



The newsletter of the
Yaak Valley Forest Council

Issue Nineteen

Fall 2010

"Promoting wholeness in our forests and our community."

Our Mission is to permanently protect the last remaining roadless cores in the Yaak Valley, to support the development of a sustainable local economy based increasingly on value added forest products and ecological restoration; and to maintain and restore the valley's ecological integrity by conserving and enhancing habitat for populations of sensitive species. We are dedicated to cultivating and encouraging meaningful dialogue between historically polarized groups; bringing these groups together to find common ground on ecologically sound, stewardship based forestry management practices.



Notes from the Director.....

Dear Friends,

Summer seemed to be short and sweet this year with a late spring that proved to be cool and very wet; July was briefly hot and then more rain, overcast skies and cool temperatures. We're hoping the fall will bring one of the Yaak's spectacular Indian summers before the winter rain and snow come in. We're busy rapping up our field season while making time to gather firewood, put gardens to bed and clean the yard and driveways to make sure the snowplow has room to plow the snow we know is on the way.

Be sure to read about the work we accomplished in our Headwaters Restoration Partnership Project this season. Pete Leusch has worked hard with our partners to finish the Yaak Watershed Assessment and Restoration Plan. We'll spend the winter creating a strategic plan to implement necessary restoration projects. This planning document will create and direct work for our local restoration workforce and is helping us realize our mission goal to support the development of a sustainable local economy based on ecological restoration. Our next workforce meeting will focus on how to develop a value-added forest products industry in our community.

We welcome Matt Bowser as our new Forest Watch coordinator. Matt has hit the ground running beginning in the South Fork watershed—an area with several roadless areas, the proposed Roderick Wilderness Area and key wildlife corridors and linkage zones. Matt will be working with other collaborative groups finding that balance between community protection and protecting the wild qualities of this area.

Senator Tester's Forest Jobs and Recreation Act continues to move through the legislative process—if you haven't signed up as a citizen co-sponsor, please take a moment and do so now. www.testersenate.gov/legislation.

Our Conservation Education program added an outdoor classroom this year. Read about our first classroom restoration weekend on the Dodge Summit Road to Trail project.

As the fall colors began to shine gold across the valley, the YVFC will continue to protect our last wild places.

Peace,
Robyn King

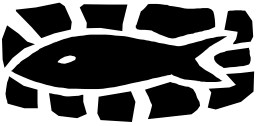


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Board and Staff

Chairman—Andrew Duffin
Members—Tony Johnson, David Henderson, Ross Rademacher, Rick Bass
Executive Director—Robyn King
Headwaters Project- Pete Leusch
Forest Watch—Matt Bowser
Conservation Ed.-Shawna Kelsey
Program Develop.—Scott Daily
Office Manager—Lisa Mountain
Photos — Beacham Photography



HEADWATERS RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECT by Pete Leusch

Headwaters field crews had a busy summer in the Yaak this year. Four new PIBO (PACFISH INFISH Biological Opinion) sites were established and surveyed at the Garver Creek, the East Fork of Basin Creek, the South Fork of the Yaak River, and the Smoot Creek. These sites will be added to the database and will be surveyed every five years to monitor changes in fish habitat related to forest management activities over time



PIBO - surveying creek

Thanks to funding from the Lincoln County Resource Advisory Council (RAC), we were able to implement a culvert cleaning project. Forty culverts that were identified in previous surveys as badly clogged were cleared and restored to functional status. Over 4000 cubic yards of sediment was at risk of clogging streams and degrading fish habitat at these culverts. To accomplish the work, we established a partnership with the Kootenai Collusion, a local group of forest workers who contracted the project. We were able to protect and restore fish habitat while saving the Forest Service money on future road repairs as well. We hope to work with Kootenai Collusion on future projects



Culvert - before

Headwaters also worked in partnership with Wildlands CPR in the Callahan Creek area to monitor decommissioned roads. The research used motion sensing cameras to document wildlife movements along the roads before the culverts were removed and the road re-contoured. The cameras will be placed in the same location next summer to compare usage after the road was removed. We also helped conduct vegetation surveys to assess effectiveness of seed mixes used to replant the roads. This type of analysis is a powerful tool for influencing the techniques used to decommission roads to make them more cost effective and beneficial for wildlife.



