



Trails are the veins of our communities and connect us to our American heritage. For over 20 years, The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation has cleared and maintained trails in the Bob for hikers, backpackers, horse riders, and other traditional uses. BMWF volunteers come from across the US and give their time to clear trails in the Bob because they value Wilderness, the solitude it provides, and access to places that can only be reached by horse or foot travel. They use their boots to express their voice. That number is not insignificant; it represents thousands of voices.

Join the BMWF in 2018 to become a part of this wilderness community. It'll be a boot-stomping, Pulaski-swinging, weed-pulling good time! Celebrate 50 years of the Wild and Scenic Rivers and the Trails Stewardship Acts by participating on a volunteer adventure (dates for Field Season 2018 will be shared online on March 1). You can also attend the Wilderness Speaker Series and/or Mountainfilm on Tour prior to BMWF's summer programs. Visit bmwf.org/events to learn more.

In 2018, BMWF will bring back the Wilderness Conservation Corps and grow the Wilderness Ranger Intern and Packer Apprentice programs. We've also added a Stewardship Coordinator to our staff thanks to generous funding from the Patti Hoksenbergen-Hunter Estate. The Coordinator will act as a mentor and skills educator to interns, help with project coordination, and capture the accomplishments of 11 interns and 2 apprentices as they travel in and out of the Wilderness throughout the summer.

Happy Trails in 2018!

Carol Treadwell

Cover photo credit: Chris Peterson



Planning a trip into the Bob?

CHECK THE TRAIL CONDITIONS ONLINE MAP BEFORE YOU GO!

There are 1700 miles of trail in the Bob. With so many choices, finding a trail takes careful planning and Mother Nature is full of uncertainties. The BMWF website now hosts an interactive map that displays trail clearing reports. Bi-weekly updates indicate where crews have recently cleared trails. Other helpful features for the public include hazards and fire boundaries. To plan your trip, go to www.bmwf.org/trail-conditions/



MARCH 21 Helena MARCH 22 Whitefish

tickets at www.bmwf.org/events

TRAIL DOGS OF THE YEAR: DARLENE & WAYNE THOMPSON



Darlene and Wayne are a dynamic duo of dedicated volunteers. Hailing from Great Falls, Montana, Darlene and Wayne have been volunteering with the BMWF since 2009! For them, it's simply getting away from TV and phones and exploring new landscapes while giving back. For the fellow volunteers and Crew Leaders in the Wilderness with these two, it's their positive attitudes and hard work that makes them such good company. Plus, they can pick lots of huckleberries!

PACKER OF THE YEAR: DEB SCHATZ

Deb and her husband Greg joined the Backcountry Horsemen in 1991. Soon after, they realized they needed another horse to use as a pack animal if they wanted to keep up with the older members. Once they got enough animals to constitute 'a string,' Deb and Greg began volunteering to pack for the BMWF. Over the years, Deb has contributed to the BMWF in many ways including donating goods to fundraisers, crunching numbers at auctions, or packing tools and supplies into the Wilderness for volunteer work groups. Her real passion lies in helping girls and women get out in the backcountry, learn skills that will help them be strong, confident and independent young women. Because of this passion, Deb has lead an all-women packing group who packs in tools and gear for our all-girl volunteer trips!



2017

700 MILES HIKED

328 HORSE & MULE LOADS

TREES CLEARED

TOTALING \$440,128

in Wilderness Stewardship Value



MILES OF TRAIL **MAINTAINED**

YARDS OF TREAD MAINTAINED

DRAINAGES MAINTAINED BRUSHED

ANNUAL REPORT

INCOME

2% MERCHANDISE

6% INVESTMENT INCOME

12% LICENSE PLATES

20% FUNDRAISERS

23%
MEMBERSHIPS
& DONATIONS

36% GRANTS

\$322,553

EXPENSES

15% MANAGEMENT

25% COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

60%
BOOTS ON THE GROUND
PROGRAMS

\$301,500

TERNS IN THE BOB

Over the past 5 years, BMWF has provided internships and apprentices to 17 young folks looking for meaningful summer employment in the outdoors and career building opportunities. All of these interns have gone on to work for the Forest Service the summer following their internship or worked for other trails and Wilderness Stewardship organizations. Packer Apprentices have returned to assist BMWF as a volunteer packer or gone on to be a USFS packer, as well.

The BMWF "weeds internship" launched in 2012 with one high school intern. (A few years later we decided to rename the position, a much more holistic "Wilderness Conservation Intern"). By 2015, the intern program had grown into a four-member crew tackling trail projects across the Bob Complex. That year, one Whitefish High School kid, Che Rousell, joined two University of Montana and one University of Wisconsin student for a summer of work in the wilderness. They forged a bond so deep that Che would later reflect, "I am not sure how many crews I will be on throughout my life, I hope many. Regardless, I will always remember Courtney, Mike, Claire, and AJ as the people who were there as I grew up in the woods, as the people who guided me and nudged me, both in building trail and building myself into the person I wanted to be."

In 2016, the local from Whitefish High was Cassidy Grady and the crew was Alex, Abby, Trevor (UM), and Evan (UW). They began the season with a big, Bob Marshall-style backpack from Big Salmon Lake to the trailhead, a 20-mile day. Cassidy said, "My experience as a BMWF

intern has been unforgettable. The Bob is forever imprinted in my mind as a place of laughter, beauty, challenge, and friendships."

In 2017, Wilderness Ranger Interns worked alongside FS crews. Jack Michael from UMW interned at Schafer Meadows and gained experience with Wilderness character monitoring, campsite inventory, and weeds suppression. After reemerging to the front country in August, he said, "Wilderness is an essential part of the American identity. It ensures that our mountains and headwaters remain pristine and allows ordinary citizens to experience the spirit of adventure." He also shared these wise words to live by: "You can eat a lot of candy and still lose weight if you're hiking every day."

"In wilderness, it isn't that you find yourself more than it is that you choose who you want to be. I chose to become the person I am now. Calluses on my hands are more important than the calluses on my ego." -BMWF Intern Che Rousel



ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!
Intern deadline: Feb 17
Apprentice deadline: Mar 15
WWW.BMWF.ORG/JOBS



You'd have to be buried under a big rock in the middle of the deepest valley in the Bob not to cringe at the news coming out of Washington D.C. While the BMWF is a politically neutral organization, the Board of Directors felt we could not remain silent on the "Wheels over Wilderness" bill (HR 1349) because it threatens the very heart of the Wilderness Act and the untrammeled nature of the landscape within the Bob. The BMWF BoD wrote the Montana Congressman and Senators to say, "The framers of the Wilderness Act intended to preserve vestiges of primitive America that shaped our national identity. Like many others, they did not want the trappings of civilization to intrude on every acre of our nation." Furthermore, "Wilderness, as is, has true economic value as well; the tourists it draws enjoy these pristine areas away from the distractions of civilization. Only 2% of America is designated, protected Wilderness. We need to remain committed to safeguarding these destinations and experiences"... and, finally, "there is a real safety concern with mixing mountain bikes and horses on wilderness trails that are often narrow and on steep terrain..." BMWF remains committed to its apolitcal mission, however, with appropriate Board discussion, we may be compelled to speak out when the institution of Wilderness or the Wilderness Act of 1964 is threatened.

TO READ THE ENTIRE LETTER, VISIT WWW.BMWF.ORG/DISPATACHES

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