

## “A Very Ambitious Guzzler Project”

*Terina Mullen*

*Fire Mitigation & Education Specialist  
Western Montana District*

A very ambitious guzzler project -- that's what Jared Bybee's wild horse and burro colleagues in other states have called the Pryor Mountain guzzler project. And, the label fits! A Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, Bybee says the project was “ambitious” due to the number of guzzlers installed in a small area and within a short timeframe. Crews, using nothing but hand tools, installed ten guzzlers in a four-month window last summer.

A guzzler is a water catchment system, consisting of an apron to catch the water, a storage tank and some miscellaneous plumbing.

The new Herd Management Area Plan for the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range identified the installation of guzzlers to address a lack of free-flowing water in certain areas of the range. The guzzlers, strategically placed to encourage grazing use by the horses over a wider area, also provide an increase in water points for bighorn sheep and other wildlife.

The only reliable water source during the summer months is located at the top reaches of the range. From the winter through the spring, horses follow the available water, congregating at the lower reaches.



A Montana Conservation Corps crew pauses in front of a newly installed guzzler on the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range. One of ten, the guzzler will be another source of water for the Pryor Mountain horses and wildlife. *BLM photo*

As a result, the middle of the horse range often gets bypassed. “By locating the majority of the guzzlers in the middle range, we are encouraging the horses to linger longer in this area,” said Bybee.

Bybee has seen evidence that the horses and other wildlife have been drinking out of the guzzlers. It may take a few years to see if the herd becomes accustomed to using the devices long-term, mitigating the concerns with grazing in the middle range. “The wildlife benefits are more immediate, since horses have patterns,” remarked Bybee.

A semi-truck delivered the construction materials to Britton

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# What are we doing here?

Not too long ago, an employee from another land management agency asked a Montana BLMer just what the BLM did in Montana. I was slightly shocked (okay, a lot shocked) when I heard this. If another federal land manager doesn't know what we do, what can we expect the general public to know?

If you're reading this, you probably have some knowledge of and/or interest in the Montana/Dakotas BLM. So I'm hereby appointing you all BLM ambassadors to help us tell our story.

And here it is: Everything we do (and have done) is tied in some way to our agency vision and mission. So now might be a good time to review each of those statements! Our vision is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens through the balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources. Our mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Simply put, we strive each and every day to care for our natural resources and manage lands for public needs.

If we take a closer look at how we accomplish our mission, it is no less than obvious just what the BLM does in Montana. From the management of subsurface minerals to the control of noxious weeds and from the development of renewable energy resources to the management of habitat for threatened and endangered species (and everything in between), the work of the BLM definitely stands out.

We have two national monuments (Upper Missouri River Breaks and Pompeys Pillar) with associated interpretive centers, the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River, The Bear Trap Canyon Wilderness, and the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range – just to name a few of our many places of special interest. We manage numerous recreation sites, receiving over four million visits per year.

The BLM has led the way with community fire planning and we continue to address hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface. Our specialists are involved with forest restoration and stewardship projects. We have well-respected paleontological and cultural resource programs and quite a gem in the Billings Curation Center. We are engaged in resolving access issues, and our rangeland management program is top-notch. We work closely with our cooperating agencies and continue to pursue effective partnerships for the future.

Whew! And, on top of all of that, we manage our internal workforce to provide quality experiences and to ensure the health of our organization amid changing times.

And now, make it part of your personal mission to let others know what the Montana/Dakotas BLM does for the American public lands and resources!



Jamie E. Connell

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jamie E. Connell".

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Springs (horse range headquarters) where crews prepared them for helicopter slinging to all the sites but one. Limited access, difficult terrain, and the location of some of the guzzlers in a wilderness study area necessitated the use of only hand tools. A truck and flatbed were able to deliver materials for just one of the guzzlers.

The BLM utilized their partnerships with the National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, Montana Conservation Corps, the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center and the Wild Sheep Foundation to complete the project. Jerad Werning, an Iraqi War veteran from Laurel, was instrumental in leading the work crews.



