

Predawn Hours, GPS Transmitters, and Sage Grouse Research

*Craig Flentie
Central Montana District*

A unique graduate level research project being conducted near Glasgow, Montana, promises to provide much needed information about the preferred travel corridors, migrating patterns and habitat associations of greater sage-grouse.

Rebecca Smith (a wildlife biology Student Career Experience Program student with the BLM's Glasgow Field Office) is conducting the research as she pursues an MS degree in wildlife biology. Rebecca graduated last spring with a BS in wildlife biology from the University of Montana (UM) and is now working toward an MS in wildlife biology, again with the UM.

The group of sage grouse Smith is using in her research winters south of the Milk River in Valley County, and then migrates in the spring to brood rearing grounds in north Valley County, Montana, and the eastern portion of the Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan. This is the longest known migration route used by sage grouse (about 120 km, + - 75 miles).

There's a great deal of information available about the habitats sage grouse need, but relatively little is known about the migration corridors sage grouse use to move from one preferred habitat to another. What features or objects do sage grouse try to



Graduate student Rebecca Smith and her subject both seem to be enjoying Smith's research project. *Photo by Vinita Shea*

What's Inside . . .

- 2 Jamie Connell Named State Director
- 2 BLM & Partners Celebrate Land Acquisitions
- 4 NPS Crew Stabilizes Garnet Cabin; Ghost Town Added to National Register
- 6 2010 Paleo Season Productive
- 8 Garden Attracts Native Pollinators
- 9 BLM Be-friended by Facebook
- 10 Willow Planting in Bell Canyon
- 11 Butte FO, RMEF Partner Up for River Cleanup

Continued on page 3

Jamie E. Connell Named State Director

Jamie E. Connell is the new state director for the BLM in Montana and the Dakotas.

Connell was born in Butte and received her B.S. in Petroleum Engineering from Montana Tech in 1985. She began her BLM career in 1985 as a petroleum engineer in Miles City. For the past 18 years, Jamie has been a public land manager for the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service in locations across the West, including Great Falls and Malta; Boise, Idaho; and Montrose, Silverthorne, Glenwood Springs, and Grand Junction, all in Colorado. Since February 2009, Connell has served as the BLM's Northwest Colorado District Manager. She and her husband John enjoy hiking, skiing, canoeing, upland bird hunting, and fly fishing.

Connell began her duties November 8. She replaces Gene Terland, who retired in May 2010.



BLM Director Bob Abbey addresses the audience after issuing the oath of office to Jamie E. Connell on Nov. 8.

BLM and its partners celebrate land acquisitions on shores of Hauser Lake

David Abrams, Western Montana District

A Sept. 3 ceremony celebrated the recent acquisition of three parcels of land as additions to the BLM's Chain of Lakes Special Recreation Management Area north of Helena.

The event was held at the BLM's White Sandy Recreation Site on the shores of Hauser Lake, not far from the three dif-

ferent sections of land which were added to the Bureau's inventory this summer.

The BLM and The Conservation Fund partnered with landowners to acquire two private parcels which were otherwise in-holdings amongst public land in the Brown's Gulch/Ward Ranch area. These lands will be managed for public recreation, wildlife habitat and other uses similar to the surrounding public lands.

The acquisition of the parcels was accomplished using Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act funds.

In another transaction, the BLM and PPL Montana, LLC partnered with a willing landowner to acquire a 5.7-acre parcel adjacent to the Holter Lake Campground. A parking area will be constructed on the parcel to provide overflow parking for the heavily used

Holter Lake Campground, significantly reducing traffic congestion and safety issues associated with people parking along Beartooth Road.

Rick Hotaling, District Manager for the BLM's Western Montana District, said that land acquisitions like these are beneficial to both the people and the land: "These three acquisitions are important for a number of reasons. They help protect our open spaces and the viewshed from potential subdivision development on this stretch of Hauser Lake. They also maintain or improve vital wildlife habitat, enhance public recreation opportunities within the Missouri River corridor, and consolidate public lands by reducing private inholdings.

"We are truly grateful for the efforts of everyone involved to help make these transactions a reality," Hotaling added.



Mark Sommer of American Public Land Exchange Company points to one of the recently-acquired parcels of land during a small ceremony celebrating the Chain of Lakes land acquisition Sept. 3 on the shores of Hauser Lake. *Photo by David Abrams*

Continued from page 1

avoid on their flight paths? What flight corridors do sage grouse consistently use?

