



NORTH FORK LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION



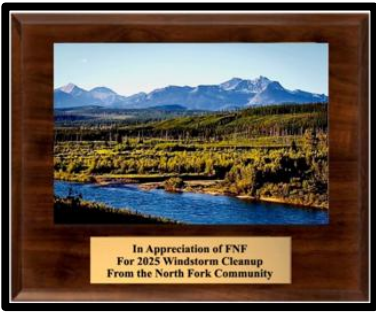
2026 Spring NEWSLETTER



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT and VICE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Spring has technically arrived, though it's felt that way since December. This was a winter that confused the bears, confounded the plants, and cancelled our beloved community ski days and snowshoe softball. It turned the North Fork Road into months of mud, ice, and potholes — and on December 17th, instead of nine ladies dancing, we got hurricane-force winds and a monumental blowdown of thousands of trees, their roots sodden with record-breaking rain. Nearly every inch of the North Fork Road from Camas to the border became a latticework of toppled timber. Neighbors armed with chainsaws, handsaws, and tractors cut a zigzagging path through the mess — a true chainsaw rodeo. Hats off to everyone who made it passable. Then on December 19th, our agencies delivered a true Christmas miracle. Flathead National Forest, Montana Department of Natural Resources, and Flathead County Roads and Bridges worked nonstop to clear hundreds of downed trees, getting the road open in time for holiday celebrations that had seemed all but impossible the day before. In recognition of their extraordinary effort, NFLA President Jim Rittenburg presented a thank-you plaque to each agency at the winter interlocal.



The blowdown isn't done with us yet. Miles of roadside are still lined with sawn timber, and many properties have blowdowns of their own to deal with. (Remarkably, reports from neighbors and the North Fork Patrol indicate very little structural damage up here; **however, if you were away all winter, be aware that you may find trees blocking your driveway when you return.**) There remains, unfortunately, a real risk of beetle infestation in all those downed trees. Local professional forester Holly McKenzie will be speaking at the Community Hall in June to advise landowners on how to assess and reduce that risk on their property.



Looking ahead to spring and summer, there is plenty to be excited about. You're holding the Spring Newsletter right now — a testament to the hard work of editor Beth Ulrichsen and the many community members and friends of the North Fork who contributed articles on the issues and topics that shape life in our community. The community calendar is full of great events, including history days, engaging monthly meeting presentations, and our popular community pizza parties. We look forward to welcoming our migratory neighbors back to the North Fork, and to a wonderful — and hopefully not too dry — summer ahead!

North Fork Community Picnic

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

Bring a dish to share, drinks & a chair. Yard Games, popcorn and movies at dusk, bring blankets.

No Fireworks.



North Fork Sentinels

By Kira Powell, Public affairs specialist for Flathead National Forest

There are 24 lookout structures still standing within the mountain ranges that surround the Flathead Valley. Six can be found keeping a quiet eye on the North Fork. Can you name them? Don't cheat now. Eyes up here - no scanning down the page....

Picture yourself driving north out of town, leaving behind the stoplights and hustle, maybe admiring the Apgar Mountains looming to the east – OK, you're right, the first thing that grabs our attention is the state of the road, but let's draw our focus back to the surrounding peaks and ridges.

When the Camas drainage leads off to the southeast, we begin to see the Livingston Range. Yes, up there, to the east is a speck of a structure high on the top of everything – Huckleberry Mountain Lookout. This 2-story 14'x14' cabin built in 1968 is the third lookout to be built at this location. The first was a 10-ft pole platform built in 1924 that burned in 1929. The second was a 2-story cabin built in 1931 that burned in 1967. Anything worth building once at 6,496' is worth building three times.



A view of the North Fork from the window of Huckleberry Mountain Lookout

Then, remembering to look west as well, there's Coal Ridge. Wildfire scarred, looming thick with lodgepole. Coal Ridge has had an interesting progression of fire structure construction. Moran Patrol Cabin (also known as Coal Ridge Cabin) was the first, built in 1928. The next was built 1.5 miles to the southeast, and the third and final – an L-4 lookout – was built in 1935, one mile to the southeast. L-4 refers to US Forest Service architectural plan name for this style of lookout, lookout model 4. Moran Patrol Cabin still stands and received major restoration between 2012 and 2015 through a partnership between the Forest Service and the Northwest Montana Lookout Association. Forest Service employees reroofed the cabin, and in 2014, the Lookout Association supplied new cabin siding for the Forest Service to install. Volunteers painted the exterior in 2016 and 2017.



Moran Patrol Cabin, spiffed up after an exterior painting project.

Cyclone Peak means we've made it to Polebridge. Cyclone Lookout was first an L-4 cabin on a 40' tower built in 1935, replaced by the current timber tower flattop style lookout, built in 1967. Over the years, Cyclone has received a new roof, floor, railing, decking, appliances, and furniture. In 2018, Lookout Association volunteers painted the cabin exterior, and sanded and stained all four stories of stair railings.

The Livingston Range is truly stunning and Numa Lookout is a subtle but valuable part of that vista. Built in 1934, Numa Lookout is the northern most lookout in Glacier National Park, just 9 miles from Canada. The trail to Numa starts from Bowman Lake and climbs almost 3,000' over six miles of trail.

Hornet has evaded me again on my most recent trip – I haven't found a spot along the valley with a view of the oldest standing lookout in Northwest Montana. Hornet is a 14'x14' log cabin with framed glass cupola, built in 1922. It was staffed from approximately 1930 through the 1960s and received a complete



Livingston Range and the North Fork, as seen from the Cyclone catwalk.



