to be an example for wildernesses across the system.

Currently the Bitterroot, Lolo, and Flathead national Forests are working together and and have a proposed action out for revision (web site http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/wmpz/). To address the concerns we have heard from you ñ we are committed to have the entire BMWC be included for the discussion of the allocation issue. At the upcoming public meeting the complex District Rangers will be sharing with you the history and asking for your thoughts on future allocation ñ most of the discussion will be focused on the levels allowed for outfitters . They will also be listening to your feedback on other forest plan revision issues or proposals. The Helena and Lewis & Clark National Forests will be doing a forest plan amendment while the Lolo and Flathead National Forest would include in the revision decision. We will treat and manage the complex together ñ it has worked well for all.

We hope to see many of you at the spring public meeting!

Cathy Barbouletos, Flathead Forest Supervisor
Spike Thompson, Lewis and Clark Forest Supervisor
Debbie Austin, Lolo Forest Supervisor
Tom Clifford, Helena Forest Supervisor

BMWC

By Deb Mucklow

Iíd like to express a Thank You to all of you for the cooperation you extended to us (the complex managers) this past season. The fires of 2003 were a challenge and many of you had your wilderness trip/experience altered due to fire locations and just by the presence of so much smoke! We had lotís of trails and areas closed for portions of time that limited use. We all tried to use a variety of formats to get timely information to you and have heard from several of you that you appreciate all the effort. This coming season and for many to come we will be experiencing a new forest within the wilderness and see first hand the natural processes. Many of you will also have some impacts of delays and extra work as we anticipate additional trees down on trail. Please come prepared for such events. (Bring your hand saws, axes etc. ñ you will not want to travel with out these tools!) One additional favor is to remind folks that the chainsaws are not allowed and even though many think this would help the efforts ñ the primitive tools can be very effectively used and be safe. It is part of the wilderness experience.

The complex is in the process of analyzing our Outfitter and Guide permits for reissuance ñ this process was delayed as result of shifting our workforce to fire assignments ñ so we have extended the current permit for an additional year and are completing our analysis and consultation this year.

Please continue to contact any of the District Rangers for additional information. If you have additional topics you would like to have covered at the spring public meeting please contact me. We all look forward to seeing you April 17 in Choteau Montana.

NORTHERN CONTINENTAL DIVIDE GRIZZLY BEAR DNA PROJECT UPDATE

The Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) potentially harbors the greatest number of grizzly bears in the contiguous United States and is directly connected to the strong Canadian population of grizzly bears. However, little information exists about the bears in this region. In an effort to understand and manage the grizzly bear population of the NCDE, managers and biologists are working to identify population trend, survival, and the corridors that separate populations.

Grizzly bear rubbing on tree

The 2003 summer field season saw the start of the Northern Divide Grizzly Bear Project with crews traversing the Spotted Bear Ranger District, and the rest of the NCDE, in an effort to locate trees along trails used by bears as ìrubbing postsî. Once a tree was identified the crews would place barbed wire on the tree in preparation for the 2004 summer. This season (summer 2004) the Spotted Bear District will have two crews returning to the bear rub trees identified in the summer 2003 season in an effort to collect hair.

In 2004, in addition to the rub tree hair collection, the Spotted Bear District will have 12 two person crews assembling barbed wire collection sites over the 1 million acre district. Training for the crews will begin June 1; all crews will be trained in the established scientific DNA collection

protocol, wilderness values, Spotted Bear logistics, and Leave No Trace ethics. The first trap session will begin June 15, with each crew working 9 days and having five days off. The completion date of the 2004 summer field collection season will be August 18. If you would like to find more information on the Northern Divide Grizzly Bear project you can go to the internet website, http://nrmsc.usgs.gov/research/NCDEbeardna.htm

Grizzly bear rolling in lure at the center of a hair snag site (the line bisecting the picture is the barbwire)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR THE BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS COMPLEX

By
Eugene Persha

Those of us who have used the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex over the years for recreation, business, adventure or for spiritual renewal, most likely consider it a very special place in the wilderness system as well as in America itself. If one has been in this wilderness multiple times, he/she probably would probably consider one's self also a friend of this great place. In fact, I would define a friend of the BMWC as anyone who calls his/herself one, and in reality, it is anyone who comes back a second time. Most of us, who have been in this wilderness, have been in there Numerous times. We are the core members of the public who can speak so very strongly about its attributes and as well, about its needs.

ìThe public needs to be involved with the management of the BMWC more than it is now.î

The public needs to be involved with the management of the BMWC more than it is now. There needs to be greater participation at meetings so every interested party can have a voice and a forum for presentation of one's views no matter what they are. If one lives far away as I do, it is very hard to attend any meetings or have anyone present my views as part of the public input process now. What we need is a representative group that is not aligned with any other (as their first objective) to present various viewpoints and serve as a conduit for the public that cannot directly participate by themselves. We need a few individuals to be a sounding board for opinion and to seek out ideas by taking initiative with the public that has been identified as wanting to be involved. The public possesses many talents and attributes that are needed to make the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex a better place. There is "wisdom in the masses", and we must use it.

With the advent of new forest plans, visitor studies, wilderness expansion areas, imposed budget limitations, reconstruction projects, and the problems keeping an area like the "Bob" pristine, wild and natural, will take efforts by all of us who care. We, the public, have to be more involved, and we need to make that fact known to all the managers of this wilderness. The public is not just the reactors to what is formulated, but rather they are part of the formulation process itself. The public has expectations that they themselves determine. These are, but not limited to: communication that satisfies the users; meetings that are convenient in time and place for those who want to be involved with the BMWC; an opportunity for discussion of projects and budgets while they are in the process of being developed; expectations that all forest managers need to engage the public to seek out their opinion and ideas in a proactive way; a demonstrated need to preserve the history and oral traditions associated within the BMWC; a desire to work on grants, education, and internships for those who see the wilderness in its positive nature; and to have some political input that overrides so much of what happens in national forests. And because of all this, it is particularly important to include as broad a group as possible no matter where one lives. This is not the job of any one person, but really the job of all of us who care.