Rebecca's research project is designed to answer those questions which in turn will help managers make land use decisions that do not cut off movement corridors used by sage grouse and other migratory animals. This research project will also help determine more precisely when this group of sage grouse begins its northward and southward migration flights.

The end results of this research will be a better understanding of how sage grouse use the landscape between summering and wintering grounds, and land use decisions that will help maintain important movement corridors for grouse.

This spring Rebecca and several assistants attached solar-powered GPS transmitters to 24 sage grouse (19 female and 5 males). Each camouflaged unit is about two inches long and is mounted on the grouse's lower back and held in place by straps under the bird's legs. The GPS units are programmed to record the grouse's location four times per day, without the challenges and costs associated with actively following the birds as required by VHF transmitters. The recorded locations are then converted to a map format that shows precisely where each grouse is spending time.

While this research is purpose driven, most of the field work (trapping grouse, attaching GPS units, and releasing the birds) has been very enjoyable. Smith finds the predawn hours before trapping operations on the prairie of eastern Montana to be especially rewarding. She also appreciates the help she has received with her research from several colleagues with the BLM, the UM, and the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.



Rebecca Smith attaches a camouflaged GPS transmitter to the back of a greater sage grouse. *Photo by Vinita Shea*

Many stakeholders across the west are familiar with the problems faced by sage grouse: habitat fragmentation (as man continues to build, till and develop); declining numbers on a national basis; and West Nile virus. As a result, greater sage grouse were recently declared warranted, but precluded from listing as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act by the need to complete listing actions of higher priority.

In the face of these challenges, it's critical that land managers make the best decisions possible concerning sage grouse, and those decisions depend upon the best information available.

Next spring Smith's research project is designed to have 40 sage grouse carrying GPS units. Over the course of the next two years, this project will begin connecting the dots among what we know about sage grouse today, and what we need to know tomorrow.

NPS Crew Stabilizes Garnet Cabin; Historic Ghost Town Added to National Register

Story and photos by David Abrams, Western Montana District

Gravity was taking its toll on the haunted cabin. For years, the Hawe House had been left to the elements—sun, rain, snow, rodents, and the occasional ghost—and because it was built on an incline at the southern edge of the Garnet town limits, it was starting to take a definite downhill lean.

Enter Nick Leritz and Bob Monsour, two National Park Service employees who spent several weeks in September shoring up the inner walls of the 1930s-era dwelling. Thanks to an interagency agreement signed in 2002, Leritz and Monsour have come to Garnet for several years to conduct preservation work at the Montana ghost town.

“It’s interesting to see the different workmanship of the buildings, how they were built, and how they’re deteriorating,” Leritz said as he pulled a board through the cabin’s window before nailing it into place against one of the leaning walls. During Garnet’s gold-rush boom-town period, he added, “Everything was put up quick, without the idea that they’d be here for 50 years or even longer.”

Leritz and Monsour are racing against time as they spend a few weeks each year “on loan” to the BLM from the NPS.

“We want to arrest the decay,” Leritz said. “Once things are lost, you can never get them back.”

Last year, the NPS carpenter and maintenance mechanic worked together to restore the old-time swing at Warren Park, the playground at the end of a two-mile trail that starts in the Garnet visitor’s parking lot. The playground, which is a ghostly revelation at the end of the moderately-strenuous walk, was built around the turn of the 20th century by a bachelor who longed for the company of townfolk on their way to his park.

“We take a lot of pride in the work we do, trying to duplicate the craftsmanship of the work which was done 100 years ago,” Leritz said.

They began their project on the Hawe House by digging a 4-foot hole on the west side of the building which was filled in with a terraced retaining wall. When they dug down to the building’s foundation, Leritz said, they found there wasn’t much left holding the house to the hillside. “We only found two bricks—everything else was rotten.”

The two workers anchored the building with new studs and layered the ground around the structure with rock, geocloth barriers, a drain pipe, and dirt. “Ideally, we’ll keep the moisture away from the cabin because that’s what’s killing these buildings,” Monsour said.

The importance of Garnet’s heritage as a classic example of a mining town has never been keener. Even as Leritz and Monsour were working on the Hawe House, the Garnet Historic District was being placed on the National Register of Historic Places, a designation which had been decades in the making.

