

Rocky Mountain Front Montana Wilderness Association's Wilderness Walks 2007

"My father considered a walk among the mountains as the equivalent of churchgoing." - Aldous Huxley

This year marks the 45th Anniversary of Montana Wilderness Association's **Wilderness Walks** program, making it one of the most enduring and popular outdoor education programs in the country. **Wilderness Walks** provides a great opportunity to learn about nature and Montana's wild heritage by exploring the landscape with a knowledgeable walk leader and fellow hikers.

Each hike is an opportunity to slow down, to feel the earth beneath your feet, to travel a winding path through the forest, to discover a wildflower-filled meadow, or to reach the top of a mountain and experience nature with all your senses. And here's the best part—you'll be hiking with experienced guides who are sharing their knowledge and passion for protecting our last wild places—and who are inviting you to discover *their* special wild spots.

Thirty-four walks are featured on the spectacular Rocky Mountain Front. They range from exploring the historic Lewis and Clark Pass on the southern Front to wildlife viewing in the Badger-Two Medicine to the north.

To walk and roam these wild places, to learn about them first-hand, is an invaluable experience. It's an opportunity to become intimately involved with a landscape, to learn its character and understand why it's so important to protect our wild places for future generations—and for ourselves. Walk participants are encouraged to sign up early, as the walk lists fill up fast. People want to explore and enjoy Montana's wildlands!

Saturday, May 19

Volcano Reef

Location: west of Bynum

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 4-5

Difficulty: moderately strenuous, elevation gain 1400 feet

Group Size: 12

Reservations: by May 18

Meeting Time and Place: 7:30 a.m., Paris Gibson Square parking lot in Great Falls or 8:45 a.m., Choteau Information Center parking lot in Choteau on Hwy. 89

Leaders: Gene Sentz 466-2750 (friends@3rivers.net) and Dan Bennett 452-7657 (bennettdan@bresnan.net)

Volcano Reef rises 1400 vertical feet from the mouth of Blackleaf Canyon—a miniature Bob Marshall Chinese Wall severing the short grass prairie from the peaks of the Sawtooth Range. After passing through the canyon into the valley of Blackleaf creek, we'll strike north for the ascent of Volcano Reef and spectacular views of the face of the Front. Before the invasion of blister rust decimated the limber pine, grizzlies heavily visited the Reef every fall. Numerous mountain goats inhabited the area before the seismic activity of the 1980s. Your leaders will discuss the 30 years of grassroots efforts

that have gone into protecting the Reef from mineral exploration and oil and gas development. At the end of the day we'll have the option of retracing our route to the canyon or a laugh-in-the-face-of-death descent down the east face.

Saturday, May 26

Muddy Creek Canyon

Location: west of Bynum

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 4

Difficulty: moderate

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by May 19

Meeting Time and Place: 8:30 a.m., Choteau Information Center parking lot, located in Choteau on Hwy. 89

Leaders: Dan Bennett 452-7657 (bennettdan@bresnan.net) and Keith Gebo 727-6335 (wildheart26_2@msn.com)

Quite possibly the finest day hike on the Rocky Mountain Front! Everything that makes the Rocky Mountain Front a national treasure—and every management debacle that has threatened it—is apparent here. This walk kicks off from the Old North Trail country and travels a mile down an old gas development road. The next mile will be off-trail and includes some rock hopping up the streambed, through a Utah-like canyon, to the pristine falls for lunch. On the way we will view a proposed well site deep in the canyon and wander through the largest old-growth Douglas-fir forest this side of the Divide.

Sunday, May 27

Mortimer / Big George Loop

Location: west of Augusta

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 8

Difficulty: moderate

Group Size: 6

Reservations: May 20

Meeting Time and Place: 8:30 a.m. at Mel's Diner in Augusta

Leaders: Dale Neal 467-2328

We will follow the loop from Mortimer Gulch and down Big George Gulch just north of Gibson Reservoir. We will traverse through the gorgeous Sun River Canyon. Bring good shoes and plenty of water.

Friday, June 1

Devil's Glen Walk

Location: near Augusta

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 6

Difficulty: easy, elevation gain 200 feet

Group Size: 8

Reservations: by June 25

Meeting Time and Place: 8:00 a.m. at the northwest corner of Target parking lot in Great Falls or 9:00 a.m. at Mel's Diner in Augusta

Leaders: Judy Kilmer 750-2741 (day) or 452-0306 (eve)

The Upper Dearborn River carves its way out of the Rocky Mountain Front through the Glen with sparkling turquoise pools, water-sculpted gorges, and fields of wildflowers. We'll lunch in a large meadow and continue on to Milky Stream.

