



NORTH FORK LANDOWNERS' ASSOCIATION

2023 Spring NEWSLETTER

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



Spring is just around the corner; I'm just not sure which corner. As the season changes from winter, to mud, to spring, I'm reminded of how lucky we are to call the North Fork home, no matter how much or how little time we get to spend here. The list of speakers to precede the monthly membership meetings is taking shape, but of special note is Lois Walker's presentation on the history of the Polebridge Mercantile, August 13. Wildfire notwithstanding, road reconstruction will impact all of our activities. Work on the last 5.5 miles to the border should begin July 10, with major restrictions in place beginning August 6. Glacier Drive will be reconstructed July 10-August 14, with expected traffic delays. The area in front of the Northern Lights and the Merc will be reconstructed August 14 through mid-September. Check the NFLA website (nflandowners.org) for details and updates. Basic fire training and home

ignition zone protection is scheduled for June 22 and our annual Firewise Day precedes the July 12 Interlocal at 9:30. Finally, spring cleanup at Sondreson Hall is set for May 22. Please join in giving the Hall a little TLC. As an added bonus, John and Zoe Zardis are providing a BBQ lunch! See you on the Fork!

Richard Hildner, President

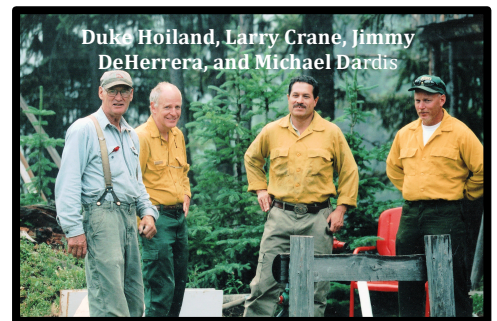
20th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WEDGE CANYON FIRE

By Lois Walker

The devastating Wedge Canyon fire was ignited by a lightning strike in the Whitefish Range at the west end of Wedge Canyon on July 18, 2003. Winds and dry conditions allowed the fire to burn eastward across the northern end of the North Fork. Within a few days it had grown to more than 4,000 acres. As predicted by the fire team's analysts, the fire made a run on the afternoon of July 24. Flames burned past Tepee Lake and Trail Creek,



then proceeded east over the North Fork Road on a front from Trail Creek to Wurtz Cabin. The fire then jumped the river and burned into Glacier Park and eventually along Kintla Lake. Total acreage consumed by that fall was a record 53,315 acres, constituting



1,121 acres of private land in addition to State, Forest Service, and National Park Service lands. For a short

while, the Wedge Canyon Fire was the #1 priority fire in the U.S. Over \$50 million was expended in fire suppression costs alone.

The Forest Service responded with a Type II team and heavy equipment. Effective air strikes of water and retardant were able to impede the fire's spread somewhat and cool the edges so that crews could build fire lines ahead of various portions of the fire. They created shaded fuel breaks and laid more than five miles of fire hose. As the fire progressed, a Type I team was assigned.

Flathead County mobilized structure protection teams consisting of personnel and equipment from the rural fire departments in Bad Rock, West Valley, Creston, and others. Their first job was to triage all properties from Whale Creek to the border and mark those homes that were safe for firefighters to defend. They then identified all eligible structures

threatened by the fire and began removing hazards near buildings, cleaning underbrush, and felling trees to make homes more defensible. Some buildings were wrapped, and when necessary they used water, foam, and sprinklers to fight the fire.

The Type I incident commander Bob Sandman and the structure protection commander Gary Mahugh operated under a unified command. Flathead County Sheriff Jim Dupont and his deputies provided security to allow landowners access to their properties and to keep the area safe. Daily informational meetings were established at Larry Wilson's home on Kintla Ranch Road each morning and at the Polebridge Mercantile twice a day, providing locals with a continuous stream of information. There was also a radio broadcast for locals daily at 1:00 p.m.

The Day of the Wedge Canyon Fire

That canyon of stone, wildflower and tree
Guarded our west side peacefully.
Until in July of twenty ought three
Out leapt the Wedge Canyon Fire.

It surged at the tall—the pine and the fir
Huffing and puffing—a red hot blur.
No dozer or Pulaski could deter
The rage of the Wedge Canyon Fire.

The old trees hissed, the young trees popped
Water and "red stuff" from choppers were dropped.
Much effort was spent but it could not be stopped—
The march of the Wedge Canyon Fire.

There were jackets of yellow, helmets of red
Neighbors were strong, very few fled
While the flames of the wildfire jumped ahead
In the time of the Wedge Canyon Fire.

Young fighters were brave, battled the blaze
Older ones directed through the smoke and the haze
Animals took flight, all in a daze
Ahead of the Wedge Canyon Fire.

It went as it came, green into red, red into gray
Trees to embers, budgets to smoke, both drifted away
Some people say it's just nature's way,
The way of the Wedge Canyon Fire.

That day of the smoke, that day of the red
That day of the ashes and the standing dead
It's seared in our memory, about much is said
The day of the Wedge Canyon Fire.