Efforts to place Garnet on the National Register date back to 1987 when a draft nomination was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office by Bureau of Land



Bob Monsour walks around the Hawe House to get another board for stabilizing the interior of the leaning cabin.

Management archeologist Jerry Clark. That draft was returned with a request for revisions and additional information and documentation. Over the years, the nomination was worked on sporadically, but ultimately it never met SHPO's standards for a recommendation of approval.

Last year, a concerted effort was made by individuals in the BLM's Missoula Field Office to place Garnet on the National Register by addressing all SHPO's concerns. Working in cooperation with John Boughton of SHPO, the nomination was presented before the state historic review board in January where it was approved for forwarding to the Keeper of the National Registry in Washington, D.C. After a several-stage process which involved multiple agencies at the state and national levels, the nomination received approval from the Keeper of the Register on Aug. 8.

"It's been a long and twisting road and we are extremely happy to see Garnet finally take its place on our nation's honor roll of treasured historic sites," said BLM historian Allan Mathews of the Missoula Field Office.

At its peak, more than 100 years ago, Garnet was a thriving gold-mining town with several hotels, a newspaper and assay office, two barber shops, a meat market, several general stores, a blacksmith shop, a jail, a stage stop, and almost a dozen saloons.

As the gold played out in the early 1900s, the once-prosperous town slowly slipped into a deep sleep until New Deal policies of the 1930s, which supported a doubling of the price of gold, resulted in mines reopening and several hundred residents returning to Garnet. The revival was short-lived and restrictions on the private use of dynamite applied at the onset of World War II dealt Garnet a death blow. Frank Davey, Garnet's last full-time resident, passed away in 1947.

Though never producing the tonnage of gold that its contemporaries at Bannack, Virginia City, Helena or Butte did, Garnet took its place as the last of the 19th-century Montana "boom" towns associated with the American dream of "striking it rich," and became the predominant mining center of the Garnet Range. The ghost town is now publicly owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

The BLM implemented a preservation program in 1972, which entailed stabilizing buildings within the Garnet town site.



Ghostly light filters through the second-floor hallway of the Wells Hotel in Garnet. The ghost town was recently placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Fifty of the seventy- nine contributing buildings were constructed before 1900; eight between 1900 and 1912, and the remaining nineteen during the mining revival of the 1930s.

Mathews said he's especially pleased with the National Register designation because it will give the ghost town a higher national public profile, which could lead to more funding for stabilization and restoration projects like the one at the Hawe House.

"It may increase visitation numbers because many tourists focus on National Register sites," he said. "It will remind people and agencies, from this point on, of the importance of preserving this nationally-recognized historic treasure."

Meanwhile, Leritz and Monsour are doing their best to keep at least one building from rolling downhill.

"This is our heritage," Monsour said. "We want people to be able to come here and see how people used to live."

2010 Paleo Season Productive

Mark E. Jacobsen, Eastern Montana/Dakotas District

MILES CITY, Mont. --- The 2010 paleontological season proved to be a productive one for dinosaur hunters plying Eastern Montana's Hell Creek formation.

"Again, it's the year of the triceratops," said BLM Archaeologist Doug Melton of the Miles City Field Office. "That seems to be the major focus for folks."

Excavation teams working public lands must be federally-recognized repositories for paleontological specimens before they can be considered qualified to excavate on BLM-administered lands. According to Melton, this year's numbers of federally-permitted institutions are down slightly; however, those permittees currently in the field are finding plenty to them keep busy.

In Garfield County, the St. Louis Community College-Meramec from Missouri was among those institutions with a BLM permit working public lands. Field Supervisor and Physical Science-Geology faculty member Carl Campbell has been overseeing excavation operations north of Jordan for several years. Campbell supervised several groups of students and volunteers which rotated through the area in June and July, working at several locations.

Campbell and crew extracted a triceratops located on BLM land in June, which has since been transported back to the St. Louis Science Center preparation lab for preservation and study. The lab is located in a publicly-accessible setting where museum visitors can watch the preparators at work and ask questions.

"Originally I thought it might be a sub-adult but some of the bones are pretty big so it's probably an adult," said Campbell. "We took out about 60 bones but it's the back half."

