



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

Montanas/Dakotas

Upper Missouri River Breaks

National Monument

Annual Manager's Report—Fiscal Year 2014

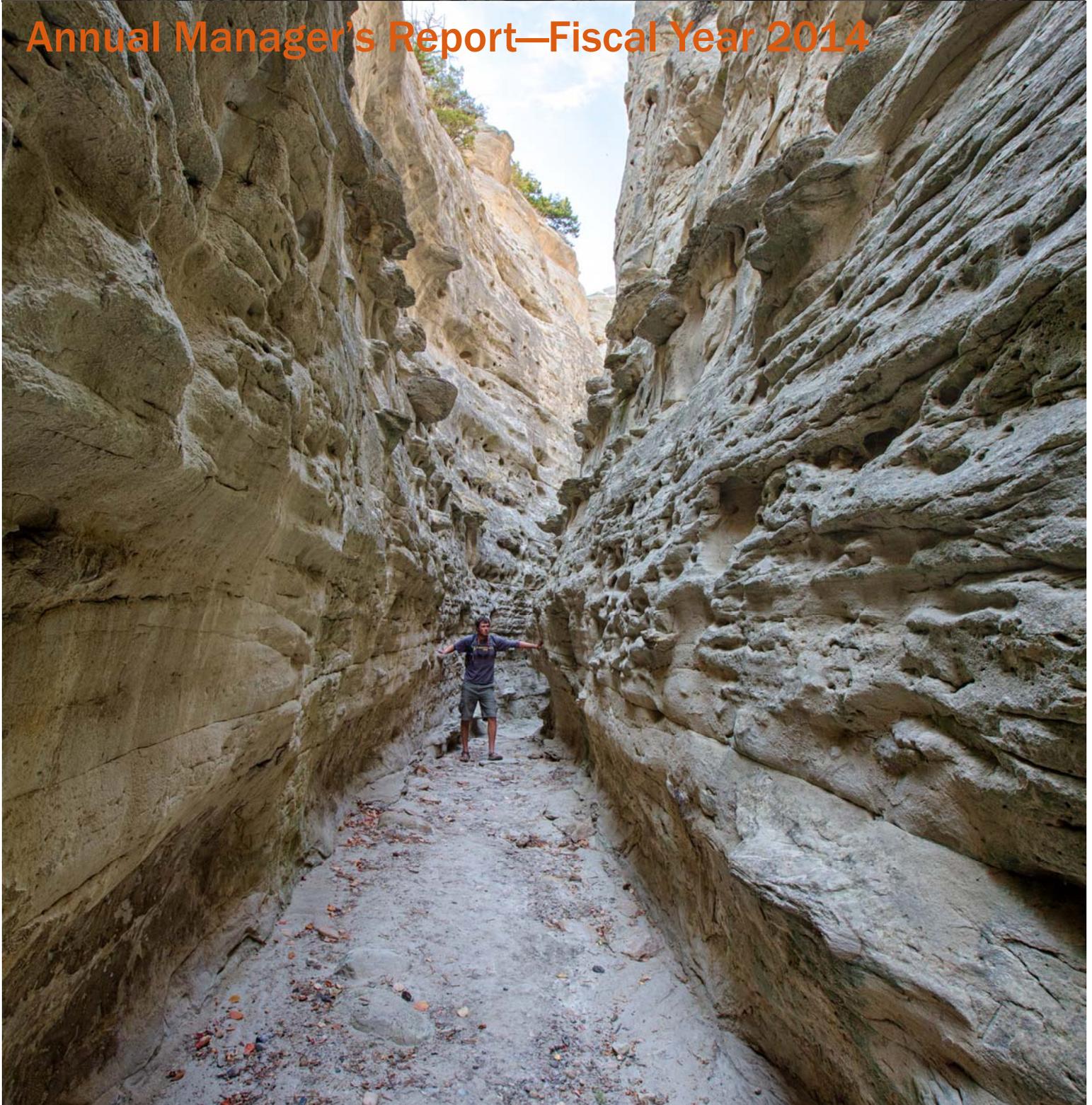


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1 Upper Missouri River Breaks Profile

Designating Authority

Designating Authority: Presidential Proclamation 7398

Date of Designation: January 17, 2001

Acreage

Total Acres in Unit 374,976

BLM Acres 374,976

Other Federal Acres 0

State and Private Acres* 120,475

*State and Private acres are not part of the total of the unit acres

Contact Information

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Field Office Name N/A
District Office Name Central Montana
State Office Name Montana

