

NORTH FORK PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION



"...to champion stewardship of the natural resources and protection of the exceptional biodiversity of the North Fork of the Flathead River watershed in Northwest Montana."

Volume XXXIX

Summer 2021

Number 1

NFPA Annual Meeting

October 2, 2021, at Home Ranch Bottoms
8950 North Fork Road

Our speaker this year is

Sally Thompson who co-wrote **People Before the Park: The Kootenai and Blackfeet before Glacier National Park.**

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

4:30pm: Potluck supper

5:45pm: Short business meeting to elect officers and members of the Board of Directors and report on the work of NFPA

6:30pm: 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.

Reaching Out

By Flannery Coats, NFPA President

"The only change we want is the seasons" said the t-shirt I bought at the Merc as a tourist over a decade ago. What a concept. There is no place else in the world that I've seen so far that has physically defined all of my own personal values and beliefs so perfectly and that t-shirt said it all. This was the memory that popped in my head as I drove up the road the other day, deliberating on what to say to you all in my first newsletter greeting as NFPA President. Meanwhile tiny SUV's blazed past me with the vigor of an emergency responder. More people. More cars. More urgency. But, perhaps, more opportunity for

humans to take away with them a sense of majesty from experiencing one of the last intact ecosystems – clean water and all? Let's hope so. There is no doubt the North Fork has changed, but I am excited to share with all of you the work that has been done over the past year to continue our mission of preservation in the face of these disconnected, extra-motorized, overrun times.

In response to the aforementioned, as well as the tragic recent events resulting in the deaths of four bears, our Board has taken on these challenging times by identifying education and outreach as our most effective tools. Committees were formed, two educational publications have been distributed (one in collaboration with the landowners association), one scholarship fund established to further the study of wilderness, and our eyes are continuously kept on existing management plans, as well as those that don't...yet.

The good news is that the North Fork is not alone. We have many allies in the greater Glacier region facing similar challenges. It is certainly exciting times to get to work and I couldn't be more honored to be a part of this organization, as well as this incredible Board of humans who care so hard, and look to you all for guidance and support as we carry on another year.

Cheers,
Flannery

Watershed Currents

By Randy Kenyon, Chair of the NFPA Watershed Working Group

Notes from Upstream...

Flathead National Forest's Glacier View/Hungry Horse Ranger Station continues work toward finalizing its Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan. This long-awaited and important updated document will guide the use of the North, South and Middle Forks of the Flathead River for current users and future generations. Despite the projected completion scheduled for earlier this year, the usual issues have caused delays. The plan now calls for the final draft submitted to the public for review this summer, with a completed plan ready for implementation in the Fall. The document apparently will be utilized as a blueprint for other Wild and Scenic Rivers systems. This plan's impact on locals up here is uncharted waters.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) remains a vexing concern, and will be for the indeterminate future, more than likely, a permanent feature of Montana's watershed protection system. Inspections are still required with a limited number of inspection stations available both through Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Glacier Park. Please use caution if using watercraft and contact local authorities for inspection information.

The Glacier View/Hungry Horse Ranger District recently released its final determination after almost two years effort on the Frozen Moose Project plan on the North Fork. This huge project covering over 8,000 acres is designed for vegetation treatments to reduce forest fuels, improve forest health, and provide forest products for the local economy. Fortunately, it includes a series of actions that will hopefully improve and maintain our watershed habitat. These actions include culvert upgrading and/or removal. These culverts must be properly sized and maintained to allow upstream fish passage, and to prevent

floods from washing out roads and causing road sediment to wash into streams. In the project area, Red Meadow, Whale, and Trail Creeks are designated as Critical Habitat for bull trout, which is a Threatened Species under the Endangered Species Act. The work on the ground will be ongoing this summer and probably finishing up next summer. There will be some limited treatment work in riparian areas. Our NFPA was integral in providing input to ensure this project is in the best interests of preserving our incredible wildland heritage.