Thoma Lookout with a glowing winter sunrise.

restoration in 1983. Hornet was reroofed in 2014, with restored shutters and cupola windows. It was added to the Forest Service cabin and lookout rental system in 1991 and celebrated its 100-year anniversary in 2022.

Turning up Trail Creek Road in winter towards the Hefty trailhead is kind of like heading off the edge of the map. The view from Thoma Lookout, however, is expansively 360 degrees. There are two ways to Thoma – the shorter way, starting from up Thoma Creek, and the longer way, climbing Hefty’s east ridge. Thoma is an L-4 “groundhouse” with gable roof built in 1930. It has been staffed for about 60 years of its 95-year history.

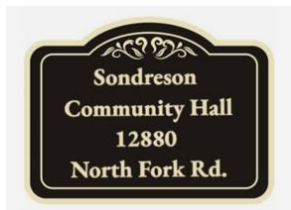
And for the adventurous explorer, lookout remnants can still be found at the historic Thompson Seton location, so they say, east of the ridge dividing the Tobacco River drainage and the North Fork Flathead drainage. The Forest Service Trail #28 to Mt Thompson Seton takes off from Ninko Creek, not far from the ridge that separates Flathead and Lincoln counties, Flathead and Kootenai National Forests. But don’t even get me started on all the neat lookouts on the Kootenai side...

The Northwest Montana Lookout Association is dedicated to the restoration and maintenance of fire lookouts in Northwest Montana. We’re getting excited for another great summer of projects, and we’d love for you to join us! This year, the lucky lookouts to receive multi-day stabilization work are Northwest Peak, Wam, and McGuire Lookouts on the Kootenai National Forest. We’re in the pre-project assessment phase for Stahl and Henry Lookouts to set them up for some T.L.C. in 2027. And for those who might be looking for trips without power tools, we also need volunteers to help gather condition assessments at Porcupine Ridge, Heavens Peak, Mount Brown, Keeler, and Werner Peak. Visit our website for more information on volunteer opportunities: <https://nwmt-ffla.org/>

Accessibility for First Responders

By Kevin Ulrichsen

Although we in the North Fork often enjoy our privacy, sometimes our addresses do need to be found. Recently, the ambulance has not been able to find the addresses of folks in need of their services, and when an emergency happens, every second is critical. Clearly visible house numbers are often the only thing guiding first responders to your door, and even with modern GPS technology, emergency personnel often lose precious minutes searching for addresses that are obscured by overgrown vegetation, or composed of small, non-contrasting numbers. To ensure a rapid response, it is essential that your address is displayed in large, high-contrast and reflective block numbers that can be easily read from a distance. For properties set back from the road, or with long driveways, it is recommended to post the number at the entrance to the driveway to prevent responders from driving past your location entirely. In the case of an emergency, it is often incredibly helpful to send



someone to intercept the first responders on the North Fork Road, and have them lead the way back to the location of the emergency.

In addition to visibility, maintaining a clear and accessible driveway is extremely important, as it allows heavy emergency vehicles and medical equipment to reach you without delay. Fire trucks and ambulances are significantly wider and taller than standard cars, therefore, overgrown tree limbs or uncleared snow and ice can prevent these large vehicles from entering your property. Obstructions not only slow down the arrival of paramedics, police, and firefighters, but can also make it impossible for them to maneuver heavy stretchers or deploy life-saving firefighting equipment close to your home. By keeping your driveway clear and passable to very large vehicles in all weather conditions, as well as ensuring your address is unmistakable, you provide first responders with the best chance of making it to you.

Community Planning Helps Protect the North Fork

By Randy Kenyon and Jim Rittenburg, NF Land Use Advisory Committee

The North Fork of the Flathead River Valley is widely recognized as one of Montana's most remarkable landscapes. Stretching between Glacier National Park and the Whitefish Range, the valley is known for its abundant wildlife, open space, dark night skies, and quiet rural character. In the 1980s and 1990s, residents began working together to ensure that future development would not erode these qualities.

Local landowners played a central role in shaping the zoning regulations that guide development today. The North Fork Land-Use Planning Committee was formed to study development trends and gather community input. Surveys were mailed to property owners and public meetings were held to discuss concerns about increasing subdivision and building along the valley floor.

A key survey conducted in 1997 asked residents for their views on several land-use issues, including minimum lot sizes, setbacks from rivers and roads, and limits on commercial signs. The strong response showed broad support for maintaining the North Fork's low-density character and protecting its scenic and natural resources. The survey results and subsequent public meetings helped guide the zoning regulations adopted by Flathead County in 1998.

The zoning standards focus on preserving open space and minimizing the visual and environmental impacts of development. To preserve those qualities, which have been and continue to be so important to what makes the North Fork so special, our zoning requires that new parcels created through subdivision must be **at least 20 acres in size**, helping keep development density low. Also, buildings must be set back from key

landscape features, including **150 feet from rivers, streams, and lakes, 150 feet from the North Fork Road, and 100 feet from other public roads**. These setbacks help protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and the scenic views that define the valley.

Residents later expanded these efforts through

Land use survey response impressive

Last summer a survey was sent to every landowner on the North Fork, asking for opinions on land use planning for the future. In all, 433 surveys were mailed, five were returned with no forwarding address and 190 owners took the time to fill out and return the survey. Whether or not you count the five returned the return was over 40 percent (43.8 percent of 433) (44.4 percent of 428). By all accounts this is an excellent return.

The results are equally interesting — not because of close votes, but because of the large majority who agree on most issues. It is also interesting that many voters did not answer every question.

An overwhelming majority were opposed to new subdivisions and supported a minimum lot size. 19.8 percent opposed any minimum lot size while 53.5 percent favored a minimum lot size of 20 or more acres.

