

# Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

## *A Monument Update*

Information About Monument Projects, Programs And People

Issue No. 1

May 2009

### National Riparian Service Team — September 2008 Workshop

*Gary Slagel, Monument Manager*

In April 2008, the Lewistown Field Office, Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (Monument), requested assistance from the National Riparian Service Team (NRST) regarding riparian issues along the Upper Missouri River.

After conducting a series of interviews with a variety of stakeholders, the NRST recommended that the Monument should host a workshop to provide an open format for discussions about riparian issues and solutions. The BLM saw the recommendation as an opportunity to bring together a cross section of individuals/interests to discuss riparian management. After a little planning, a three-day September '08 NRST workshop in Lewistown began taking shape.

The first two days of the workshop provided opportunities for the stakeholders/attendees to become acquainted, discuss key issues, and listen to presentations on riparian studies and options for grazing management and monitoring. The third day of the workshop was dedicated to discussing specific strategies and actions.

After much discussion, workshop participants selected four riparian/monument management projects, or action items, for BLM to move forward with. Each of these four items will be a collaborative effort among BLM, a variety of interested publics, agencies and livestock grazing permit holders.

- Action item one is building a large riparian enclosure to attempt enhancing, woody species. After considerable discussion about the criteria for selecting a site, Ford Bottom (at river mile 99.5) was selected as the enclosure site.
- Action item two is producing this newsletter as a means of updating the public. The newsletter will be printed and distributed twice per year; informational; educational; and designed to update the public about current activities within the Monument.
- Action item three is a project to develop a "River Community" weed control effort involving resource specialists, interested permittees, high school students, concerned members of the public, and county weed districts.

- Action item four involves working with the Bureau of Reclamation to increase water flows, at the appropriate times, to enhance woody riparian ecosystems along the river and assist in managing pallid sturgeon. This action will more than likely be a long-term process and could involve multiple partners/activities.

I would like to thank those who organized and those who participated in the NRST workshop. I also want to ensure all of our stakeholders that we intend to continue moving forward with these and other collaborative management actions throughout the Monument.



# UMRBNM Community/Youth Weed Project

*Kenny Keever, Natural Resource Specialist, Havre Field Station*

Invasive species (weeds) are a major environmental and economic concern across Montana and the country.

That's hardly news to most Monument stakeholders. However, the damage noxious weeds create and their rate-of-spread are surprises to many.

These invasive weeds can alter hydrologic cycles, sediment deposition, erosion, nutrient cycling, soil chemistry, and other processes causing serious ecological damage.

Unfortunately, the Monument (like many areas) has experienced a rapid increase in these invasive species over the past 30 years. Early riparian inventories along the river corridor (mid 1970s) found no invasive species. Then in 1983, BLM responded to an outbreak of leafy spurge, Canada thistle, and Russian knapweed. During that outbreak, we documented and treated roughly 20 acres of infestation in the river corridor from Coal Banks Landing to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Today, there are hundreds of acres infested by 1 or more of the 19 weed species known to occur in the area. As you can see, our current situation took some time to build to its current level, and solutions will be long-term battles involving multiple agencies, numerous interested parties and many landowners.

In response to this ever broadening need, BLM will be working to implement a River Community cooperative

management and monitoring program along portions of the Missouri River corridor. This effort will incorporate landowners, the BLM, county weed districts, and local conservation districts. Equally important, the Youth Weed Project will involve students from several Blaine, Fergus and possibly Chouteau county communities.

The Youth Weed Project will be designed to inform the next generation about the problems associated with weeds and enlist their help. The BLM will assist county weed district personnel as they introduce invasive species information into the curriculums of local schools and organizations such as FFA and 4-H. Some interested students will then become members of monitoring crews for specific portions of the Upper Missouri Wild & Scenic River corridor. These monitoring crews will use GPS technology to measure the change in size of noxious weed infestations over time.

In the interim, the BLM, permittees and willing members of the public will continue using a combination of methods (cooperative agreements, biological agents, hand pulling, chemical, etc.) to reduce the size of these infestations over time.

We will provide more information about the combination of methods used in the war on weeds in later editions of this newsletter and update you as the Youth Weed Project develops.



Kenny Keever (left, in white ball cap) addresses a gathering during a recent noxious weed education day.

# The Importance of Collaboration

Gary L. "Stan" Benes, Lewistown Field Manager

We hear the word "collaboration" a lot when discussing relationships and how those relationships can often determine our measure of success. An official definition of collaboration is to work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort. The unofficial definition, the one my Granddad would use for collaboration, is simply the business of neighbors working together across the fence to get something accomplished. In either case, working together is the key to any measure of success.