The public needs to play a greater part and a more vigorous role in governance of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. We need to discuss our ideas openly and broadly throughout our great constituency. Who out here wants to try?

Partners in Trails

By Paul Travis
Project Director, Bob Marshall Foundatiom

Since 1997, the Bob Marshall Foundation (BMF) and members from various Backcountry Horsemen (BCH) Chapters around the state have been working together to help preserve the trail system in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (BMWC) and to promote wilderness values through education. The Bob Marshall Foundation is a nonprofit organization, which coordinates and leads volunteer projects in trail maintenance, historic cabin restoration, and campsite rehabilitation in the BMWC. The BMF has built partnerships with national and local volunteer groups as well as youth and youth at risk organizations, to help achieve these goals.

Many of the BMF volunteer projects require packing support to haul tools, food and camping gear to remote, backcountry project locations. The BMF has been able to successfully recruit and rely on volunteers from various BCH chapters to help out. Packing support is essential for making our projects successful and allows volunteer crews to work on trails further into the wilderness. In other words, volunteer packers help make our projects happen!

This summer, although hampered by the fires burning and thick smoke in the BMWC, we were able to complete most of our projects with packing support from many BCH volunteers. Members from the Charlie Russell Chapter helped pack in volunteers from the National Smokejumpers Association to Webb Lake Guard Station for trail and facility maintenance. Volunteers from the East Slope Chapter packed for many projects out of the Augusta/Choteau area including trail maintenance trips for the Continental Divide Trail Alliance and various youth groups. Members of the Missoula and Bitteroot Chapters have come through for us on many projects in the Spotted Bear area and Swan District including support for the Wilderness Volunteers, youth groups and campsite rehabilitation projects. The Flathead Chapter has helped with packing for the National Smokejumpers Association, youth groups, and individual volunteer trips in the Great Bear Wilderness. For the last several years, the BMF has also been working with the Flathead Chapter in a joint effort where volunteers from both organizations work together to clear and open trails.

BCH volunteers have donated over 190 hours of packing at a total value of $4,200.00 to help our volunteers transport their food and supplies into project sites. Along with the packing support, many BCH volunteers have helped in educating volunteers, especially youth groups, about wilderness values, Leave No Trace ethics, history, and acquainting many to horse and stock use in the wilderness.

The Bob Marshall Foundation would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those individuals who have helped over the years. The time, effort, experience and knowledge that volunteer packers have generously donated to our projects have been greatly appreciated by our organization and by our many volunteers. Your assistance has made these projects more fulfilling, enjoyable and rewarding.

The Bob Marshall Foundation would like to take this opportunity to announce the release of a new specialty license plate. Montana artist, Andrea Brew, created a watercolor design consisting of a silhouetted pack string passing beneath the Chinese Wall in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. All proceeds from the sale of this specialty plate will support volunteer projects in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex and adjacent wild lands coordinated by the Bob Marshall Foundation.

To purchase your Bob Marshall Wilderness specialty license plate simply go to your countyís motor vehicle or treasurerís office and ask to purchase the Bob Marshall Wilderness plate. They are readily available statewide and there is no application process involved. There is no need to wait for your renewal date--you can buy it now with no additional fees or purchase when your annual registration is due.

For more information about the license plate, please call 406-253-4421 or email to plates@bobmarshall.org.
Happy Trails!

LINCOLN RANGER DISTRICT 2003 HAPPENINGS

The year began
with an adventure in hiring, trying to make the best of our hiring system. We hired a five-person crew for the season but were not able to fill our Wilderness Ranger position. Rita Vincello and Bevin Feutrier accepted the Wilderness Ranger position for the season. We started the season opening up trails and then getting ready to work on our first CIP project, the Sourdough Reroute. The crew did an excellent job and completed the project ahead of schedule. The Charlie Russell BCH packed a group of retired jumpers, from the BMF, in and out of Webb Lake to work on trails and put in new sill logs on the tack shed. Martie Schramm and Amber Kamps hiked to Webb Lake to touch bases with the jumpers and take a look at the CIP project. They hiked from the trailhead to Webb in 2.5 hours, with backpacks, faster than a streaking mule, wow! The unsuspecting duo did not realize what awaited them at the end of their wilderness hike, the 2003 fire season. Between the packing jobs the BCH completely rebuilt one puncheon and braced up another that had developed a bounce and cleared trails. A big thanks to all these volunteers!

In July, Rita decided to take a trip on the dark side, ooh bummer, and accepted a position on the Helena fire crew. Bevin then became the Wilderness Ranger for the remainder of the season. We gathered our gear, got the stock shod and ready to go, work on our next CIP project, The Valley of the Moon. A lightning bust hit the district the evening before we planned to head in. They of course nabbed the best district crew, the trail crew, to help suppress the fires. This delayed us one more day, not a problem we can still accomplish our CIP project. And then things really started to take on a meaningful shape, one of the strikes above, Snowbank Lake, started to burn a bit hotter. Jay, the IC, started working on the fire with a crew and engines. About the time they were making progress on the fire it started to make some progress of itís own. Then Amber, our new Ranger said, ìlook there is another fire.î The spotter plane had missed that one. We began to wonder if we would get to our next CIP project.

That fire was named the Talon fire and we ordered 8 jumpers to initial attack it in the morning. Copper Creek Campground had been evacuated and the upper Copper Creek road closed. We awoke the next morning to a thick, pea soup type inversion but luck was with us the jumpers were able to jump into a meadow on Stonewall Mountain, above the inversion. Around mid morning as the pea soup was lifting out of the valley bottoms and the sun began to shine, we got a call from the jumpers requesting a helicopter evacuation, humm this is not good. As the day progressed several things happened; first it was looking less like the CIP project was in the stars, second the jumpers got evacuated and headed back to their home base, thirdly we had crews on other small fires as well as the lookout on Stonewall and their escape routes were in jeopardy. We got all of them headed in and they all arrived safely at the barn ready for new assignments. Stonewall lookout survived, a little pink but OK, and the small fires became a part of the ìSnow Talon Fireî. About the time the Snow Talon was doing whatever it wanted, the Moose Wasson fire to the west started to kick up itís heels and was coming at us from the rear. Evacuation plans were made for the town of Lincoln should the prevailing west winds return. The winds to this point had been fairly light and out of the east, pushing the fire toward Helmville.

