

## Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

*A Monument Update*

Information About Monument Projects, Programs And People

Issue No. 3

December 2010

**Manager's Message**

I thought it would be a good idea to dedicate this issue of the Monument Update Newsletter to a discussion of the BLM's on-the-ground accomplishments in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 toward protecting the objects, values and features found in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

Our guidance for on-the-ground management activities in the monument came in stages. The first stage began with the monument proclamation itself as it automatically established several management safeguards in January 2001.

The State Director's Interim Guidance for managing the monument (2001) was the second stage and it cross-referenced all the existing management guidance in place at the time the monument was designated against the proclamation to determine which existing activities were, or were not, consistent with the proclamation.

The third stage was completing the approved resource management plan (2008) which was the eventual product of numerous public meetings and tens of thousands of public comments.

Completing the management plan for this monument was arduous and time consuming and we appreciate all the groups, organizations, agencies and individuals who participated. However, I think the approved resource management plan was worth the effort and certainly provides us with a good map for managing the monument.

As you will see, much of our work in this monument carries forward from one year to the next. If we build something we must maintain it (much like owning a home or managing a ranch). We monitor and evaluate the amount of use or activity in an area to determine if that use or activity is changing the condition of the area. If we treat noxious weeds in an area with chemicals or biological controls, we monitor and evaluate to determine if the treatment is work-

ing. As you will see below, some of our responsibilities and accomplishments are repetitive from year to year.

Our 2009 and 2010 accomplishments are organized by BLM resource program area, as that is how we track our time and efforts.

We hope you find the following information interesting and informative.

Sincerely,



Gary E. Slagel  
Monument Manager

Lewistown Field Office



## Watersheds/Vegetation/ Livestock Grazing/Fuels/ Noxious Weeds

### In fiscal year 2009, the BLM:

- Assessed 54,845 acres as part of the 10-year grazing permit renewal process to ensure these lands are meeting standards and guidelines and to design resolutions if they are not
- Applied shrub and grass vegetation treatments (prescribed burns, noxious weed treatments or grazing treatments) to 1,180 acres
- Constructed three shrub, grass and forest projects (built protective fences around cabins, or relocated fences to lessen impacts to wildlife)
- Monitored 200 acres of shrub, grass and forest projects to ensure they were meeting objectives
- Maintained shrub and grass vegetation projects (spring improvements, fences, wildlife ramps in water tanks or protective enclosures) at 27 sites



- Inventoried 99,766 acres for the presence of invasive plants and/or noxious weeds
- Treated 4,581 acres for noxious weeds
- Monitored and evaluated previous weed treatments on 23,560 acres
- Transferred three grazing preferences from one base property owner to the succeeding property owner
- Issued 15 grazing permits/leases (based upon expiring permits/leases, ranch sales and base property leases)
- Issued 89 grazing use authorizations (grazing bills or approved changes in authorized use)
- Evaluated rangeland health on eight grazing allotments to ensure they were meeting standards for rangeland health

- Monitored 34 grazing allotments (after season of use) to ensure the amount of grazing was within acceptable guidelines
- Inspected 134 grazing allotments for compliance (season of use and number of cattle)
- Implemented and monitored fuels treatments (prescribed burns) on 700 acres

### In fiscal year 2010, the BLM:

- Assessed 9,900 acres as part of the 10-year grazing permit renewal process to ensure these lands are meeting standards and guidelines and to design resolutions if they are not
- Applied shrub and grass vegetation treatments (prescribed burns, noxious weed treatments or grazing treatments) to 664 acres
- Constructed one shrub, grass and forest project (built protective fences around cabins, or relocated fences to lessen impacts to wildlife-Joel fence)
- Monitored 864 acres of shrub, grass and forest projects to ensure they were meeting objectives
- Maintained shrub and grass vegetation projects (spring improvements, fences, wildlife ramps in water tanks or protective enclosures) at 19 sites
- Inventoried 22,000 acres for the presence of invasive plants and/or noxious weeds
- Treated 2,023 acres for noxious weeds



Range and riparian monitoring are important tools to determine how well management practices are working.



A good prescribed burn can improve forest health, wildlife habitat and vegetation diversity.

- Monitored and evaluated previous weed treatments on 23,560 acres
- Evaluated rangeland health on two grazing allotments to ensure they were meeting standards for rangeland health
- Monitored 36 grazing allotments (after season of use) to ensure the amount of grazing was within acceptable guidelines.