Friday – Sunday, June 1-3

Spring Extravaganza

Location: Seven Lazy P Guest Ranch west of Choteau Teton Canyon

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 10-12

Difficulty: Sunday easy, Saturday moderate

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by May 25

Meeting Time and Place: Meet anytime after 1:00 p.m. on Friday at the Deep Canyon Seven Lazy P Ranch, receive cabin assignments and explore the area. A full agenda for the weekend will be provided at the time of registration.

Leaders: Keith Shaw 467-2268, Dan Bennett, and Gene Miller

This is a weekend getaway to enjoy the wonders of the Rocky Mountain Front. The Seven Lazy P Guest Ranch will be our hosts. There will be a \$225 charge for the weekend per person. This will pay for all food and lodging. Bring no bedding or food. The cabins are rustic, modern and comfortable. The food is excellent and the event starts off with dinner on Friday night the 1st of June. Sack lunches will be provided both days of the weekend. There will be evening entertainment. Hike leaders will point out and discuss spring flowering plants, history of the area as well as point out various sites where Native American's once lived and traveled through. Sunday's hike will be a half day hike. Saturday's hike will climb up to the Blackleaf/Teton Divide through various ecosystems. The spring flowers should be in abundance both days. Sunday's hike will be more of a show and tell exploration, question and answer day out on the Teton River flats.

Saturday, June 2

Falls Creek

Location: west of Augusta

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 6-7

Difficulty: moderate

Group Size: 10

Reservations: by May 25

Meeting Time and Place: 8:30 a.m. at The Frenchman in Wolf Creek

Leaders: Gabriel Furshong 466-2600 (mwarmf@wildmontana.org) and Chip Clawson

This is a moderate hike of 6–7 miles up the beautiful drainage of Falls Creek in one of the Rocky Mountain Front's premier roadless areas. Trail #299 leaves from just west of the Diamond X Ranch along the Dearborn River and heads south between Twin Buttes and Table Mountain. We will take it three miles south and find a lunch spot between the East and West Forks of Falls Creek. This is a very accessible hike for Helenans, as it is the southernmost roadless area of the Front. The drive from Wolf Creek is an added perk. Road #434 heading out of Wolf Creek is easily one of the most scenic in the state, and crosses the Dearborn High Bridge- a pin-connected Pratt half-deck truss bridge- of truly unique design suspended over the rushing Dearborn River.

Saturday, June 2

Camp Disappointment / Two Medicine Encounter

Location: near Cut Bank

Public Land Management: Tribal Lands / Private

Trail Miles: 2-3

Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Group Size: no limit

Reservations: by June 4

Meeting Time and Place: to be determined by leaders

Leaders: Larry and Callie Epstein 873-2277 ext. 12 (day) 873-5642 (eve)

(larry.epstein@bresnan.net)

Walk a wild stretch of the prairie through river breaks and cottonwood bottoms to the historic site where Meriwether Lewis and his party encountered the Blackfeet. This is a fine opportunity to learn the events surrounding the conflict. Advance reading of the Lewis and Clark journals is suggested. We can also take a look at some of the plants identified by the expedition. Bring binoculars for views of the Rocky Mountain Front and Glacier National Park. Participants will be asked to donate \$25.00 each for an access fee to cross private land and to purchase a tribal conservation license.

Co-sponsored by the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.

Sunday, June 3

Belly River Country

Location: Glacier National Park (near Babb)

Public Land Manager: National Park Service

Trail Miles: 12.2

Difficulty: moderate, elevation gain 889 feet

Group Size: 8

Reservations: by May 25

Meeting Time and Place: To ensure an early morning start, participants should meet and be prepared to camp at the walk leaders property at Duck Lake (near Babb, MT) on the evening prior to the walk. A detailed map and direction will be provided.

