

# The Wilderness Voice

Newsletter of the Madison Gallatin Chapter



MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

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## Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program

By Becky Hattersley, MWA OEMP Wilderness Fellow

Formed in 2010, the Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program was designed to foster a life-long engagement with nature, stewardship, and community by connecting underprivileged youth with the wild places in their backyard through intergenerational place-based outdoor adventures and service learning projects. The following is a report about an OEMP outing this winter.

*I don't want to jinx anything, but the Outdoor Explorers tend to bring about good weather and our February trip was no exception. We had a light snow and a little sun, perfect for an afternoon of hiking around and digging pits in the snow.*

*The Battle Ridge Forest Service Cabin was our day's destination. Built in 1938, it is a rustic log cabin with a wood cookstove, outhouse, and no electricity. It is one of 24 Forest Service cabins in the Gallatin National Forest available to the public for a minimal fee. Located a mere 18 miles out of Bozeman and only a short hike in from the road, it was a perfect location for what we had planned for. We met in Bozeman and carpoled up past Bridger Bowl and Brackett Creek to the parking spot. There, we divvied up our snowshoes and caught up with Jay Poppy of the Friends of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center. Kimberly Schlenker our Forest Service leader showed us the way to the cabin.*

*Once we arrived, we gathered outside for some snacks and water. Jay Poppy gave a presentation on snow science. He dug a snow pit and showed us the different layers that formed a snowpack. Some were solid shelves while others consisted of loose sugar-like particles of snow. Then, he got out inclinometers and we tested the slope of the hill we were on. It was about 10 degrees, far below the danger zone of 35 degrees. Our next activity was a stability*



*test. Jay isolated a column of snow and we took turns hitting the top of it with varying degrees of force on a shovel until it broke. This demonstrated where the weak layers were and how easily they separated from the rest of the snowpack, the kind of test that backcountry travelers use to determine how dangerous an area is for avalanches.*

*Our next activity was the beacon search drill. Avalanche beacons are the tools that backcountry travelers*

*wear in case they end up in a slide. The beacons send and receive signals from other beacons. When they are in search mode, the user is looking for their partner. In the default mode, which is a send mode, they are giving out a constant signal to those around them so that if the user is caught in a slide they can be found. We got to experiment with them by searching for beacons Jay hid around the area. As soon as we turned our beacons on search mode, they started beeping and a red display with numbers and arrows appeared. As we followed the arrows, the numbers went down and the beeping sped up. Pretty soon we were right on top of where the beacons were hidden and it was time to start digging. Sure enough, right below the surface of the snow, there was another transceiver set to send, the way one would be if it was attached to a real human under the snow.*

*We wrapped up our day back at the cabin. Inside it, Kimberly had some hot coco and a warm fire going. Bunk beds with mattresses provided a nice place to sit and enjoy the warmth. Once we were all ready to face the elements again, we put on our snowshoes again and headed back to the cars.*

*Winter isn't over for the Outdoor Explorers! We hope to see you on our upcoming trips: March – Snowshoe and Animal Tracking, April- Madison Buffalo Jump & Natural History, May- Biking !*

## Daly Creek Snowshoe Walk By Catherine Nelson

On February 16, a cold Saturday morning, a group of eight people car pooled and drove to Yellowstone Park to snowshoe in the Daly Creek drainage. It is a narrow valley in the northwest corner of YNP and it is the first trail in the park as you head south on the highway from Big Sky. It was a clear deep blue sky day and a bitter wind was blowing at the trailhead. We snowshoed on an existing trail marked by cross country skiers for quite a distance. If you stepped off to the side of the ski tracks you sank into deep powder snow. We stopped many times to look at many of the animal tracks in the snow, big and small, deep and shallow. Jeff helped us identify the fresh tracks of deer, elk, coyote, martins, and smaller animals. We were very close to Crown Butte to the left of our trail and we could see where different

animals had climbed or descended the steep slope below the vertical rock formations. As we headed back into the drainage, we were sheltered from the wind by the adjacent forested hills. Another member of our group, Laurie, helped us identify different trees growing in the woods. The trail climbs over several small hills and then evens out in the valley as you approach the Gallatin range. There are efforts under way from several different organizations to protect the Gallatin Range from further development and road building because it is a critical corridor for wildlife adjacent to YNP. The Daly Creek trail eventually works its way around to the left connecting with the Tepee Trail and Tepee Creek which is a buffer zone for wildlife in YNP. You can also stay on Daly Creek trail and go over the Gallatin Range on Daly

Pass.