We all come from different backgrounds, with different experiences, different heritage, and different beliefs that have formed a personal set of values for each of us. We all have a personal sense of what is right; the interpretation of which is determined by those values. Those interpretations, from individual to individual, or organization to organization, often times do not agree.

However, I believe there are things we can agree on. We all enjoy life under the Big Sky of Montana and find central Montana to be a very special place. My sense is that we all have an appreciation for the very special natural environment provided in the Missouri Breaks. We all want to enjoy and use the area and all it offers us, but we also want to conserve and preserve this same area for the future.

As stewards of these public lands, it is our job at the BLM to find that balance between use and protection. We understand and respect individual and organizational values and strive to address each in our efforts to find and maintain that balance.

We hope to move forward in our management of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, in both the spirit and the substance of collaboration.

In a move toward that end, we will soon be proposing a meeting called the "Missouri Breaks Collaboration Partnership." This effort will be an open forum to discuss issues and values. All interested parties will be invited to join and discuss the future of the Monument and how we might work together on items of mutual interest.

This Collaboration Partnership will help us find common goals that all the stakeholders agree on. We will then work toward those goals, hopefully building trust as we move toward resolving increasingly challenging issues, just like neighbors over the back fence meet and discuss mutual issues and build trust in each other.

Collaboration takes time, but is well worth the effort.

## FRIENDS, PERMITTEE, AND BLM PARTNER ON FORD BOTTOM ENCLOSURE

*Chad Krause, Hydrologist, Lewistown Field Office*

*Mitch Forsyth, Rangeland Management Specialist, Havre Field Station*

One of the action items that sprang forward from the NRST workshop was constructing a large enclosure along the Upper Missouri to enhance/protect woody riparian species such as cottonwood and willow.

Interested publics had identified Ford Bottom, approximately one river mile above Stafford Ferry (at river mile 99.5) as an area of concern regarding cottonwood recruitment. Field visits by BLM personnel confirmed that although the grazing allotment was meeting Standards for Rangeland Health, an enclosure at Ford Bottom may increase the opportunities for woody species to reach older age classes.

BLM staff has since surveyed the location for the Ford Bottom enclosure fence based upon the riparian zone width and where topographic features lend themselves to fence construction. The fence will be a two-wire electric fence designed to manage livestock and mitigate wildlife impacts. The fence will be charged with a charger/battery system that

will be installed each spring and removed each winter. The fence wings (those portions extending from the bank to the river) will also be removed each winter to avoid being destroyed by ice. The enclosure will protect approximately 12 acres of riparian habitat and just under 1/2 mile of river bank.

Because of the site's remote location, the fence materials will be transported to the site by boat or on foot.

The Friends of the Monument organization has offered to purchase the fence materials and help with construction and annual maintenance. The grazing permittee will also help with annual maintenance as well as installing the fence wings and the charger/battery system prior to the beginning of the grazing season and removing them in the fall.

The partners involved in this project anticipate constructing the fence this spring.

# A RICH CULTURAL HISTORY

*Craig Flentie, Writer/Editor, Lewistown Field Office*

The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, and much of central Montana, is a sprawling, outdoor warehouse of cultural and historical artifacts that provide important clues about who we are and how we got here. Across this landscape the teepee rings, drive lines and buffalo processing sites of one culture blend into the homestead buildings, weathered corrals and abandoned hay rakes of another.

Each of these sites tells an important part of the central Montana story.

If you find yourself visiting one of these sites, turn the cell phone off and let yourself hear only the natural sounds around you. With just a little imagination, you can almost hear stories about those who lived, worked, laughed, cried and sometimes died there.

## *The Hagadone Homestead*

One of the better preserved homestead sites in this Monument is commonly known as the Hagadone place.

The homestead sits on public land about 20 miles north of Winifred, Montana, and is one of the features that contributes to the uniqueness of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

The Frank Hagadone homestead sits on a small bench overlooking the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River. The setting is remote; quiet (except for the wind); conveys a sense of solitude; serves as a reminder of how harsh this environment can be; and is very much a rich source of information about the homesteading chapter of our history.

The center of the homestead consists of dug outs, log buildings and frame buildings that demonstrate the evolution of building techniques and materials of the day. These dug outs and buildings sit amongst a collection of old farming equipment, rolls of barbed wire and other trappings



Frank Hagadone.  
*Photo courtesy  
of the Lewistown  
News Argus.*



that tell stories of the men and women who worked to carve out a living here.