- Monitored 131 miles of streams and riparian habitat (late seral woody plant study with the University of Montana)
- Monitored two drinking water sources (Kipp and Coal Banks Landing)

## Water Resources/Streams/ Riparian Areas

**In fiscal year 2009, the BLM:**

- Inventoried water resources at 31 different stations (these may be cross section readings to measure stream flow or readings to measure shallow ground water wells)
- Inventoried 36 miles of streams and riparian areas (in the Two-Calf planning area)
- Processed one water right application
- Constructed one lake/wetland/stream/riparian project (the Ford bottom enclosure)
- Maintained 41 lake/wetland/

**In fiscal year 2010, the BLM:**

- Inventoried water resources at 31 different stations (these may be cross section readings to measure stream flow or readings to measure shallow ground water wells)
- Completed proper functioning condition assessment on 149 miles of the UMNWSR in conjunction with National Riparian Service Team
- Processed one water right application
- Constructed one lake/wetland/stream/riparian project (an enclosure in a riparian area or a potential riparian area)
- Maintained 37 lake/wetland/stream/riparian projects (enclosures, drift fences, tree watering systems and solar off-site water pumps)
- Monitored 50 miles of streams and riparian habitat (late seral woody plant study with the University of Montana)
- Monitored two drinking water sources (Kipp and Coal Banks Landing)



The White Cliffs as seen from Eagle Creek.



## Wildlife

### In fiscal year 2009, the BLM:

- Inventoried 54,845 acres of wildlife habitat as a means of documenting change of condition
- Monitored 45,000 acres of terrestrial (sage grouse and big game) habitat
- Monitored 18 specific species wildlife population sites (eagle nests, prairie dog towns, mountain plover habitat and softshell turtle habitat)

### In fiscal year 2010, the BLM:

- Inventoried 3,500 acres of wildlife habitat as a means of documenting change of condition
- Monitored 9,900 acres of terrestrial (sage grouse and big game) habitat
- Monitored 16 specific species wildlife population sites (eagle nests, prairie dog towns, mountain plover habitat and softshell turtle habitat)

## Recreation

### In fiscal year 2009, the BLM:

- Gathered traffic information via traffic counters on 60 miles of

specific roads and trails (linear recreation inventory)

- Processed 43 Special Recreation Use Permits for commercial users and groups (mostly on the Upper Missouri River)
- Issued and managed 989 recreation use permits (overnight use at the Kipp Recreation Area)
- Managed four fee collection programs (the Kipp Recreation Area, the Missouri Breaks Inter-

pretive Center, the river outfitter fees and the upland outfitter fees; this money comes from the outfitters and from the public)

- Administered the recreation fee program at two fee sites (the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center and the Kipp Recreation Area; this money comes from the public)
- Conducted recreation site condition assessments at nine sites (homesteads, kiosks, and other recreation sites)
- Conducted recreation site annual maintenance at 49 sites (39 buildings/facilities along the Missouri River and 10 at the Kipp Recreation Area)
- Completed two miles of annual trail maintenance (Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center and Look Out Point)
- Evaluated 375,000 acres of recreation area (watchable wildlife areas, areas of critical environmental concern, the uplands recreation management area and the river recreation management area)
- Monitored 75,000 acres of wilderness study areas



Sharptail grouse

- Evaluated linear recreation management objectives on 81 miles of roads and trails (associated with the Missouri Breaks Backcountry Byway and the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center)
- Assessed 313 miles of designated rivers and trails (Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River, Nez Perce National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail)



The Bullwacker landing strip.

### In fiscal year 2010, the BLM:

- Processed 32 Special Recreation Use Permits for commercial users and groups (mostly on the Upper Missouri River)
- Issued and managed 1,057 recreation use permits (overnight use at the Kipp Recreation Area)
- Managed four fee collection programs (the Kipp Recreation Area, the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center, the river outfitter fees and the upland outfitter fees; this money comes from the outfitters and from the public)
- Administered the recreation fee program at two fee sites (the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center and the Kipp Recreation Area; this money comes from the public)
- Conducted recreation site condition assessments at two sites (homesteads, kiosks, and other recreation sites)
- Conducted recreation site annual maintenance at 49 sites (39 buildings/facilities along the Missouri River and 10 at the Kipp Recreation Area)
- Completed two miles of annual trail maintenance (Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center and Decision Point)
- Evaluated 375,000 acres of recreation area (watchable wildlife areas, areas of critical environmental concern, the uplands recreation management area and the river recreation management area)

- Monitored 50,000 acres of wilderness study areas
- Evaluated linear recreation management objectives on 81 miles of roads and trails (associated with the Missouri Breaks Backcountry Byway and the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center)
- Assessed 313 miles of designated rivers and trails (Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River, Nez Perce National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail)

## Roads/Travel Management

### In fiscal year 2009, the BLM:

- Conducted annual maintenance (primarily road grading; occasional culvert replacement) on 179 miles of roads
- Decommissioned and rehabilitated one mile of road