We found a great place for lunch sitting in the warm sun on dry fallen logs. In our group we had a civil engineering student from MSU, a school teacher from Livingston, a lawyer from Washington, D.C., a counselor, a solar panel expert, a BWAGs hiker, an expert on flowers and trees, and a retired professor from MSU. We were visited by a young man snowshoeing by himself and he joined us for lunch. He is a post doctorate student at MSU and he is a hydrologist. We enjoyed his company and asked him all kinds of questions learning about drainages, water sources, and even fracking. Our day snowshoeing in Daly Creek was rewarding and felt rich to all of us in many different ways.



*The group with Crown Butte in background, photo by Catherine Nelson*



*Lunch time, photo by Catherine Nelson*

# KEEP IT WILD!



MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

[www.wildmontana.org](http://www.wildmontana.org)

## The Ten Essentials By Roger Jenkins

With hiking season knocking on our front doors, it is time to get out the hiking boots and give some thought to those things that should be in our packs. The absolute musts are usually referred to in hiking guides as the Ten Essentials: those items that you should never leave the trailhead without. And that means NEVER! NEVER! It is absolutely amazing how many hikers have heard this, and yet fail to heed the advice. Why not? Maybe it's complacency. Maybe it's the old "it can't happen to me" syndrome. Well, maybe not. But are you willing to bet your life on it? I personally know some folks who did, and came dangerously close to losing. The few pounds that the essentials represent are not "extra." They are absolutely critical. The list will vary depending on who you talk to, but the following are some that almost everyone can agree on.

**First Aid Kit** You don't have to be prepared for cardiac bypass surgery on the trail. Keep it simple: A few bandaids, some gauze and adhesive tape, an elastic bandage for twisted knees or ankles, some butterfly bandages for deep cuts, a few anti-histamines for bee stings, and some pain killers are most of what is needed for day hiking. For extended backpacking trips, you might want to add a few more things.

**Maps** Carry topographical maps. If you don't know how to read one, learn. Such is pretty simple and it is really important that you have basic map reading skills. You can purchase topo maps from a number of outdoor shops in the area or you can download them for free from any numbers of web sites. No excuses.

**Compass** Do not assume you can find north on a cloudy day without instrumental assistance. You don't have to spend a lot of \$\$ on a compass, but given that in the western US, the differences between true north and magnetic north are significant, make sure you get one that can correct for these differences.

**Rain Gear** Weather can change really quickly in the Rocky Mountains, so be prepared. The cost of rain gear has plummeted dramatically in the last two decades. Rain and wind protection can be essential to your survival, especially if you sustain an injury.

**Extra Clothes**, including a wool or fleece hat. You lose at least 35% of your total body heat through your head. That 35% can make a tremendous difference in cool weather. The hat may be the thing that keeps you alive through an unscheduled night out. But most of all, it keeps the brain warm, so that you can think your way out of any predicament in which you find yourself.

**Matches** Get the waterproof variety, or put the regular ones in a waterproof container. Cigarette lighters are very convenient. But try to use them after the flint has gotten wet, and you'll see why people who carry them also carry matches.

**Knife** We're not talking here about the 40-tool, everything-including-the-kitchen-sink Swiss Army variety. Just a simple, one or two blades type will do. To cut fabric, make a large bandage, shave kindling, cut some cord, etc.

**Flashlight or Headlamp** This one seems to raise the most eyebrows among novice hikers. "Why do I have to take a flashlight for a day hike?" Of course, the answer is because it's only light about half of the time. Sometimes, it's difficult to judge the amount of time that it will take to complete a hike. There are any number of reasons why you might be out after dark. But walking in the dark on a trail, without a light, can be a terrifying experience, especially after you've fallen a few times.