Culvert - after

We spent some extra time at the Dodge Summit trail this year as well. After the initial clearing of downed timber on the trail in spring, student work crews spent a weekend improving the crossings and tread work on some of the rougher sections. Headwaters Restoration Partnership worked with our Outdoor Education Director, Shawna Kelsey, and the outdoor education program, to establish the trail as an outdoor classroom. We hope to use it every year to provide a great learning experience for local kids. The work has made the trail much more user friendly. Students also learned about the history of the trail and basic botany and conducted vegetation surveys at the restored stream crossings. These surveys help us to streamline our rehabilitation work while confirming that the crossings are functioning properly. This fall we were able to get back on the trail to clear the way for hunting access and late season recreation.

Finally, progress on the Yaak Watershed Assessment and Restoration Plan continues this fall and will be instrumental in our plans for work next summer. The plan identifies conservation and restoration opportunities for westslope cutthroat trout and inland redband trout and provides specific recommendations for management activities to improve native fisheries in the Yaak River Watershed. Many thanks to Watershed Consulting, LLC and the specialists at the Three Rivers District for all their work in helping to finalize the plan.



Student Crew

FOREST WATCH

by Matt Bowser

I am thrilled to be joining the Yaak Valley Forest Council as the new Community Forest Watch Coordinator. For the past twelve years, I have pursued a path in outdoor leadership working on backcountry trails to conserve wild lands.



I am fortunate to have worked in some amazing ecosystems from Alaska to Yellowstone. This past season, I was a crewleader on the Three Rivers District, acquiring an advanced knowledge into the lay of the land that I now call home. I aim to take my leadership experience to another level and direct my skills toward a position that strives to protect and restore habitat within an organization that I highly respect.

Communication, team work, and sweat go into a trails project, but the end product is to overcome challenges along the way in hopes of further developing a citizen as a part of the wilderness community. Crew based work advanced my teaching style, fostered strong organizational skills, and illuminated the importance of dialogue in order to complete a project. In college, I received a degree that provided the foundation and theory behind communication. My field experience has taught me how to interact and unite with people to arrive at a common destination.

I have worked for several different non-profits and the federal government in my previous field. My experience with both sets of institutions has given me a solid understanding and scope into how the relationship between a sponsor and conservation

organization functions from a programmatic level into the field. I look forward to the challenges my new job presents. Polarity seems to currently have a grasp nationwide and I want to do my best at the community level to ease its grip.

I made the jump to Forest Watch Coordinator on the first of October and landed squarely on an assignment in the very heart of the valley: the South Fork Yaak Project. Sarah Canepa, a former Forest Watch Coordinator, has kindly been showing me the ropes and introducing me to the world of Forest Watch. We've already been on the ground for the project doing pre-harvest monitoring on a handful of sub-units.

The South Fork project will follow the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) guidelines, so the timeline of events will move rather quickly:

- October/November 2010 – 30 day scoping period
- January 2011 – EA Release / Objection period begins
- May 2011 – Decision notice

I understand this project is very near and dear to local supporters, so please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions, comments, or concerns. Later this fall, I will be asking for your support in the form of comment letters on the project. I hope to speak with many of you at that time.

Please contact Matt at 295-9736 or Matt@yaakvalley.org.

Dodge Summit Road to Trail Project

This past June the YVFC hosted four Troy High School students on a maintenance project to the Dodge Summit trail. In 2004, YVFC and other partners decommissioned a highly degraded five mile stretch of forest road that annually deposited huge amounts of sediment into sensitive fish habitat in the upper Yaak River in northwest Montana. With assistance from the US Forest Service and our other partners, YVFC helped to coordinate this Dodge Summit Road-to-Trail Project and turn the old road into a non-motorized trail in some of the wildest country in the Yaak Valley, home of grizzly bears, wolves, moose and elk. It is a perfect, easy-access, moderately difficult stretch of trail to begin building an outdoor classroom.