I bet you are wondering what was happening with the Trail Crew, right? This after all is supposed to be a complex newsletter article. Well you may have guessed our crew, the best most versatile crew on the district, was scattered across the district on engines and initial attack crews supporting the fire efforts. We did close the Indian Meadows trailhead and trails beyond. There were people in the Wilderness and vehicles parked at the trailhead. One of the vehicles was a large truck and trailer belonging to Brett Todd one of our outfitters. We got in touch with Julie his wife to find out where the keys were hidden, and guess what, they werenít there. We finally managed to get some keys and we got all the people and vehicles evacuated from the trailhead. The Indian Meadows Guard Station became the next District priority. It was in the direct path of the Snowbank Lake fire. We ordered wrap for the station, but there was a delay in shipping, and for a while we wondered if it would survive the fire. Finally the wrap arrived and the fire gave us a slight break and we got it wrapped. With the help of some of our local loggers, and supervised by Casey our trail crew foreman, they cut and trimmed around the station and crews burned around the cabin to create a defensible space. It is a little more open with a few less trees around the guard station, but it is still there. About this time the decision was made to close the National Forest to the public. We evacuated the residences in the Elk Meadows subdivision, the fire was now moving toward them. A type 1 team had also been ordered to manage the fire complex. Studebakerís team, from California, arrived and set up fire camp at Aspen Grove Campground. We discovered the real maximum occupancy of the campground, 1000. The fire continued to make impressive runs each day. Silver King Lookout, a historic structure and local landmark now lay in the path of the fire. As the smoke cleared we discovered the lookout had been lost. It was a tragic loss, but we counted our blessings, because no lives or homes had been lost, the volunteer fire departments and our crews had done an excellent job on

See Lincoln , page 6

LINCOLN

From page 5.

About this time the fire began to work itís way into the Wilderness and Webb Lake Cabin, also a historic structure, lay in the path of the fire this time. The fire had a ways to go before it would reach the cabin, but on previous days it had been making impressive runs. The wrap was stored on site in the Webb Lake tack shed. The question now was how do we get folks in there to get the job done safely and quickly? The helicopter! We flew a crew in, supervised by Casey Burns, to wrap the cabin and set up a sprinkler system. This was an allnight job, taking most of two days to accomplish. They set up 2 five-gallon gas cans to run the pump. To keep the pump running we flew a crew in every 3 days with gas. It was not safe to leave people at Webb Lake. This went on from August and into September until we felt the cabin was out of danger.

Hunting season started the first of September. The early Wilderness rifle season opened September 15, and the outfitters and private parties wanted to get in and set up their camps. I know all of you understand that when you interrupt someoneís hunt you are playing with fire, those hunting tags have a tendency to burn a hole in the bearerís pocket. We opened up half of the Wilderness on September 6. Two outfitters had base camps located in the closed area of the Wilderness and two had camps in the open area. We located temporary camps for Neil Eustance and Bill Plante in the Upper Landers Fork. The shortest way to all the camps was still through Indian Meadows Trailhead, which remained closed. Thanks to the Rocky Mountain and Seeley Lake Ranger Districts and other outfitters, they were able to access their camps using alternate trailheads.

We use Webb Lake Cabin as a base for backcountry patrols and usually access it via the Indian Meadows Trailhead. We also had to use the other trailheads, which increased our travel distance to the cabin. Bevin was ready to do some patrols but she needed a partner. Rich came from fire, to the enlightened Wilderness side, to work with Bevin. The season ending event came with the opening of the backcountry rifle season, snow and cold. Those doing patrols said they didnít remember when their feet had been colder in the stirrups. We did eventually get the cabin unwrapped and got somewhat back to normal. We lost all of our puncheons on the Mainline trail within the fire perimeter. The future trail priorities are set, rebuilding the puncheons and reconstructing portions of the trails leading out from Indian Meadows. I guess the Valley of the Moon project is somewhere in the future now. We did open up the trailhead, Mainline and Landers trails in October and Brett and Bill were able to conduct their final hunts in somewhat of a normal fashion.

One final note, how do you break in a Ranger? Think back to when our previous ranger Daina Bambe showed up on the Lincoln District. I believe she was on the district for 3-4 days and the Copper Creek fire took off, the first project fire on Lincoln District in several years. Take note of the similarities here, Copper Creek, new ranger and fire getting the picture? This time we gave Amber a little more time on the district before the trial by fire, but also just a slightly larger fire!

"The question now was how do we get folks in there to get the job done safely & quickly?"

SEELEY LAKE RANGER DISTRICT

2003 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Trail Maintenance-All of the districts primary and secondary trails were cleared at least once. Snags from the 1988, 2000 and 2001 fires continue to fall. It is not uncommon for the trail crew to cut hundreds of downfall on a trail, only to have the trail chocked with downfall a few weeks later. Rick Atkins of Wilderness Outfitters was awarded a trail clearing contract this year. Rick and crew worked hard and did an outstanding job. WTR outfitters once again cut hundreds of logs out of the trail during their travels. Thanks Jack and Karen! Keith Guchawsky of Missoula Backcountry Horsemen, did a fantastic job of maintaining the Monture Creek and Limestone Pass trails. Keith and crew are planning a similar volunteer work project with us in 2004.

The Dry Fork Trail #31 from the North Fork Cabin to the Danaher received heavy maintenance this past summer. Water bars were replaced to improve drainage and the trail tread was widened and stabilized in many places where it had crept downhill or retaining walls had failed. The dangerous bridge on the Red Cliff was torn out and replaced with gabions. This trail was used only in the spring when the Dry Fork was to high to ford. A lot of stock users preferred to risk the high water than use this dangerous bridge! The gabions were tied into the hillside and now provide a safe route during high water.