Campbell said the skull is likely still in the hillside, if it is present at all. When excavators finished up for

the season, there were only a couple of rib bones left protruding from the dirt, a tantalizing lead to more of the carcass.

"We'll excavate in and follow the bones," he said. "We'll be working on that again next summer."

Campbell also supervised volunteers in the excavation and removal of a hadrosaur specimen discovered by Miles City resident Gif Wood on private land.

The taxonomic grouping of Hadrosauridae is composed of multiple species referred to as duck-billed dinosaurs due to their typically broad, flat beaks which were well adapted to browsing. The fossil was jokingly dubbed "Gif's Duck" for the duration of the excavation. It was found on the crest of a hill, surrounded by active cropland. The associated sediments yielded still more clues as to what the area might have resembled millions of years ago.

"We have a pretty good idea of what the paleogeography looked like. It was on the edge of a



(Right to left) Gif Wood (Miles City), Carl Campbell (St. Louis, Mo.) Carlton Laird (St. Louis, Mo.), Jack Hobein (St. Louis, Mo.) and Aaron Jacobsen (Miles City) carefully separate the bones of a hadrosaur from its ancient stream-bed grave July 6. The duck-billed dinosaur was found on private land in Garfield County by Wood. *Photo by Mark E. Jacobsen*

streambed; it's kind of draped over the channel sands. It looks like it just dropped right where it was," said Campbell. "It hasn't been scavenged. It's probably going to be a third to a half complete."

St. Louis Community College staff has also been collecting data for an extensive paleo-geography project on the Hell Creek formation, an endeavor which will take several years and additional funding to complete.

"Our goal out here is to really do some serious three-dimensional mapping so we can figure out diversity," said Campbell. "When you look at this, we only have maybe 10 or 15 percent of the Hell Creek formation left; it's all been eroded away. Just think of all the dinosaurs that have been found in that 10 or 15 percent. If you multiply that up by nine times, then if you can layer it in 25 foot layers, you can get an idea of abundance and diversity over time. It's been done in other areas, but it's never really been done in this area --in any detail."

Understanding the environment that existed during the dinosaur heyday --as well as the subsequent effects of natural processes-- adds vital information to the fossil record. Beating the odds of time, geology and erosion make it a statistically rare event when a semi-complete fossil specimen in recoverable condition is found, he said. However, the fact that so many specimens continue to be uncovered and retrieved is a testament to the innumerable life forms which inhabited ancient Montana.

In addition to the St. Louis Community college, other institutions with BLM permits are in the field this summer working in several eastern Montana counties.

Staffs from the Museum of the Rockies and the University of Montana are working in Garfield and McCone counties. Field workers from Concordia College of Moorhead, Minn., the University of Washington from Seattle, Wash., and the University of California at Berkley are also working in Garfield County.

The Burpee Museum of Rockford, Ill., --excavators of the famous "Jane" T-rex-- are operating out of Carter County again this year, while Yale University's Peabody Museum of Natural History from New Haven, Conn., is collecting in Fallon County.



St. Louis Community College-Meramec Field Supervisor and Physical Science-Geology faculty member Carl Campbell surveys a triceratops specimen located on BLM ground prior to its removal for transport. The bones --which consisted of the majority of the carcass, minus the head-- were finally removed this season after several summers of excavation. This year in Garfield County, the St. Louis Community College-Meramec was among several institutions with BLM-permits returning to work on federal land. *Photo by Mark E. Jacobsen*

The BLM issues permits primarily for vertebrate fossil specimens (organisms with a backbone), and scientifically significant invertebrates (organisms without a backbone), and plant fossils. The permits are generally issued only to professional paleontologists who must agree to preserve their finds in a public museum, a college, or a university because of their relative rarity and scientific importance.

Visitors to public lands are welcome to collect reasonable amounts of common invertebrate and plant fossils without a BLM permit. No permit is needed for plant fossils, such as leaves, stems, and cones, or common invertebrate fossils, such as ammonites and trilobites. Petrified wood can be collected for personal use-up to 25 pounds each day plus one piece, but no more than 250 pounds in any calendar year.

These materials must be for the finder's personal collection and cannot be sold or traded.

For more paleontology and fossil collecting information call the BLM Miles City Field Office at (406)233-2800 or visit the web at: <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/CRM.html>.