A new and vital conservation organization has recently arisen: Flathead Rivers Alliance. Formed in 2019, the Flathead Rivers Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the Flathead River System. Unfortunately, our usage and visitation have been dramatically increasing over the last decade, while resource management agencies have been increasingly unsupported and have been challenged to keep up with the increasing threats to the resource. Through education, stewardship and community outreach, they will be working alongside their partners to maintain the health of the Flathead River, as well as to ensure access and enjoyment for all users. Through education and outreach they seek to provide the tools and access to knowledge that fosters an environment of self-teaching and pride in the river. They are partnered with the National Park Service, Flathead National Forest, American Rivers and Pursuit. Please visit their website at flatheadrivers.org to learn more and become involved!

Wildlife Corner

By Diane Boyd, Chair of the NFPA Wildlife Working Group

In 2021 the NFPA rolled out a new *Living with Wildlife* brochure and a new issue of the *Bear News* to provide information about our resident bears and how we can better live with a wide variety of our wild neighbors. NFPA distributed these to our members and also made them available on our website so everyone can benefit, especially the critters: <https://www.gravel.org/archives/>.

On the darker wildlife side, some major events happened that will affect our wolves, black bears, and grizzly bears. Several dreadful new bills were signed into law during this 2021 legislative session that will negatively impact wolves and bears. Laws were enacted to reduce wolf populations through allowing neck snares, bounty payments, longer harvest seasons, unlimited number of wolves killed, spotlighting, night vision scopes, and baiting. These changes will increase the non-target capture of dogs and wildlife species including lynx, bears, mountain lions, deer, elk, and wolverine. Additionally, new laws now allow spring hunting of black bears with hounds and a chase season afterwards to train dogs but not shoot bears, which will increase fatal outcomes for humans, black bears, grizzly bears and dogs. Another bill prevents Fish, Wildlife and Parks from relocating grizzly bears outside of pre-approved grizzly management zones, which opponents argued will lead to an increase in the density of problem bears and force wildlife managers to kill more bears.

In late August/early September, four female grizzly bears – Monica and her three yearling cubs – were euthanized in the North Fork after getting several food rewards from human establishments and subsequently becoming destructive in their search for additional food resources. In 2018, Monica had two cubs that became food conditioned in the same Polebridge area through similar food conditioning, and both cubs were then euthanized. The tragic loss of these magnificent animals could have been avoided if people had been more careful.

On Aug 30, FWP removed the quota on wolves in HD 110 (North Fork), and in 313 and 316 (Yellowstone buffer) so now there is NO LIMIT to the number of wolves that can be shot, trapped, or snared in those formerly protected districts. The war on wolves is raging out of control. Be careful out there with your dogs, they may get caught in a wolf trap or snare. (See '*Fish and Wildlife Commission adopts 2021/2022 wolf hunting and trapping regulations*': <https://fwp.mt.gov/homepage/news/2021/aug/08-30-fish-and-wildlife-commission-adopts-2021-2022-wolf-hunting-and-trapping-regulations>.)

The North Fork remains one of the truly last best places in the Lower 48 for our spectacular wildlife, clean air, pure creeks, undammed rivers, dark skies, majestic mountains, and places of deep silence. But it is facing significant challenges from being sought after by so many people wanting to experience the North Fork's beauty and wild spirit. We hope you'll help us keep it wild. And vote for change for the better.

Wilderness Matters

By Debo Powers, Chair of the Wilderness Working Group

Every summer, when I see more and more people streaming into the North Fork to recreate, I am grateful that we made sure that 80,000 acres in the northern Whitefish Range became Recommended Wilderness in the Flathead Forest Plan. Thanks to the work of the Whitefish Range Partnership in 2013, we can count on the protection of some wild places in the North Fork. Our next steps with the Recommended Wilderness in the North Fork is to make sure that it continues to be managed as wilderness so that it can eventually be officially designated as such.

It is important to protect wild places for many reasons:

1—Wild places maintain habitat security for wildlife. The abundance of wildlife is what makes the North Fork special, including the apex predators like grizzly bears and wolves. Plant and animal species around the world are disappearing at an alarming rate. We must conserve places where wildlife (both plant and animal) can have a refuge.

2—Wild places feed our souls. In this bustling world filled with roads and development, humans need to be able to get away from the noise and congestion and notice our inherent connection to all living things. For our own well-being, we need to be able to go to wild places where we can be quiet and contemplative and notice what a beautiful world we live in.

