

Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument Fall Newsletter

Protecting and preserving the
Upper Missouri River Breaks
National Monument through advocacy,
education and stewardship.



Summer 2020: Back on Track

After a difficult spring filled with COVID-19 cancelations and the uncertainty of what the summer held, the Friends got back into the flow of things and had a very successful season of field work. Throughout the summer, the Friends were a constant presence on the monument. Whether it was running volunteer stewardship events or continuing to assist with maintenance of recreation facilities, our organization and volunteers were there. In addition, the Friends were able to build upon past conservation advocacy work to establish a new coalition of conservation professionals ready to respond to issues impacting the monument as they arise. All of this work would not be possible without the support of people like you, people that love the monument and its surrounding landscapes. Thank you for your continued interest and support of our work, we loved spending another year bettering the Breaks together!



Friends of the
**MISSOURI BREAKS
MONUMENT**

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This Year's Business Sponsors

As we wrap up this year we have countless thank yous to extend, but we wanted to take the time to give special words of appreciation to some of the local businesses and sponsors that made this year's work possible.

We were so fortunate this year to receive materials and supply donations for our stewardship work from **Lehman's True Value** of Fort Benton, **Power Townsend** of Helena, and the **Lewis and Clark Historical Trail Division of the National Park Service**. A special thank you to Lehman's True Value for their exceptional help with the purchasing, storage, and transportation of our cottonwood planting materials and for their continued support throughout the years.

Another one of our amazing partners was **Missouri River Outfitters** of Fort Benton who were kind enough to donate the use of eight canoes for our annual river clean-up. They have also been a huge help with organizing shuttles and canoe rentals for several of our floats this year making our jobs much easier and efficient.

Food and beverage donations this year were provided by **Lewis and Clark Brewing** of Helena, **Montana Sub Shop** of Great Falls, and **B Social Bar and Lanes** of Fort Benton. Montana Sub Shop and Lewis and Clark Brewing provided beer and sack lunches for our river clean-up volunteers, with plenty of beer left over for our National Public Lands Day crew too! Thank you both for fueling our paddlers! The B Social Bar and Lanes happily signed on to donate sack lunches for our annual Cottonwood Planting event early this spring. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 concerns we were unable to host our beloved event and take B Social up on their generous offer, but we appreciate it none-the-less!

The support of local businesses, like these, makes much of our work possible. During a difficult year for all, with COVID-19 related disruptions, this support and generosity means more than ever. Please join us in extending our gratitude to our business sponsors for the 2020 field season.



2020 in Numbers

(July through September)

Stewardship Events: 6

Event Volunteers: 68

Montana Communities Represented: 18

Total Volunteer Hours: 555

Estimated Return to the monument: \$15,096

Wilderness Study Areas Monitored: 6

Week-Long Maintenance Floats: 5

Dog Mascots/Helpers: 2

Northern Light Sightings: 1

Nights Spent on the Monument by Staff: 30

Toilet Paper Rolls Refilled: 200+

River Miles Paddled: 320

Pounds of Trash Removed on Clean-Up Float: 150+

Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring Forms: 35

Beavers Sighted: 12

Lewis and Clark Quotes Used: 27.5



Mikayla's BSWC Term Wrap-Up

After joining the Big Sky Watershed Corps program in January, I was fortunate enough to have been placed with the Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument for my 10-month term of service. Since then, the work, the landscape, and the people that have made up my time with the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument have bolstered my passion for both the breaks and for the incredible work that this organization does in service of our public lands and the people they benefit.

Much of my work this year has been spent on the water. Between maintenance floats, Wilderness Study Area trips, and river clean-ups, I paddled almost 320 miles on the Missouri river between Wood Bottom campground and James Kipp Recreation Area learning about the history, ecology, and geology of the breaks along the way. These trips included campground maintenance, vegetation monitoring, cottonwood watering, and educating visitors about the monument and the work the Friends does to protect it. Each float on the Missouri offered a new and exciting experience; whether it was battling 14 miles of headwinds alone in a canoe or sleeping under the stars at Hole in the Wall listening to a chorus of coyotes, I never left the water without a story to tell.

However, the most rewarding part of my time with the Friends has been during our many volunteer events. I feel extremely privileged to have met and worked alongside so many supporters of the Friends during these stewardship days while also getting the chance to enhance my own professional development. Organizing projects like the National Trails Day maintenance hike, Interpretive Center Beautification Day, Missouri River Clean-up Float, and National Public Lands Day at James Kipp afforded me the opportunity to see plans become reality and to witness the dramatic benefits that a small group of people can provide with a lot of hard work.

I want to thank all of you for your warm welcome and tireless efforts to leave this world a better place than you found it. Although each one of you has his or her own unique connection to the monument, this has proven to be a community of people that can and will readily come together to do an immense amount of good. I am grateful for every moment that I have spent as a part of this organization and I look forward to seeing you all on the monument in the future. As one volunteer so aptly phrased it, "paddle on"!

Sincerely your 2020 BSWC member,

Mikayla Moss



Breaks Action Team

While stewardship is often seen as the outward face of the Friends, there is more going on than what is seen on the ground. This year, the Friends reached out to other Montana-based conservation groups to build a collation of advocates for the monument and its surrounding landscapes. The coalition, called the Breaks Action Team (BAT), includes the Friends, Montana Wildlife Federation (MWF), and Montana Wilderness Association (MWA). Like the Friends, MWF and MWA have been fighting to protect Montana's natural resources for years, long before the monument's creation even. Individuals focused on central and eastern Montana from both organizations join staff from the Friends on monthly calls, at a minimum, to discuss issues in the region. This cohesion and communication will allow all organizations the ability to track monument related matters and build a joint game-plan as problems arise.



Looking Ahead to 2021

On January 17th, 2021, the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument will turn 20! Just months after on April 18th the Friends will join its namesake and focus as the organization turns 20. Both of these anniversaries are cause to celebrate and celebrate we will!

In 2021, the Friends will be ramping up operations and are committed to functioning within all three of our mission statement's directives; advocacy, education, and stewardship. In accordance with this move, the Friends will be continuing all of our stewardship work, adding educational events about subjects related to the monument, and hosting talks with conservation advocates. As the current health crisis plays out, we will be making decisions about in-person events or virtual gatherings for many of these programs in the coming months. Please keep an eye out for a complete schedule this winter and early spring.