THE LATEST BUZZ

Linda Talley, North Dakota Field Office

Photos by Tam Frager and Kelly Privratsky (Forest Service)

Buzz, buzz, buzz . . . bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, beetles, hummingbirds and bats head for the Buffalo Gap Campground where there is a new garden with native plants for the native pollinators.

The campground is at the western edge of the U.S. Forest Service Little Missouri National Grassland, north of Interstate 94 and west of Medora, N.D. It's near a woody draw with green ash, plum, chokecherry, and native currant bushes. The planting site is at the entrance to the day use parking lot.

Kelly Privratsky, a biological technician with the Forest Service's Medora Ranger District in Dickinson, N.D., is in charge of the garden site along with Forest Service botanist Joe Washington. Their office received a one-time grant to establish the garden. One of its goals is to help teach local school groups about the importance of native plants and their pollinators.

The garden is divided into two parts—one has a “perennial garden” look with wood mulch, and the other a “prairie” restoration with native grasses mixed in.



Tam Frager plants a garden for native pollinators at the Buffalo Gap Campground in North Dakota.

At the end of May, BLMers Tam Frager and Linda Talley from the North Dakota Field Office helped to plant about 60 natives. Kelly had already placed about 150 in the ground, among them flax, spiderwort, black-eyed susans, wild bergamot, and bedstraw. The plants were purchased from a native plant nursery in Bismarck, and local penstemon and grass clumps were salvaged from oil and gas development sites.

We were lucky to have an unusually wet spring. Since the initial planting, three bird baths have been added to the site. Aluminum signs written in calligraphy by Tam Frager identify the plants with both their Latin and common names.

As of late August, the plants were doing well. The late summer bloomers like goldenrod, gayfeather, and black-eyed susan have very good foliage color. The anise hyssop had the most striking bluish flowers. The garden should be great for pollinating insects.

There's still plenty to be done. Kelly noted that we need to control certain invasive weeds like Canada thistle and creeping jenny, and install perimeter edging. He'd also like to plant more native shortgrasses like blue grama and buffalograss to aid with weed control. He thinks the natives will eventually get established and push out the annual exotics. Wood chips may be placed around the plants to keep the weeds down—no fertilizer will be used—and the plants will rely on rainwater for moisture.

The pollinator garden is part of the Forest Service Region One's Native Plants and Pollinators Initiative. It is being implemented in tandem with “The Pollinator Partnership,” which has as its mission the protection of pollinators, critical to food and ecosystems, through conservation, education, and research (see www.pollinator.org for more details).

If you are in the western part of North Dakota along Interstate 94, stop by and pick up some pointers for your own garden. You might even spot some native pollinators!



Why Plant a Native Pollinator Garden?

Nearly all flowering plants need to be pollinated, and most depend on bees, butterflies, and other animals to get it done. Why plant a native pollinator garden?

- Native plants provide the right habitat for native pollinators—non-native species may not have enough nectar or pollen or they may be inedible to butterfly or moth caterpillars.
- Pollinators are vital to maintaining healthy ecosystems, are essential for plant reproduction, and produce diversity in the plants they pollinate (the more diverse plants are, the better they can adapt to environmental changes).
- Pollinators need our help! Insects and other animals pollinate one-third of the food we eat, including coffee and chocolate. Several butterfly and bumblebee species have disappeared from parts of their range because of habitat loss, disease, pollution, and pesticide poisoning.

BLM is be-friended by Facebook

Jack Conner, Montana State Office

The social media craze has introduced us to a whole new lingo with buzz words like “twitter,” “Facebook,” “YouTube,” “MySpace” and others. This new medium has opened up a whole new world of communication between anyone within reach of a computer and an internet connection. Within a matter of seconds, millions of people can see what you ate for breakfast or what blockbuster movie you saw last night. In July 2010, Facebook topped 500 million users internationally.

The BLM has not lost this opportunity to improve its public information capabilities. The BLM Montana/Dakotas recently joined several other BLM states in establishing Facebook pages accessible to the general public. BLM states and programs such as the Wild Horse and Burro Program are now utilizing Facebook to post information ranging from the status of large fire incidents to information about upcoming Resource Advisory Council meetings. Members of the public can receive information posts either through Twitter or by “liking” the page of interest.