The Dry Fork Trail was rerouted at Whiskey Ridge to provide a better crossing at Cabin Creek. It is good to have this section of trail finally rerouted. It is amazing no one was fatally injured in the log -jams at the old crossing.

Limits of Acceptable Change Monitoring- Combining outfitter fee demo dollars and regular recreation funds enabled us to keep pace with wilderness condition monitoring during 2003. Campsites were inventoried in the Dry Fork of the North Fork of the Blackfoot geographic unit. These campsites were last inventoried in 1998. Overall campsite densities and impacts appear to remain unchanged over the last 4 years. There are several areas where there continues to be an excessive density of campsites above a particular impact index according to LAC standards. Social data indicated that trail and campsite encounters are within acceptable limits.

Outfitter Fee Demonstration Program-Approximately $11,000 was collected from outfitters on the district during 2003. The money was used to finance a wilderness guard and trail crew for 1 month and install a non-freeze gravity flow water system at the Monture Creek Trailhead.

Volunteers-A Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation project with retired smoke jumpers re-shingled the roof at the North Fork Cabin. Rod McGiver did an outstanding job of spearheading this project for us. We look forward to working with this experienced group of volunteers in the future.

2004 PLANS

Trail Maintenance-The district plans to clear all primary and secondary trails this coming season. This work will be accomplished by utilizing district trail crews, contractors and volunteers. The Monture Creek trail #27 and Limestone Trail # 402 will receive concentrated heavy maintenance. A district trail crew will spend 1 month at the headwaters of the Dry Fork fixing washouts on the triple divide trail.

Noxious Weed Treatment- Several patches of yellow toadflax will be given top priority for treatment with herbicides. All the trailheads leading into the BMWC will be spot sprayed with herbicides.

Public Contacts/patrol, Campsite Restoration and Campsite LAC Inventory-Tentative plans are to partially fund the trail crew with wilderness dollars to conduct LAC inventories, treat weeds and naturalize campsites.

Wilderness Education ñ **Presentations to local 6th graders on preventing the spread of weeds, and ì No Trace ì will continue. Education of the wilderness user is an everyday part of our jobs during public contact in the field.**

CARMICHAEL CABIN

Carmichael Cabin Scapegoat Wilderness Seeley Lake Ranger District

Carmichael Cabin was built in 1921 by hired hands of the Carmichael Ranch, owned and operated by James Henderson Carmichael. The main ranch was located just west of Bowman Corners and is now the Soap Creek Cattle Company or the Krohn Ranch. Every spring Romanian and Basque sheep herders and their sheep dogs would herd large flocks of sheep up the Dearborn River and over the continental divide to spend the summers grazing the lush open mountain meadow hillsides in the upper reraches of the Norh Fork of the Blackfoot River..

The Carmichael Ranch ran up to 14 bands of sheep in it's "hay-day". Only 3 of these bands would graze in the Carmichael Cabin area. However, each band was comprised of approximately 1,100 sheep. One sheep herder plus 2-3 dogs would be in charge of each band. The sheep herder slept in a small tent or in the open near the sheep. Per their permits with the US Forest Service, they moved every other day to prevent overgrazing of the meadows. It was not uncommon for each band to lose many lambs per summer to eagles, bears and lions despite the herdsmen and dogs constant vigilance. The bands could not be left unattended or the losses to predators would have been great. The camp tender who supplied each herder with groceries and supplies was therefore a very important part of every sheep operation. Carmichael Cabin was actually a camp tenders cabin
where the camp tender stored the herders supplies and stayed.

Many of the geographical names surrounding Scapegoat Mountain were named after people associated with the Carmichael Sheep operation. Brodus Creek, Theodore Creek and Dabrota Creek are all named after Carmichael's herders. Eagle Creek was named by Alex Muir, Carmichaels Scottish foreman on account of the numerous "gray eagles" (golden) near it's headwaters.

n 1944 Mr. James Carmichael passed away. His ranch was sold and the backcountry sheep operation was .discontinued. US Forest Service terminated the special use permit and took over the cabin to use as an administrative site. The cabin was unmaintained and deteriorated between the 1960's and 1984. The cabin is currently used by the US Forest Service in the adminstration of the surrounding area. The mountain meadows where thousands of sheep grazed are in excellent shape and provide forage for wildlife and some recreational and administrative packstock grazing. The cabin is listed as eligible for the National Register of Historical Structures.

(information provided by Lucile Shumate, granddaughter of James CarmichaelCharcoal sketch by Laura Spinney Trail crew volunteer))

New Lewis and Clark Deputy Forest Supervisor on Board

By Bonnie Dearing, Public Affairs Officer

Since July 2003, Allen Rowley has been on board serving as the Deputy Forest Supervisor for the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Great Falls, Montana.

Rowley moved to Great Falls from Kalispell where he served as the Public Affairs Officer for the Flathead National Forest. During his tenure there, he also performed several short-term assignments as an acting district ranger and as planning staff officer. Prior to the public affairs assignment, Rowley was the wilderness fire manager on the Spotted Bear Ranger District, also on the Flathead National Forest. He has held various Forest Service positions in fire, range and timber on the Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests in Idaho and the Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Utah. Rowley has a Bachelor of Science degree in forestry resources ecosystem management from the University of Idaho.

ìI am looking forward to the new adventures moving to Great Falls will bring,î said Rowley. ìI have a bias toward the active management of natural resources, and knowing the resources on the landscape is important to me.î According to Rocky Mountain District Ranger, Mike MuÒoz, ìAllen already knows the BMWC well, and has provided some keen insight for future management of the ëBobí.î We welcome him to the other side of the wall.