Budget

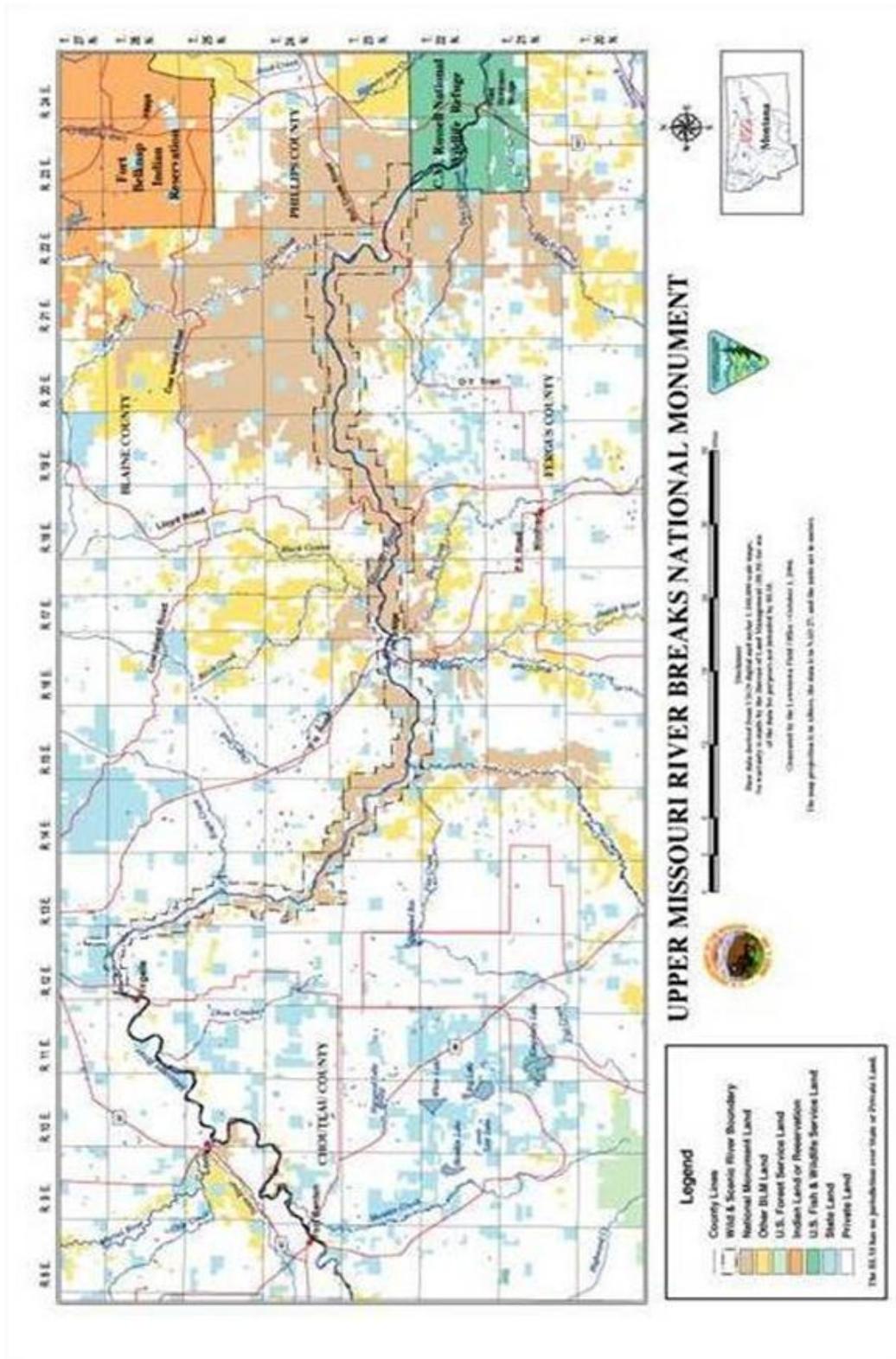
Total Fiscal Year 2014 Budget \$2,202,405

Subactivity 1711 \$1,133,539

Other Subactivities' Contributions \$1,068,866

Other Funding \$0

Map of Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument



Managing Partners

The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (AFNM) does not currently have established partnerships to assist with the management of the unit.

Staffing

- 1 Monument Manager
- 2 Range Management Specialists
- 1 Wildlife Biologist
- 1 Hydrologist
- 1 Natural Resource Specialist (Weeds)
- 1 Civil Engineering Technician
- 1 Park Ranger
- 1 Range Technician Career Seasonal
- 1 Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner
- 1 Interpretive Center Director
- 1 Office Assistant
- 1 Law Enforcement Ranger
- 1 Maintenance Worker (Career Seasonal)
- 4 Seasonal Park Rangers

The Monument staff is located in Lewistown, Fort Benton, and Havre, with support from specialists on the staffs of the Lewistown Field Office, Havre Field Office, and the Malta Field Office. Oil & gas support comes from the Great Falls Oil & Gas Field Office. Since some of the Monument staff also provides support to other offices demands on their time are high, and priorities aren't always within the Monument.