By providing a water source in an otherwise dry area, this newly installed guzzler will encourage the Pryor Mountain wild horses to use more of the range. *BLM photo*

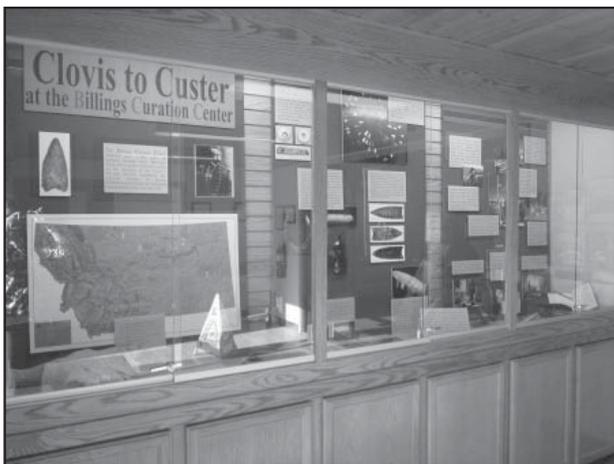
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## A NEW DISPLAY – FRONT AND CENTER AT THE STATE OFFICE

*Story and photo by Terina Mullen  
Fire Mitigation & Education Specialist  
Western Montana District*

Those entering the Montana/Dakotas State Office through the front doors will notice a new look and improved function. The space was designed and developed by Jack Conner, a supervisory property management specialist at the state office.

A new display area, located just inside the front doors to the building, highlights the work of the



The new display area in the entrance of the Montana State Office features the work done by the Billings Curation Center. Every few months the display will change as other Montana/Dakotas BLM offices are invited to showcase their own projects, events, program areas and resources.

Billings Curation Center (BCC). David Wade, museum curator at the BCC, put together the current display, "Clovis to Custer at the Billings Curation Center." Featured in the display are photographs and artifacts from six sites across Montana, from the northern Bootlegger Trail site in Toole County to the Iron Site in the southeastern corner of the state.

Jack is working on a plan in which the informational display would rotate on a quarterly basis. The various BLM districts and/or field offices would be given the chance to fill the display area with informational materials showcasing their projects, events, resources, or program areas. Look for exciting new displays every few months.

Further inside, one will immediately notice the new "welcome" sign and the new wall art. Beautiful photographs of BLM landscapes adorn the walls. Additionally, two new mini-conference rooms to the right provide a sunny spot to chat, have a quick meeting with a member of the public, or eat lunch.

Many thanks to those involved in making the front area of the state office so functional and pleasing to the eye!

# Multi-Agency Integrated Restoration Strategy – *A Partnership in Conservation*

*Joshua Jackson  
Forester  
Missoula Field Office*

The Multiple Agency-Blackfoot group came together in 2009 in order to plan, analyze, and implement natural resource projects in the Blackfoot River basin of northwestern Montana. Working collaboratively, the group strives to maximize positive results of forest treatments across ownership boundaries, improving forest health and wildlife habitat while decreasing the risk of catastrophic fire in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

The MA-Blackfoot group has identified a large portion of the upper Blackfoot River basin as its primary area of interest. Three smaller focus areas include Arrastra Creek, which is pre-

dominately managed by the BLM; Cooper Lake, which is predominately managed by the Forest Service; and Blackfoot Community Conservation Area (BCCA) Core, which is managed by the Blackfoot Challenge, a group comprised of private landowners and local, state and federal land managers that has been working for 15 years to coordinate conservation efforts in the Blackfoot watershed.

The BLM Missoula Field Office and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service have completed a watershed-level assessment for lands within the Arrastra Creek area. Based on recommendations from this assessment, the group identified

projects that will be implemented over the next 10 years.