Leaders: Roger Semler 216-2672 (wildpro@sofast.net)

This walk will explore Glacier National Park's spectacular Belly River Country. Beginning at Chief Mountain Customs on the Canadian border, our destination will be the idyllic Belly River Ranger Station, one of the last working backcountry ranger stations in the NPS. Enroute, the walk leader will discuss Glacier's progressive wilderness management program and wilderness designation status. To ensure an early morning start, this walk requires camping on the leader's property at nearby Duck Lake the evening before the walk.

Saturday, June 9

North Fork Teton River

Location: west of Choteau

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 2

Difficulty: easy

Group Size: 12

Reservations: by June 3

Meeting Time and Place: 9:30 a.m., Choteau Information Center on Hwy. 89 or by arrangement

Leaders: Starshine 453-8989 (dr.starshine@bresnan.net) and Carol Potera 452-5660 (carpot@aol.com)

This walk provides an opportunity to fulfill the dream of a lifetime by visiting the spectacular Bob Marshall Wilderness with a short, easy walk of one mile with no elevation gain. Families, children and seniors are certain to enjoy this lovely day. Hike one mile through waves of wildflowers along the North Fork of the Teton River. Enjoy your trail lunch on the river shore inside the wilderness boundary with 8875 ft. Mt. Wright as a dramatic backdrop. The leaders promise plenty of time to enjoy the great and small wonders of nature.

Friday - Sunday, June 15-17

Dearborn Trail #206 Project

Location: Rocky Mountain Front

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 3.5

Difficulty: moderate, elevation gain 870 feet

Group Size: 8

Reservations: by June 1

Meeting Time and Place: 8:00 a.m., at the Augusta Information Station

Leaders: BMWF Crew Leader 863-5411 (trails@thebmwf.org)

We arrive at our work site via the Dearborn River Canyon—one of the gateways to the Scapegoat Wilderness. The hike in provides views of craggy landscapes including Steamboat Mountain (8286 ft.), Twin Buttes (7500 ft.), and Monitor Mountain (7739 ft.). As the trail descends towards the National Forest boundary, we will hike through open meadows alongside the Dearborn River until we arrive at the jagged landscape of Devil's Glen. The crew will camp near the trailhead and day hike 2-3 miles to project work each day. Primary work will include rock removal and retreat, as well as water bar maintenance and minor brushing and clearing. This is a Front country camping trip and you will be asked to provide your own gear. A list will be sent to you after you register. Sturdy boots, long pants and work gloves are required. All tools, safety gear and food will be provided.

Co-sponsored by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation

Sunday, June 17

Blindhorse Site from Chicken Coulee Trail

Location: near Choteau

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 6-7

Difficulty: moderate

Group Size: 10

Reservations: by June 8

Meeting Time and Place: 8:00 a.m. at Old Trail Museum Parking lot on the north end of town.

Leaders: Dave Wedum 466-5723 and Gabe Furshong 466-2600

This is a walk that is attractive politically, historically, and ecologically. We'll begin the hike from the Montana Organic Spirit Ranch. We'll be heading up the Chicken Coulee Trail beneath Choteau Mountain and will turn north to skirt the Front. We'll arrive at the site proposed for drilling by Star Tech Energy in the Blindhorse Outstanding Natural Area in 2004. We'll view the old seismograph "road" Star Tech proposed to use, and

judge for ourselves whether their claim to use only the existing road was at best, colorful salesmanship.

Friday, June 22

Dearborn River

Location: near Augusta

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 8-12

Difficulty: easy, elevation gain 1500 feet

Group Size: 10

Reservations: by June 8

Meeting Time and Place: 9:00 a.m. at Mel's Diner in Augusta

Leader: Joanne Bernard 781-2627 (jebarnard@bresnan.net)

Enjoy a leisurely hike in the beautiful Dearborn River valley that was spared from the 1988 Canyon Fire that burned the two adjacent watersheds of Falls Creek to the south and Elk Creek to the north. This fire traveled 50 miles in one day from the North Fork of the Blackfoot River and threatened the ranches near Augusta before being extinguished by rain. Lots of wonderful rock formations and waterfalls.