3—Wild places sequester carbon and greenhouse gases and can give us a hedge against the ravages of climate change that are already affecting our lives. There is a world-wide movement to conserve 30% of the landscape and what we do in the North Fork is part of that equation.

We are way out of balance in Montana. Only 3.4 percent of our landscape in Montana has been designated as Wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964. If you compare that to California (which is roughly the same size as Montana), they have 14 percent designated as Wilderness. And the human population of that state is 40 times as large as ours and has the 6th or 7th largest economy in the world.

Montana's population is growing at a fast rate. It is past time that we protect our remaining wild lands before it is too late.

Outreach Committee

By Julie Nelson, Chair of the Outreach Committee

This has been a busy and exciting year for the NFPA Outreach Committee! We decided to focus on education outreach; specifically, living with wildlife in a safe and responsible manner.

Diane Boyd updated the Living with Wildlife brochure and we teamed up with the NFLA to ensure that every landowner received a copy. The NFPA recognizes that the number of people purchasing property and moving to the North Fork has been on a steady rise over the last few years, and we believe connecting with these newcomers on the issue of wildlife safety is of the utmost importance. The North Fork Welcome Committee has been given a supply of Living with Wildlife brochures in order that they will go out to each new landowner.

We also resurrected the North Fork Bear News newsletter! We intend for this to be an annual mailing to all NFPA members. Funding for both publications was largely supported by an endowment from the Flathead Coalition. A major thank you goes out to Rachel Potter and all Coalition members!

The Outreach Committee has identified the need to modernize our donation and membership opportunities and plans to add an online payment option to the NFPA website. Thanks to the dedicated and tireless work of our IT guru, Bill Walker, this option should go live on gravel.org this fall. It is our hope that by making it even easier to donate to the NFPA and/or become a member, we will significantly increase the funds we receive and can then in turn, use them to continue our educational outreach mailings and plan future events.

We are always open to hearing suggestions from our NFPA members on what kind of outreach you would like to see, so please don't hesitate to reach out!

NFPA needs to raise \$1,000 to edit, print and distribute the North Fork Bear News next year - You can help us continue this coexistence education! Please consider adding an additional \$10, \$25, or \$50 to your membership dues this year to support vital reporting on our local North Fork bears. A donation of \$100 or more gets you a NFPA t-shirt!

Scholarship and Award Committee Report

By Suzanne Hildner, Chair of the Scholarship and Award Committee

The brand-new Scholarship and Award Committee has been busy over the winter and spring. We are excited to report on our progress with projects made possible by the transfer of funds from Headwaters Montana. Headwaters disbanded when their founder and director Dave Hadden retired the end of 2020.

Jack Potter Award ~ NFPA was bequeathed stewardship of the Jack Potter Award from Headwaters. Flathead Audubon described this award as follows "Headwaters Montana established the award in 2011 after the retirement of Jack Potter, a 40-year veteran of Glacier Park. Potter retired from the park as

Chief of Science and Resources. He was known for his vigorous defense and advocacy of the Park's natural resources, sometimes in opposition to forces looking to be expedient or financial rather than custodial." NFPA subsequently decided to award the 2021 Jack Potter Award to Dave Hadden on the occasion of his retirement, in deep appreciation for all of his years of effective conservation work. Subsequently, Jack Potter (for whom the award is named) and his wife Rachel requested that NFPA change the name of the award going forward to the Glacier National Park Stewardship Award.

Kreck/Fields Wilderness Scholarship ~ This spring marked the inaugural offering of the Kreck/Fields Scholarship, established with funds received from Headwaters. Dr. Loren Kreck, DDS, dedicated much of his life to wilderness and natural resource conservation on the Flathead National Forest and was a key activist in the designation of the Great Bear Wilderness and the protection of the North Fork of the Flathead River Valley, bordering Glacier National Park. Edwin Fields, a well-respected builder in the Flathead Valley, spent decades as an activist for protecting Montana's remaining wilderness and wild places, including founding and serving as the president of Headwaters Montana. After their respective passings, both the Kreck and Fields families bequeathed funds to Headwaters, which were subsequently transferred to NFPA. Both Loren and Edwin would have greatly appreciated the creation of this scholarship to promote wilderness advocacy.