Even more landowners favored setbacks from creeks, rivers and road. 156 said yes and there were 30 no votes. Of the 156 yes votes, 68 favored 200 feet from water and an additional 35 preferred 150 feet.

Nearly as great a majority wanted legal setbacks from the North Fork Road. 89 favored 150 feet and 37 favored 100 feet with 21 in favor of 50 feet and 30 opposed to any setback requirement.

159 wanted signs limited by size and number while only 20 landowners opposed limiting signs.

Although 95 landowners thought structures should be screened from view — (75 voted no on screening) most were opposed to any laws requiring screening. Only 31 landowners felt screening should be required.

*1-29-98
Hungry Horn News*

North Fork Views

by Larry Wilson



Where do we go from here? It would seem that the next logical step would be for the Land Use Planning Committee to ask the county to draft proposed regulations for the following:

1. Minimum lot size of 20 acres;
2. Setbacks requiring up to 200 feet from streams;
3. Setbacks of 150 feet from the North Fork Road;
4. Setbacks of 100 feet from other public roads;
5. Proposals to limit the size and number of signs.

Then — we would go through 'the process' again! Public meetings, public hearings etc., rewrite, amend and reach agreement on the North Fork.

After that go to the county for implementation of the regulations that a majority of us can support!

Larry Wilson is a near lifelong North Fork resident.



The North Fork Land Use Planning Committee members counted ballots last week. From left are Larry Wilson, Duke Holland, Mike Eddy, John Frederick and Lynn Ogle. Back left are Naomi Holland and Bonnie Ogle.

the **North Fork Neighborhood Plan**, adopted by Flathead County in 2008. The plan outlines community goals such as preserving open space, protecting wildlife corridors, and maintaining the remote, undeveloped character that residents value.

Together, the zoning regulations and neighborhood plan reflect decades of community involvement in shaping the future of the North Fork. Copies of both documents can be viewed and downloaded from the North Fork Landowners website at www.nflandowners.org.

It's Easy to DONATE - BECOME A MEMBER- PAY DUES!



You can pay dues and donate at: <https://nflandowners.org/pay-dues-donate/>

or get a new membership application form at:

<https://nflandowners.org/nflawp/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NFLA-Patrol-Signup-Form.pdf>

All this and more can be found on the NF Landowners' Website! <https://nflandowners.org/>

North Fork Gardening

By The Wernick and Losey Families



As we write this short article on gardening for the NFLA newsletter we are experiencing the third spring breakup so far this “winter.” The weather feels more fickle than ever, but surely summer will come. After consulting with several well-seasoned North Fork gardeners here is a menu of cultivars that grow well in our alpine climate.

1. Many types of **lettuce** do well here. They are frost hardy, love cool temperatures, and grow quickly. Romaine leaf lettuce has stiffer leaves which hold their texture well. Succession planting keeps the harvest going all season.

2. **Kale** is very hardy and resists bolting.

3. **Swiss Chard** grows huge leaves and is also frost resistant.

4. Any member of the **cabbage family** grows well here. However, they are all susceptible to cabbage butterfly worms. The non-toxic BT bacterial spray will control them, but must be reapplied after each rain. We prefer Green Acre for mid-summer harvest and Red Acre and Late Flat Dutch for fall harvest and winter storage.

5. **Peas** are one of the few legumes that are frost hardy. They can be planted the first of May. We prefer Maestro peas for their large pods and you can keep your own seed to replant every year.

6. **Fava beans** are the only other legume that we know that is frost hardy. We plant the short growing version because they do not need to be supported.

7. **Potatoes** grow well here since they are native to the Andes. They love cool, damp weather, but cannot take any frost. They must be covered or sprayed with water during frost events. They keep all winter in a well-vented root cellar and you can replant your own seed potatoes every year. We prefer Yukon Golds and North Fork Reds that we have planted for 40 years. We have also recently tried a new variety called Huckleberry potatoes that have a deep purple skin and yellow flesh. They also keep very well in the cellar.

8. **Carrots** grow well, but are magnets for bears. Electric fences help, but the bears have learned to dig under

fences and just help themselves. You have to admire their intelligence and innovation, but we don't recommend growing carrots in the North Fork because of the risk of attracting unwelcome visitors.

9. Detroit Red **Beets** are frost hardy and also produce nice salad greens.

10. Sweet Mama **squash** is an excellent winter keeper. We grow the compact kabocha bush variety since they need to be covered on the few frosty nights during the summer season.

11. Yellow **summer squash** and zucchini also grow well in cool weather provided they too are covered on frosty nights.

12. **Strawberries, raspberries, saskatoon berries, and Pixwell gooseberries** can produce well in the North Fork, but each have special needs to keep them happy.

13. **Onions and garlic** also do well. Onions have the best chance to fully mature if you buy starts and plant them in well-drained soil when the major risk for frost is over. You can use cover cloth if an unexpected frost is predicted. Onions also like a lot of water and

soil that is as warm as possible. Raised beds help the soil stay warmer and with good drainage under the bed you should have success.

Patterson, Ringmaster, and Walla Walla Sweets have been grown by Beth Ulrichsen with good results.

Patterson onions store well in the cellar. Garlic also does well in the North Fork. We plant the cloves in the fall and cover them with a few inches of grass clippings to protect from the winter cold. Garlic also stores very well.

14. Janet Leigh is our local **sweet corn** expert. Her secret is to buy whatever variety you can find with the shortest days to harvest, plant when the soil has warmed, and hope for lots of sun.

So, here's to the perfect summer when it rains every week, but only at night; the ground squirrels forget how to find our gardens, and the road is only dusty on Mondays.