The site was first homesteaded in 1918 by a gentleman named George Clyborn. Herbert Cameron (Clyborn's brother-in-law) and his family also lived on the place until about 1924, when Frank Hagadone bought the homestead.

Hagadone kept the homestead for nearly 30 years. Throughout that time he used additional homesteading conveyances to enlarge the original claim (eventually owning 320 acres). He also built additional buildings and other improvements to make life more practical, comfortable and sustainable.

Between 1953 and 1980, the homestead and its acreage were owned by several families in the Winifred area. In 1980, the BLM purchased the homestead and has worked to maintain the site's truly unique evidence of yesteryears.

On January 29, 2009, the Frank Hagadone Homestead site was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

## ABOUT FRANK HAGADONE

Frank Hagadone was a personality of considerable dimension and was very much a part of this area's early history. Had Frank kept a diary, a sampling of the entries would look something like this:

- Born in Nebraska in 1875;
- Moved to Fergus County in 1903, after trailing cattle north from Texas;
- Traveled for a while with Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West show as a marksman;
- For a time, made his living breaking horses;
- In 1917, Frank, with his wife and three daughters, settled on a different homestead located several miles downriver;
- Saved one of his daughter's life by slashing her lower leg with a straight edge razor and sucking out the rattlesnake poison after she was bitten by a snake that was resting under a tarp which served as a rug over the dirt floor in their living room;
- In 1924, bought and moved upstream to the Clyborn homestead -- his wife and daughters stayed on the original homestead until 1927, when they moved into Winifred;
- Built barges and filled them with supplies in Fort Benton, then sold the goods and the lumber used to build the barges as he floated downriver;
- Was a carpenter of some accomplishment and helped build many homes and buildings in Winifred as the community was growing;
- Became a pretty good gardener and made money by raising vegetables on his homestead and selling them in Winifred;
- Worked tirelessly with a horse pulled scraper to build a road from his homestead up to the bench above;
- Kept his '36 Chevy coupe parked up on the upper bench -- rode a horse or walked from his homestead to the upper bench where he kept his vehicle;
- Never drove his Chevy much over 10 miles per hour;
- Could roll a Bull Durham cigarette with one hand while he drove with the other;
- At age 78, while on a trip to Fresno, California, to visit his sister, Frank scuffled with a couple of hard-cases who tried to roll him in Las Vegas (one telling of this story indicates everyone involved in the incident, including Frank, was carrying a handgun); and
- Frank died of injuries from the fight a few days later at his sister's home in Fresno.

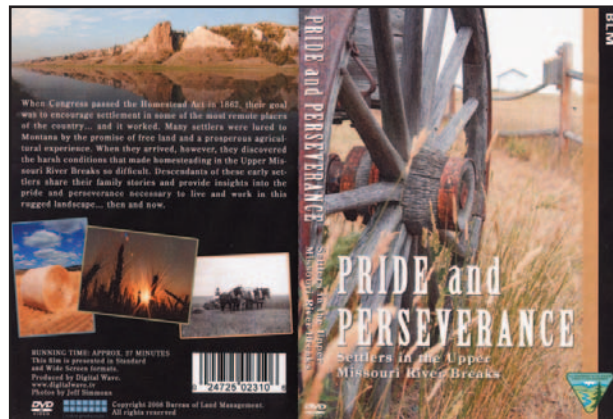
By today's standards (when many make their living at a desk and computer and risk little more physical danger in the workplace than a nasty paper cut) Frank Hagadone's life seems almost of novel proportion. Yet upon a second look, perhaps his life adventures were nearly typical of the day for those outgoing individuals who were daring enough to carve a living out of this harsh landscape during the early years.

Regardless of whether the years and repeated tellings have enlarged or diminished the accuracy of the trials and rewards surrounding our homesteading era, the BLM's Lewistown Field Office feels strongly that the stories and artifacts of the day merit care and sharing. With that in mind, the LFO will continue maintaining this historic property and has designated a site steward to continue monitoring its condition and to complete minor maintenance. The BLM will also install interpretive signs inside the homestead buildings this summer.

## “Pride and Perseverance: Settlers in the Missouri River Breaks”

*DVD Available to the Public*

*Zane Fulbright, Archaeologist, Lewistown Field Office*



A 27-minute video featuring Winifred, Big Sandy and Fort Benton area residents and their ties to the land near the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument is now available through the BLM.