The crew arrived at the trailhead at noon and in a steady drizzle met with Forest Service personnel to learn trail maintenance and leave-no-trace camping skills. Afterward, we set up camp, cooked dinner and spent a rainy but pleasant evening around the fire learning about the history of the trail and the work to come.

Saturday morning we split into two crews. One group of four worked with pulaskis to delineate the tread at stream crossings and at waterbars and other drainage features. The second crew of three worked with pruners to clear alder and other shrubs that

were encroaching on the trail. In the afternoon the groups joined to work several sections of rough trail where the tread was unclear. We removed the large rocks and smoothed the tread making the trail more conducive to mountain biking in particular.

On Sunday we began the day with a basic course in botany as it relates to road restoration. We identified trees, shrubs, moss, grass, native forbs, and invasive weeds as the key plant types of concern. Following Kootenai National Forest protocols we conducted vegetation surveys at all six of the stream crossings on the trail. The vegetation surveys allow us to see what plantings are the most effective and efficient in stabilizing the sites. All of the crossings were in a stable condition with very minimal erosion and strong revegetation.

On Monday morning we broke camp and spent the day visiting the waterfalls of the West Fork of the Yaak River and Boyd Hill Cemetery. We concluded the trip with a celebration feast at the Yaak Community Center where each student was recognized for their hard work and given a small gift. The trip was a success and we were able to improve the trail while educating the students on many levels. Plus, we all had a lot of fun, made new friends and acquired important skills.

WHY IT MATTERS

BY DAVID HENDERSON

Asking why something matters is always a good thing. Pulling back from any endeavor and trying to see the forest rather than just the trees – in our case, this cliché seems particularly apropos – and ask ourselves why are we doing this will always generate some needed if not expanded perspective. John Muir once said, “When you try to pick one thing out in nature, you find it’s connected to everything else.” Because of this, our heritage as western thinking children of the Enlightenment struggles with always wanting to take things apart in an effort to understand them and eventually conquer them rather than seeing things together and communing with them. However, this tendency of ours to dissect things in order to understand them and eventually master them is meeting some new challenges in today’s world and even in today’s science.

We’re beginning to appreciate the interconnectedness and relational nature of everything from sub-atomic particles to the globalization of macro-economics. Even the preeminence of objective, removed, disconnected scientific observation of phenomena is being challenged by the reality that the observer and the observed are intimately and subjectively connected. Now, I appreciate as much as anyone what the Enlightenment and Sir Francis Bacon’s scientific method have done to distance us from the tyranny of subjectivity gone mad via superstition. But as we so often tend to do, our western thought pendulum needs to re-center itself and with the advent of ecology and many other scientific innovations such as quantum physics, recognizing the ultimate connectedness, relational orientation, and systems nature of all that is around us has begun to do that re-centering. No one would even begin to challenge Muir’s observation in today’s understanding of the natural world or even our place in it.

But what are the implications of this deeper understanding of the relational nature of nature and our place in it and in our particular case of setting aside wilderness in the Yaak? Perhaps social change movements offer an insight for us. When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. began the work of challenging the de jure and structural racism in the South, anyone familiar with this racism understood one thing clearly – racism was grounded in the intention to make certain people what Martin Buber would call “the Other.” It was only in this disconnect that white Southerners could perpetrate the racism which perpetuated what former Mississippi Governor William Winter called “the closed society.”

And it’s this same disconnecting today which allows us to fall into everything from homophobia to Islamaphobia.

But Dr. King understood something else – he knew that racism, human social disconnection, not only violated the victims but also did violence to the perpetrators and progenitors of racism. As much as racism was doing violence to its victims, it was also diminishing the humanity of its practitioners. As a child of the South I saw firsthand what Dr. King recognized and in his remarkable humanity wanted to eliminate, but not just because of his love for his black sisters and brothers in the South but also because of his love for his white sisters and brothers who were being victimized as well by their own disconnection from their better selves.