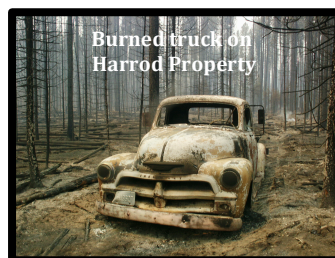
By Larry Kinsolving

Structure protection specialist Rick Trembath, with permission, established a Staging Area in a Safety Zone at the Larry and Ruth Kinsolving property, on the high ground south of Trail Creek. Five fire trucks were stationed there, and fire personnel then had a bird's-eye view of the progress of the fire from the cabin's deck. The Kinsolvings were not home when the fire started, but when they arrived before the big run, they gave firefighters access to the cabin and even served them fresh-squeezed orange juice. The fire surrounded the open space at the cabin during its run on July 24 and came perilously close to the cabin in an area cleared only a few weeks earlier. As the fire closed in, dozens of snowshoe hares ran for shelter under the front deck. Deer also sought safety in the open space. With dedicated effort, teams were able to defend and save all of the structures on the property and preserve the integrity of the Safety Zone for fire personnel. Water sprayed on the cabin closest to the fire probably prevented combustion but cracked some of the hot windows.

Shortly after passage of the fire front, the staged fire engines were able to check on surrounding properties and suppress ignitions. This resulted in saving at least one cabin where an ember had started a fire in the ridgepole. In the meantime, Ruth Kinsolving fed the firefighters from her root cellar and with food donated by Sean and Heather Ziegert at the Northern Lights Saloon when the Forest Service food truck couldn't get up the road.

In total, on the west side of the river, 7 residences and 19 outbuildings succumbed to the fire, mostly in the Teepee Flats area. Notably, not one permanent residence burned in the Wedge Canyon Fire, and most summer homes were saved. (By comparison, the fast-moving Red Bench Fire which occurred 35 years ago in 1988 burned 38,000 acres and destroyed 25 homes, as well as the Polebridge Ranger Station, the pole bridge, and numerous barns and outbuildings.)

Many North Forkers were quick to respond,



especially those in the line of fire, so to speak. Approximately 40 to 50 landowners remained at their homes to help defend their properties. The Forest Service established a spike camp at Sondreson Hall to provide supplies for the structure protection teams. Homeowners did everything from watering down their homes to baking cookies for the firefighters. Up and down the North Fork Road, residents posted signs thanking the firefighters for their efforts. Locals were especially grateful when the Forest Service deployed two dozers that created a line to keep the fire from reaching any of the buildings on the historic Kintla Ranch.

The folks around Trail Creek organized a team known as the Trail Creek Irregulars. Armed with five ATVs, hand tools, five-gallon bladder pumps, and four water trailers with pumps they waged battles to save the summer cabins of Tony and Denise Docal, Katie Wilson, and Rod Wenger. They were reinforced by Mike Eddy with his personal fire truck and a skidgen with a large-capacity water tank. With their ATVs, the team was able to get in close and save buildings. They were also instrumental in keeping the fire from creeping north toward private dwellings after the main fire had passed.

Many North Forkers deserve credit for their heroic efforts during the fire. With apologies to those inadvertently not named here, responders included Duke Hoiland and family, Larry Crane and family, Lynn Ogle and family, Mike Eddy, Larry Wilson, Elmer Benson, David Silverstein, Gary Byers, Joe Franchini, and Eglantine, Will, and Nick Meeker. Bill



North Fork Land Use Advisory Committee

By Randy Kenyon

The past two years saw the North Fork Land Use Advisory Committee endeavor to clarify our Neighborhood Plan by introducing a text amendment to our zoning regulations. The intent of this was to address ambiguities in order to minimize conflicts and hopefully forestall dramatic changes affecting our beloved valley. The key was gathering information that assured the preservation of

and Jocelyn Meeker established their cabin along the North Fork River as a Safety Zone.

On a positive note, the Wedge Canyon Fire served as a catalyst for change. In the aftermath of the fire, the NFLA appointed a Fire Mitigation Committee to explore what could be done to mitigate the effects of future wildfires. One fact was obvious: that it is safer, cheaper, and more effective to abate hazards long before a fire starts. In the twenty years since the fire, the committee has obtained numerous grants from government agencies to help North Fork landowners reduce hazardous fuels on their properties. The first two grants resulted in more than 100 home wildfire inspections that generated treatment prescriptions. Fuels reduction work was completed under about 100 separate cost share agreements, and at least 500 acres of private property were treated with grant money, with even more acres treated without any financial assistance.

In 2006, the community applied for and was granted Firewise Community status. To be eligible for Firewise status, a community must conduct an annual event and demonstrate continuing landowner engagement. To that end, the Fire Mitigation Committee holds well-attended annual Firewise Day workshops, drawing on experienced presenters and providing landowners with a wealth of applicable information.

Now in their 18th year, the 2023 Firewise Day workshop will take place on **July 12, from 9:30 to noon** at Sondreson Hall, ahead of the Summer Interlocal Meeting. Current plans are to have Rick Trembath and Larry Kinsolving speak about their respective memories of the Wedge Canyon Fire.

Special Note: Molly Shepherd, Lynn Ogle, Larry Wilson, Allen Chrisman, and Larry and Ruth Kinsolving also contributed to this article.

Firewise and Interlocal Meeting!

Wednesday, July 12th!

9:30 Firewise/12:00 Potluck Lunch/1:00 Interlocal

landowner rights, while at the same time fine-tuning our land use regulations to bring clarity and consistency with the goal of sustaining our unique rural character.

As you know, we have been found. Our subcommittee worked tirelessly researching zoning regulations, working closely with local land use officials, and gathering landowner input in an attempt to respect the needs of both the local community and the authority of the county commissioners. This was no easy task. It was found that most of our zoning issues stemmed from the absence of definitions and “performance standards” in our regulations.