Friday - Sunday, June 22 - 24

Blackleaf Trail #106 Project

Location: Rocky Mountain Front

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National

Trail Miles: 7.5

Difficulty: moderate, elevation gain 1668 feet

Group Size: 8

Reservations: by June 8

Meeting Time and Place: 8:00 a.m., Rocky Mountain Ranger Station in Choteau

Leader: BMWF Crew Leader 863-5411 (trails@thebmwf.org)

This work area sits on the dramatic Rocky Mountain Front where the flat grasslands give way to the jagged spine of the Rocky Mountains. We will base our kitchen camp out of the Forest Service cabin that sits at the West Fork of the Teton River, but tent camp around the facility. We will tackle general trail maintenance including spot retreat, drainage maintenance and rock removal. Each subsequent day we will pick up where we left off so hikes will gradually increase from 2-6 miles over the weekend. If you live on the eastside and can't make it for all three days, you can still join us for one or two. Day trippers are welcome, but please be sure to note when we can expect you on the registration form in order to properly plan meals. This is a Front country camping trip and you will be asked to provide your own gear. A list will be sent to you after you register. Sturdy boots, long pants and work gloves are required. All tools, safety gear and food will be provided.

Co-sponsored by the Bob Marshall Foundation

Saturday, June 23

Blackleaf Canyon Key Exchange

Location: Rocky Mountain Front

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 7

Difficulty: moderately strenuous, elevation gain 1600 feet

Group Size: 24 (12 each group)

Reservations: by June 16

Meeting Time and Place: 7:45 a.m., at Paris Gibson Square in Great Falls, 9:00 a.m., Choteau Information Center, located in Choteau on Hwy. 89

Leaders: Dan Bennett 452-7657 (bennettdan@bresnan.net), Keith Gebo 727-6335 (wildheart26_2@msn.com), Chuck and Gerry Jennings 452-3476 (gerger1@bresnan.net)

Two hikes in one! Half the group will start from the West Fork Teton Ranger Station and head up the North Fork Teton. After one mile they will turn into the Bob Marshall Wilderness and follow the East Fork to Blackleaf Canyon Pass. The other group will begin at the mouth of Blackleaf Canyon and travel up the spectacular valley to the pass. The groups will meet at the top for lunch and exchange car keys. Both hikes offer outstanding scenery and dazzling wildflowers. This area is habitat for grizzlies, wolves, elk, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats. This is a good chance to learn more about one of the Front's most vulnerable areas. The Lewis and Clark National Forest has proposed a snowmobile play area for the canyon.

Sunday, June 24

Crown Mountain

Location: west of Augusta

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 7

Difficulty: moderate (to the pass), moderately strenuous (to the summit), elevation gain 2500 feet

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by June 17

Meeting Time and Place: 9:00 a.m. at Nilan Reservoir parking lot

Leaders: Jennifer Smith 452-9072 and Scott Friskics (friskics@hotmail.com)

This hike begins with a gradual climb through forested hillsides rich with wildflowers. When we reach the pass dividing the Petty Creek and Crown Creek drainages, we'll stop for lunch. In the afternoon, we'll let you decide what you want to do – hike to the summit of Crown, scramble around on the rocks, or just relax and enjoy the stunning vistas.

Tuesday - Sunday, July 10 -15

Pretty Prairie Noxious Weed Eradication Project

Location: Bob Marshall Wilderness

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 18-19

Difficulty: moderate, elevation gain 2006 feet

Group Size: 6

Reservations: by June 26

Meeting Time and Place: 4:30 p.m., Augusta Information Station

Leaders: MBWF Crew Leader 863-5411 (trails@thebmwf.org)

Noxious weeds pose an increasing threat to the integrity of wildland ecosystems, invading the native vegetation and disrupting the natural biological balance of an area. The primary focus of this project is noxious weed eradication (knapweed) around Pretty Prairie Cabin. This will be a "roving" project where we will move our campsite as we work up the trail throughout the week. Other project goals include trail maintenance, water bar cleaning and spot retreat en route, and possibly facility maintenance. Although

our kitchen camps will be based out of cabin facilities, we will be tenting under the stars. This is a backcountry camping trip and you will be asked to provide your own gear. A list will be sent to you after you register. Sturdy boots, long pants and work gloves are required. All tools, safety gear and food will be provided.

Co-sponsored by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation

Saturday, July 14

Kiyo Crag (Badger Two Medicine)

Location: near East Glacier

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 4

Difficulty: moderate, elevation gain 700 feet

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by July 7

Meeting Time and Place: 9:00 a.m. at Two Medicine Grill in East Glacier

Leaders: Lou Bruno 226-9294 (wilderlou@bresnan.net) and Wilber Rehmann 443-5677 (wilbur@ixi.net)

Few walks can match this one for hiking above timberline and glorious views. From the crag, look across the Bob Marshall Wilderness to the west, and to the southern part of Glacier National Park, and to the east, the prairie views are just as grand. The route is mostly off-trail through alpine and sub-alpine meadows. Saxophonist Wilbur Rehmann will play from atop the Crag, sending notes out that drift and echo in this wide-open expanse.