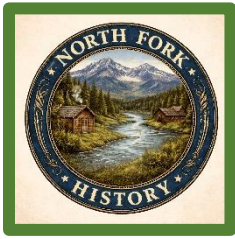


Wernicks' Market

The Wernicks' produce will be available for sale on June 17th, July 15th, Aug 19th and Sept 16, at NOON at the Gazebo on East Red Meadow Rd. Don't be Late!

A CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

By Lois Walker



This year marks the hundredth anniversary of the marriage of Frank and Ethel Newton. They are believed to be the first homesteader couple to be married in the North Fork. Others had married, but they went to town to do so. Reverend Frame, a

Methodist minister from Columbia Falls, came up to perform the ceremony at Ethel's parents' cabin on June 23, 1926.

Ethel was the granddaughter of homesteaders A.G. and Ella Vance. The Vances, with their two daughters and their husbands, and Ella's brother John Willcutt, moved to the North Fork from Livingston, Montana in 1909, when Ethel was just one year old. Her mother May Vance was married to Ben Hensen. Ethel and her brother Ben Hensen, Jr. were raised in the North Fork and attended the Red Meadow School and then the Polebridge School. They both graduated the eighth grade in 1922.

Ethel's husband Frank Newton, who was five years older than she was, was likewise born in Livingston. In 1919, at age 16, he came to the North Fork to work with his Uncle John Willcutt on a road crew completing construction of the North Fork Road to the Canadian border. They brought several teams of horses with them from Livingston to help. That project was completed in 1920.

Once Frank was an adult, he filed on his own



Frank and Ethel's 50th anniversary, 1976

homestead and built a cabin on it in 1925. He and Ethel fell in love and decided to marry in June 1926, six months after her 18th birthday. They planned a pack trip through Glacier National Park for their honeymoon.

They looked forward to living together in Frank's cabin, but shortly after their return a devastating fire in the North Fork burned their

home and many others, then jumped the river into Glacier Park. The fire wasn't completely controlled until early September. The next year, Ben Jr. helped Frank gather logs for a new cabin, and as was the custom in the

North Fork their friends and neighbors helped them rebuild.

Ethel gave birth to four children between 1927 and 1932, but tragically two of them died in infancy. Their daughters Evelyn and Carol developed a special attachment to the North Fork and came to love it as much as their parents did.

While Frank was in the North Fork he did all manner of work to make a living: hauling logs and hay for neighbors, doing spring plowing, hauling freight for the Polebridge Store and supplies for the Glacier Park Oil Company. He manned the Hornet Creek Lookout in 1920 and worked for the Forest Service at Moran Ranger Station from 1926 to 1932.

In 1933, the Newtons moved to California where Evelyn started school. Among other activities, Ethel managed an apartment house for about 20 years, while Frank worked as an aircraft machinist. They faithfully returned to the North Fork each summer, though. Frank said, "I'd quit my job in the spring and go back in the fall."

The Newtons, together with friends Hazen and Ruth Lawson, hosted the annual North Fork community picnic at Bowman Lake for many years. They also participated in the annual 4th of July Fish Fry at Sondreson Hall and were well-known for the marvelous garden they planted each summer. Ethel appropriately named it her Garden of Eatin'. According to columnist Frank Evans, Ethel was also known throughout the valley for her turnip sandwiches.

Frank and Ethel celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a joyous all-day affair at Sondreson Community Hall in June 1976. The event was covered by Gladys Shay in the *Hungry Horse News*.

Sadly, Frank passed away the next year, on June 3, 1977, at age 73. Six years later, in 1983, Ethel married Harold Willcutt, a North Fork neighbor and Frank Newton's first cousin. Harold died in 1991. Ethel passed away on August 18, 1999 in Valley Center, California, at age 91.

The majority of the Newton property in the North Fork is still in family hands. Ray Brown lives on 10 acres that he purchased/received from Ethel.



Ethel Newton at her Garden of Eatin'.

Creating a North Fork Perennial Garden

By Lorna Rittenburg



This is what I quickly learned.

1. Choose plants **as close to native as possible** for our region. e.g. lupins, yarrows, lilacs. columbines, Larkspur, poppies, roses and Potentilla. We learned that of the many varieties of Potentilla, Goldfinger was the closest to native and grew 10x the speed of other varieties. These “close to” native varieties attract & provide food for local pollinating birds and insects
2. Check labels to make sure plants can survive Hardiness **Zone 3A**, which is -35F to -40F
3. **Tuber type plants** such as lilies, irises and Day Lilies do well.
4. **Fall planting** is best. It requires less watering and allows for stratification of seeds (below freezing temps to promote germination in the spring). The snow cover provides protection and the frost heave drives the seeds into the ground.
5. **Daffodils** are a spring delight. I buy mixed bags for naturalizing (they do not seem to spread here, but come back every year). They will grow in poor soils, require no maintenance and add a needed splash of color in the early Spring (mice eat tulip bulbs).
6. **Cover plants with weed free straw** in the Fall. This adds frost protection in the absence of snow, breaks down with summer watering to improve the soil, and provides a blanket to moderate spring temperature swings, protecting the sensitive new plant shoots.
7. **Rocks** are beautiful, and add visual appeal. I am always on the lookout for beautiful rocks for the garden. As an added bonus, they require no watering or care and are bountiful in this area.
8. **Bring in Soil.** Local soil is low in nutrients and organic matter and may contain invasive weed seeds. If you cannot make your own, Kalispell Creamery sells a cow manure / top soil mix for \$20 a pick-up truck load or \$10/cu yard for trailer loads. Help support our Local Farmers!
9. **Watering.** I have a simple system. I have a sprinkler on a hose which I move around each day in the dry summer. Each area gets soaked every 3 days. This encourages the plants to grow deep roots. Birds and insects, particularly butterflies and day moths, love the watering.
10. Carefully select perennials to provide a longer flowering season and to provide **color & food for pollinators.** Leaving **pruning or cutting back until the spring** provides seeds and hiding cover for animals throughout the winter.