The proposed performance standards were derived from county zoning standards, the county growth plan, and our Neighborhood Plan focusing on public health and safety as well as the reduction of noise, traffic, fire danger and wildlife conflicts.



Permitted and conditional use permits were likewise brought up to date. Missing and outdated definitions were addressed to avoid confusion and misinterpretation, particularly in the area of rental accommodations and home occupations. After extensive and ongoing reworking

of the document, based upon the county planning office and board input, the final version was presented this past August to the Planning Board for their recommendation to the County Commissioners. This encounter was an after-midnight disappointing debacle, ending with a negative recommendation.

Then this past December, a large group of concerned North Forkers met again with the County Commissioners for their final determination. Despite all the effort, landowner and planning input, along with the overwhelming support of the community, the commissioners unanimously voted down our proposal. Their determination was based almost solely upon avoiding additional staff time on zoning enforcement leading to “big government”.

Until political winds blow differently, there seems no point in pursuing any changes to our zoning regulations. Is there an upside to this? We think so. It provided an opportunity for our community to coalesce around an idea near and dear to all of us.

Finally, I would like to give a heartfelt nod of appreciation to each and every individual who contributed in their own way to this endeavor.

NORTH FORK FIRE MITIGATION COMMITTEE *by Allen Chrisman*

Join us on **June 22** at 9:30 a.m. at Sondreson Hall to visit the Hildner residence on Moose Creek to discuss what you need to do to protect your homes – both with exterior treatments and fuels treatments around your place. Bring a bag lunch to eat at the Hall and learn what to do within your structure after lunch.

Put **July 12** on your Calendars! Our **Annual Firewise Day** will be held at 9:30 a.m. at the Hall preceding the Summer Interlocal. The North Fork has been recognized as a Firewise Community since 2006!! This year we’ll commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the 2003 Wedge Canyon Fire. We’ll discuss the Wedge Canyon TIP Project and how to apply for funding; the North Fork Community Wildfire Protection Plan; the upcoming Fire Season and more!

Don’t miss these annual events!!



2023 North Fork Firewise Day **North Fork Landowners Association** **Fire Mitigation Committee** **Wednesday, July 12, 2023 0930 – 1200** **Sondreson Community Hall, Whale Creek**

Time	Presenter	Topic
0930	Allen Chrisman	Welcome & Introductions
0935	Rick Trembath & Larry Kinsolving	2003 Wedge Canyon Fire – Personal Experiences and Lessons Learned
1045	Break	
1100	Sean Johnson	NRCS Wedge Canyon TIP Project
1120	Allen Chrisman/ Molly Shepherd/ Lincoln Chute	North Fork Community Wildland Fire Protection Plan Update
1125	Allen Chrisman	Elmo 2 Fire Video
1135	Andy Huntsberger	2023 Fire Season Projections
1155	Molly Shepherd	Wrap-up and Adjourn

Informative and Useful Fire Weblinks:

-FireSafe Flathead: <https://firesafeflathead.com>

-FireSafe Montana: <http://firesafemt.org/>

-Firewise USA: www.firewise.org

-Northern Rockies Coordination Center: <https://gacc.nifc.gov.nrcc>



SONDRESON HALL CELEBRATES ITS 70th ANNIVERSARY

By Lois Walker

Imagine . . . How many meetings? How many dances? How many Thanksgiving and Christmas and New Year's celebrations, elections, weddings, church services, private parties? How many events has this humble community hall hosted over the past 70 years? It's no wonder that the floor needed to be refinished in 2014!

The NFLA was founded by voluntary agreement as the North Fork Improvement Association in June 1947. By the end of summer 1947, 56 people had applied to join, a diverse collection of original homesteaders, long-time residents who were not technically homesteaders, and those who had come to the North Fork during World War II or immediately post-war. Dues at that time were \$2 per person and \$1 for associate members. The organization elected its first board of directors, opened its first bank account at Conrad National Bank in Kalispell (now First Interstate Bank), and took over hosting a variety of popular social events for full-time and summer residents.

A principal concern, from the very beginning, was how to accommodate all these people. Dances and social gatherings had been a part of North Fork life for decades, but the population was steadily increasing. They needed a place besides peoples' homes to gather for social events and to conduct business. That meant getting organized and raising money. So, that's what they did.

In 1952, the NFIA began seriously collecting donations for construction of a community hall. At the end of the year, \$271 had been contributed. Another \$422 was received in 1953. They may not have had much money (the treasury at the end of 1952 stood at \$397.73), but they had members who were more than accustomed to hard work and had well-honed building skills.

Madge Terrian owned a piece of land near the heart of the community, approximately halfway between Polebridge and Trail Creek. She and her husband Ollie volunteered to donate the land for construction of the community hall. Loyd and Ruth Sondreson, who logged and operated a sawmill in the North Fork, offered to provide logs for the structure. Long-time homesteader Harry Holcomb agreed to act as construction foreman.

In the fall of 1952, volunteers did basic clearing and site preparation and laid the foundation of the building. By the end of the season, the walls were several feet high and the structure was beginning to take shape. Harry closed the site for the winter and then scheduled a series of work weekends for the summer of 1953 to finish the project.

An old ledger book in the NFLA archives lists out-of-pocket expenditures for the project. \$170 to the Sondreson Lumber Co., \$100 to the Columbia Falls Lumber Co., \$50 to the O'Neil Lumber Co., \$106 to the Glacier Coram Lumber Co., \$332 to the Pacific Hide & Fur Depot for aluminum roofing sheets, \$33 to Kalispell Mercantile for bolts and nails, \$19 to Montgomery Ward for lamps for the Hall, and plenty of money to Byrd's Groceries and the West Glacier Mercantile for the fine lunches that North Fork ladies prepared for the workers. In all, the organization expended about \$700 for construction for the Hall. Everything else was donated labor.