Saturday, July 14

Smith Creek Falls

Location: west of Augusta

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 4-6

Difficulty: moderate, elevation gain 500 feet

Group Size: 14

Reservations: by July 13

Meeting Time and Place: 7:45 a.m., Paris Gibson Square in Great Falls, or 9:00 a.m., at Mel's Diner in Augusta

Leaders: Dan Bennett 452-7657 (bennettdan@bresnan.net) and Ray and Martha Jones 452-2503 (raymarj@sofast.net)

From the trailhead we'll drop swiftly into the Smith Creek Valley. A two-track road will take us two miles through a working cattle ranch until we reach the Lewis and Clark National Forest boundary and the falls. The valley was hard hit by the 1988 Canyon Creek fire, but it is now bursting with new growth. Birds and wildflowers thrive here. After lingering over lunch at the falls we will decide whether to return to the trailhead or head up Jackie Creek another mile and a half to a knob overlooking Moudess Creek with views toward the Crown Mountain country.

Sunday, July 15

Mettler Coulee / Two Medicine Ridge

Location: near East Glacier

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 8-9

Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by July 10

Meeting Time and Place: 8:00 a.m. at Two Medicine Grill in East Glacier

Leaders: Lou Bruno 761-3206 and Doug Hammill (doug@dochammill.com)

From the historic Hard-Trigger Ranch, this hike will be along a rustic trail above Dog Gun Lake, then up Deep Creek to the head of Mettler Coulee. Before hiking down Mettler Coulee and back to the ranch, hikers will walk up to a ridge for a panoramic view of the Hyde Creek drainage. Along the way there is a good chance of seeing elk, black bear and signs of grizzly bear. Wildflowers and spectacular views of Glacier Park and the surrounding foothill country and plains are special features of this hike.

Saturday, July 21

Rogers Mountain Loop

Location: Rocky Mountain Front

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 3-4

Difficulty: moderate, elevation gain 1400 feet

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by July 20

Meeting Time and Place: 8:30 a.m. at Paris Gibson Square in Great Falls or 10:00 a.m. at Rogers Pass

Leaders: Judy Fettig 468-2090 (montanastar@highstream.net) and Dan Bennett 452-7657 (bennettdan@bresnan.net)

This short and leisurely hike combines amazing views of this critical, shrinking link in the Yellowstone and Yukon wildlife corridor, with lunch on Rogers Mountain-high above the valley of the South Fork of the Dearborn. We'll begin the hike on an old two-track. After a mile we'll turn south into the woods on an unmapped trail and make our way atop the headwaters of the South Fork to a high saddle. From there it's a short climb through a dwarf forest to the Continental Divide Trail back to our starting point. Expect an abundance of wildflowers on the Divide!

Saturday, July 28

Wagner Basin

Location: near Augusta

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 3

Difficulty: easy

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by July 21

Meeting Time and Place: 9:00 a.m., Mel's Diner in Augusta

Leaders: Starshine 453-8989 (dr.starshine@bresnan.net) and Carol Potera 452-5660 (carpot@aol.com)

Spend a perfect day in the wilds, on a hike suitable for families, children and seniors. Hikers will follow the Sun River for a short distance to enter Wagner Basin. With ease, we can spot raptors and bighorn sheep on the cliffs, geese and ducks in the river and deer in the meadow. Explore the creek running through the area and learn about a fen. Hikers will walk a very slow pace to savor the surroundings photograph and observe wildlife. Lunch will be taken on a spot overlooking the fen. This hike will be in memory of Carley McCauley.