From this...



To THIS!



Firewise & Interlocal Day

Wednesday, July 8th

9:30 a.m. Sondreson Hall. Firewise, Insect & Disease concerns with blowdown; status of Hazardous Fuels Grants; Review of North Fork Fire Plan, Update on current fire season; how to seal ridge cap on metal roofs from ember showers. **12:00 Lunch** served by NF Trails, please bring a dish to share. **1:00 p.m. Interlocal Meeting** featuring speakers from County Rd Dept, GNP, USFS, US Fish Wildlife, Dept of State Lands & Border Patrol.

Tree Cleanup Recommendations After the Winter Windstorm Event

by Holly McKenzie, DNRC Kalispell Unit Service Forester.

The December 2025 winter windstorm event brought 50-75 mile-per-hour winds that caused extensive damage to forestland across much of Western Montana, particularly on exposed slopes or higher ridges. For many landowners, the storm left downed trees and concerns about how and when to salvage them.

Pine stands should be addressed soon to avoid wood degradation as warmer weather arrives in June. Blue stain, a discoloration caused by fungi carried by bark beetle, may develop within 3-6 weeks and can significantly reduce a log's value at the sawmill. Blue stain is not as severe a defect for lodgepole pine as it is for ponderosa pine, but landowners should still make sure they have a purchaser's agreement from the sawmill before hauling lodgepole into town.

Douglas-fir blowdown may have more time before it dries and becomes a concern, so immediate salvaging is less critical in the first months of summer. However, downed Douglas-fir can still attract bark beetle or other wood-boring insects that flock to stressed trees or downed logs.



Drone photos by Daniel Pendergraph, Courtesy of DNRC showing extensive North Fork blowdown



Drone photos by Daniel Pendergraph, Courtesy of DNRC showing lodgepole pine thinning strips near Tepee Lake.

For most landowners, the best approach is to salvage usable material or work with a contractor to move it to a sawmill or firewood yard. Leaving logs stacked beyond late fall could contribute to beetle outbreaks in 2027, when beetles that move in the area lay eggs that emerge as adults the following spring.

While the salvage process may feel overwhelming, help is available. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Natural Resources Conservation Services, and Montana West Economic Development maintain lists of thinning and logging contractors, and local sawmills often have foresters who can visit properties and provide

guidance. DNRC also offers site visits to answer forest health questions and connect landowners with resources based on their property conditions and management goals.

In many cases, working with neighbors is the most economical option. Coordinating across property lines or with contractors already working in the area can reduce equipment move-in costs and make smaller projects more feasible. A contractor usually can't afford to move logging equipment for only a few truckloads of logs, but a combined project across several parcels may produce enough material to make the work more affordable.

DNRC forest pest entomologist, Amy Gannon, shares the following recommendations for landowners concerned about insect activity in damaged stands:

1. The MCH anti-aggregate pheromone is fairly effective in deterring Douglas-fir bark beetle during May and June flights. MCH only repels Douglas-fir beetle.
 - Packets must be hung by April 15 to be effective, before beetles fly mid-May.
 - Packets only last for one season.
 - Double Bubble from Synergy (1000 mg) can be hung on a grid of 15 per acre. Single-tree protection still requires 2 to 3 per tree, depending on diameter. Hang on the northwest or northeast side if possible.
 - Single Bubble (400 to 500mg) can be applied on a grid of 33 per acre. Single-tree application also requires 2 to 3 per tree, depending on diameter.
 - MCH has an EPA registration number and is therefore treated as a pesticide. Please be sure to wear proper protective gear when hanging packets.

2. Pheromones are also available to repel mountain pine beetle, but that species is not currently at outbreak levels in Montana. Verbenone only repels mountain pine beetle and does not work on western pine beetle or Ips, also known as pine engraver beetle.
3. Ips are often the most immediate concern in slash and downed pine trees. These beetles can build up in fresh slash and may kill surrounding trees. The best way to reduce that risk is to burn the slash, remove downed trees, or process the material into firewood as soon as possible. Trees need to be cut into firewood and stored in a dry place or sent to the mill where the bark will be removed. Because Ips larvae need moist inner bark, called cambium, to survive, once that layer dries out or is removed, they cannot complete their life cycle.
4. Large slash piles are less concerning because beetles tend to move deeper into the pile rather than flying onto nearby trees. However, smaller slash piles, especially hand piles in pine stands, can harbor Ips beetles and should be burned as quickly as possible. Slash is less of a concern in Doug-fir, larch, spruce, or cedar stands.
5. As always, one of the best long-term defenses against beetles is a thinned and healthy forest where trees have the water, sunlight, and nutrients they need to remain vigorous.

If your property was affected by the winter storm and you are unsure where to start, reach out to your local DNRC service forester, Holly McKenzie, at 406-407-1519 or holly.mckenzie@mt.gov.



North Fork

Preservation

Association invites you to our
Annual Meeting on **August 22, 2026**
at Sondreson Community Hall

Featuring guest speaker
Dan Fagre, PH.D., Internationally renowned Earth scientist and retired glaciologist

Fagre will share exhibits from the USGS "Repeat Photography Project", a series of historic photos of glaciers in Glacier taken during the late 1800s and early 1900s that researchers replicated from the same vantage points starting in 1997.