On a humorous note, rumor has it that the building was chinked in part with Harry Holcomb's cast-off pajamas. At least one member remembers occasionally seeing strips of blue and white material dangling from the seams of the walls.

A grand celebration marked completion of the Hall in 1953, complete with musical entertainment and Albert Lewis serving as caller for the obligatory community square dance. It represented a marvelous example of community common purpose and cooperation.

As the Hall enters its eighth decade, we now have members who are third and fourth generation descendants of original homesteaders. Much has changed, but thankfully much has stayed the same. What is most important and amazing is that the North Fork is still a tight-knit community, with people who care about their neighbors, the community, and the resources we all enjoy.

1952 early start, Harry Holcomb on right



1952, September 3rd



1953 Construction



Hit the Trails with the North Fork Trails Association

By Bill Walker



Established in 2013, the mission of the North Fork Trails Association (NFTA) is to promote the maintenance and preservation of the historic trail structure in the North Fork Flathead area with the aim of supporting recreation, forest management and research.

There is an extensive trail system in the North Fork, especially west of the river, but reductions in federal funding allowed it to become dilapidated and partially abandoned over the last few decades. The North Fork Trails Association formed with the goal of reversing this process.

NFTA sponsors trail work, hikes and explorations, and, beginning this year, we're making a special effort to establish some low-impact walks for folks who don't think a 10% grade has to be part of the normal outdoor experience. NFTA also offers various types of training that are open to the public, including an annual series of First Aid/CPR/AED courses, typically held in May and July.

The complete schedule of activities is on the North Fork Trails website (<http://nftrails.org/calendar/>). However, many NFTA activities are also cross-posted to the NFLA website (<https://nflandowners.org/calendar/>). Or contact Bill Walker at wkwalker@nvdi.com or 406-407-2764 for more information.

NF Road Construction Updates

By David Prunty, Public Works Director Flathead County

Crushing activities for the project up Whale Creek should begin in mid to late May, assuming spring ever gets here and they can start that work.

We will have our normal spring and fall grading activities along the entire corridor outside of these work areas. We'll also try and do some

could be an issue with water depending on how spring runoff/rains occur.

Currently, I don't have any 2024 work to report. If FLAP funding is approved we'll be starting the NEPA process in 2024 and I anticipate it could go one for a year or maybe more. The second FLAP project to fix the slough at Ray Hart's place would occur in 2027 or so (best estimate I could give at this time) and there would some significant permitting that will need to occur with the wetlands on the west side and the river on the east side. Remember, all of this is contingent on receiving funding for the FLAP application.

North Fork Road.

(1) Prior to July 10, 2023, do not perform construction activities that cause delays or otherwise interfere with public traffic.

(2) From July 10, 2023, to August 6, 2023 (dates inclusive), limit delays to public traffic according to Subsection 156.07(i).

(3) Public road closure is permitted after August 6, 2023. Allow Flathead National Forest administration, Ways Less Traveled Bed and Breakfast employees and guests, in-holders, Border Patrol, and Flathead County access through the worksite. Limit delays to these entities to 30 minutes

grading on Glacier Drive over to the bridge before the project starts, but that area

- (1) Glacier Drive, **Phase 1**-Do not perform construction activities on Glacier Drive (15+00 to 80+39.50) prior to July 10, 2023.

- (2) Glacier Drive, **Phase 2**-Do not perform construction activities from prior to August 14, 2023.

- Do not perform work simultaneously on Glacier Drive Phase 1 and Phase 2.
- Do not perform construction operations before 8:00 am or after 4:00 p.m.



North Fork 4th of July Community Picnic

July 4th, 1:30pm at the Jacobson's, 61 Moose Creek Rd.

Bring a dish to share, your drinks & a chair. Yard Games, popcorn and movies at dusk, bring blankets. All are welcome! Come meet your neighbors!

North Fork Bear Update!

By Justine Vallieres, MT FWP Bear Management Specialist

Spring is here and we are getting reports of bear sightings and conflicts already. With the start of the new season, I thought I would let you know some of the highlights in the North Fork last season in case you missed the Interlocal meeting this winter. Last spring was very busy in the North Fork, with mostly reports of sightings, it seemed bears were more visible than usual. At one point last spring I knew of at least 15 individual grizzlies from Big Creek up to Trail Creek. Most of these bears passed through or spent a little time grazing and moved along, while some were more localized and visible. Almost all of them were just eating grass in people's yards and fields. Breeding season resulted in males being more visible and moving around chasing the ladies. I got a lot of emails, calls, and texts with photos and video updates, so thank you for those! This can be very helpful in putting the pieces of the puzzle together and understanding who is out there and what they are doing. Any reports of females and young are important for our grizzly trend and population monitoring research team.

Of the 15 grizz last spring, 6 of them were wearing collars. I will just give a brief overview of the bears that spent the most time in the North Fork area. One collared sow was named Lisa and she and her two yearlings were released in Glacier last spring as they were moved preemptively for her close proximity to a cattle depredations site on the Eastern front. Lisa is 16 and had no prior conflict history. She moved south out of the North Fork and spent a lot of time in the Blankenship and Coram area. Lisa dropped her collar later in the summer in Coram. I have had no calls on her since.