NEW LEWIS AND CLARK SUPERVISOR ARRIVES SOON

By Bonnie Dearing, Public Affairs Officer

Lesley W. ìSpikeî Thompson has been appointed as the Forest Supervisor of the Lewis and Clark National Forest headquartered in Great Falls, Montana. Thompson will be moving to Montana from Salmon, Idaho, where he currently serves as the Acting Forest Supervisor of the Salmon-Challis National Forest. Prior to his temporary assignment in Idaho, Thompson served as Deputy Forest Supervisor of the Bitterroot National Forest for two years.

Thompson began his Forest Service career as a range conservationist on the Malheur National Forest in Oregon in 1976. He also worked on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (OR) as a resource assistant; the Nez Perce National Forest (ID) as the range program leader; and the Dakota Prairie Grasslands (ND) as a district ranger of the McKenzie Ranger District. Thompson earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Rangeland Resources from Oregon State University.

WELCOME

ìIím really excited about the opportunity to work with the employees on the Lewis and Clark National Forest and all the communities near the forest,î said Thompson. Ranger Mike MuÒoz recently met Spike at a family meeting of Lewis and Clark Forest employees and said, ìSpike instantly showed a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for the wildland land fire use and prescribed fire programs currently functioning throughout the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complexî. He will be a fine addition to the managerís group for the BMWC.

LEWIS AND CLARK FIRE USE MODULE
SUMMARY OF A FIRE SEASON IN THE BMWC AND BEYOND

By Randy Gilbert, Fire Use Module Leader
Rocky Mountain

The 2003 fire season proved demanding, exciting, and productive for the Lewis and Clark Fire Use Module. The crew began work on May 19. With a core of returning employees, we were set to offer up a crew featuring both depth and enthusiasm. The first three weeks of work for the crew involved extensive training including District orientation, pumps and hose training, helicopter crewmember training, squad boss training, and even some explosives instruction.

In June, the crew continued to work on projects assigned to them, primarily working within the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Over the past three seasons the module has concentrated on reducing fuels to create defensible space around administrative sites on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District. Due to the logistical hurdles of these backcountry trips, and District priorities, the module did not embark upon their first dispatch until the third of July.

The first dispatch for the Module was to the Dry Lakes Complex, located in the vast lands of Southern New Mexicoís Gila Wilderness. This was a great first fire of the season--it was the first fire assignment ever for a couple crewmembers--because of the variety of operational assignments that were performed in an unforgiving environment. This fire helped build the cohesion and teamwork that would enable Module members to perform effectively and efficiently in the coming months.

After returning from the Dry Lakes Complex, the Module worked on a couple of suppression fires on a neighboring Ranger District. Although the fires were comparatively small, they provided valuable training opportunities for several crewmembers.

Next, the Module traveled to the Flathead National Forest to assist in efforts to manage the Little Salmon Complex. The Module spent nearly two months on the Little Salmon providing monitoring, structure protection, and helicopter skills to support this large incident. These assignments provided many opportunities for the module to get in some good ì on the job trainingî and complete more task books. With the Flathead National Forest a close neighbor, the Lewis and Clark Module had the flexibility to rotate District personnel onto the Module. This opportunity provided some ì cross-trainingî assignments for Rocky Mountain Ranger District fire suppression personnel as well as Module personnel.

October saw the Module back at home, but still very active. A window to begin ignition of the controversial South Fork Sun River prescribed burn arrived early in the month. This gave the crew some excellent experience on a large complex prescribed fire operation. However, the work did not end with successful lighting operations. Ignition took three days, but the Module and District suppression personnel spent the rest of October mopping up, sawing out trails, and cleaning equipment.

Before temporary module members were laid off for the winter, on November 15, we had a chance to offer them additional training. The District put on S-290, S-230, and S-215. These courses will help crewmembers work toward Crew Boss and Engine Boss qualifications, both of which will benefit crewmembers and the Rocky Mountain Ranger District.

ì These assignments provided many opportunities for the module to get in some good ì on the job trainingî and complete more task books.î

Overall, the Lewis and Clark Fire Use Module had an outstanding season. We had ample opportunity for training and, in return for these opportunities, we presented Fire Use Management Teams and Districts with an enthusiastic team that was able to conduct challenging assignments safely.

BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS COMPLEX
SCAPEGOAT WILDERNESS
SOUTH FORK SUN RIVER PRESCRIBED FIRE COMMENCES

By Michael Munoz, Rocky

Amazingly, after a hectic fire season, favorable burn conditions arrived in the fall of 2003 for management ignition of fire in the Scapegoat Wilderness on the Lewis and Clark NF (LCF). Personnel from the Rocky Mountain Ranger District began monitoring conditions closely following what was believed to be a season ending rain event recorded on September 13. Typically, a half-inch of rain within a 5-day period is considered a season ending event. However, due to dry conditions prevailing for the last 5 seasons, the bar was raised to æ inches, which was received in it entirety on September 13. Most folks believed that yet another season had passed without opportunity to implement the first phase of the South Fork Sun River Prescribed Fire.

However, drying conditions returned with an unusual feature on the Rocky Mountain Front: very little wind. Resources were gathered from near and far to embark on what appeared to be more than the typical dry run that we had carried out the last two springs in preparation for ignition of fuels in the project area. The much-anticipated day would finally arrive, after several years of gathering preliminary information, and completion of an environmental analysis and issuance of a decision in March 2001. Multiple briefings of political representatives, the news media, and several open-house discussions with the public and local communities had been held. On October 3, 2003, the project commenced with the arrival and briefing of fire personnel at the Benchmark Administrative Cabin in the afternoon and yet another public meeting at the Augusta High School Library in the evening. With these tasks completed, the first day of ignition was slated to begin on Saturday, October 4.

For those not familiar with the project, the South Fork Sun River Prescribed Fire is designed to accomplish two basic objectives: 1) to restore the natural role of fire within the wilderness complex and; 2) to reduce the risk of wildfire escaping the wilderness in this portion of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. Achieving these two objectives was paramount. Managing lightning caused fires in this portion of the Scapegoat Wilderness under our Wildland Fire Use Policy was simply too risky without addressing some key factors in the project area.