Fagre led the project during his time with the USGS Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center in West Glacier, constructing side-by-side visual comparisons of the images to measure glacial recession.

We would love for you to be among our honored guests.

5:30pm: Potluck supper

6:45pm: Short business meeting

7:30pm: Speaker

We are excited to spend an evening with all of you,
share with you what we've been up to
and look forward to a great presentation.

Bear Resistant Garbage Containers

NFPA/PBBS are 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 at below market cost with the help of grants and private donations.

Purchase price per canister is \$300.

Cans are available now! Please contact Suzanne Hildner shildner@icloud.com or

(406) 253-3263 to purchase or rent



Polebridge Bear Smart Update Spring 2026

By Suzanne Hildner

Any day now PBBS is expecting a report of bears waking up on the North Fork. They have already been sighted in the lower valley. Keep your eyes peeled for tracks and other evidence!!

The North Fork had little in the way of bear conflicts last year. We have earned the praise of the bear biologists with Montana FWP for our community efforts in this regard. PBBS is encouraging all North Forkers to continue to minimize attractants and to discourage bears so we can continue to boast about our excellent track record. Please remember to secure all attractants by:

A. Taking down bird feeders if they have been up through the winter and using flowers rather than feeders to attract hummingbirds.

B. Purchase and use a bear resistant garbage can. These can be purchased at below retail cost from North Fork Preservation Association/ PBBS. See details below.

C. Protect your garden and the bears by installing electric fencing. If you need assistance contact PBBS at sdhildner@icloud.com for information on funding and help with fence design. If your property has a planted lawn which can attract bears in the spring when they are hungry for fresh green grass, consider temporary electric fencing to discourage bears until other food sources become available.

D. Secure pet food; livestock feed; small livestock such as chickens and compost with electric fencing.

E. Clean or secure outdoor grills after each use.

F. For more information see <https://peopleandcarnivores.org/education-materials> and <https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/wildlife-management/bear/be-bear-aware#landowners>.

If you are having a problem with bears frequenting your property...

Call Polebridge Bear Smart immediately!! We can help you prevent a small problem from being a big one. We

will help you identify attractants and can loan you a game camera and scare devices. We provide this service in partnership with FWP. FWP requires notification of wildlife conflicts if you choose to use PBBS services. To contact us call or text Suzanne Hildner at 406-253-3263 or email her at sdhildner@icloud.com.

North Forkers can now recycle emptied/expired bear spray cans through PBBS!!!!!!

Now is a good time to review your collection of bear spray. Things to note:

1. Store in a cool place and if carrying in your car it is recommended to carry bear spray in an secure container such as an ammo can or bear spray container available for purchase online rather than loose or in the glove compartment.

2. Check expiration date. Consider writing expiration date on the outside and bottom of the can when purchased.

3. Shake can every couple of months to mix capsaicin and propellant.

4. Familiarize yourself with first aid in case of accidental spraying. Wash affected body parts with soap and COLD (NOT HOT!!) water.

5. To recycle; make sure can is empty. You can do this by spraying the can WITH THE WIND AT YOUR BACK until empty. Flagging tied to a nearby tree can help you monitor wind direction. Empty the can several times. Then puncture the can at the top with a hammer and nail. This is best done by placing the can in a plastic bag and picturing through the bag so any capsaicin residue is captured.

6. You can recycle on your own at Pacific Steel and Recycling or contact Suzanne Hildner at sdhildner@icloud.com for drop off locations. We will again provide a drop off container on the front porch at Sondreson Hall.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR TO THE BEARS!!!!

Last Year's Big Windstorm Means a Busy Year for the North Fork Trails Association

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, ranging from challenging back country expeditions to low impact walks for folks who don't think a 10% grade has to be part of the normal outdoor experience. New this past year: We are starting to open a few unused/abandoned roads for cross-country skiing and hiking/biking. Our work starts in early spring and sometimes doesn't wrap up until after the snow flies. Get in touch if you want to help out! We always welcome volunteers.

NFTA also offers various types of training that are open to the public, such our annual series of First Aid/CPR/AED courses, typically held in May and July (May 22nd and July 22nd this year). As needed, we sponsor chainsaw training and certification. We'll likely include crosscut saw training soon, as well.

Keep an eye on our activity schedule on the North Fork Trails website (<http://nftrails.org/calendar/>). This is particularly important in the late winter/early spring when weather and trail conditions make for a very fluid schedule. The website also contains various informational articles, including regularly updated posts on trail conditions throughout the entire area. Many NFTA activities are cross posted to the NFLA website (<https://nflandowners.org/calendar/>), to our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/nftrails/>) and to social media. There's also an email list offering periodic updates, including (we hope) a monthly newsletter. Contact Bill Walker at wkwalker@nvdi.com or 406-407-2764 for more information or to be added to mailings.



NFLA Meetings at Sondreson Community Hall

The second Sunday of each month, from June to October. Please come join us!

All of the North Fork Community is welcome!

Speaker Line-up for 2026!

June 14 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 6:30pm (earlier start time), @ Sondreson Hall. Presentation: Anthony Nelson from Glacier Institute, Updates and Vision. 8pm General Meeting. Bring snacks to share.
July 12 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 7pm @ Sondreson Hall, Speaker: ALERT/Medivac General Meeting at 8pm. Bring a snack to share.
Aug 9 Sun	NFLA General Meeting 7pm @ Sondreson Hall. Presentation: North Valley Search and Rescue. General Meeting at 8pm, bring a snack to share.
Sept 13 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 6pm @ Sondreson Hall. Amber Steel will discuss the Moose Creek Fish Dam. Meeting at 7pm, bring a snack to share.
Oct 11 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 6pm @ Sondreson Hall. Speaker: To be determined, but it is sure to be amazing! Watch for updates on Facebook and NFLA website. General meeting at 7pm, bring snacks & items for the food pantry.