The Montana/Dakotas External Affairs office is in charge of monitoring page content, but employees from around the state have contributed items of special interest. Photographs of special projects, information regarding area closures, and highlights of recreation opportunities have been included in weekly posts since it was first published in late August. Since then the page has connected with over 1,200 active users and has received favorable input from members of the public interested in BLM resource management projects.

As the BLM ventures further into using social media to get out its message, it may consider using Twitter and YouTube for instant updates or videos. The External Affairs office will continue to monitor public interest in Facebook as a source for Montana/Dakotas information.

Link to our Facebook page from
www.blm.gov/mt.

Willow Planting in Bell Canyon

David Abrams, Western Montana District

Youth joined experience as nearly a dozen employees from the Dillon Field Office and members of Montana's Youth Challenge teamed up to help repair a damaged riparian area in Bell Canyon, about a 90-minute drive from Dillon.

The two teens--Reed Pitman from Deer Lodge and Bryan Nutting from Joliet—spent the day with the BLM crew planting 800 willows along an ice-cold, crystal-clear mountain stream. The group also helped improve the “architecture” of the creek by shaping it with downed branches and streamside rocks.

“Initially, we were going to build fences to protect the riparian area, but now our Plan B is to allow this place to rest for four years, treat it for cheatgrass, and plant willows, allowing the stream to heal,” said Pat Fosse, Assistant Field Manager for Renewable Resources, as she helped the others dig holes for the willows.

“This stream is in a steep, narrow canyon and is the only water source in a large pasture,” she added. “It has been heavily impacted by past livestock grazing practices. New livestock management will include a shortened season of use, periodic rest and and offsite water development.”

Steve Lubinski, a seasonal range technician with the Dillon Field Office, worked with the enthusiastic Youth Challenge participants, showing them how to correctly place a log mid-stream and how to find the best place to plant the young willows. As he surveyed their work from the bank, Lubinski said, “Now this will flow year-round. One of the cooler things about this project is that we'll be able to see the effects of this very quickly.”

A few weeks earlier, Dillon BLM employees had seeded the area which had been sprayed for cheatgrass the previous autumn. As the mountain sunshine kept the crew warm in the high altitude, everyone expressed optimism that the project would be a success.

But whatever the outcome, Fosse said it was “a good day at the office.” As she patted soil around a willow shoot, she added, “This is like working in a postcard.”



Steve Lubinski, a seasonal range technician with the Dillon Field Office, tells Reed Pitman, a teen from Deer Lodge, where he'd like to have logs and branches placed in the streambed. *Photo by David Abrams*



Reed Pitman of Deer Lodge, Bryan Nutting of Joliet, and Steve Lubinski, a seasonal range technician with the Dillon Field Office, plant three of 800 willows along a mountain stream in Bell Canyon. Pitman and Nutting were part of a Montana Youth Challenge team assisting the BLM field office with the stream restoration project. *Photo by David Abrams*

Butte Field Office partners with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for River Cleanup

Renee Johnson, Montana State Office

Twenty-three volunteers organized by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the BLM's Butte Field Office participated in the first Wise River Stewardship Project Volunteer Day on Father's Day, June 20. Dick Tally, RMEF Volunteer Coordinator for the Butte-Silver Bow Chapter, established the event for Father's Day to encourage father-son camaraderie in the spectacular Big Hole River corridor.

The RMEF and the Butte Field Office used this event to familiarize community members with the partnership and newly established Stewardship Agreement between RMEF and the BLM. They also discussed long-term objectives in managing the wildlife habitat and forest health in the Big Hole watershed and engaged the help of folks to monitor areas both before and after vegetation treatments to ensure invasions of noxious weeds or other undesirable species are nipped in the bud. It's the goal of both the RMEF and BLM to tie the volunteers into this landscape where everyone can see and participate in the long-term management of the resources there.

After a week of heavy rain and dreary weather, blue skies and sunshine lit the landscape as BLM employees conducted an orientation in the parking lot of the Blue Moon Saloon at Divide. Wildlife biologist Sarah LaMarr wowed the group with an overview of the objectives of the project, a history on the development of the proposal, the importance of habitat in the area, and restoration opportunities.

Lacy Decker, Integrated Weed Management Specialist, handed out weed identification pamphlets supplemented with live examples of what the volunteers could expect to find in their inventory efforts.