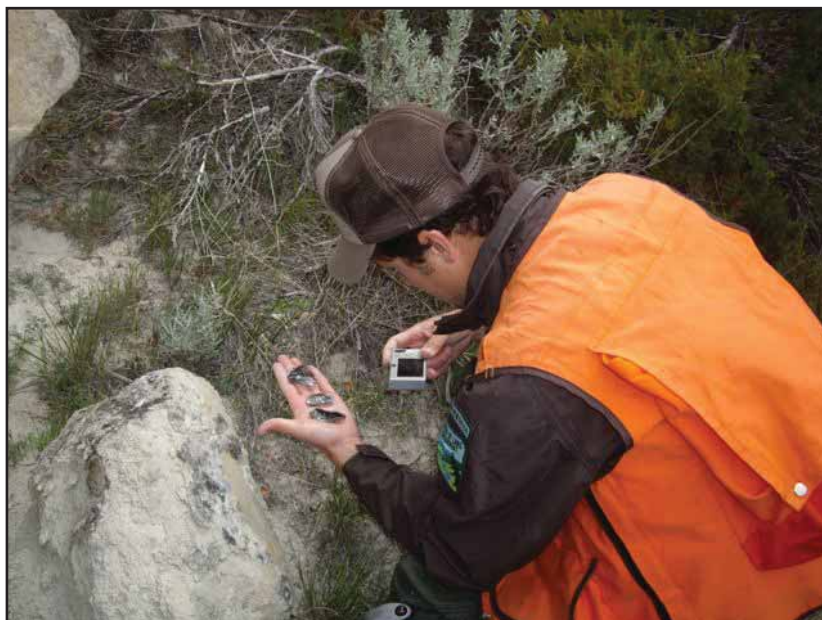
### In fiscal year 2010, the BLM:

- Conducted annual maintenance (primarily road grading; occasional culvert replacement) on 144 miles of roads
- Hired three seasonal workers to install numbered route markers on open and seasonally open roads throughout



the monument; these markers indicate which roads are open to motorized travel according to the approved resource management plan; roughly 150 markers were installed on monument acres both north and south of the Missouri River; this signing project is largely completed (however, some private landowners would not grant permission for the workers to cross their private land to install markers on public land); the next step will be for BLM to produce a revised travel management map for the monument

- The Montana Pilots Association installed one registration box at each of four individual landing strips (Black Butte North, Bullwhacker, Cow Creek and Left Coulee). These registration boxes will allow BLM to monitor the actual use occurring at these airstrips.



Cultural clearance work in the monument.

## Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center/Heritage Resources/Indian Tribes

### In fiscal year 2009, the BLM:

- The Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center in Fort Benton is nearing its 5th Anniversary. Since its opening, the center has hosted an ever increasing number of living history and Take It Outside programs for school kids and area residents throughout the region. In fiscal year 2009 the center hosted 12 such programs. The number of visitors to the center continues to increase each year.



Stabilization work at the Hagadone homestead.

- Macalester College (Minnesota) conducted a field school on 20 acres to train geology students
- Intensively recorded, evaluated and studied one heritage resource (the National Register of Historic Places nomination package for the Hagadone Homestead)
- One heritage resource intensively recorded, evaluated and studied (the National Register of Historic Places nomination package for the Hagadone Homestead)
- stabilized, managed and protected three heritage sites (roof and wall stabilization or perimeter fencing)
- Conducted condition assessments at 13 heritage resource sites (done with the help of the Site Stewards; a volunteer group)
- Consulted with one Indian tribe

### In fiscal year 2010, the BLM:

- The Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center hosted 26 living history and Take It Outside programs
- Macalester College (Minnesota) conducted a field school on 20 acres to train geology students
- Conducted cultural clearance work on 3,845 acres
- One heritage resource intensively recorded, evaluated and studied (the National Register of Historic Places nomination package for the Nelson Homestead)
- Stabilized, managed and protected four heritage sites (roof and wall stabilization or perimeter fencing)

- Conducted condition assessments at 10 heritage resource sites (with the help of the Site Stewards; a volunteer group)
- Consulted with one Indian tribe

## Law Enforcement

### In fiscal year 2009, the BLM:

- Had one law enforcement ranger stationed in Lewistown. This individual was responsible for continuous law enforcement patrols, conducting investigations, investigating trespasses