The other collared female that spent a lot of time around the Polebridge area is a bear we call Danni. We caught Danni two years ago in 2021 while attempting to catch Monica. We estimated she was around 8 years old, so now she would be 10. We decided to collar her despite having no prior conflict because she had never been captured before for research or conflict and we wanted to see where she would go. After much time watching her

locations in and around Polebridge, up to Red Meadow Rd and down to Hay Creek, she closely resembles travel patterns of Monica with how



she uses the landscape. We had suspected that Danni may be Monica's offspring, and just two weeks ago DNA confirmed Danni is Monica's daughter! Not only is it really interesting that as an older female Danni had never been caught, but that she showed up within the same week that Monica sadly left us. At the time Danni had two cubs of the year, so she should be kicking them off this year as two year olds. When sub-adults go out on their own for the first time they are like confused teenagers trying to find their place in the world, so if they are hanging around your property please make them leave. They need to know being around people and homes is not safe. It's pretty awesome that we have a chance to do things right with Monica's daughter and her young. It's great incentive to keep up the great work of spreading education and being bear aware in the North Fork!

The other collared bear that spent a lot of time in the North Fork area was a collared subadult (3-4 year old) male named Chance. He was released in the North Fork last spring from the Blackfeet and was caught for cattle depredation. He spent the majority of his time on the West side of the North Fork Rd between Ford and all the way down to Camas Rd. He did a great job of avoiding houses. I never got any calls in regards to him.

As for the old male that I caught and had to euthanize, he had been seen for a couple weeks along with another very visible male that was more stout and lighter in color. I had gotten numerous reports of both of them hanging close to houses and way too comfortable around people. A lot of people assumed because of this bear's habituation that it was a bear we called Oattie that Tim and I caught back in 2014. After the work-up I confirmed it was not Oattie. This bear was quite old, over 20 years old. My plan initially was to collar, relocate, and monitor him closely, but because he's an old large



male collaring him was not an option. Large males will not keep collars on because their necks are larger than their heads so they pull the collars off easily. Also, realistically there is no better place for these bears to be relocated if we are taking them out of the North Fork, so relocation options were limited as the places I would want to go were still unreachable due to snow. This male however was physically in rough shape. Due to the nature of older bears in his condition we decided releasing this bear was not in the best interest of his welfare, but also given his comfortability around people and homes, there was concern for human safety and property damage. The worst part of this job is removing

bears, but I will always put the welfare of the animals and human safety first.

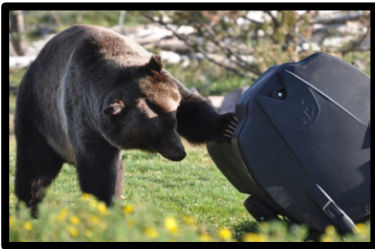
So that's just a quick update of a few bears that are living amongst you and a good reminder to stay vigilant with attractants. We continue to have the chance to do right by the bears in and around the North Fork so I want you to know you can always reach out to me if you have questions or concerns. Please, if you see or hear of any issues do not hesitate to call me. It's so crucial that I know about issues sooner than later so I can respond quickly and get ahead of the problem. Not calling does more of a disservice to the bear in the long run. As I always say, help me to help you, and help me to help the bears. Thank you all! Justine. Vallieres@mt.gov

Polebridge Bear Smart Report for Spring 2023

By Suzanne Hildner, PBBS Chair

Polebridge Bear Smart (PBBS), a program introduced by the North Fork Preservation Association, was created in the fall of 2021 in response to the tragic habituation and subsequent need to euthanize the well known local grizzly Monica and her three female yearling cubs.

Last year we offered, for the first time, training sessions for Polebridge based seasonal employees. We talked with them about living, working and recreating in bear country and encouraged them to be "Bear Ambassadors" to the many tourists they meet. This program, held in cooperation with Polebridge businesses, was, by all accounts a resounding success. We are looking forward to repeating the training for this year's group of employees.



PBBS will be expanding its programs this year to include outreach to short term rental property owners with tools to help renters be responsible and safe in bear country. If you own a short-term rental, expect an email contact regarding this program. We are particularly excited about an Initial Response Program we are developing with help from Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks. This program will have PBBS volunteers available to provide rapid aid to property owners who have a bear incident or a bear frequenting their property. The intent is to quickly provide assistance under the guidance of the bear biologists who are often overwhelmed with incidents during the busy summer months. We will be able to supply game cameras and scare devices on loan immediately to identify individual bears and deter them. In doing so we hope to protect the bears from habituation as well as mitigate property damage.

We also continue to offer bear resistant canisters available for sale or rent. See accompanying information for details. We look forward to a safe spring, summer and fall for both bears and humans.

Last, but certainly not least, keep an eye out for this year's edition of Bear News!



Bear Resistant Garbage Containers Available

By Suzanne Hildner



NFPA/Polebridge Bear Smart is offering Kodiak brand 96 gallon bear resistant garbage containers for loan or purchase at a reduced price. This opportunity is being made to the Polebridge community with the help of grants

and private donations. Purchase price per canister is \$300. Cans are available now!