So, what can we take away from this discussion of King’s fight against racism and why does it matter to someone who wants to fight for protection of a wild place such as the Yaak? Not only does disconnecting from our natural world end up doing violence to our environment – whether it be logging done by logging companies who care nothing about the woods and drainages they dismantle or the local people they victimize or any of us who choose to increase our carbon footprint because it’s just too inconvenient not to – both diminish people who in their greed have lost touch with their connection to the world and those around them. Why does work like the Yaak Valley Forest Council matter? It matters because it is an important effort to take a stand against an unnatural disconnect – an “Othering” if you will – that continues a cycle of violence that not only hurts our planet but continues to do irreparable damage to the souls of anyone choosing to engage in that disconnect. Underneath environmentalism is a desire to honor our interconnectedness and to enhance our own humanity. The Yaak Valley Forest Council is one small instrument committed to this, and that matters.





CONSERVATION EDUCATION UPDATE

BY SHAWNA KELSEY

The summer came to a close after a productive garden season at the elementary school. As autumn arrived, we had to switch gears back to the classroom, focusing on the current in-class lessons in Kindergarten through third grade and planning a high school environmental studies program.

The school garden, in its second season at the elementary school, did very well. With the addition of high-quality topsoil, the garden produced quite a few vegetables. At the end of the season, and before the start of school, the garden hosted a harvest party.

With the help of high school and adult volunteers and donations of vegetables from local gardeners, we were able to prepare a dinner for the community. Thirty-five community members attended the event, which was located at the school garden. Hopefully, the dinner was the first of many annual harvest parties at the garden.

Now that school has started in Troy, the in-class lessons have begun again at the elementary school. The focus of these weekly lessons varies from class to class but all revolve around the subjects of local nature and community.

Using these topics as a foundation, we teach core subjects including science, writing and art. In kindergarten, for example, the science lessons are based on the letter of the week and have included moose for 'm' and snake for 's.'

In addition to the classroom lessons, we have activities two days a week in the afterschool program. One day is for nature walks and the second is for garden work. The nature walk is a time for walking and exploring in the Callahan Creek area near the school. The garden work afternoon has revolved around preparing the garden for the winter. The kids are building raised beds, fertilizing the soil and planting garlic.

Finally, the Conservation Education Program is preparing to work in the high school classrooms. We are currently working on an environmental studies curriculum that can be used by different teachers to complement their existing courses.

What we hope to accomplish with this work is a heightened sense of place as well as an increase in the ecological literacy of the student body.

THANK YOU FROM SCOTT DAILY

Dear friends,

Many of you answered our call, yet again, as you so often do. Ongoing, it has been for supporting YVFC's programs and on occasion is has been to support a special cause such as when our director, Robyn, had to undergo a very serious surgery a couple of years ago, and then again when I, almost a year ago, was confronted with a cancer recurrence in my pelvis. That was winter of this year and it was indeed the grayest winter of my life, making my darkest Yaak winter look like a trip to Key West. My daughters at the time were five and eight and it was to be the fourth time they would be at my side as I underwent highly invasive surgery to try to stop the spread of the rare bone (or cartridge) cancer I have been wrestling with since I was diagnosed in 2008.

Life for all four of us would be forever changed with this surgery that would amputate my entire leg, hip and pelvis on the right side of my body. For Sherrie, my wife with whom I had passed out of our dull old lives and into the wildness of the Yaak in 1997 (the very year YVFC was forming), it was a time of not only sorrow and loss but also one of immense responsibility.

A request went out in this newsletter stating our situation and many of you responded with generous support, financially as well as in kind words and prayers. It is for this support, as well as the ongoing wishes for good health, that I am writing this somewhat belated thank you and update.

So many of you donated to my family's fund; the money was used to pay for a hotel room for my family during the twenty days I remained in Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane, WA. It was used to help feed us during a time when neither Sherrie nor I were working. It was used to help pay toward my high annual health care deductible, as well as for all of the supplements I continue to take.

We will use the remaining balance in the weeks and months ahead of us. We recently learned that the cancer has spread to my lungs. We are not fully certain what this means in terms of

life expectancy. I am not asking for a full prognosis at this time. I want to live as fully as I am able until my body no longer is alive. We have a fair understanding that, short of a miracle, all that we can do now that metastasis has occurred is hope to extend life and try to slow tumor growth. That is what I am told by many, but I also believe that with the integrative approach I am assembling right now I might be able to attain my goal (short of any based on miraculous thinking): I am sure the doctors may deem it quite lofty, but I want to be here at least ten years so that my girls can grasp what "losing papa" means, as well as what it does not mean. My biggest fear is that they would feel some sort of guilt that could affect their lives into the future.