The realty workload is high for the Monument, and includes actions such as rights-of ways, easements, land acquisitions, and commercial film permits.



2 Planning and NEPA

Status of the Resource Management Plan

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Monument was approved in December of 2008. Implementation of the Management Plan is ongoing. The backlog of legal challenges to the Management Plan has been reduced. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Management Plan was completed in 2014, as well as the development of a strategy to assist successful implementation.

Status of Activity Plans

The Transportation plan was approved previously and the sign plan for the Monument area is being implemented. Road route markers have been installed in all areas in which we had legal access or land-owner permission to access these roads. An environmental assessment has been initiated that will establish methods, process and schedule for closing the approximate 201 miles of roads that were identified to be closed in the Management Plan of 2008.

Implementation of Integrated Weed Management continues with many different activities. Biological, chemical, and manual treatments were made on 15 different invasive species in the monument. All 2014 activities were generally outlined in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument: Guidelines for Integrated Weed Management Plant update (2012) and covered under NEPA through the programmatic EA for Integrated Weed Management (2008) as tiered to the Vegetation Treatment EIS in 17 Western States and the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (UMRBNM) RMP.

Status of the RMP Implementation Strategy

A RMP Implementation plan is under revision.

Key National Environmental Policy Act Actions and/or Project Authorizations

A major planning effort was undertaken late in FY2014 with the early steps completed on an Environmental Assessment for restoring motorized access to the Bullwhacker area of the Monument. A court decision in 2011 declared the only road access into this area as a private road, effectively closing motorized public access to over 40,000 acres of public land within the Monument. The proposed EA seeks to re-establish this traditional motorized access into this highly valued hunting area. Preliminary field work was completed in September of 2014, and a scoping and public involvement process is underway. Implementation of plan direction concerning the river recreation program has been successful, and is continuing.

The Recreation Facilities in the UMRBNM are in very good condition as shown with the FAMS condition assessments which are completed in a new five-year rotation at all sites. Annual maintenance is being performed and has minimized the deferred maintenance issues at these areas. Deferred maintenance is being reduced commensurate with maintenance funding and does not meet our needs. Smaller projects are completed with summer seasonal crews and youth hires. Majority of maintenance needs are associated with the UMNWSR and remote boat camps: fire ring maintenance, vault toilet maintenance, exclosure maintenance. The general condition of these facilities is good. Collected recreation fees are primarily used for the service and maintenance of developed public access sites and developed boat camps within the river corridor. An environmental assessment has been initiated that proposes to build fences to separate recreationists from cattle at many of our most popular river campsites.

One of the objects of the UMRBNM is the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, administered by the Forest Service. In 2014 the BLM hosted their public scoping meeting in Lewistown as they continue to work on drafting a new Comprehensive Plan for the trail. As part of this planning effort we are attempting to define trail corridors for the NPNHT through the Monument, especially since the entire length of the trail in the Monument is a High Potential Route Segment. The adjacent field offices are drafting their RMP's and are defining trail corridors; the UMRBNM did not do that in the 2008 RMP and needs to consider how to define the corridor in a manner compatible with the neighboring offices.

Implementation of Integrated Weed Management continues with many different activities. Biological, chemical, and manual treatments were made on 15 different invasive species in the monument.

Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) for salt cedar was initiated in 2001. Several individual trees had been documented at that point and there was great potential to find more along the 149 miles of river. From 2002 to 2005 all mature trees were identified and removed from the river corridor. However, in the years that followed, many new infestations were observed at the mouths of drainages along the lower reach of the river. These new infestations were all about 1-2 years old and ranged from several individuals to several hundred plants. The plants were never more than 8-10 inches in height. New infestations were observed annually from 2005 to 2008, and were always treated by hand pulling and removing the plants from the sites. The sites were monitored annually once the infestation was documented. Field work in 2009 resulted in the absence of any new infestations and no reoccurrence at old sites. In 2010, the BLM completed a complete inventory for salt cedar and more than a dozen other invasive plants. In 2011 the river experienced prolonged period of flooding and high water. As a result, salt cedar colonized many of the sediment deposition sites as far upstream as Loma. However, most of the infestation is still below Judith Landing. It is estimated that seasonal crews pulled and removed around 1000 lbs. of salt cedar seedlings.

3 Year's Projects and Accomplishments

General Accomplishments

ANNUAL VISITATION: Visitor use on the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River was 3510 registered boaters. Of this number, 2208 were Montana residents, and 1302 were from out of state. Outfitters reported 536 visitors to the Missouri River in the Monument. The overwhelming number of boaters used canoes and other non-motorized boats. Use in the uplands is not counted due to remoteness of the area; however, the majority of the use is during hunting season, September through November. Some hiking occurs during the summer, but use is unknown. Our largest campground, Kipp Recreation Area, had over 2900 paying visitors.