The video is titled “Pride and Perseverance: Settlers in the Missouri River Breaks,” and features interviews with the descendants of four homesteading families who found their way to central Montana during the 1920s and 1930s.

The interviews were filmed at early day homestead sites and current day ranches along the Missouri River and in the adjacent uplands. The video mixes historical photos of homesteaders with interviews of their descendants. The photos were provided courtesy of Winifred area residents, the Winifred Museum and the Overholser Historical Research Center.

Digital Wave Productions of Portland, Oregon, produced the DVD which can be purchased from the BLM's Lewistown Field Office and the Interpretive Center of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in Fort Benton for \$15.

“This video (which is a product of the BLM's Enduring Legacy Initiative) is one of the tools designed to interpret and maintain the local history of the Missouri River Breaks,” added Zane Fulbright, a BLM archaeologist in Lewistown.

The BLM will also be placing interpretive panels at the Francis Hagadone, John Ervin and Gus Nelson homesteads (all of which are somewhat unique sites because the historic buildings are still standing). These panels will document the stories of late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century settlers along the Missouri River as well as common experiences and hardships endured by these settlers. The BLM will also be installing an interpretive panel at Hole in the Wall.

## Riparian Inventory

Chad Krause, Hydrologist,  
Lewistown Field Office

Resource specialists from Lewistown and Havre; Wayne Elmore; and members of the National Riparian Service Team will soon be combining their efforts to conduct a river-wide assessment of riparian conditions on the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River.

Later this summer or early fall, this interdisciplinary team will meet for nearly a week to come to consensus on:

- how the river will be divided into reaches;
- how to apply one assessment methodology to such a large river system;
- how the questions on the proper functioning condition checklist will be evaluated;
- the desired conditions regarding cottonwood and other riparian species; and
- monitoring.

The actual assessment of the 149 miles of river will be completed in the summer of 2010.

The team will also host pre and post assessment workshops for stakeholders. The pre workshop will address how the river will be evaluated, and the post workshop will present the results. Both workshops will include field days and opportunities for questions and answers.

BLM will keep the stakeholders posted as the team's schedule is confirmed.

# National Public Lands Day

Sandra Padilla, River Ranger, Lewistown Field Office



Last year's youngest NPLD volunteer helps Sandra Padilla with a little fencing.

Over the past 16 years, National Public Lands Day (NPLD) has grown from a fledgling event involving a few citizen volunteers into an event that hosts thousands of volunteers across the country. NPLD is now among the largest of volunteer events designed to help citizens volunteer a day to clean up and fix up our public lands, and this year promises to be no exception.

This summer the Lewistown Field Office is inviting citizen assistance with five different National Public Lands Day events in central Montana and four of them focus on the Missouri Breaks National Monument. Here's a summary of the events, dates and locations for your consideration.

**May 13 & 14:** This event will be a general cleanup along the Upper Missouri River from Coal Banks Landing to Judith Landing.

**June 22:** Volunteers and BLM will install a drip irrigation system throughout the campground at Coal Banks Landing.



**July 10:** We will install and dedicate a Metis interpretive panel at Ear Mountain on the Rocky Mountain Front, work on hard surfacing the nearby walking trail and give the trailhead a general cleanup.

**August 12:** We will finish removing the barbed wire fence at the Wood Bottom Watchable Wildlife area.

**September 12:** We will give the James Kipp Recreation Area a general cleanup and complete various work projects throughout the campground.

Aside from a sense of accomplishment, there are several perks associated with volunteering for one or several of these events. Participants will receive a free day pass good at any fee site next year, a free t-shirt, lunch, refreshments and good company.

For more detailed information about these National Public Lands Day events, contact Sandra Padilla at 406-538-1916.

# Ice Out On the Mighty Mo

Craig Flentie, Writer/Editor,  
Lewistown Field Office

This past March 20<sup>th</sup>, Aurora Northerner, a range technician in the Lewistown Field Office, stopped by Judith Landing (on the Missouri River north of Winifred). She was able to photograph some of the damage shelf ice can create as the ice goes off the river each spring.



**ABOVE:**

A couple of tons of ice perched on top of a BLM boater registration box.

**LEFT:**

Shelf ice grinding its way through the willows.

**BELOW:**

About four feet of ice sitting on top of the boat launch.



This damage is a constant concern to resource specialists and stakeholders who manage riparian areas, facilities and improvements along the river bank.