I have a lot of work to do, for my girls. For myself and for Sherrie.

Robyn and the YVFC board have been very helpful to us throughout this trying time in our lives. I will continue working for YVFC as our program development coordinator in charge of major grants for as long as I am able. Unfortunately much of my other work that I was undertaking here in Sandpoint I will now either put to rest or pass on to other more able friends.

If anyone is interested enough to want to keep tabs on what is going on with all of this, I am considering registering with one of the websites similar to what Robyn did during her surgery and recovery period a couple of years ago. I may even start a blog because I see it as an opportunity to keep our friends updated regularly and also because I am considering documenting this experience in the form of a memoir. That's another lofty goal and we'll see what comes of it. What I do know is that I will use the Internet this time around to keep our friends and supporters updated.

If you would like to be updated, we thank you for your friendship. Send me an email at ravenchortle@gmail.com and I will be sure that we send you information on how best to keep informed when the time comes.

As always, thank you for your support.
To a wild Yaak and a bountiful life!

Scott Daily

Help us help the Yaak

BY RICK BASS

One of the most gratifying things about being a board member of the Yaak Valley Forest Council is watching supporters pull together in common cause for the good of a community and an ecosystem. The general spirit of our dream is a beautiful and important thing, as is the specificity of our labors: a community garden, a festival, kids' campouts, repairs to a damaged watershed, and the preservation of the wilderness- the farther, wilder country just over the next ridge -that is the core of our inhabitation of this place, the Yaak Valley, only so-recently emerged from beneath the ice: a land of vibrant dynamism, cloaked with dense wet forests and yet stirred here and there each year by breaths of fire. The Yaak is a million-acre wild garden like no other: and we who live here, and we who are grateful for such places, understand that we have an obligation to the Yaak -a responsibility, to go with the great gift of our rights.

The YVFC has come a long way in a short time and it is through the goodwill of residents and visitors alike- supporters from near and far who are committed to helping protect what is special about this place, and who understand also the Yaak's importance -ecologically but also socially -in the larger fabric of the West.

One of the least pleasant things -the pressures and burdens- of being a board member, and one whose strengths do not lie in this area, to say the least, -has to do with the obligation to help support financially the workings of our organization. The YVFC has always risen to meet what opportunities present themselves to us, no matter how challenging -and we are expanding, seeking to build

capacity, now, apropos of the Great Recession, as we see the fruit of our long labors beginning to ripen -most notably with the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act, introduced last July by Senator Jon Tester, and co-sponsored by Senator Max Baucus.

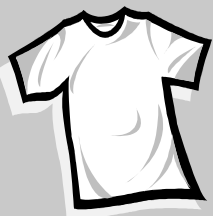
As board members, it's one of our duties to help keep the people who are implementing our great work: -our Executive Director, our Forest Watch coordinator, our office staff, our Headwaters Restoration director, our grant writer, our Conservation Education director- working, and appropriately cared-for. There's not a shred of fat in our organization or our work, and our journey is long. Many of you have given generously in the past, and the part of me that makes me not the best board member for this kind of thing actually hesitates to ask you for more support- specifically, to ask for money, to help us keep our great workers keeping on. There's a part of me that wants to say *Heck, take a break from your giving, you've accomplished great things with that generosity, we'll find the money somewhere else.*

But the truth is our budgets, -like all grassroots groups -are always close to the bone. The journey, perhaps, never ends, nor does the asking, -nor, hopefully, the work of the workers. We are still shy of reaching the generous matching grant offered to us (\$8000) by the Cinnabar Foundation.

If, here near year's end, you are able to make a tax-deductible donation to the Yaak Valley Forest Council, know please that we leverage your giving magnificently. It is a hard correlation to envision an abstraction, to equate your generosity -whether you have never given before, or have given dozens of times- with wilderness in the Yaak, and wildness- but it is happening, the abstract is becoming real, as our organization moves further into the future, and we are grateful for the fuel of your own giving, your partnership in this great venture.