Visitation at the Missouri River Breaks Interpretive Center was over 6000 visitors. Over 800 students received educational programming at the center, or off site.

Total estimated visitation for the Monument in 2014 was approximately 17,500 visitors to include river boaters, interpretive center visitors, and hunting fishing enthusiasts.

Our volunteer force was extraordinary and what we like to refer to as a “force multiplier” enabling us to provide the quality service our visitors expect. Our volunteer staff amassed a total of 6,152 hours performing in various capacities such as campground hosts, interpreters, NPLD events, invasive weeds eradication assistance, cultural site monitoring and other duties associated with the Monument’s myriad resource management principles.

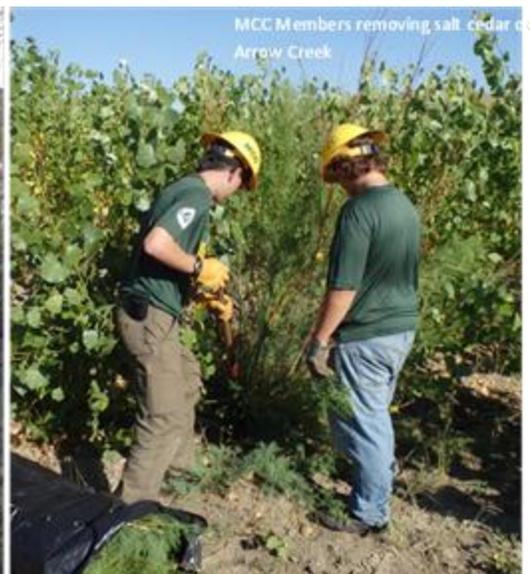
RANGE MANAGEMENT: Numerous range monitoring studies were implemented in 2014. Trend and rangeland health monitoring occurred on 27 Grazing Allotments within the Monument. In addition, 22 Grazing Allotments were assessed to see if they were meeting rangeland health standards using the Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing for Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Over 60 allotments were inspected to ensure livestock grazing compliance. To ensure compliance, over twenty range improvement projects were maintained. These include the annual construction and maintenance of fences within riparian areas to exclude livestock grazing. Maintenance of these types of exclosures has to be executed in a timely manner to coincide with the dropping water levels of the river. Other projects include the maintenance of drift fences, water developments, and electric fences.

This year, 22 Grazing Allotments were assessed to gauge whether they were meeting rangeland health standards using the Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing for Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. This protocol is a qualitative methodology which involves a multi-disciplinary team, and tasks them with assessing 17 different rangeland health indicators helping to providing the team with the preliminary evaluation of the land health in a particular area. In total, 72, 619 acres of lands were assessed using this protocol. In addition, trend studies were read on 27 Grazing Allotments, which included the establishment of five new trend monitoring sites. This monitoring accounted for approximately 69,000 acres of trend data collected.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT: Key upland habitats were inventoried for rangeland and riparian health, greater sage grouse, BLM Designated Sensitive Species, and big game. Monitoring efforts continued for sage grouse habitat and big game winter range. A large, landscape level, prescribed burn of 3300 acres was completed to reduce wildfire threats to greater sage grouse habitat, and improve big game winter habitat. Several miles of old fences, which were a danger to wildlife and obstacles to wildlife movement, were removed. Spring improvements and wildlife escape ramps for livestock watering tanks were maintained.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT: Invasive plants were treated in all identified recreation sites to help prevent spread caused by recreation. Herbicides were used to treat river bottoms along 4 of the 6 WSAs. Biological control agents were monitored for leafy spurge, spotted knapweed, poison hemlock, Canada thistle, and Russian knapweed. With help from the



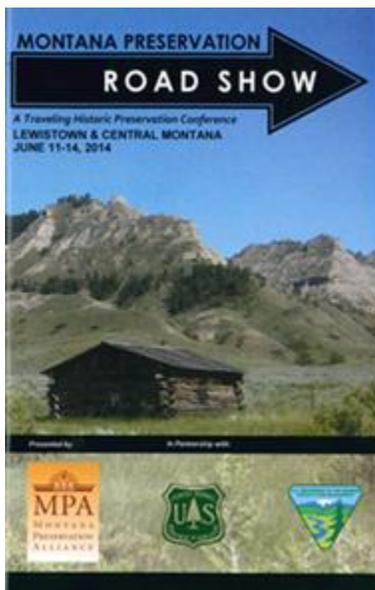
Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument, 2 County weed districts and the MT Conservation Corp, 121 river/stream miles were surveyed for salt cedar and common tansy with all plants being removed. Purple loosestrife site was monitored and treated as part of EDRR.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: With Macalester College and the Montana SHPO, we listed the Judith Landing Historic District Boundary Increase on the National Register of Historic Places. This increase encompasses the site where Ferdinand Hayden uncovered and collected several specimens of fossilized dinosaur bones and teeth in 1855. Hayden's discoveries constituted the first identified dinosaur skeletal remains in the Western Hemisphere. Subsequent paleontological expeditions, including the 1875 Army Corps of Engineers Expedition led by Col. William Ludlow with George Bird Grinnell and Edward S. Dana, the 1876 Edward Drinker Cope expedition, and Charles H. Sternberg's 1914 trek, also explored the fossil beds in the Dog Creek Drainage first discovered by Hayden.