**Extra Food** "Extra" implies that you have some food with you to begin with. Look, we know that no one is likely to starve to death, even if you go without food for a week or two. But that extra snack bar will give your body a little charge to help keep warm on a cold day, and may help you think straight.

**The Tenth Essential** This is your call. Think about what might be important to you. For some, it might be strong insect repellent, for others, toilet paper, or a GPS. Probably, everyone should try to take along a good load *of common sense*.



*Example of the ten essentials, photo by Roger Jenkins*

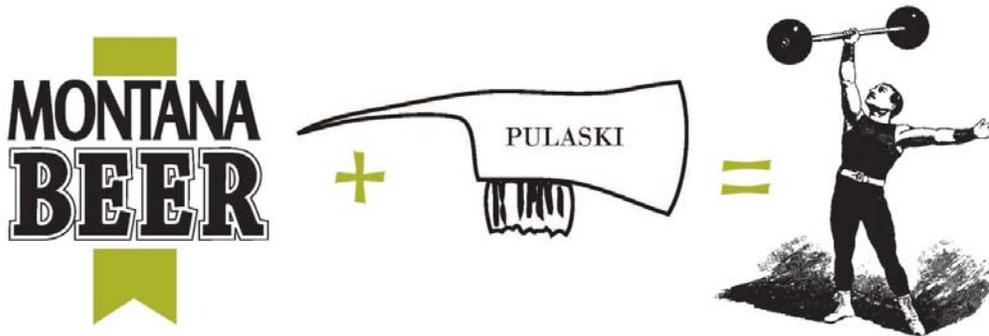
## Beer is Good (For You!) By Shannon Freix, CDT Program Manager

While most people would place beer and healthy living on opposite ends of the spectrum most days; this spring, for one week only, the stars are aligned and you can have both at the same time.

What? How is this possible you may ask?

Well, during the week of April 29<sup>th</sup> the Montana Wilderness Association will be touring the great state of Montana to celebrate local breweries and the Continental Divide Trail. MWA's trail stewardship program, CDT Montana, focuses on completing and maintaining the CDT on the northern section of trail all with the help of dedicated volunteers. Beginning Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, CDT Montana staff will be stopping in Helena, Missoula, Butte, Bozeman and Great Falls to recruit fun-loving volunteers to join us on field projects this summer.

So how do beer and healthy living share the same benefits during this one delightful week? Because when you enjoy a beer (or two, or three) the night we are in your town a portion of all sales will be donated from your local brewery to support volunteer projects on the Continental Divide Trail. And when you volunteer on a project this summer, you get buff, strong and burn a lot of calories. Then you get thirsty and have earned yourself another beer at the end of the day. Here's a simple diagram to show you how it breaks down.



So as you enjoy local Montana beer we hope you realize the many benefits it may have when you drink it – helping to complete our nation's longest mountain trail, supporting thirsty volunteers in the field after a hard day's work and allowing MWA to reach out to new friends.

Check out these dates and join us this spring in your town to celebrate CDT Montana and your local brewery. And, in all seriousness, please remember to drink responsibly. We need volunteers to come back and help each summer.

Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>: Blackfoot River Brewing, Helena

Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>: The Quarry Brewing Company, Butte

Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>: Kettlehouse Brewing Company, Missoula

**Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bridger Brewing Company, Bozeman**

Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>: Bowser Brewing, Great Falls

Oh yeah, the first 25 people to renew their MWA memberships at these events will get a FREE CDT Montana pint glass to take home with you. Thanks in advance for supporting our work and our amazing volunteers!

The 2013 trail projects can be found online at [www.cdtmontana.org](http://www.cdtmontana.org) and volunteer applications are currently being taken.

## Summer Wilderness Walks Preview

By Roger Jenkins and John Todd

From the Beartooth Plateau to the Big Hole there are over 30 hikes scheduled in southwest Montana this summer. 2013 is Montana Wilderness Association's 51st year offering, free, member-led excursions in to some of this state's finest backcountry. From the Lima Peaks to the Snowcrest to the Gallatin Range, there is a hike for everyone. And this year, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the last wilderness designated in Montana with five hikes in each of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness units.