An overthrust belt of limestone reefs, limited fuels and previously burned areas form a significant natural buffer along a majority of the wilderness boundary on the Rocky Mountain Front (RMF). The South Fork Sun River project area represents one of the few large areas where such a buffer does not exist, due to the presence of continuous fuels across the wilderness and non-wilderness boundaries on the RMF. The use of prescribed fire along the Scapegoat Wilderness Boundary will reduce the amount and arrangement of fuels within the project area through burning and creation of a buffer so that lightning caused fires can play a more natural role within the wilderness. The goal is not to eliminate fire, but to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire while allowing lightning caused fires to play their natural role in the wilderness.

As planned, the prescribed burn relied heavily on aerial ignition to light the burn units, in accordance with the decision notice and burn plan. A plastic sphere dispenser and helitorch were used for ignition during the air operations, as described in the minimum tool analysis for the project, a requirement for aerial ignition in the wilderness.
Personnel from throughout Region One participated in completing the initial phases of the project in an area that is comprised of four blocks, or units, totaling approximately 16,500 acres. The first two units (1a and 1b) treated resulted in more than six miles of fire front along the wilderness boundary and approximately 4,300 acres of a mixed severity burn. Personnel from the Aerial Fire Depot (AFD) and Lolo, Flathead, Helena and Kootenai National Forests served in key command and air operations positions, with LCF personnel serving in key positions such as burn boss, aerial ignition specialist, ground ignition specialist, and information officers, as well as agency administrators. Other Agencies from around Montana participated, including the BLM-Lewistown, BIA-Blackfeet Agency, Blackfeet Tribe, Chippewa-Cree Tribe, Little Shell Tribe of Chippewas, State of Montana DEQ and Lewis and Clark County resources.

Conditions were well within the parameters, or window, of the burn prescription beginning October 1. However, gathering personnel following a long and arduous fire season proved challenging, as did the need to inform the public and media of the opportunity at hand in a timely manner. Once those key tasks were complete, ignition commenced on October 4, ending three days later on October 6, when the window of opportunity passed, followed by some significant wind events reaching between 40 to 60 mph.

See Scapegoat , page 13

VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTION ON ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT DURING 2003

By Kraig Lang

The Staff of the Rocky Mountain Ranger District would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere and heartfelt appreciation to all of the groups and individuals who donated their valuable time and labor to volunteer work projects on the Rocky Mountain Front during 2003. We could never accomplish a fraction of the work needed in the backcountry without your ongoing contributions. Thank you for a job well done.

During the 2003 field season, volunteer groups and individuals contributed over 11,356 hours of natural resource work in the backcountry of the Rocky Mountain Ranger District. In total, this volunteer labor would add up to more than five complete years of permanent full time fieldwork on the ground.

Approximately twenty formal projects, totaling more than 10,058 hours were completed by a variety of volunteer groups such as the Bob Marshall Foundation, East Slope Backcountry Horsemen, Wilderness Treatment Center, National Smokejumper Association, Helena Climbing Association, Explorations, Continental Divide Trail Association, American Hiking Society, Millís Wilderness Adventures and a host of others. Most of the formal volunteer projects accomplished by organized groups were focused on trail maintenance and construction work along with a number of facility and Wilderness stewardship projects.

In addition to the formal projects, over 25 individual volunteers contributed 1298 hours of labor during the year in the areas of packing support to other volunteer projects, campsite cleanup, facility maintenance, visitor contacts, snow survey work and wildlife monitoring.

If any groups or individuals are interested in participating in the volunteer opportunities we have in 2004, please contact Jim Forrest or Kraig Lang at (406) 466-5341. The Rocky Mountain Ranger District is looking forward to another safe and productive year of working with volunteers in the spectacular backcountry of the Rocky Mountain Front.

ì During the 2003 field season, volunteer groups and individuals contributed over 11,3 56 hours of natural resource work in the backcountry of the Rocky Mountain Ranger District.î

Scapegoat

From page 11

Some Quick Statistics related directly to the South Fork Sun River Prescribed Fire

Description of Activity or Item	Amount
Total Project Cost*	$491,000
Acres Treated	4,300 Ac.
Cost per Acre**	$115/Ac.
Aircraft Personnel Transported	253 people
Aircraft Cargo Transported	11,385 lbs.
Aircraft Heli-Torch Fuel	2,750 gals.
Aircraft Sphere Dispenser	8,000 spheres
Aircraft Bucket Work	80,654 gals.

**Total cost reflects costs of implementation in October 2003, not dry runs or environmental analysis.*
***The average cost of fuel treatment in Region One is $350/Ac., according to AFD/RO personnel.*

South Fork Sun River Prescribed Fireís 6-mile front along Scapegoat Wilderness Boundary. Note the continuous fuels in the remainder of the project area to be ignited at a later date when conditions warrant.

A mosaic pattern of burned and unburned fuels between Patrol Ridge and the South Fork Sun River following completion of management ignition in unitís 1a and 1b of the project area. Patrol Mountain Lookout is located on the highest point in the center of the photo.

As a result, personnel went into a holding pattern for nearly three weeks until significantly cooler temperatures and precipitation arrived. Contingency resources comprised of hotshot crews, smokejumpers and Forest Service regulars, along with bucket work from 2 medium (T2) helicopters and 2 high performance light (T3) helicopters mopped up several, anticipated, spots and slopovers experienced after the hand and aerial ignitions were complete.

Although the first two units, or phase one, is now complete, more fire is yet to be introduced through management ignition in the remaining two units to accomplish the objective of creating a mosaic or mixed severity burn within the project area. Accomplishing this objective will prove challenging given the continuous fuels, steep slopes, multiple aspects and sheer size of the area present in the remaining 12,000+ acres that comprise units 2 and 3.

As previously emphasized to the public and media, success is not simply completing the prescribed burn. Weíll know success when both the Lewis and Clark, and Flathead National Forests are able to manage lightning caused fires in this portion of the Scapegoat and Bob Marshall Wilderness as natural fire under our Wildland Fire Use Policy. Until then, the South Fork Sun River Prescribed Fire will simply serve as a cornerstone and a huge exclamation point on the 2003 fire season not only throughout Montana, but especially in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex!