Please contact Suzanne Hildner sdhildner@icloud.com or (406) 253-3263 to purchase or rent. Help the Polebridge Community be **BEAR SMART!!!**

Greetings from the Welcome Committee

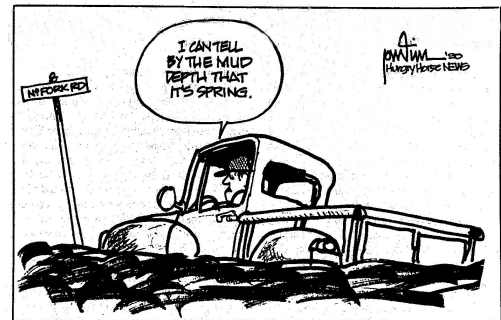
By Beth Ulrichsen

The Welcome Committee has enjoyed greeting many new North Forkers, and we are excited that new faces have joined in on some of the activities hosted by the NFLA. If you are new to the North Fork, or a seasoned North Forker, be sure to take a peek at the 2023 NFLA Calendar for many opportunities to meet your neighbors and get involved in our vibrant community!



If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the latest Welcome Committee Brochure (filled with

important and pertinent information about living in the NF) please email me, Beth Ulrichsen, at Bethulrichsen@gmail.com. Can't wait to see you all at the next NFLA Meeting or event! Everyone is welcome!



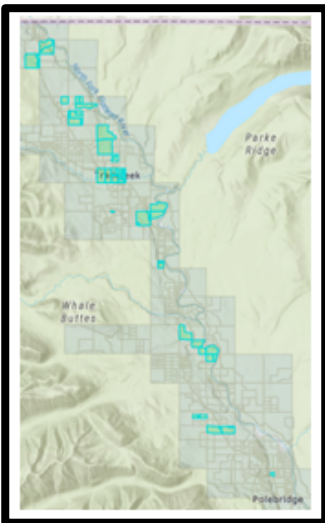
The North Fork Compact

By Bruce McNeil

The North Fork Compact offers a dynamic legal framework for preserving the semi-primitive nature of its member tracts. Since 1971, this landowner's association has legally protected more than 2200 acres of member tracts along the west side of the North Fork of the Flathead River, from the Canadian Border to Polebridge.

The North Fork Compact tracts are subject to rulings by its board enacting adjustments under one guiding principle: preservation of the semi-primitive character of the North Fork, with the 1971 status quo as the baseline. As such, the Compact landowners operate like a zoning board of adjustment for Compact tracts. The Compact covenant runs with the member's real estate in the 'Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions' Montana state property records and is fully obligatory upon successive owners.

With no minimum parcel size limit, landowners along the North Fork are welcome to join the Compact. See our website for details (nfcompact.org).



Glacier National Park - North Fork Update

By Jim Dahlstrom, North Fork District Ranger, Glacier National Park

I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know about a few happenings in our corner of Glacier this season. Two major infrastructure projects will be happening simultaneously, both around the townsite and just inside the Ranger Station at Polebridge.

The first is the final year of a two year project to stabilize all the bridges along the Inside North Fork Road. Last year, Fish, Camas, Dutch, Anaconda, Logging, and Quartz Creek bridges all got a major facelifts and approach work that should last the next 20+ years. This season the



project concludes with the same repairs to Bowman, Akokala, Ford, and Kintla Creek bridges. Realizing that the work on each of these bridges this year will have some impact on visitor movements, the contractor is attempting to complete the major

approach work in early May, so that the core visitor season is not affected as much. So, this year there will be no motorized travel beyond the Polebridge Ranger Station until the first day of vehicle reservations, May 26.

One change to the vehicle reservation system this season is the main operating hours. This

season you will need a reservation from 6am-3pm. It is likely that the parking at both Kintla and Bowman will be full again right after 3, so entrance to those areas by vehicle may be restricted during periods of high visitation.

Boat inspections and Camas bypasses continue to be available at the Ranger Station starting May 21. Please call the Ranger Station for details and instructions. You can also get your Camas bypass from the Headquarter's building during normal business hours.



And last, but not least, I believe everyone is aware of the resurfacing project on Glacier Drive, slated to begin July 9. There will be up to 30 minute pilot car delays for the remainder of the summer. We expect to provide some NPS employees in the Mercantile plaza to give information and advice to visitors, and again this year we will have a dedicated AM radio channel to convey all of the aforementioned challenges regarding visiting our cherished corner of the Park. So while this summer may be a little bump in the road (pun intended), I am optimistic that a future visit to the North Fork will continue to be unlike anything else you can experience in Glacier.

Helpful Web Links

North Fork Landowners Association NFlandowners.org

North Fork Zoning Regulations nflandowners.org/nz

North Fork Neighborhood Plan nflandowners.org/np

Flathead National Forest 406-758-5204 fs.usda.gov/detail/flathead

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks 752-5501 fwp.mt.gov

Flathead County flathead.mt.gov/

- ◆ For a more complete list of relevant North Fork websites, visit NFlandowners.org

North Fork 2023 Calendar -Activities April to October

Updates will be posted on facebook, the NFLA website www.nflandowners.com/calendar.

Please Note the Fall/Winter Calendar will be available November 2023

RECURRING EVENTS

***The North Fork Landowners Association Meetings:** held the 2nd Sunday of each month from June to October. Guest speaker followed by Meeting. Bring a snack to share.

***North Fork Worship** Non-denominational services led by Don Sullivan, will be held at Sondreson Hall each Sunday at 10.30am from June 4th until August 27th. These will be followed by coffee & social time. Please bring a snack to share. Don ~ twilitz1@yahoo.com

***Wernick's Garden Sale:** The Wernick's produce will be available for sale on June 21st, July 19th & Aug 16th, and Sept 20th at NOON @the Gazebo on E. Meadow Rd. Don't be Late!