With forester Marylou Zimmerman's assistance, all three staff members oriented the volunteers with inventory and GPS protocols in anticipation of a successful day documenting weed locations and densities. Renee Johnson, who was the Assistant Field Manager for Renewable Resources at the time, conducted a tailgate safety session to ensure everyone had a safe and successful experience. Maintenance worker Pete Armstrong assisted with shuttling volunteers, answering questions, and distributing garbage bags throughout the day.

The day ended with a barbecue at the Divide Campground on the Big Hole River, hosted by RMEF, with chef extraordinaire Al Christophersen, RMEF Habitat Stewardship Services Coordinator, grilling burgers and

hot dogs with all the condiments. Christophersen thanked the volunteers for their "commitment to wildlife and their habitat, and support of stewardship projects."

Volunteers provided 190 hours of service work, valued at almost \$4,000, and accomplished 300 acres of both pre- and post-treatment weed inventory, along with hand pruning and garbage collection.

RMEF Volunteer Coordinator Dick Tally summarized the event: "As a group, we enjoyed the day, we all learned some good things, saw some beautiful country and went home feeling good about what we accomplished....We're looking forward to many more years working with you and your teams. Things like this do not happen without the efforts of many hands and the leadership of Spartans."

In 2010, the partnership between BLM and RMEF forged under the Stewardship Agreement expects to restore 240 acres of sagebrush-grassland, treat 25 acres of weeds, thin Douglas fir forested landscapes and reduce fuels while utilizing biomass on over 200 acres, and restoring aspen stands along about one mile.



MaryLou Zimmerman, a forester with the Butte Field Office, goes over maps with volunteers near the Nez Perce Gulch area along the Big Hole River during the first Wise River Stewardship Project Volunteer Day on Father's Day, June 20. *Photo by Renee Johnson*

Attention BLM Retirees

The BLM Retirees Association

Stay in touch! The BLM Retirees Association has a social gathering at 11:30 a.m. on the first Tuesday of even-numbered months at the Windmill (3429 TransTech Way) in Billings. If you would like to receive email or postcard notifications of these meetings, please contact Alice Slagowski at (406) 259-9319 or asluggo@bresnan.net.

The Public Lands Foundation

The Public Lands Foundation (PLF) offers new retirees a free one-year membership. If you're interested, contact David Mari, Montana PLF Representative, at (406) 538-7121, or email dmari@earthlink.net (please note "PLF" on the subject line).

What is the PLF? It works to keep America's public lands in public hands, managed professionally and sustainably for responsible common use and enjoyment.

The goals of the PLF are to:

- Keep lands managed by the BLM in public ownership and open to use by the public.
- Support multiple use management under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
- Encourage professionalism by BLM employees.
- Increase the public's understanding of and support for the proper management of the public lands.

Although PLF membership consists largely of retired BLMers, current employees and anyone interested in the goals of the organization are welcome to join.

Retired since May 1, 2010:

Nancy T. Anderson -- 33 years
Field Manager, Missoula
Field Office

Peter C. Armstrong -- 28 years
Maintenance Worker, Butte
Field Office

Lloyd R. Butcher -- 23 years
Engineering Equipment
Operator, Eastern Montana/
Dakotas District Office

Shirley E. Conrad -- 15 years
Administrative Support
Assistant, Glasgow Field
Office

Linda E. Hardy -- 10 years
Outdoor Recreation Planner,
Montana State Office

David C. Jaynes -- 36 years
Outdoor Recreation Planner,
Montana State Office

Howard A. Lemm -- 31 years
Associate State Director,
Montana State Office

Gayle M. Sitter -- 33 years
Wildlife Biologist, Montana
State Office

Rodney L. Sanders -- 19 years
Outdoor Recreation Planner,
Lewistown Field Office

Gene R. Terland -- 36 years
State Director, Montana State
Office

Nora K. Taylor -- 31 years
Botanist, Montana State
Office

Bureau of Land Management
Montana State Office
5001 Southgate Drive
Billings, Montana 59101
Phone: (406) 896-5011
<http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en.html>

The Quarterly Steward is published every three months by the Bureau of Land Management and distributed in Montana and the Dakotas. It is produced by the External Affairs Staff, Montana State Office.

Ann Boucher, Editor & Graphic Design

FIRST CLASS
POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PERMIT NO. G-76