FIRE IN THE BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS COMPLEX 2003

By Steve Wirt

The 2003 fire season brought many surprises to Fire Managers in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. By the end of September over 50 fires had burned more than 88,000 acres in the complex. Only one of the fires was determined to be person caused, that fire was suppressed very early and was kept to less 1/2 acre.

This year 12 fires were managed as ì wildland fire useî events. Those fires accounted for 42,262 acres. The remaining 40 plus ì suppressionî fires burned 45,980 acres, 6 of those fires burned more than 1000 acres each.

Remember ì wildland fire useî fires are those we manage for the benefits they provide on the landscape to the wilderness ecosystem. And ì suppressionî fires, often referred to as ì unwantedî fires are those fires we want to prevent. Suppression means stopping the fire and putting the fire out. However, stopping the fire is not always that easy. Thus, another term, ì appropriate management responseî. The appropriate management response for a fire, is just that. The term best describes how a fire is being managed. It is often applied to fires in remote areas, with difficult access and, even more difficult to get out, therefore too dangerous for firefighters. These fires otherwise do not meet the criteria for wildland fire use.

On 11 fires the appropriate management response was determined to be suppression with the use of helicopter water bucket drops. Firefighters were not placed on the ground because of serious safety issues with those fires.

Westside Trail #263ó burned pungeon

The following is a list of the ì wildland fire useî fires that were managed this year for wilderness ecosystem benefits:

Fire	Size
Little Salmon Creek	36,765
Pagoda	320
Charlotte	10
Independence Park	152
Lime Creek	3,148
Upper Lime Creek	1
Casey Creek	333
Salmon Point	.1
Little Hammer	4
Bartlette Mountain	1,529
South Spud	.25
Casey II	.1
	42,262 acres

Many trail signs were burned & it is planned to replace them in 2004

SPOTTED BEAR RANGER DISTRICT ACCOMPLISHMEMTS IN 2003

By Gordon Ash

Outfitter/Guide Fee Demo Activities

Funded 2 river rangers along the South Fork Flathead Riveró visitor contact and education, campsite inventory and rehabilitation, and river patrol.

Funded wilderness rangers for visitor contact and education.

Funded a noxious weed control crew (with cooperating funds from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation)ó all target sites in the South Fork, Danaher area and Middle Fork of the Flathead Rivers.

Continued reproduction of native grass seeds for utilization in Wilderness native reveg program on severely impacted sites.

Removal and replacement of the Meadow Creek Packers Roost at the trailhead on the South Fork of the Flathead River.

Trail Maintenance

Over 600 miles of trails maintained. 6 resource crews performed this work.

40 miles of Historic phone line maintained. Significant sections were rehabilitated following the fire events in the South Fork.

Heavy Maintenance/reconstruction Projects:

MCCó West Side Trail # 263 (Bob Marshall)ó Puncheon replacement. Completed over 200 feet of construction.

Morrison Creek Trail #154 (Great Bear)- completed 800 feet of turnpike re-crowning, Total project completed.

Spotted Bear River Trail # 83 (non-Wilderness). Completed 2.5 of trail reconstruction.

Deferred Maintenance/trail inventory

Inventoried 20 miles of trail inventory and have accomplished about 95% of required inventory target.

Facilities

Hahn Cabin historic refurbishment completed. Big Prairie Work Center foundation replacement, 50% completed; the Ranger Dwelling foundation and support fully stabilized.

Volunteers

Even with significant fire activity during the field season, over 164,000$ of volunteered project activity was accomplished on the District. Two undred and twelve individual volunteers participated in program activity ranging from trail work in both Wilderness and non-Wilderness settings; facility rehab; stock care and stock tack repair; fencing; visitor contact; and snow survey endeavors. Special thanks go to the Bob Marshall Foundation, the Backcountry Horsemen, Student Conservation Association and Landmark Volunteers and National Smokejumper Association..

Fire Effects

Following the fire activities of 2003 (see accompanying article), extensive trail reopening and rehabilitation occurred. Using support from Spotted Bear District and Rocky Mountain Ranger District trail crews, and detailers of fire personnel form the Region 1 Smoke Jumper Base and Bitterroot/Lolo National Forest over 60 miles of trail were reopened; over 10 miles of trail tread was reestablished with associated water drainage; over 200 feet of trail corduroy was rebuilt; and critical fence repair was accomplished.

MOREL MUSHROOM HARVESTING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2004

By Dale Luhman

In 2003, large wildfires burned approximately 160,000 acres of the Flathead National Forest. There were 7 large fire complexes; Wedge, Robert, Beta/Doris, Blackfoot Lake, and Ball outside of the wilderness, and Little Salmon and Crazy Horse inside the wilderness. 88,000 of these acres were on the 15 fires of the Little Salmon Complex in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex on the Spotted Bear Ranger District. The Forest Service's experience with past fires indicates the general public personal use and commercial harvesters will come to these recently burned sites to gather morel mushrooms. Commercial harvest of wild morel mushrooms began in earnest in the 1980s in western states and spawned the development of foreign markets. Based on experiences with other large fires on the Flathead (Moose - 2002, Challenge -1998, Little Wolf - 1994, Red Bench - 1988), we expect an influx of from several hundred to over a thousand people seeking to harvest mushrooms.

In 2004, the Flathead National Forest plans to implement a commercial and personal use mushroom harvest program on lands burned within the Flathead National Forest. The program is intended to manage all harvest-related activities in a manner that minimizes impacts to natural resources and the local community.

Morel mushrooms usually respond to fire by having a flush of growth the summer season after a fire. The type of growth usually varies by the intensity of the burn of the fires. We have already observed areas within the fire perimeters that have burned very hot, burned with moderate intensity, and other areas have burned at a low intensity or not burned at all. When the ground warms up in the spring and the area receives rain, the mushrooms respond. This will vary by elevation of the area and aspect of the slopes. We anticipate that mushrooms may be available from early May into August.