Saturday, July 28

Corrugate Ridge

Location: Bob Marshall Wildernes, northwest of Choteau
Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest
Trail Miles: 14
Difficulty: strenuous, elevation gain 1200 feet
Group Size: 15
Reservations: by July 14
Meeting Time and Place: 7:00 a.m. at Paris Gibson Square or Choteau Information Center at 8:15 a.m.
Leaders: Keith Gebo 727-6355 (wildheart26_6@msn.com) and Dan Bennett 452-7657 (bennettdan@bresnan.net)
Corrugate Ridge is one of the most beautiful places in the Bob Marshall and was the special favorite of Carley McCauley who passed away a few seasons ago. Carley was a legendary hiker and a strong defender of all things wild. The hike leaves from the West Fork Ranger Station and crosses the Teton into the Bob Marshall Wilderness. We'll follow the Teton for 2 miles before turning west on Bruce Creek to curl "behind" 8800 foot Wright Mountain. At the head of Bruce Creek we'll turn north along the ridge to our main lunch spot on the knob below the pass to Crazy Creek. Expect to see spectacular wildflowers. Hikers will also view the remnants of a WWII trainer from Malmstrom that failed to clear the Ridge in 1942.

Saturday, August 4

South Fork Teton

Location: west of Choteau

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 10-12

Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Group Size: 10

Reservations: by July 27

Meeting Time and Place: 8:00 a.m. at John Henry's in Choteau

Leaders: Gabriel Furshong 466-2600 (mwarmf@wildmontana.org) and Chip Clawson

A trip for more experienced hikers along the South Fork of the Teton all the way to the saddle between the South Fork of Teton and the North Fork of Deep Creek, bridging two roadless areas on the Front. From the saddle, we can decide whether to work our way southeast to view Green Gulch from the ridgeline or work our way southwest to the Bob Marshall boundary. Either way, we'll be treated to a nice view of country every bit as wild as the Wilderness to the west, before returning to our cars and the perils of civilization. This is a long day hike, so come ready to enjoy yourself for the day.

Saturday, August 18

Sawtooth Ridge

Location: west of Augusta

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 12

Difficulty: moderately strenuous, elevation gain 2300 feet

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by August 15

Meeting Time and Place: 8:00 a.m. at Mel's Diner in Augusta

Leaders: Dr. David Baker 236-5934 (belt@3rivers.net) and Alex Gavrishoff

This is a hike up the backside to the crest of the Rocky Mountain Front (on Sawtooth Ridge). The view is spectacular. A geologist and a forest engineer will conduct the hike and discuss the overthrust belt, the Rock Mountain Front, plate tectonics, and the great scenery. A horse will be available to carry limited amounts of gear for the participants while they are on the trail. This hike will have a slow pace with a lot of learning. See www.littlebelt.com for more details.

Friday - Sunday, August 17 - 19

Our Lake Trail #184 / Headquarters Pass Trail #165 Projects

Location: Rocky Mountain Front / Bob Marshall Wilderness

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 2.5-3

Difficulty: moderate, elevation gain 1950 feet

Group Size: 8

Reservations: by August 3

Meeting Time and Place: 8:00 a.m., Rocky Mountain Ranger Station in Choteau

Leaders: BMWF Crew Leader 863-5411 (trails@thebmwf.org)

Our Lake Trail #184 switchbacks through a spruce-fir forest that eventually opens to jagged rock fields, sloping scree and crystal waterfalls. Primary work on this trail includes drainage installation and maintenance, rock removal, switchback maintenance and spot retread. Just outside the Bob Marshall Wilderness area, Headquarters Pass Trail #165 is a main gateway into the wilderness for pack strings and a popular choice for day hikers. Nearby Rocky Mountain, the highest peak just inside the Bob Marshall Wilderness at 9392 ft., towers above as you work your way up the switchbacks. Work will be focused on rock removal with water bar maintenance and spot retread where needed. This is a Front country camping trip and you will be asked to provide your own gear. A list will be sent to you after you register. Sturdy boots, long pants and work gloves are required. All tools, safety gear and food will be provided.

Co-sponsored by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation

Saturday, August 25

North Fork Blindhorse Canyon

Location: Blindhorse Outstanding Natural Area northwest of Choteau

Public Land Manager: MT. Dept. Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Bureau of Land Management

Trail Miles: 8

Difficulty: moderately strenuous, elevation gain 1600 feet

Group Size: 14

Reservations: by August 24

Meeting Time and Place: 7:30 a.m. at Paris Gibson Square in Great Falls, or 8:45 am at the Choteau Information Center

Leaders: Todd Davis, 727-0107 (tdavis@3rivers.net) and Dan Bennett 452-7657 (bennettdan@bresnan.net)

