

Adopt a Trailhead Montana

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **68 AATM sites since 2015**
- **38 total AATM partners**
- **Chapters of the Montana Back Country Horsemen have adopted 18 trailheads across the state**
- **There is at least one AATM kiosk on each of the 7 national forests in the state of Montana**
- **A total of 28 AATM kiosks are located on Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' State Parks**

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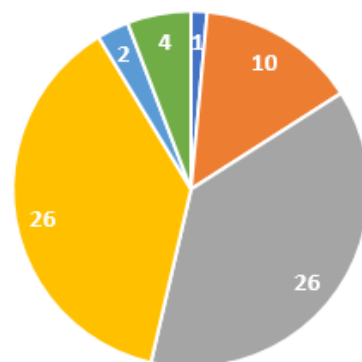
Humble Beginnings

Adopt a Trailhead Montana or (AATM) is a cooperative volunteer program to help protect Montana's trails from further spread of noxious weeds. The program started in 2015 with one AATM kiosk installed on the Lolo National Forest at the Rattlesnake National Recreation Site outside of Missoula. Since then, a total of 68 AATM kiosks have been installed across Montana. The AATM program was started with the intent to increase awareness of site specific weeds and to gain volunteer involvement at trail-

heads. Noxious weeds can be a problem at trailheads because these invasive plants thrive in disturbed areas. Repetitive disturbance at trailheads provides the perfect habitat for noxious weeds to become established and increases their ability to spread. When an infestation occurs at a trailhead, noxious weeds can slowly make their way up that trail system, often hitchhiking as seeds in treads of mountain bike tires, ATVs or other motorized vehicles; in the socks, shoelaces or

gear of hikers and hunters, or in the hair or fur of pack animals. A great prevention tool for noxious weeds is to control them in small areas, which helps reduce their spread to weed free areas, AATM is doing this!

AATM Locations by Year



■ 2015 ■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019 ■ 2020

How to Adopt?

The AATM program relies on the dedication and involvement of volunteer groups from. Groups interested in participating need to be organized and have good support from their membership for an AATM project to be successful. Member-

ship must be willing to perform removal of noxious weeds at least once per calendar year at the site selected. To adopt a trailhead, a group must choose a trailhead, select 4 species to feature on signage, provide group name, logo, trailhead name, latitude & longitude, the name of the county the trailhead is in, and the land management

agency information. Once these items are provided, signage can be developed and a work day can be organized for a weed pull/education day and kiosk installation.

For more information about AATM and to adopt a trailhead, contact Shantell at 406-883-7375.



Smoking Boomer Rail Trail

Kelsey Guffey, Wheatland County Weed Coordinator



AATM kiosk at the Smoking Boomer Rail Trail outside of Harlowton, MT.

“This (AATM) event and kiosk gives us an additional way to provide outreach to our stakeholders”

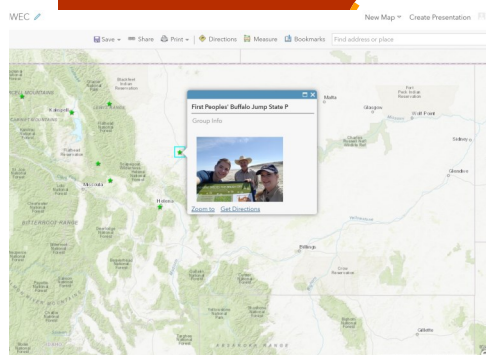
Wheatland County Weed District recently installed an AATM educational kiosk and boot brush, courtesy of Adopt a Trailhead Montana, at our Smoking Boomer Rail Trail in Harlowton, Montana. As a part of its unveiling, we hosted our first annual “Pulling Together Weed Walk” over Independence Day weekend. We also had the pleasure of using the Montana Weed Control Association’s South Central Area noxious weed education trailer at this event. The U-Bet 4-H club and other participants helped us pull 4 giant bags of noxious weeds as a part of the integrated management on this site. This event and kiosk gives us an additional way to provide outreach to our stakehold-

ers. Our trailhead is near the Wheatland County Fairgrounds, Chief Joseph Park, the Musselshell River, and the proposed site for a community development project. Trail users, community members, visitors, and rodeo participants can now have a visual reminder that their actions can have an ecological and/or economic impact on an area.

The development of this project has also been a wonderful opportunity for multiple partners to come together for a win-win positive collaboration. We hope to “adopt” another trailhead, and install another kiosk at a USFS site near Judith Gap in the near future.



Members of the U-Bet 4H Club try out their newly installed boot brush kiosk



An interactive map and searchable database will house all AATM information.

Programmatic Updates...

Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign

One of the yearly requirements of adopting a trailhead under the AATM program is to provide data collection: pounds of weeds pulled, number of hours spent pulling, number of volunteers and other logistics regarding the signs/kiosks. To keep track of this data, the MNWEC is working with MSU’s spatial and GIS professor to build a searchable digital repository that includes an interactive map to show where AATM kiosks are located around the state. The repository will house all AATM information and will be accessible from the MNWEC’s website; this will be helpful to track future progression of the effectiveness of AATM and the weed management performed at trailheads, keep up to date on which signs need replaced, chronology of the program, and to determine if species composition at trailheads has changed.

Roundup River Walk & Heritage Trail

Meriel Beck, Musselshell County Weed District Coordinator



Musselshell County Weed District installed a kiosk at the Roundup River walk and Heritage Trail and held the first ever weed pull in the same area that the kiosk is in, in 2020. Having an educational kiosk was so important for this

area because of all the foot traffic. People from all over the area drive to the parking area where the kiosk is located and use the walkway year-round. Having the ability to have such good information about the noxious weeds is vital

to maintain the work that the Weed District has done in the area and to keep new invaders at bay with the boot brush station.

In 2020 the Weed District in conjunction with the Extension Office

held its first annual weed pull in the area that the kiosk is located in. We were able to pull over 70 bags of spotted knapweed on a side hill of the County Fairgrounds. The plan is to continue having a weed pull each year with the Community and the 4-H clubs involvement. Having the kiosk installed has given the community good information; it has also provided increased awareness as the Weed District has had people contact the office wanting to know more about noxious weeds and what they can do to stop the spread.

2020 AATM Partner Spotlight: Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon

Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign

Overall, the AATM project has been a great success. Thousands of pounds of weeds have been pulled and hundreds of volunteer hours have been logged. While many groups have annually contributed and fulfilled their AATM requirements, one group has consistently provided superior organization and conducted not one, not two, but an average of 5 weed pulls yearly. The Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon has proven to be an incredible AATM partner; and noxious weeds on trails in and around Giant Springs State Park are being removed.

A HUGE shout and many THANKS to the Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon members and FWP's Josh Waggoner for programmatic oversight and organization.



Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon, Great Falls Montana

31 July 2020 · 🌐

Anyone up for one last knapweed blitz? This Saturday morning, August 1st. Between 7-9 am. Wear gloves, bring a tool to help coax the root out of the ground. I'll have some bags. If you arrive after 7 am - the bags will be in a bucket by the sign where you scrape your shoes, just after you cross the little footbridge.

1 comment



Like



Comment



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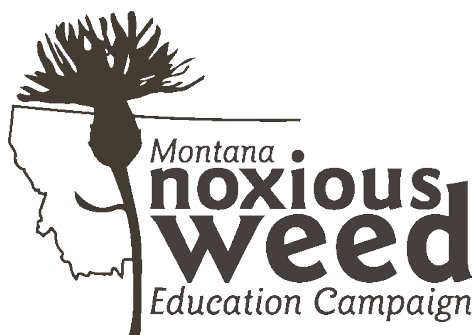
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Author

Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon, Great Falls Montana

In about 90 minutes we removed over 120 gallons of knapweed. Those bags were packed down and heavy. By then it was just getting too warm. Good job!



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The Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign (MNWEC) started in 1996 with the goal of educating the public of Montana about the economic and environmental impacts of noxious weeds, while encouraging public participation in ecologically based integrated weed management.

The MNWEC is a grassroots campaign that works directly with federal, state, county and tribal land management agencies and organizations and other non-governmental organizations to produce noxious weed educational materials.

“To educate the people of Montana about the economic and environmental impacts of noxious weeds while encouraging the public to participate in ecologically based integrated weed management.”

Thank You AATM Partners!

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaverhead Deerlodge NF • Beaverhead Trails Coalition • Bitterroot Back Country Horsemen • Blackfoot Challenge • Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation • Butte BLM Field Office • Cabinet Back Country Horsemen • City of Helena Parks & Rec • City of Livingston • Custer Gallatin NF • Dillon BLM Field Office • Flathead Audubon Chapter • Helena-Lewis & Clark NF • Kalispell DNRC • Kootenai NF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lolo NF • Makoshika State Park • Missoula Back Country Horsemen • Missoula County Weed District • Montana Back Country Hunters & Anglers • Montana Dept of Ag-PMB • Montana WILD • Montana Wilderness Assoc.-SW Wildlands Chapter • Mountain Sky Guest Ranch • MT FWP, Region 2 • MT FWP, Region 3 • MT FWP, Region 4 • Northwest Back Country Horsemen • Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage | <p>Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powell County Weed District • Rattlesnake Trail Users • Selway-Pintlar Back Country Horsemen • Smith River Weed Volunteers • Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon • Youth in Restoration • Musselshell-Golden Valley 4H Council • Musselshell County Weed District • Wheatland County Weed District |
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For more information about AATM or how to adopt a trailhead, contact Shantell at 406-883-7375.