North Fork Community Calendar

2026 Summer Community Activities



RECURRING EVENTS

- * **The North Fork Landowners Association Meetings** - held the 2nd Sunday of each month from June to October. Guest speaker followed by General Meeting. Bring a snack to share. All are welcome!
- * **North Fork Worship Non-denominational services** - led by Don Sullivan, will be held at Sondreson Hall each Sunday at 10:30am from June 1st until August 31st. These will be followed by coffee; social time. Please bring a snack to share. Don - twilitz1@yahoo.com
- * **Wernicks' Market** - The Wernicks' produce will be available for sale on June 17th, July 15th; Aug 19th and Sept 16, at NOON at the Gazebo on E. Red Meadow Rd. Don't be Late!

May 2 Sat	Star Gazing , 7:00 pm @ 197 W Thunderbird Rd. Telescopes provided, Sky tour of stars, constellations, galaxies, and Nebulae. We will do some astrophotography so you will have pictures to remember.	Call Jim Rittenburg if cloudy 215-796-1592
May 16 Sat	Sondreson Hall Spring Clean Up , 8:30am start, indoor cleaning, outside brush clean up, wood chopping, etc. Bring tools. Noon - Volunteer Barbeque.	Dan Jacobson 406-249-4190
May 17 Sun	All About NF Weeds , 3-4pm @ Sondreson Hall, a presentation by Kylie Heikkila, NFPA Board member and GNP Lead Wilderness Ranger who specializes in noxious weed mitigation for the North Fork. Snacks provided. Bring questions!	Flannery Freund 406-407-3863
May 19 Tues	1st Aid/CPR/AED Class , 9am until 4pm approx @ Sondreson Hall. Trainer: Bob Lee. This class is the two-year American Heart Association (AHA) cert. in First Aid, CPR & AED usage. Bring lunch and drinks, \$45 pp, 10 max.	Reservation: Bill Walker 406-407-2764
May 20 Wed	Gardeners' Roundtable , NOON @ Wernick's Gazebo E. Red Meadow Rd. Share ideas & knowledge with fellow gardeners. Bring starts, plants or bulbs to share or sell. Baked goods & crafts may be available. Followed by Curtis' Softball Game, bring a glove!	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
May 29 Fri	Last Friday Pizza Party , 6pm by the Polebridge bridge. Bring a chair, drinks, toppings, sauce or cheese to share. Oven & dough provided.	Lorna & Jim Rittenburg 267-992-0881

June 14 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 6:30pm (earlier start time), @ Sondreson Hall. Presentation: Anthony Nelson from Glacier Institute, Updates and Vision. 8 pm General Meeting. Bring snacks to share.	Host - Jim Rittenburg 215-796-1592
June 17 Wed	Wernicks' Wed Market, @ Noon, E. Red Meadow Rd, meet your neighbors, buy fresh produce, flowers, baked goods and crafts. Followed by Curtis' Softball Game, bring a glove.	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
June 18 Thur	Wildland Fire Awareness Training, 10 a.m. to noon @ Sondreson Hall, Insect & Disease concerns with blowdowns; Status of Hazardous Fuels Grants; how to seal ridge cap on metal roofs from ember showers.	NF Fire Mitigation Comm: Dick Leigh + Allen Chrisman achrisman52@gmail.com
June 21 Sun	Summer Solstice Hike, Evening hike to Hidden Meadow Lake 6:30pm for short 3-mile hike, flat. Meet at Polebridge Ranger Station to car pool or ebike to the trailhead.	Bonnie Hankey 406-888-5084. Karin Colby 406-212-4776
June 22 Mon	Game Night, 7pm @ Sondreson Hall. Games for all ages; children and adults! Bring a game, drinks & a snack to share.	Bridget Priest 530-205-8050 Gerry Stearns 406-261-1277
June 24 Wed	Wednesday Coffee Morning with Lynn & Bonny Ogle, Meet at 10 am at 296 Kintla Ranch Rd. Come listen to their amusing & adventurous stories of their years in the North Fork. Please bring a chair, mug and perhaps some goodies to share.	Bonny and Lynn Ogle 406-471-9917
June 26 Fri	Last Friday Pizza Party, 6 pm @ the Border. Meet the Border Patrol, bring chairs, drinks, toppings, sauce or cheese to share. Oven & dough provided.	Lorna and Jim 267-992-0881
July 4 Sat	North Fork Community Picnic, 1:30pm @ the Jacobsons', 61 Moose Creek Rd. Bring a dish to share, drinks & a chair. Yard Games, popcorn and movies at dusk, bring blankets. No Fireworks.	Dan and Dawn Jacobson 406-261-9527
July 8 Wed	Firewise & Interlocal Day 9:30 a.m. Sondreson Hall. Firewise, Insect & Disease concerns with blowdown; status of Hazardous Fuels Grants; Review of North Fork Fire Plan, Update on current fire season; how to seal ridge cap on metal roofs from ember showers. 12:00 Lunch served by NF Trails, please bring a dish to share. 1:00 p.m. Interlocal Meeting featuring speakers from County Road Dept, GNP, USFS, US Fish Wildlife, Dept of State Lands, and Border Patrol.	NF Fire Mitigation Committee: Allen Chrisman/ Richard Hildner/ Bill Walker achrisman52@gmail.com wkwalker@nvdi.com
July 12 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 7pm @ Sondreson Hall, Speaker: ALERT/Medivac 8 pm General Meeting. Bring a snack to share.	Host Jack Mc Farland 503-453-5172
July 15 Wed	Wernicks' Wed Market, @ Noon, E. Red Meadow Rd, meet your neighbors, buy fresh produce, flowers, crafts and baked goods. Followed by Curtis' Softball Game, bring a glove	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
July 18 Sat	An Evening with John Wesley Powell at the 5th Annual Barn Party, Food and Music to follow the program. Please RSVP to tjstonefam@comcast.net	John and Tami Stone 406-405-5209