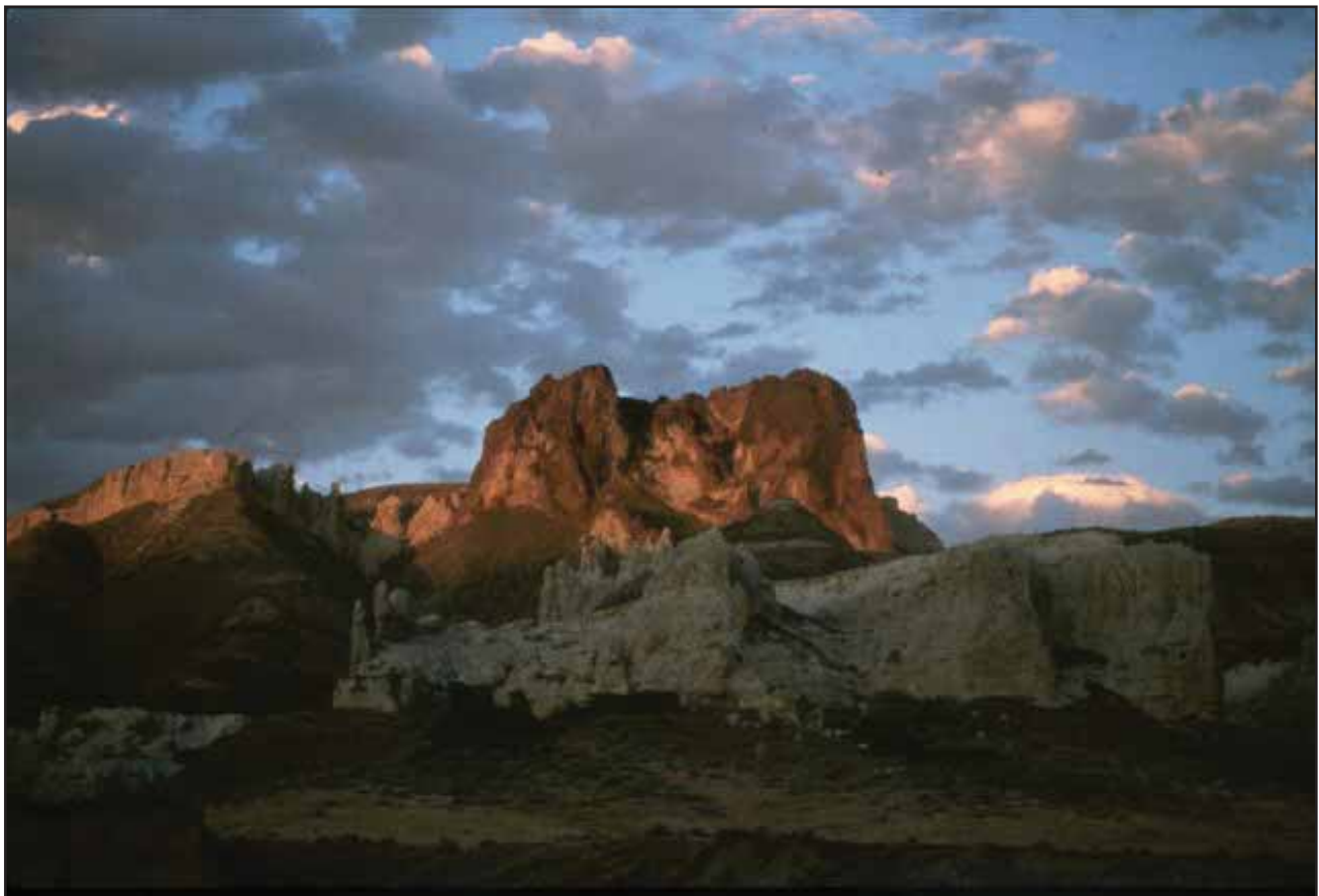
and unauthorized use and coordinating or participating in search and rescue efforts.

### In fiscal year 2010, the BLM

- Hired an additional law enforcement ranger who will be stationed in Fort Benton. The rangers in Lewistown and Fort Benton will be responsible for continuous law enforcement patrols, conducting investigations, investigating trespasses and unauthorized use and coordinating or participating in search and rescue efforts.



Occasionally search and rescue efforts are needed to locate and evacuate those in need from remote locations in the monument.



## Monument Staff Members/Responsibilities

From time to time, people ask about Monument staff members and their responsibilities. Hopefully, this table will prove useful.

NAME	RESPONSIBILITY	DUTY STATION
Gary E. Slagel	monument manager	Lewistown
Vinita Shea	rangeland management	Lewistown
Aurora Northerner	range/riparian technician	Lewistown
Chad Krause	hydrologist	Lewistown
Mitchell Forsyth	rangeland management	Havre
Jody Peters	wildlife management	Havre
Kenny Keever	natural resource specialist	Havre
Mark Schaefer*	supervisory outdoor rec. planner	Ft. Benton
Connie Jacobs**	interpretive center director	Ft. Benton
John Robertson	recreation maintenance	Ft. Benton
Roger Williams	information receptionist	Ft. Benton
Vacant	law enforcement ranger	Ft. Benton
Vacant	park ranger	Ft. Benton
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\* Mark supervises the river staff; is responsible for overall river management; and manages the Fort Benton River Management Station which is located in the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center.

\*\* Connie manages the interpretive aspect and program functions at the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center.

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