This is an opportunity to visit one of the most seldom seen areas on the Front– the North Fork Canyon of the Blindhorse- from the top down. On the way we'll stop at the proposed gas-drilling site below Choteau Mountain. From the county road we head east across the short grass prairie and Old North Trail Country before crossing into the Blindhorse ONA. Next a bushwhack through the main canyon to an old two-track that climbs steeply to Choteau Mountain. After an extended break, we'll head north to catch the head of the North Fork Canyon which we'll take for 2 isolated miles back to the main Canyon of the Blindhorse. From there we'll retrace our route to the cars

Saturday, August 25

Ear Mountain

Location: near Choteau

Public Land Manager: Bureau of Land Management

Trail Miles: 4-5

Difficulty: Strenuous, elevation gain 3500 feet

Group Size: 15

Reservations: August 17

Meeting Time and Place: 8:00 a.m. at the Log Cabin Café in Choteau

Leaders: Tom Flowers 466-5631 and Gabriel Furshong 466-2600

Ear Mountain (elevation: 8580 ft.), is one of the Rocky Mountain Front's most recognizable peaks. We'll be off-trail all the way, climbing from a small campground on the mountain's east side, working our way around to the south below the limestone buttresses. Climbers must be comfortable off trail and in the rock. Some use of hands, but nothing technical. You'll take in fabulous views of the Great Plains, Sweet Grass Hills and the high Teton Peaks of the Front.

Friday - Saturday, August 24 - September 1

Blind Creek Trail #171 Project

Location: Bob Marshall Wilderness

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 7

Difficulty: strenuous, elevation gain 2327 feet

Group Size: 8

Reservations: by August 10

Meeting Time and Place: 4:30 p.m., Rocky Mountain Ranger Station in Choteau

Leaders: BMWF Crew Leader 863-5411 (trails@thebmf.org)

The twisted rock strata and jagged reefs of the Rocky Mountain Front make it one of the most scenic and dramatic places in the Bob Marshall Wilderness country. On this project, a BMWF crew will partner with a Montana Conservation Corps crew to complete project work on Blind Tommie Creek near Tubby Creek, part of the Birch Creek loop. Work will consist of clearing windfall, spot tread work, brushing, rocking, drainage maintenance and possible installation. Day hikes to work sites will be between 1-2 miles. This is a backcountry camping trip with primitive campsites and you will be asked to provide your own gear. A list will be sent to you after you register. Sturdy boots, long pants and work gloves are required. All tools, safety gear and food will be provided.

Co-sponsored by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation

Saturday, September 8

Rierdon Gulch

Location: west of Choteau

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 8

Difficulty: moderately strenuous, elevation gain 1900 feet

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by September 7

Meeting Time and Place: 7:30 a.m. at Paris Gibson Square in Great Falls or Choteau Information Center at 8:45 a.m.

Leaders: Al and Elaine Wiseman and Dan Bennett 452-7657 (bennettdan@bresnan.net)

In his essential hiking guide *Discover the Rocky Front* author Tom Kotynski wrote "If there's any valley along the Rocky Mountain Front that reminds me of the scenery from

the opening scene of the movie “*The Sound of Music*,” it’s the Rierdon Gulch Valley.” This is your chance to check it out. We’ll leave from the South Fork Teton and head south up the gulch to the pass to Deep Creek, the highest rated non-wilderness land in the country. Along the way Al and Elaine will share stories of the lives of the Metis who settled the South Fork after the failure of the Northwest Rebellion in 1885. Joseph Kinsey Howard wrote a comprehensive account of the Metis’ struggles, *Strange Empire*, in a cabin just down the road from the trailhead.

Saturday, September 8

Headquarters Pass

Location: west of Choteau

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 7

Difficulty: strenuous, elevation gain 3500 feet

Group Size: 10

Reservations: by September 1

Meeting Time and Place: 7:30 a.m. at the Log Cabin Café in Choteau

Leaders: Lisa Easton 781-2341 and Matt Marcinek

Trail #165 across Headquarters Pass is a major gateway to the Bob Marshall Wilderness, and as you might guess, it’s up, up, up! Our hike begins at 5900 feet, and by the time we reach the pass, we will be standing at 77543 feet. This is mountain goat territory. From the pass we will climb another 1700 feet to the top of Rocky Mountain, the highest mountain in the Bob Marshall. Mountain ranges stretch to the north, south and west. Turn to the east and the views are of the prairies and the island ranges of central Montana.