In the fires that occurred in the South Fork Flathead River on the Spotted Bear Ranger District in 2003, the proposal for harvesting mushrooms in 2004 is being analyzed this winter. It tentatively will include the following restrictions. In the wilderness no commercial harvesting is allowed. People can harvest mushrooms for their own consumption while they are in the wilderness if they slice the mushrooms lengthwise immediately when they are harvested. No mushrooms can be removed from the wilderness. However, if a person wants to harvest some mushrooms for their own consumption and they are not for resale, they would need to obtain a personal use permit prior to entering the wilderness. A personal use permit is available free, and limits the person to 5 gallons of mushrooms that must be sliced lengthwise at the time of harvest. These mushrooms could then be removed from the wilderness. These permits would be available at the Hungry Horse and Spotted Bear Ranger District offices. Final information on commercial harvest permits, commercial campsites, and buying stations will also become available over the next few months as the final details of the overall mushroom program are decided. You can contact the Hungry Horse or Spotted Bear Ranger District offices for more information on the mushroom harvest program.

ARTISTS IN THE WILD!

By Teresa Wenum

This summer a Montana performing artist, an artist representing the visual arts and a writer will spend up to a week in one of the many wilderness or ìnear wildernessî cabins on the Hungry Horse, Spotted Bear and Swan Lake Ranger Districts. The Flathead National Forest joined with the Hockaday Museum of Art in Kalispell, the Bob Marshall Foundation and Swan Ecosystem Center to start the Artst *Wilderness* Connection program. The artist-in-residence program gives artists an opportunity at a unique retreat to focus on their art in very remote settings to explore wilderness values, concepts and the natural features and processes that take place in these wild areas.

After the artist residency that takes place in either August or September, artists are asked to donate a piece of artwork representing their stay at a cabin and share their talents and experience with the local community. This could include an art showing, performance, open house, workshop or seminar.

Work on the program actually began in 2002 with plans to pilot the residency in 2003. Last summerís fires forced planners to postpone plans ëtil 2004.

The Artist *Wilderness* Connection program is modeled after the successful artist-in-resident program on the Helena National Forest. The San Juan National Forest in Colorado and the Hiawatha National Forest in Michigan also host successful programs with area arts associations.

PENTAGON CABIN STABILIZATION, PASSPORT IN TIME PROJECT

By Tim Light

Project Dates: August 13-August 22

Following on the success of the PIT project at Schafer in 2003, the Distict is hosting a similar project at Pentagon Cabin this coming August. The cabin is an administrative site located at the confluence of Spotted Bear River and Pentagon Creek, and is used seasonally, primarily during the summer and fall months, by the Spotted Bear Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest.

Pentagon cabin was built in 1931 and has not changed in the interim. Crews work out of the station in the summer months maintaining trails and fighting fires as the need arises. Pentagon is a one-story, log building with a porch on the gable end. The logs are joined with compound dovetail notches. It was probably built by Evert Hart, an accomplished log craftsmen who was envolved with the construction of many of the Flatheadís backcountry cabins. Pentagon is almost identical to the cabin at Gooseberry Park, approximately 10 miles away, and is one of a network of cabins spaced roughly a dayís ride apart that were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s to facilitate the Forest Serviceís management of what is now the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Currently, the cabinís sill and spandrel logs are partially or totally setting on the ground. We propose to raise the cabin off the ground 8 to 10 inches, pour nine cement footings (at the four corners of the cabin, center of the porchís front log, mid-span on sill logs and mid-span on front spandrel log) and set the cabin on cement blocks. The replacement of the sill logs is needed because of rot and it is possible that the spandrel logs are also rotted and will need to be replaced. The porch supports and decking also need replacement.

Because Pentagon is in the Wilderness, only hand tools will be used. Volunteers will use the construction techniques of the 19th Century, crosscut saws, axes, log carriers, draw knifes, and a full range of hand tools. Sill logs will be cut on site from trees felled by the volunteers. Volunteers should have carpentry skills although they are required. Also, it should be noted that it is a 10-mile hike into the site. The forest will pack in all camping and personal gear, but all potential volunteers are advised to take into consideration physical conditions before applying. Comtact Tim Light, (406) 758-5258 for additional information.

MEADOW CREEK PACKER'S ROOST CORRAL RECONSTRUCTION

By Nate Gassman

The old Meadow Creek Packers Roost staging area had deteriorated to an unacceptable condition for the permitted outfitters, their animals, clients, and the primitive surroundings.

To improve the conditions of Meadow Creek Packers Roost, the Spotted Bear Ranger District, working with the outfitters, removed existing corrals and replaced them with seven newly constructed corrals. Each corral was constructed of square reused steel, and measure a minimum of 64í x 64í. The work took place over 7 days and involved six outfitters, their laborers, and 20 Forest Service employees.

The outfitter area is large enough to allow the corral areas to be graded to allow proper drainage. Proper drainage will cause less accumulation of mud and manure resulting in a more favorable environment for livestock. The Spotted Bear District installed a SST vault toilet that meets both handicapped and waste management regulations.

To improve vehicle parking and congested conditions, the fourth improvement was to assign each outfitter parking next to their designated corral. The new designated parking areas are large enough to accommodate large trucks, trailers and stock trucks. This new parking area provides ample room for storage of hay and tack sheds. Outfitters are providing their own hay and tack storage facilities. The orderly storage of hay and tack sheds improved the aesthetic appearance of Packers Roost.

Finally, Spotted Bear created a communal storage area for bear attractants. The communal food storage area decreases the likelihood of attractants being stored in an unapproved manner, thus minimizing bear-human conflicts. The Packers Roost Corral Reconstruction project was a complete success. The hard work put fourth by the outfitter and Forest Service employees is reflected in the high quality of the new facility. The new corrals are a great example of terrific working partnership that exists between the Spotted Bear outfitters and the Spotted Bear District.