In fact, we'll kick off this season's hikes in our corner of the state celebrating a conservation giant on May 4th in Bear Trap Canyon. This is a great early season river hike along the Madison River. Bear Trap Canyon is a 6000 acre unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. The low-elevation canyon receives only 11 inches of precipitation annually, but contains a Class IV rapid known as the "Kitchen Sink." The trail, bordered by 1500-foot cliffs, climbs gradually with an eleva-

tion gain of only 175 feet. The goal is to hike in 3.5 miles to Bear Trap Creek, but the group can elect to continue on and turn around at any point.

Look for your 2013 Wilderness Walks book to arrive in your mailbox later next month or check [wildmontana.org](http://wildmontana.org) for an online schedule soon.

And, in case you can't wait to start planning your summer, here's a list of walks in the Bozeman area:

- Bear Trap Canyon, Saturday 5/4/13
- GPS Training in Hyalite Canyon, Saturday 6/8/13
- Summer Solstice walk to Fox Creek Meadow, Friday 6/21/13
- Spanish Creek trail to Pioneer Falls, Saturday 6/22/13
- Mount Jefferson, Saturday 6/22/13
- Porcupine Creek, Friday 6/28/13
- Grotto Falls- Parents and Pre-schoolers Hike, Friday 7/19/13
- Bacon Rind Creek Trail, Saturday 7/20/13
- Windy Pass, Saturday 7/13/13
- The Helmet, Saturday 7/20/13
- Buffalo Horn Pass and beyond, Friday 7/26/13
- Monument Meadows, Saturday 7/27/13
- Gallatin Crest Backpack Adventure on South Swan Creek, Thursday - Sunday 08/15-18/2013
- Papoose Creek, Saturday 8/17/13
- Fortress Mountain, Saturday 8/24/13
- Gallatin Crest from South Swan Creek, Wednesday 8/28/13
- Hyalite Canyon Rocky Viewpoint, Saturday 9/21/13

Come talk to the walk leaders at the CDT Brewery event (previous page) on May 2.



*Hiking Beartrap Canyon, photo by Susie McDonald*



*Lunch at Red Mtn. saddle, photo by Susie McDonald*



The 2013 Gathering of the Montana Wilderness Association, hosted by the Eastern Wildlands Chapter, will be held in Billings, May 17-19. You should have already received a flyer in the mail with schedule and registration information. Some of that information is repeated here in case you didn't get the flyer or misplaced it. You can also go to [www.wildmontana.org/gathering](http://www.wildmontana.org/gathering) to download the registration flyer, a map of the weekend's event locations or to order tickets.

Lodging will be available at the Billings Hotel ([www.billingshotel.com](http://www.billingshotel.com)) for a group rate of \$79 per night.

## Schedule of events

### Friday, May 17

5:00 Music for the Wild - Bluegrass, BBQ & Brew, a fundraiser for the Eastern Wildlands Chapter

### Saturday, May 18

Hike to Castle Butte, located about 50 minutes northeast of Billings.

The afternoon and evening events will be held at DanWalt Gardens

3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Happy Two Hours with time to tour the gardens and enjoy a no-host bar and live acoustic music by Wes Urbaniak.

5:00 p.m. Welcome by MWA Executive Director, Brian Sybert

6:00 p.m. Dinner buffet

7:00 p.m. Volunteer awards

7:45 p.m. Huckleberry Pie Auction

8:00 p.m. Break and raffle drawing

8:15 p.m. Great Plains - America's Lingerin Wild: A photographer's journey exploring struggle and hope on the prairie, a presentation by conservation photographer Michael Forsberg.

9:00 p.m. Book signing and socializing.

### Sunday, May 19

Outing to the Pryor Mountains with two or three possible hikes ranging from five to seven miles.

8:30 a.m. State Council Meeting - Learn more about MWA by attending a meeting of the state council. All members are welcome!

Volunteers are needed to help with set up and clean up, sell tickets, greet participants and assist with the raffle. If you are interested in helping, contact Laura Parr at 443-7350 ext. 110 or [lparr@wildmontana.org](mailto:lparr@wildmontana.org).