April 11 Tues	1st Aid/CPR/AED Class with certification 9am @ Sonderson Hall. Trainer Bob Lee. All day event, bring lunch and drinks, \$45 pp, 10 max. * REQUIRED FOR CHAINSAW CLASS	Reservation: Bill Walker 406 407 2764 or wkwalker@nvdi.com
April 27 Thurs	Star Gazing , 7.30 pm @ 197 W Thunderbird Rd. Telescopes provided, bring binoculars if you have them, Sky tour of stars, constellations and galaxies.	Check with Jim Rittenburg if cloudy 215 796 1592
May 13 Sat	Chainsaw Usage Course leading to US Forest Service Certification, 9 to Noon @ Sonderson Hall. Followed by hands-on field practice in FNF. Note 1st Aid cert required offered April 11.	Reservation: Bill Walker 406 407 2764 or wkwalker@nvdi.com
May 20, Sat	Sondreson Hall Spring Clean Up , 10 am start, indoor cleaning outside brush clean up, wood chopping, etc. Bring tools. Noon- Volunteers Barbeque Want to help? Cannot make the date call Dan.	Dan Jacobsen 406 249 4190 (clean up) Zoe and John 731 695 4528 (bbq)
May 23 Tues	1st Aid/CPR/AED Class with certification 9am @ Sonderson Hall. Trainer Bob Lee. All day event, bring lunch & drinks, \$45pp, max 10	Reservation: Bill Walker 406 407 2764 wkwalker@nvdi.com
May 24 Wed	Gardner's Roundtable , NOON @ Wernick's Gazebo E Meadow Rd. Share ideas and knowledge with fellow gardeners. Bring starts, plants or bulbs to share or sell.	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
May 26 Fri	Last Friday Pizza Party , 6pm on the Polebridge Bridge. Bring a chair, drinks, toppings, sauce or cheese to share. Oven & dough provided.	Lorna & Jim Rittenburg Lornaritt@aol.com
May 27 Sat	Star Gazing , 7.30 pm @ 1276 Long Bow Trail . Telescopes provided, bring binoculars if you have them, sky tour of stars, constellations and galaxies.	Check with Jim Rittenburg if cloudy 215 796 1592
June 11 Sun	NFLA General Meeting , 7pm @ Sondreson Hall. Speaker TBD. 8 pm General Meeting . Bring snack to share.	Jack MacFarland 503 463 5172
June 19 Mon	Game Night , 7pm @ Sondreson Hall. Games for all ages, including children. Bring a snack to share.	Bridget Priest 530 205 8050
June 21 wed	Summer Solstice Hike . Evening hike to Cyclone Lookout. Start time TBD. Covey Meadow short 2 miles hike flat with Lorna 6:30 pm Polebridge Ranger Station.	Zoe text 731 695 4528 Lorna text 267 992 0881
June 21 Wed	Wernick's Wed Market @ Noon, E Red Meadow Rd, meet your neighbors, buy fresh produce and flowers.	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
June 22 Thurs	Basic Fire Training , 9.30am to 3 pm @ Sonderson Hall. AM. Session Field Trip to Hildner Residence, for onsite evaluation of Home Ignition Zone treatments & Structure Assessment. Lunch @ Hall bring your own. PM Session Presentation by Kevin Ulrichsen on Interior Structure Defense & Fire suppression.	NF Fire Mitigation Committee Allen Chrisman & Dick Leigh achrisman52@gmail.com
June 26 Mon	Kintla Ranch History Tour with Larry Wilson meet at 10am at his cabin on Kintla Ranch Rd. Bring lunch. If time, we will visit the Billy Kruse Cabin (15920 NF Road).	Lorna Rittenburg 267 992 0881