July 20 Mon	Game Night , 7pm @ Sondreson Hall. Games for all ages, adults and children. Bring a game and a snack to share.	Rayna Eyster 419-571-0762 Beth Ulrichsen 860-960-6103
July 22 Wed	Wednesday Coffee Morning with Ray Brown @ 10am by the river below the main cabin @ 12533 N Fork Rd. Come and listen to his stories of his many years in the North Fork. Please bring a chair, mug & goodies to share.	Ray Brown 406-626-3856
July 24 Fri	Last Friday Pizza Party , 6pm @ the Rittenburgs'. Bring chairs, drinks, toppings, sauce or cheese to share. Oven & dough provided.	Lorna and Jim 267-992-0881
Aug 2 Sun	Annual Pie & Ice Cream Social & Square Dance 6pm Sondreson Hall. Bring a pie, ice cream provided. Burn those calories & square dance like the good ole' days with Debo Powers. All ages welcome.	Krista Johnson 360-815-5454 Debo 406-407-0787
Aug 4 Tues	Look at the Sun Through a Solar Scope With Jim Rittenburg , Open House from 10am to 12 noon at the Observatory at 197 W Thunderbird Rd	Jim Rittenburg 215-796-1592
Aug 9 Sun	NFLA General Meeting 7pm @ Sondreson Hall , Presentation: North Valley Search and Rescue. General Meeting @ 8pm , bring a snack to share.	Cheryl Crane cherylcrane@comcast.net
Aug 10 Mon	North Fork Compact Meeting , 8pm @Sondreson Hall, open to non-members, snacks provided. For more information go to https://www.nfcompact.org	Bruce McNeil cbm010@msn.com
Aug 12 Wed	Wednesday Morning Coffee with "Hoss" Fisher , Meet at his cabin on Panorama Ranch at 10 am. Bring a mug, snacks and a chair.	Rob Fisher 406-609-9903
Aug 15 Sat	Community Art Night! Doors open at 6:00 pm Sondreson Hall , featuring local artists followed by a short recital, details to follow	Tasia Kain 406-531-2843
Aug 19 Wed	Wernicks' Wed Market , @ Noon, E. Red Meadow Rd, meet your neighbors, buy fresh produce, flowers, baked goods and crafts. Followed by Curtis' Softball Game, bring a glove!	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
Aug 22 Sat	North Fork Preservation Association 43rd Annual Meeting , 5:30pm @ Sondreson Hall. Pot Luck Dinner, 6:45pm Business Meeting, 7:30pm Speaker Dan Fagre —retired climate scientist from Glacier National Park. All are welcome	Debo Powers 406-407-0787
Aug 28 Fri	Last Friday Pizza Party , 6pm @Wurtz by the river. Follow the Pizza signs. We will try and get a spot by the river but if there is no availability the party will be held on the old airstrip. Hope to see you all. Bring chairs, drinks, toppings, sauce or cheese to share. Oven & dough provided.	John and Zoe Zardis 731-695-4528
Sept 2 Wed	Wednesday Coffee Morning with Larry Wilson @ 10am at his cabin on Kintla Ranch Rd. Come and listen to his stories of his life in the North Fork. Please bring a chair, mug & goodies to share.	Lorna Rittenburg 267-992-0881

Sept 10 Thurs	Fall Bike Ride, Meet at 11 am at Logging Creek Ranger Station (good parking). Bike from Logging Creek Ranger Station south on the inside North Fork Road to Camas Creek. Out and back. All are welcome! E-bikes and traditional bikes! Bring lunch or snacks!	Beth and Kevin Ulrichsen 860-960-6103
Sept 13 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 6pm @ Sondreson Hall. Amber Steel will discuss the Moose Creek Fish Dam. Meeting at 7pm , bring snacks to share.	John Zardis 425-775-5550
Sept 16 Wed	LAST Wernicks' Wed Market @ Noon , E. Red Meadow Rd, meet your neighbors, buy fresh produce, flowers, baked goods and crafts. Followed by Curtis' Softball Game, bring a glove	Jerry & Linda Wernick jerrywernick@gmail.com
Sept 23 Wed	Star Gazing, 7:00 pm @ 197 W Thunderbird Rd. Telescopes provided, Sky tour of stars, constellations, galaxies, and Nebulae. We will do some astrophotography so you will have pictures to remember	Contact Jim Rittenburg if cloudy 215-796-1592
Sept 24 Thurs	2nd Fall Bike Ride, Meet at 11 am at Red Meadow/Spruce Creek intersection. Bike to Hay Creek and back or complete the loop via NF road. Fairly flat terrain, suitable for both traditional and e-bikes. Bring lunch or snacks!	Beth and Kevin Ulrichsen 860-960-6103
**Oct 2 Fri	FIRST Friday Pizza Party, 5pm @ the Ford River Access. Bring chairs, drinks, toppings, sauce or cheese to share. Oven & dough provided.	John Stone 425-775-5550
Oct 11 Sun	NFLA General Meeting, 6pm @ Sondreson Hall. Speaker: To be determined, but it is sure to be amazing! Watch for updates on Facebook and NFLA website. Meeting at 7pm, bring snacks & items for the food pantry.	Richard Hildner 406-260-7725

