



Spring 2017

Friends of the **MISSOURI BREAKS MONUMENT**



Save the Breaks

On April 26, 2017 an Executive Order was signed targeting national monuments and the Antiquities Act. Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior, was directed to review national monuments over 100,000 acres, and designated under the Antiquities Act since 1996. The Upper Missouri River Breaks is the only monument in Montana of this size and scale, and was placed under review.

The Friends had 120 days to collect your comments in support of the Upper Missouri Breaks Monument, and you delivered! In the last three months, The Friends organized comment writing events collecting hundreds of hand written comments that have been hand delivered directly to Secretary Zinke's office in Washington, DC. You may have seen us tabling at the Summer Celebration in Ft. Benton, or speaking at land rallies in Bozeman or in Whitefish, or maybe even on stage at Alive at 5 in Helena, but wherever you were, the support you showed for the Upper Missouri Breaks Monument was extraordinary.

At the Western Governors Association meeting in Whitefish on June 27th, Secretary Zinke stated that it is "likely" that he will not recommend any changes to the Upper Missouri River Breaks Monument. Your comments will help decide the fate of the Upper Missouri Breaks Monument, and tell Sec. Zinke just how important national monuments are to our way of life here in Montana.

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This spring was the most productive to date for the Friends stewardship program. From late March to early May we hosted five stewardship events and worked with 87 volunteers. The work of our volunteer force has always been our greatest strength and this spring really showed how well-supported our stewardship program is.

Our first stewardship events of the year were our fifth annual cottonwood planting events. 17 volunteers planted 80 trees on private land at Pilot Butte Ranch at the Terry Ranch Undaunted Stewardship Site on March 25th. A week later on April 1st 18 volunteers planted 70 trees at the much-loved Little Sandy Campground. These 150 young cottonwood trees join the 370 trees previously planted by the Friends within the monument's boundaries. This year we began a tradition that will carry on for years to come, a camp out the night before the planting. The campout allowed Friends and BLM staff the chance to connect with volunteers and deliver educational talks about the planting's importance.

Three weeks after the cottonwood plantings the Friends hosted the University of Montana's Wilderness and Civilization program on a float through the White Cliffs section. On the float 16 students took part in a survey of birdlife within the monument's campgrounds, as well as a check-in on the then almost month-old trees. The bird survey will be used by BLM resource technicians to track the use of campgrounds by migratory species throughout the year, with additional surveys taking place in the summer and fall. (cont. pg 3)

The end of April brought with it a new stewardship event that we plan to continue for years into the future, an Arbor Day tree planting. On April 28th we worked with 23 fourth graders from Fort Benton Elementary. With the students' help eight box elder trees and one cottonwood tree were planted at Coal Banks Recreation Site, these trees will bring shade to the heavily-used campground in the summer months. Sarah Harker, the Friends' AmeriCorps Vista member working on educational programming, gave the students a very thorough lesson on watershed ecosystems prior to the planting.

Our last stewardship event of the spring was the return of our Spring Clean-Up Day after a two year hiatus. Ten volunteers joined staff from the Friends and BLM as we jet boated from campsite to campsite cleaning up fire pits and collecting debris from last year's recreationists. This preseason clean-up prepared the sites for the onslaught of floaters during the summer's busy months.

We cannot thank all of our volunteers enough for their hard work and support of the stewardship program, and the monument as a whole. All of their labor will be supported throughout the summer by work from our Field Project Leader and a crew of four seasonal interns. During the summer the Field Project Leader will lead natural resource assignments and the interns will split time between watering the young cottonwoods, manning the monument's interpretive center and assisting the Field Project Leader. We still have multiple stewardship volunteer events in the coming months and would love to have your help, please keep an eye on the volunteer section of our website.

Hope to see you in the Breaks,
Joe Offer
Stewardship Director



The Friends have 5 Seasonals working on the monument this summer!

We have 4 Montana Conservation Corps Interns, **Kaylee Arnsperger**, **Chad Hoffman**, **Lantana Clark**, **Hannah Jacob**, and our Field Project Leader **Tynan Conner** (not pictured) can be found watering cottonwood trees, supervising Montana Conservation Corps Crews, or helping guests in the interpretive center. Make sure to say hello when you see them on the monument!



Does something look different? We are excited to announce our new logo and website! Missouribreaks.org has a new mobile friendly design, updated information, and a modern look. Our new logo is the iconic Hole in the Wall enclosed in a cottonwood leaf. We are ordering merchandise with the new logo soon, if you have any ideas on what you would like to see our logo on, give John an email at john@missouribreaks.org.



Upcoming Events

Clark Days, Friends of Pompeys Pillar - Billings, July 28-29th

**Invasive Weed Survey Float – Judith Landing-James Kipp
August 7th-10th**

Fort Benton River Clean-Up Day – Fort Benton, September 11th

**National Public Lands Day – James Kipp
September 30th (Camp out 29th)**

Pint Night at Blackfoot Brewing - Helena, October 9th

Annual Meeting - TBD - October 14th



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Visit missouribreaks.org, or email us at info@missouribreaks.org for more information!

Between stewardship projects, advocacy campaigns, and outreach events 2017 has been busy for The Friends! On behalf of the staff and board at Friends of the Missouri River Breaks, we would like to thank you for your ongoing support and enthusiasm for the Upper Missouri River Breaks Monument, and for the Friends mission to protect and preserve them.

Go to missouribreaks.org, to support the Friends. **Your gift of \$50, \$100, or as charitable of a donation as you can**, will support ongoing programs, and enable us to be ready for Secretary Zinke's