The Montana Site Stewardship Program completed another training session for new site stewards May 16-17, 2014. Advanced training for veteran site stewards was held in the fall of 2013. In the Monument we have two site stewards who monitor numerous sites along the river, taking a canoe and spending multiple days inspecting sites inaccessible any other way. Some sites that they monitored had not been examined since they were recorded in the 1970s. Other stewards monitor the Nelson Homestead, which is accessible by road and gets higher visitor use.



Gist Ranch, part of the Ervin/Gist Historic District being proposed for listing on the National Register of Historic Places



We partnered with the Montana Preservation Alliance and Region One Forest Service to produce the Montana Preservation Road Show, a "traveling historic preservation conference" highlighting the cultural heritage of Lewistown and central Montana. Cultural landscapes focused on agricultural settlement, tribal uses, railroads, artistic backdrops, as well as literary landscapes and sacred landscapes were discussed by the presenters and over 120 participants in this endeavor. Highlighted on the cover of the program is the Frank Hagadone Homestead, located in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument and listed on the National Register in 2009.

The partnership with the Montana Preservation Alliance also is producing a National Register nomination for the Ervin Homestead/Gist Ranch in the Upper Missouri River Breaks

National Monument. Work on this nomination began in 2014 and should be completed in 2015.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT: The Monument monitored thirty miles of riparian and stream bank communities adjacent to the Missouri River. The interdisciplinary team responsible for the monitoring found robust, vigorous willow/sedge plant communities indicative of good riparian health and improving trends. Over 60 miles of stream that are tributary to the Missouri were inventoried in 2014. Over 90 percent of these miles were in proper functioning condition and exhibited good health. Six miles of Cow Creek on BLM-administered land were functional-at-risk



River bank communities of willow and sedge on the Upper Missouri River within the Monument.



BLM-administered land on Rowe Coulee Bottom within the Monument. This area was protected from livestock grazing in 2014.

because of channel widening following significant flood events in 2011, 2013, and 2014. The interdisciplinary team concluded that additional monitoring was necessary to determine causal factors, and trend studies were initiated.

The BLM partnered with an adjacent landowner to exclude livestock grazing from 200 acres of riparian bottomland on the Missouri River at the mouth of Rowe Coulee. Ninety acres were BLM-administered land, and 110 acres were private land. This project benefited over one mile of Missouri River frontage in the

Monument.

The Monument and the Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument completed a cottonwood planting project at Dark Butte, benefiting approximately 5 acres of cottonwood habitat and 1/4 mile of Missouri River frontage.



Skid-steer drilling holes for cottonwood plantings at Dark Butte in 2014.

Education, Outreach, and Interpretation



Students making parfleche bags during the “Must Cultures Collide?” program about the Nez Perce War of 1877 at the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center.

The Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center interprets the natural and cultural history of the UMRBNM and the National Wild and Scenic Upper Missouri River. The main interpretive theme is “How the Land and the River Have Shaped Human History, and How Human History now Shapes and Preserves the Land and the River”. Included within this main theme are subthemes, such as: Geology, Flora and fauna of the river and the uplands; steam boating history of the river; the Nez Perce flight from the US army in 1877 and their crossing at Cow Island; the many cultures of people who have called this place home

and the freighting history that gave rise to the importance of Fort Benton as the worlds’ innermost port. Leave No Trace programming is also included.

Visitation remained approximately the same in the centers’ eighth year while the educational program demand increased slightly. This year a number of schools traveled over three hours to attend educational programs at the center.

General visitation for FY 2014 was approximately 6,000 visitors. Almost every state in the Union was represented in our visitation distribution, with Montana, Washington, Kansas, Oregon and Arizona representing the largest numbers. At least 19 foreign countries were represented in our visitation distribution, with Canadians making up the largest representation of foreigners.



People practice using GPS units to learn about geology with the EarthCache Trail along the Upper Missouri River, 2014

Over 800 students attended educational programs at the center or off-site.

More than 49 educational programs were presented, with over 32 groups attending programs. A number of school programs saw almost 70 students in one day. The number of groups increased from the previous year.

Several evening interpretive programs were presented to the public in FY14, including a Geology of the Lewis and Clark Expedition presentation by Mary Ellen Egle with the USFS, and several geological programs about the Upper Missouri River EarthCache Trail by Ramia Bashara, a GeoCorps Intern working at the center during the summer of FY14. The programs were all well attended and very well received by the public.