June 30 Fri	Last Friday Pizza Party 5 pm @ the Border. Meet the Border Patrol Guys, bring chairs, drinks, toppings, sauce or cheese to share. Oven & dough provided.	Lorna and Jim Rittenburg 215 796 1592
July 4 Tues	North Fork Community Picnic 1.30pm @ Jacobson's, 61 Moose Creek Rd. Bring a dish to share, your drinks & a chair. Yard Games, popcorn and movies at dusk, bring blankets. No Fireworks.	Dan and Dawn Jacobson 406 261 9527
July 8 Sat	Square Dancing to Old Vinyl Records 7.30pm @ Sondreson Hall. Lemonade provided, bring snacks to share.	Paul Marotz alfnme@hotmail.com
July 9 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 7pm @ Sondreson Hall. Presentation by Paul Travis, Flathead Land Trust, on what they do and how they work. 8 pm General Meeting. Bring a snack to share.	Richard Hildner 406 260 7725
July 11 Tues	North Fork "Oh Hell" Tournament @Sondreson Hall, 7pm. Attention all card players- join us for a simple, fun game! Beginners welcome.	Randy Kenyon 406 890 4460
July 12 Wed	Firewise and Interlocal Day , 9.30 am @Sondreson Hall. 20th Anniversary of the Wedge Canyon Fire. Presentation by Rick Trembath & Larry Kinsolving. Update on the Wedge Canyon TIP and Fire Season Observations. 12:00 Lunch served by NFTA, please bring a dish to share. 1:00pm Interlocal featuring speakers from County Rd Dept, GNP, USFS, US FishWildlife, Dept of State Lands & Border Patrol.	Allen Chrisman & Molly Shepherd achrisman52@gmail.com mollshep@gmail.com Bill Walker wkwalker@nvdi.com
July 18 Tues	1st Aid/CPR/AED Class with certification, 9am @ Sonderson Hall. Trainer Bob Lee. All day event, bring lunch & drinks, \$45pp, 10 max.	Reservation: Bill Walker 406 407 2764 or wkwalker@nvdi.com
July 19 Wed	Wernick's Wed Market @ Noon, E Red Meadow Rd, meet your neighbors, buy fresh produce and flowers.	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
July 21 Fri	Garden Tour of the North Fork , 9 am start @ 1276 Long Bow Trail, car pool, bring lunch.	Zoe Zardis: 731 695 4528
July 22 Sat	North Fork Preservation Association 41st Annual Meeting 5:30pm @ Sondreson Hall. Pot Luck Dinner, 6:45pm Business Meeting, 7:30pm Speaker, Liz Fairbank, Road Ecologist, The Center for Large Landscapes.	Flannery Freund 406 407 3863
July 28 Fri	Last Friday Pizza Party , 6pm @ Hornet Lookout Parking Area. Hike, bike, or drive (car-share) Bring chairs, drinks, toppings, sauce or cheese to share. Oven & dough provided.	Lisa and Snuffy Smith 941 504 7433
July 29 Sat	Square Dancing to Old Vinyl Records 7.30pm @ Sondreson Hall. Lemonade provided, bring snacks to share.	Paul Marotz alfnme@hotmail.com
July 31 Mon	Game Night , 7pm @ Sondreson Hall. Games for all ages, including children. Bring a snack to share.	Rayna Eyster and Beth Ulrichsen 860 960 6103 (Beth)
Aug 4 Fri	Community Conversation on Climate Change , 7:30 to 9 pm @Sonderson Hall. Led by Debo Powers. A PowerPoint presentation about climate change effects in Montana followed by small group discussions and conversations.	Debo Powers debopowers@gmail.com
Aug 7 Mon	North Fork Compact Meeting 8pm @Sondreson Hall, open to non members, snacks provided.	Bruce McNeil Cbm010@msn.com
Aug 12 Sat	Annual Pie & Ice Cream Social & Square Dance 7pm Sondreson Hall. Bring a pie, ice cream provided. Burn those calories & Square dance like the good Ol' days. All ages welcome in on the fun!	Paul Marotz alfnme@hotmail.com and Kevin & Beth Ulrichsen
Aug 13 Sun	NFLA General Meeting 7pm @ Sondreson Hall. Speaker Lois Walker, The history of Polebridge Mercantile, and her new book. General Meeting @ 8pm , bring a snack to share.	Bill Walker 406 407 2764 or wkwalker@nvdi.com

Aug 16 Wed	Wernick's Wed Market @ Noon , E Red Meadow Rd, meet your neighbors, buy fresh produce and flowers.	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
Aug 16 Wed	North Fork "Oh Hell" Tournament @Sondreson Hall , 7pm. Attention card players. Join us for another simple, fun game. Beginners welcome. Bring a snack to share.	Randy Kenyon 406 890 4460
Aug 19 Sat	Square Dancing to Old Vinyl Records 7:30pm @ Sondreson Hall . Lemonade provided, bring snacks to share.	Paul Marotz alfnme@hotmail.com
Aug 20 Sun	History Day with Ray Hart . Learn about his buildings and how he arrived in the North Fork. Noon at Ray Hart's cabin.	Joyce O'hara 978 407 2344
Aug 22 Tues	Star Gazing , 7.30 pm @197 W. Thunderbird . Telescopes provided, bring binoculars if you have them, sky tour of stars, constellations & galaxies.	Check with Jim Rittenburg if cloudy 215 796 1592
Aug 25 Fri	Last Friday Pizza Party , 6pm Opposite Wurtz Cabin by the river. Look for sign. Bring chairs, drinks, toppings, sauce or cheese to share. Oven & dough provided.	Lorna 267 992 0881
Sept 6 Wed	History of Ranching & Homesteading in Big Prairie , 2 pm@ Jack McFarland's Ranch, 15 car max, 5pm BBQ, pls bring drinks & chairs. Contact Lorna to coordinate # of people, carpool, mobility issues.	Coordinator, Lornaritt@aol.com Host, Jack and Sue jack@mcfarlandranch.com
Sept 10 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 6pm @ Sondreson Hall . Speakers:Andy Huntsberger, Glacier View Fire Management Officer, Planning for Wildfire in the North Fork Meeting at 7pm , bring snack to share.	Steve Berg stephenberg44@gmail.com
Sept 20 Wed	Last Wernick's Wed Market @ Noon , E Red Meadow Rd, meet your neighbors, buy fresh produce and flowers.	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
Oct 8 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 6pm @ Sondreson Hall . Speaker:TBD Meeting at 7pm , bring snack to share & items for food pantry.	Randy Kenyon kenyonnorthfork@gmail.com
Oct 21 Sat	Star Gazing, 6.00 pm @ 197 W Thunderbird Rd . Telescopes provided, bring binoculars if you have them, sky tour of stars & constellations.	Check with Jim Rittenburg if cloudy 215 796 1592

North Fork Landowners' Association
P.O. Box 1603
Columbia Falls, MT 59912



Take a peek at the
**2023 North Fork
Calendar of
Activities**

for many opportunities to
learn and socialize with the
NF Community! There's
something for everyone!

**Don't Forget to Renew your
NFLA Membership
or
Consider Becoming a New
Member, all are Welcome!**

Contact John Zardis
treasurer@nflandowners.org
or visit NFLA Website
nflandowners.org for forms

**North Fork Patrol
Signup**

Application Download
available on the NFLA
Website
nflandowners.org