Saturday, September 15

Rogers Pass to Flesher Pass

Location: near Lincoln

Public Land Manager: Helena National Forest

Trail Miles: 14

Difficulty: strenuous, elevation gain 3817 feet

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by September 8

Meeting Time and Place: 8:30 a.m. at Grubstake Restaurant located at I-15 and Lincoln Road or at the Flesher Pass turnout on Hwy 279 at 9:15 a.m.

Leaders: Diane Cannon 933-5305 and Helen Fee

This is a rugged hike along the Continental Divide Trail with several major ridge ascents and descents. Hikers need to bring ample drinking water, food and clothing for windy conditions. Enjoy 360-degree views of the Gates of the Mountains area to the Bob Marshall Wilderness and beyond! Plan on a full day hike and car shuttle to conclude the hike.

Saturday, September 22

Elk Creek Pass / Steamboat Mountain

Location: west of Augusta

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 14

Difficulty: strenuous, elevation gain 3000 feet

Group Size: 10

Reservations: by September 15

Meeting Time and Place: 8:30 a.m. at Mel's Diner in Augusta

Leaders: Lisa Easton 781-2341 and Matt Marcinek

Enjoy wonderful vistas of the crest of the Rocky Mountains and what author Ivan Doig describes as "the reef line of the entire continent." Our route is on the Elk Creek Trail through a proposed addition to the Bob Marshall Wilderness, then up to Elk Pass (6004 feet) to the backside of Steamboat Mountain. From the top of Steamboat (8565 feet) the views are grand.

Friday – Sunday, September 28 - 30

Autumn on the Teton

Location: Seven Lazy P Guest Ranch west of Choteau Teton Canyon

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark National Forest

Trail Miles: 14 -16

Difficulty: easy to moderate

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by September 21

Meeting Time and Place: Meet anytime after 1:00 p.m. on Friday, September 28 at the Deep Canyon Seven Lazy P Ranch, receive cabin assignments and explore the area. A full agenda for the weekend will be provided at the time of registration.

Leaders: Keith Shaw 467-2268, Dan Bennett, Gene Miller

Autumn is a beautiful season on the Rocky Mountain Front. This is a weekend getaway to enjoy the wonders of the Front. The Seven Lazy P Guest Ranch will be our hosts. There will be a \$225 charge for the weekend per person. This will pay for all food and lodging. Bring no bedding or food. The cabins are rustic, modern and comfortable. The food is excellent and the event starts off with dinner on Friday night the 1st of June. Sack lunches will be provided both days of the weekend. There will be evening entertainment. Both days the hike leaders will point out and discuss history and other important issues of the area. Sunday's hike will be a half-day hike. Saturday's hike will climb up to Lonesome Ridge above the South and Middle Forks of the Teton River. A variety of ecosystems will be observed. Sunday's hike will have no elevation gain and will focus on the changing colors and variety that a walk along the Teton River can provide. It's a lovely place to be in the fall.

Saturday, October 6

Flat Top / Metis Hike

Location: west of Choteau

Public Land Manager: Lewis and Clark Nat. Forest/The Nature Conservancy

Trail Miles: 4-5

Difficulty: moderate, elevation gain 800 feet

Group Size: 15

Reservations: by September 29

Meeting Time and Place: 10:00 a.m., at the Teton Bridge at Cave Mountain

Leaders: Dan Bennett 452-7657 (bennettdan@bresnan.net), Dr. Keith Shaw, Al and Elaine Wiseman

This is a short, fall hike with tremendous views of the Teton River Country. After a mile jaunt down the North Fork, hikers will switchback up Flat Top for a lunch. Views of the Great Plains spreading out to the east and Teton Peaks behind make for a perfect lunch spot. After lunch, the group will drop into the valley of the South Fork Teton River, the inspiration for writers Joseph Kinsey Howard, Ripley Hugo, Milred Walker and A.B.

Guthrie. Hikers will also have a chance to learn about the Metis in the South Fork. The Metis, of Cree, Chippewa, French, English, and Scottish heritage, once numbered 30,000 and settled in the area west of Choteau after being driven out of Canada. The hike concludes at the Metis cemetery on Nature Conservancy land. Transportation to the trailhead will be provided.