One intern with GeoCorp (through a partnership with Geological Society of America) completed the new EarthCache Trail on the Upper Missouri River. These EarthCaches went “live” through the Geological Society of America’s Geocaching website, making them available to the public. These EarthCache sites will also be used in conjunction with educational programs for younger students floating the Missouri and Marias Rivers through the Hands on the Land program. The GeoCorp intern contributed 480 hours of labor to the center in FY14. We continue to get very positive comments from the public as they discover the unique EarthCache sites along the river all season long. One site is situated at an overlook above the town of Fort Benton, MT. A number of geocachers have discovered this site and have requested information about floating the Wild and Scenic Upper Missouri River because of the information they have discovered.

Various programs about the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument were provided throughout the year to special interest groups, service clubs and professional organizations.

Invasive plant brochures are sent out with information packets for prospective visitors. Education materials are made available at the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center and Coal Banks Landing Canoe Launch. Five (5) Noxious Weed Signs inspected and maintained.

FY 14’s maintenance efforts total about 1,000 hours by interpretive center staff, volunteers, the center director, contractors and the City of Fort Benton.

The grizzly bear display has been greatly enhanced by a new diorama to replace the bare white walls that served as a backdrop.



Grizzly bear display under construction.



Grizzly bear display completed.

Partnerships

The BLM has partnered with the University of Montana on a research project regarding late-seral woody riparian species such as green ash, box elder, red-osier dogwood, etc. The purpose of the project is to determine whether the relative absence of such species is influenced by site conditions (soil texture, soil moisture, depth to water table, etc.) or by historic herbivory. The project is ongoing, and a citable publication is forthcoming.

In the fall of 2009, over 50 radios were attached to soft-shelled turtles in the lower portion of the monument. A graduate student from Montana State University, in cooperation with BLM, FWP, & USFWS, finalized research on winter habitat, nesting areas, and movements throughout the summer and fall until river ice up. The project will identify important wintering and nesting areas to allow for future management.

MT FWP and USFWS continue to survey endangered Pallid Sturgeon numbers, to document success of stocking efforts and recruitment of young fish into the population.

Through a partnership with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office and Macalester College, the UMRBNM presented the Judith Landing Historic District Boundary Increase to the State Historic Preservation Review Board in September 2013. With their support that property got listed on the National Register of Historic Places in FY14. This is the first site of paleontological history to get listed on the NR from Montana.

Our partnership with Macalester College supports their paleontological field school, engaging youth in science on the landscape. The Monument benefits as well, since during the course of their fieldwork the professors and students monitor between ten and twenty paleontological localities annually, and inventory about twenty acres for paleontological resources.

Volunteers

Volunteers provided exemplary support to the river operations program serving in various capacities such as campground hosts, visitor contact representatives, administrative assistants and field staff to include assistance with National Public Lands Day activities. Specific volunteer projects of note include a large, coordinated effort on a river cleanup day prior to the main float season, and a very successful cottonwood planting effort at Judith Landing Campground.

Land (or Interests in Land) Acquisitions

There were no land acquisitions or interests in lands activities for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument completed in fiscal year 2014.

4 Science

Science

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Tyrannosaurid teeth found while monitoring a paleontological locality.

Macalester College (St. Paul, MN). Dr. Ray Rogers and colleagues from Macalester and the Smithsonian continue to conduct paleontological field schools in the UMRBNM with financial support from the BLM's challenge cost share and cultural resource program. Five abstracts and posters based on research in the Judith River Formation were presented at the 2014 Rocky Mountain and Cordilleran Sections of the Geological Society of America's joint meeting.

University of North Dakota. Student research on invertebrate fossils in the Dog Creek drainage is being conducted in 2014. This research will form the basis of a graduate student's thesis.

5 Resources, Objects, Values, and Stressors

Riparian

Riparian areas within the Monument are generally functioning at or near their capability, which in most cases is proper functioning condition or making progress towards proper functioning condition although ecological status varies depending on site location. Riparian areas support numerous Monument objects including cottonwood forest and valuable wildlife habitat for nearly every species of wildlife that inhabit the Monument.



While riparian functionality is being maintained or is improving, riparian values such as woodland forest do have stressors. These include flow regulation and water use, invasive plant species, urban floodplain development upstream of the Monument (which affects the river ecosystem downstream), and livestock grazing. However, on BLM-administered land, livestock grazing as a stressor is limited in scope and scale to relatively small areas.

In summary, while riparian areas within the Monument are generally being maintained or improving and have overall good health, there are stressors affecting the objects and values that these riparian areas support. Many of the stressors are outside of the BLM's ability to directly control.