The scholarship will be awarded annually to a graduate student attending a Montana institution of higher education who is using their education to advocate and promote wilderness protection and preservation. This advocacy and promotion can be in the areas of public policy, literature, journalism, or the arts. Specific fields of study can be, but are not limited to, wildlife biology, ecology, environmental studies, environmental law, journalism, or the expressive arts. The value of the scholarship is \$1500, awarded annually. More information and directions on how to apply can be found at our website, gravel.org.

After reviewing many applications, the NFPA is pleased and excited to announce the 2021 recipient of the Kreck/Fields Wilderness Scholarship which was offered for the first time this year. Malcolm Gilbert is a second-year law Student at University of Montana Alexander Blewett III Law School. Mr. Gilbert brings a strong history of wilderness advocacy to his law studies and is presently on the Board of the Montana Environmental Information Center. His diverse background includes many years as a fishing guide.

Other Activities

The North Fork Landowners Association sponsors a number of hikes, river floats and bicycling events. See the "recurring events" notes near the bottom of their calendar page (<https://nflandowners.com/calendar>) for details and listings of more activities.

Wild Montana (formerly Montana Wilderness Association) offers several hikes each year in Northwest Montana. They have both a summer and winter schedule. See their website for full details: <https://wildmontana.org/> (click the "discover" link near the top[of the home page.]

The North Fork Trails Association (NFTA) has quite a few trails-related activities throughout the year, some in conjunction with other organizations. See their online calendar (<https://nftrails.org/calendar/>) for more information.

Flathead Rivers Alliance (FRA) launched a River Ambassador Program this summer and is currently seeking volunteers to join the team. To learn more visit: <https://www.flatheadrivers.org/>.

MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR DUES YET, IT'S TIME!

If it's been more than a couple of years since you last paid dues, this may be your last newsletter.

If you *have* paid your dues for 2021. **Thank you!**

I want to help protect the North Fork of the Flathead River Valley at the western edge of Glacier National Park.

_____	New	Name	_____
_____	Renewal	Address	_____

		Phone	_____
		Email	_____

Save a tree! I wish to receive the newsletter by email _____

I want to join the NFPA. Here is my membership fee of \$20.00/year _____
family membership of \$25.00/year _____
living lightly membership of \$10.00/year _____

I want to help. Here is my donation of _____ for _____

I wish to receive occasional email alerts about important issues! _____

Please remove me from your mailing list. _____

Mail check or cash to: North Fork Preservation Association
77 Moose Creek Road
Polebridge, MT 59928
(406) 752-5935

***** NFPA needs to raise \$1,000 to edit, print and distribute the North Fork Bear News next year. You can help us continue this coexistence education! Please consider adding an additional \$10, \$25, or \$50 to your membership dues this year to support vital reporting on our local North Fork bears. A donation of \$100 or more gets you a NFPA t-shirt! *****

North Fork Preservation Association

77 Moose Creek Road
Polebridge MT 59928

Please remember to pay your dues!

If it's been more than a couple of years since you did so, this may be your last newsletter.

NFPA OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Flannery Coats, President (406) 407-3863 flannery.e.coats@gmail.com

Debo Powers, Vice President (406) 407-0787 debopowers@gmail.com

Randy Kenyon, Treasurer, Chair of Watershed Working Grp (406) 257-4362 kenyonnorthfork@gmail.com

Suzanne Hildner, Secretary, Chair of Scholarship and Award Com. (406) 862-2831 sdhildner@icloud.com

Diane Boyd, Chair of Wildlife Working Group (406) 470-2832 dianekboyd@gmail.com

Bill Walker, Media/Newsletter Editor wkwalker@nvdi.com

Julie Zeigler, Chair of Outreach Committee (503) 999-9744 julienelson406@gmail.com

Robin Chopus sweetlorettas@gmail.com

Amy Robinson arobinson200@gmail.com

Roger Sullivan (406) 250-1472 rsullivanmt@gmail.com

Officers are elected for a one-year term; board members for two. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact a board member.

NFPA T-shirts are Here!

For the first time in many years, NFPA has a new t-shirt! The cost is \$20 and they will be on sale in all sizes at the annual meeting on October 2. Show your support for watershed, wilderness, and wildlife by wearing this great shirt!