A few of these projects are already underway. The BLM has started thinning treatments in the Arrastra Creek area. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) has completed salvage logging and is planning fuels reduction work with the BLM in the northwest corner of the Arrastra Creek focus area. The DNRC, Blackfoot Challenge, and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) are working with the Montana State University Extension Stewardship Workshops program to involve local landowners in Patterson Prairie, Arrastra Creek, and Cooper Lake. Because of these efforts, landowners are applying for grants from the BLM Community Assistance Program and the NRCS Western Competitive Grants Program to reduce hazardous fuels on their lands.

As the BLM Missoula Field Office implements ecosystem restoration and fuels projects in the upper Blackfoot River basin, it will continue work with its MA-Blackfoot partners to ensure that maximum benefits are achieved across the landscapes and ownership boundaries.

The MA-Blackfoot group includes state and federal agencies and special interest groups including the BLM, Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), and the Blackfoot Challenge.



The MA-Blackfoot group looks at projects in the Arrastra Creek area. *BLM photo*

# BLM – MFWP Access Programs Help Local Hunter

*Craig Flentie  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Central Montana District*

Last fall, when Patricia Adams of Lewistown drew an either sex elk tag in Elk Hunting District 410 (which has become a go-to district for elk hunters), she knew she would need a little hunter's luck, a little research, and a little persistence.

Today, she will quickly tell you the experience and lifelong memories were well worth the effort. The experience has also made her an advocate for an equal access program managed by the BLM and another managed by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP).

Patricia has two artificial hips and has battled rheumatoid arthritis for a number of years. Combined, these complications make most outdoor activities seem a little uphill, but that has never deterred her. With one of the coveted elk tags in hand, she knew a successful hunt would hinge on access to good elk habitat.

That's where the research began. Patricia soon learned about two programs that could help her. One was the MFWP's Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle Program and the other was BLM's Equal Access Program.

Both programs are designed to provide hunters with disabilities with reasonable vehicle access for recreational experiences.

Patricia and her husband Peter, who would accompany her on each hunt, contacted the MFWP about getting a permit to hunt from a vehicle. The permit requires the permit holder to



Patricia Adams hopes to use the BLM's Equal Access Program to help her hunt in years to come. *Photo courtesy of Patricia Adams*

be accompanied by a companion, to display orange placards (provided by MFWP) on his or her vehicle, and to abide by other MFWP rules while hunting. The program does not allow permit holders or their companions to drive off roads, to use private roads without landowner permission, to bring others along to hunt or to assume that all roads (state, federal or private) are accessible to the permit holder.

Patricia and Peter then contacted the BLM's Lewistown Field Office about obtaining a travel permit through our Equal Access Program. This permit allowed Patricia and Peter to drive a vehicle on existing, seasonally closed roads in a specific area -- in this case, the Chain Buttes Block Management Area. The BLM travel permit is non-transferrable, requires the holder to abide by all other agency regulations, and establishes criteria for using roads in wet weather conditions.

The applications for both permits were brief and easy to complete. With permits in hand, Patricia was ready to start her elk hunting adventure.

Patricia and Peter were persistent and made multiple hunting trips to the Chain Buttes area. The equal access program worked great, and they both enjoyed the opportunity to see so much country and wildlife. They were courteous of other hunters, and as far as they know, their hunting from a vehicle did not disturb anyone else.

On about the sixth trip, Patricia spotted a fine young bull on a timbered hillside where she could get a shot. When the bull collapsed, she was able to leave the truck and hustle up the hillside to tag her first elk. "I guess the adrenalin helped push me up that hill! Later, I had to sit down and scoot my way back down the hill to the truck," she offered with a smile.

Patricia thoroughly enjoyed her hunting opportunities and feels it's important for others with similar physical challenges to learn about the equal access programs offered by the BLM and MFWP.

"I'll be applying for elk permits on a regular basis now that I've learned about these programs," Patricia added.

# BLM's Work is Year Round

*Story and photos by Craig Flentie  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Central Montana District*

It's not uncommon for members of the public to ask what the BLM does when the snow is deep, the temperature is low, and our outdoor work temporarily comes to a halt.