Throughout the UMRBNM, the Missouri River is listed as a water quality impaired stream by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Although most pollutants are from upstream sources, non-point source pollution from altered streamside zones is identified as a contributor of pollutants. On BLM managed lands, those allotments meeting upland and riparian health standards are at least partially mitigating non-point source pollution. Since most upland and riparian areas within the UMRBNM are meeting standards or improving, mitigation of non-point source pollution is also improving.

Invasive plant species have continued to persist in the UMRBNM particularly along the river corridor. Some species will always be a significant vegetative component of the river bottoms they now infest. New invaders such as tamarisk, purple loosestrife, common tansy, and perennial pepperweed are being inventoried/monitored annually to keep very small populations from becoming established. Recreation sites such as campgrounds are

being treated to reduce the risk of spread from these areas to other areas of the Monument and to address introductions due to recreational activities. The most recent comprehensive survey of invasive species occurred along the river corridor in 2010.

Riparian and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Stable

Riparian Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	Number of acres inventoried for object or value	Number of acres found to possess object or value	Number of acre monitored (of those possessing object or value)

Stressors Affecting Riparian



Hill and Chouteau County Weed Coordinators assisting in Salt cedar EDRR and removing young Russian olive

Emerging stressors include drought/climate change and recreational use and development. The plant evaluation for the RMP identified these emerging stressors as inadequately addressed in the RMP.

There is an emphasis in Montana to inventory for aquatic

invasive plants with the discovery of Eurasian Watermilfoil in the Missouri River both up and downstream from the Monument.

The establishment and spread of cheatgrass and/or Japanese brome, regardless of ecological conditions, is becoming more widely distributed on river bottoms along the Missouri River. Results of monitoring and upland assessments indicate, at least in some localized areas, that it is outcompeting and replacing native grass species. If this trend continues, at some point, ecological processes and conditions will worsen impacting grazing and wildlife.

Wildlife

Most known wildlife populations continue to be stable or expanding, with exceptions noted below. Many less glamorous and lesser known species have not been inventoried, but presence continues to be based on regular or occasional observations, and presence of available habitat within established range of the species within the state.

Overall acreage of prairie dog towns has stabilized within the monument due to good precipitation years, areas decimated by plague are re-established, or new towns get discovered.

Bald eagle populations nesting along the Upper Missouri River continues to increase annually. Only three nests were active in 2004, while 21 nests in 14 territories have now been documented, with all but one of those territories successfully fledging young birds in 2014.

Sage grouse trends have been static over the long term with slight declines in the last 3 – 5 years in areas north of the Missouri River. Inventories for unknown lek sites continued, with additional areas to be surveyed in coming spring.

With management and monitoring of upland and riparian health standards, big game winter habitat conditions are good to excellent and still improving, except in areas of overuse by resident and growing elk population. Elk numbers continue to exceed FWP population goals and are starting to have an impact on mule deer winter habitat, limiting available forage for wintering mule deer. These numbers continue to climb due to limited public access for hunting.

Big horn sheep and elk populations continue to increase and expand into unoccupied habitat. This could provide additional opportunities for wildlife viewing and hunting, except for limited public access. Current bighorn sheep are above the population goals set by MT Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks. These numbers continue to climb due to limited public access for hunting.



Prairie Dog Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Fair	Stable

Prairie Dog Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	500	500	200



Bald Eagle Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Upward

Bald Eagle Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	300	14	14



Greater sage-grouse Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Poor	Downward

Greater sage-grouse Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	12,000	12,000	8,000



Bighorn Sheep Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Upward

Bighorn Sheep Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	135,000	135,000	50,000



Elk Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Upward

Elk Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	225,000	225,000	60,000



Mule Deer Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Upward

Mule Deer Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	362,000	362,000	60,000

Stressors Affecting Wildlife

Impacts to critical wildlife habitat along the Upper Missouri River are still increasing with recreational development and use. Efforts are being made to reduce these impacts through mitigation and relocation of recreational sites. Some declines in the size of prairie dog towns have been noted following outbreaks of sylvatic plague. Uncontrolled elk numbers have been shown to reduce mule deer numbers across several western states, by reducing the quality of the habitat. Bighorn sheep populations are at risk for disease outbreaks due to high numbers and densities, which could cause a collapse of these herds for many years to come.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River. The centerpiece of the Monument encompassing a 149 mile section of river was first officially recognized by the State of Montana in 1966 as a component of the Montana Recreational Waterway System. The Upper Missouri's uniqueness, special values and wild and scenic qualities were instrumental in the National Wild and Scenic designation on October 12, 1976. Of special note is the fact that the Upper Missouri contains segments of all three river classifications contained in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. These classifications are Wild, Scenic and Recreational. To this day the Upper Missouri remains relatively unchanged and its settings vary from riparian vegetation, to the unique and beautiful "White Cliffs", to the sharply carved and rugged "Badlands", to the rolling, pine and juniper covered slopes of the "Breaks". These contrasting habitats provide for a diverse and plentiful wildlife population,

numerous recreational opportunities, livestock grazing and other multiple use activities.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Stable

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	149 miles	149 miles	149 miles

Stressors Affecting Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River

Stressors to the Upper Missouri National Wild and scenic River segment are livestock, recreation over-use, and other human impacts.