Thank you for anything you're able to give.

Yaak Valley Forest Council T-Shirts



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Cotton - so soft
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Original artwork of banjo-playing porcupine!! See www.yaakvalley.org

**Two
Books**

*Archipelago: Notes
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Stories of the Yaak by Local Authors

&

The Roadless Yaak

Reflections & Observations

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Do the words *wild* and *untamed* have a special place in your heart?

- ◆ Do the Yaak Valley's **roadless lands** have a value to you and your family?
- ◆ Do you support **habitat restoration and promoting community participation in forest use decisions**?



If you answered yes to these questions, please consider adding your name to our unified voice promoting these ideas. There are **no membership dues** to pay, and nothing expected of you beyond your support. However, should you choose to get more involved, we can provide you with the information that matters regarding future timber sales and other projects in our forests.

All Lincoln County residents and property owners are welcome to add their names to our list of supporters.

Please contact us at YVFC, 265 Riverview Dr. Troy, MT 59935 406/295-9736 or info@yaakvalley.org

We Appreciate Your Support.

Special thanks to individual donors and to the following foundations that have provided funding over the past five years to aid the YVFC with our projects.

Bullitt Foundation, Patagonia,
Brainerd Foundation,
Resources for Community Collaboration,
Ferguson Foundation,
Cinnabar Foundation, Peradam Foundation,
Claiborne/Ortenberg, Kongsgaard Goldman,
Cadeau Foundation, Ben & Jerry's Foundation,
Maki Foundation, New Land Foundation,
Campion Foundation, Y2Y Initiative, NEST,
Montana Arts Council, Arthur B Schultz Foundation,
444S, Nasaw Family Foundation,
SHARE, Engelhard Foundation,
Bunting Family Foundation,
Norcross, Wilburforce, and TREC.

HEADWATERS PROJECT:

American Fisheries- Montana Chapter,
Claiborne/Ortenberg,
National Forest Foundation,
Trout and Salmon Foundation, Trout Unlimited—Flathead Chapter,
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks—Future Fisheries Project,
Lincoln County Resource Advisory Council, MT Chapter Sierra Club,
Kootenai Valley Trout Club,
Idaho Panhandle Trout Unlimited

*All we are saying is give peace a chance....
John Lennon.*

YES, I want to be part of the Yaak Valley Forest Council's unified voice promoting the ideas expressed in this newsletter! I am a resident of, or own property in, Lincoln County.
 I am neither a resident of, nor do I own property in, Lincoln County, but I would like to support the YVFC in its mission. Here is my tax-deductible donation.

Name _____ Phone _____

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Email _____ Donation Amount _____

Donors of \$25.00 or more may receive a copy of one of our books. Donors of \$50.00 or more may receive two books. Please check your preferences.

- Archipelago: Notes from an Inland Island*, an anthology of Yaak Valley essays written by local authors. *The*
- Roadless Yaak: Reflections and Observations About One of Our Last Great Wild Places*, written by well known authors.

You may also donate through our website at www.yaakvalley.org using paypal.

Archipelago

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Troy, Montana 59935

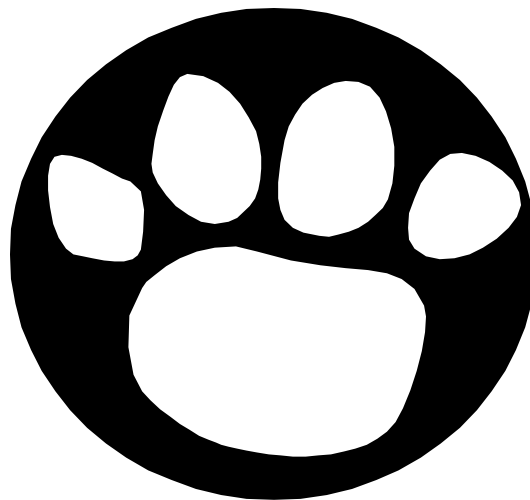
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