On occasion, it seems there's a public misperception that when hard winter weather stops BLM's field work, all BLM work stops. That assumption is far from accurate, but it does lend credence to the age old theory of visibility. This theory holds that we're most visible when we're responding to a fire, conducting range surveys, helping a visitor on the Upper Missouri, conducting a public meeting, maintaining roads or other facilities on public lands, treating noxious weeds, monitoring riparian areas, helping trap and transport wildlife, conducting check stations in the fall, burning slash piles, inspecting a construction project, or any of the host of other outdoor tasks BLM staffers complete on a regular basis.



Mike Sweeney moves his work indoors during the winter and puts the finishing touches on a picnic table that will be placed near the Gillmore cabin.



Joe Nardinger and Ed Bradley discuss the repairs needed on an ATV.

This theory also holds that when a public resource managing agency is not visible, the neighbors may not understand what all we do, regardless of the weather.

A tour through any BLM office would quickly reveal a mix of duties on behalf of our public lands and taxpayers that are not weather dependent, but are necessary ingredients in the mix.

We always have a host of staffers working on planning projects (e.g., resource management plans, environmental assessments, categorical exclusions) that provide the guidance for our field work. The information technology needs keep evolving (and puzzling some of us), contracting becomes a little more detailed each year, grazing bills need mailing, partnerships need developing, maps need updating, next year's field projects need prioritizing, and our story needs telling. Additionally, there are a host of meetings for staffers and managers that are better held during the winter than during the field season.

And those staffers who do work primarily outside, simply move indoors and continue working, building, maintaining and repairing.

All in all, it's pretty easy to answer those questions about our winter activity -- even though some of it is less visible in the public's eye.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 November 1, 2010:

Greg Albright -- 29 years  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Montana State Office

Steven Bement -- 16 years  
Engineering Equip. Operator  
Eastern Montana/Dakotas District

Mary Clark -- 31 years  
Administrative Officer  
Montana State Office

David Coppock -- 31 years  
Geologist  
Montana State Office

Darlene Dukart -- 39 years  
Physical Science Technician  
North Dakota Field Office

Charlene Gunther -- 35 years  
Purchasing Agent  
Montana State Office

Gary Kirpach -- 33 years  
Fire Management Officer  
Central Montana District

Richard Kodeski -- 34 years  
Monument Manager  
Pompeys Pillar Nat'l Mon.  
Billings Field Office

James Maloney -- 28 years  
Engineering Equipment Operator  
Western Montana District

Robert Meidinger -- 24 years  
Natural Resource Specialist  
Billings Field Office

Donna Saffo -- 30 years  
Legal Assistant  
Montana State Office

Lee Walsh -- 34 years  
Civil Engineering Technician  
Western Montana District

Charles Ward -- 34 years  
Planning & Environmental  
Coordinator  
Billings Field Office

Gary Warfield -- 32 years  
IT Specialist  
Central Montana District

# 5th Anniversary Celebration at the Missouri River Breaks Interpretive Center

Join the BLM's Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Interpretive Center as we commemorate our fifth year! We will host a number of special events and exhibits throughout the summer:

- Jack Gladstone joins us during Fort Benton's Summer Celebration on Saturday, June 25, entertaining everyone with his musical tales about local history and Native American stories.



- Learn about the Nez Perce National Historic Trail with Jim Evans, Executive Director of the Nez Perce Trail Foundation on Sunday, June 26.
- View the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System through the lenses of photographers in a special summer-long exhibit featuring many unique places in Montana and throughout the West.
- Discover the little-known Spiny Softshell Turtle, said to resemble a pancake with a pigs' snout! Learn about the research being done on this reptile through presentations by Brian Tornebene, who will provide an evening program for adults and families as well as a special Kids Day activity, both on August 13.

All of these activities and more will be posted on the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center web site: [http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/lewistown\\_field\\_office/umrbnm/intercenter.html](http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/lewistown_field_office/umrbnm/intercenter.html)

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