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

The 149 mile section of the Missouri River became a component of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail in 1978. Passing through the area in 1805 Captain Meriwether Lewis was compelled to write some of his most eloquent journal entries. The segment of the trail located within the Monument is unequivocally described by visitors as the most visually unspoiled portion of the entire route travelled by the Corps of Discovery in 1803-1806. Fortunately for 21st Century visitors the words penned by Captain Lewis on May 31, 1805, “As we passed on it seemed as if those scenes of visionary enchantment would never have an end”, hold true to this day as travelers are rewarded with glimpses at every bend of the river with the same awe inspiring views observed by the explorers.

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Stable

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	374,976	374,976	374,976

Stressors Affecting Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

The primary stressors to the Lewis and Clark NHT are natural processes, visitor use, and vandalism.

Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail

Formally designated in 1989, approximately 15 miles of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail (NHT) trail passes through the Monument and bisects the river corridor near Cow Island where a skirmish between the Nez Perce and the U.S. Army was fought in 1877. Though the segment of this trail within the Monument is minor it makes up for its shortcomings by offering visitors an unsurpassed glimpse of the trail as it once was. Visually unspoiled and geographically altered only by the hand of Mother Nature, the trail crosses the Missouri River at Cow Island, a natural river crossing known to Native Peoples for thousands of years. Though privately owned, Cow Island Landing is a critically important point of the trail, containing remnants of 19th-century military and commercial activity, homesteading, and even paleontological exploration.

Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Stable

Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	15 miles	15 miles	15 miles

Stressors Affecting Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail

The primary stressors to the Nez Perce NHT are natural processes.

Wilderness Study Areas

Six Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) were identified by the BLM in the Montana Wilderness Inventory of 1980 and are managed to prevent impairment of wilderness characteristics until Congress either designates these lands as wilderness or releases them for other purposes.

Wilderness Study Areas Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
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Good	Stable
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Wilderness Study Areas Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
374,976	0	0	0

Stressors Affecting Wilderness Study Areas

The BLM has not identified any stressors to the WSAs at this time.

6 Summary of Performance Measure

Resources, Objects, and Values Status Summary Table		
Resource, Object, or Value	Status	Trend
Riparian	Good	Stable
Prairie Dog	Fair	Stable
Bald Eagle	Good	Upward
Greater sage-grouse	Poor	Downward
Bighorn Sheep	Good	Upward
Elk	Good	Upward
Mule Deer	Good	Upward
Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River	Good	Stable
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail	Good	Stable
Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail	Good	Stable
Wilderness Study Areas	Good	Stable

7 Manager's Letter

The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument faces many challenges in the coming years. Constrained funds have limited implementation of the Management Plan. Significant portions of the National Monument have only limited public access by air or water. Private lands restrict vehicular access and travel in much of the Monument. County ordinances do not adequately protect the objects and values of the Monument on the many private inholdings within the National Monument. There have been and continue to be legal challenges to our plans and programs.

There have also been success stories in the management of the Monument. The Monument has become a leader in youth employment projects in the Montana/Dakotas BLM. The Montana Conservation Corps youth and young adult crews logged fourteen crew weeks of much needed work in various conservation projects on the Monument, including road closures, sign installations, recreation site maintenance and construction, and invasive species projects. The Monument also has developed the beginnings of a Land and Water Conservation Fund strategy, developing major project submissions in both the Core and Collaborative LWCF for both fee simple and conservation easement purchase. The land acquisition strategy has begun to bear fruit, with a potential million dollar purchase funded in 2015.

Other success stories include the strengthening of partnerships with the Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument and other groups and agencies to help meet mutual goals and get important work completed. Road closures identified in the Management Plan are being implemented. Entrance signs have been purchased and are being installed on the major access roads to the Monument. Our recreation sites have been improved with additional investment by BLM and by volunteers. The management of our very popular river program continues to improve. Efforts are being made to separate cattle and dispersed camping on the Missouri River. A joint effort with the BLM and the Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument to establish cottonwood trees in our developed and dispersed campsites has begun to bear fruit.

It is imperative that we continue to strengthen existing partnerships and to actively seek new ones. The amount of work that is needed in the National Monument far exceeds our limited workforce capacity and budget. But some additional financial investment by the BLM is needed. The Monument continues to operate without a much-needed warehouse, our highest priority for new construction or lease.

New planning opportunities continue to arise. There is a need for additional dispersed campsites on sections of the Missouri River and existing campsites require new investments. Much work yet needs to be done to fulfill the promise made by President Clinton when he created the Monument in 2001.



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

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February 26, 2015

The mention of company names, trade names, or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by the federal government.