



MEETING
SEPT. 4
7:00 PM
MONTANA WILD

As summer is winding down it's important that we recap what we have done and what still needs to be done, so we can plan for next year. This meeting will focus on that.

Anyone that has been working on either the Elkhorn trails or the Gates of the Mountain trails be sure to bring your travel dates, miles, hours worked and number of animals, so reporting can be completed for both the Grant and the State .

2019 Deer & Elk Season

Dates

Archery	September 7	October 20
Two-Day Youth Hunt (Deer Only)	October 17	October 18
General	October 26	December 1
Backcountry (HD's 150, 151, 280, 316)		
Archery	September 7	September 14
General	September 15	December 1



Tony provided me with a letter to submit to the State Newsletter that sums up the Gates of the Mountains .(next page)

Gates of the Mountains Trail Clearing (by Tony Smith)

For the last several years Last Chance BCH has been the sole trail crew for the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Although fairly small at 28,460 acres the Gates presents multiple challenges including the 40,000 acre Meriwether Fire which scorched much of the area in 2007, rugged terrain, pine beetle infestation, and lack of water. LCBCH is further indebted to clear the gates due to a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant in 2018.

While 2018 was a work intensive year to get the trails cleared, time has not been friendly to the beetle killed pine trees and fire killed firs. Multiple areas in the central portion of the wilderness are north facing slopes where the burned trees are now finally starting to come down. On the eastern side of the wilderness the beetle killed lodge pole has had enough and has started to come down by the hundreds. Coupled with a snowy winter and a wet, stormy spring, 2019 has seen much of the same.

Work on the Gates began in May with a small group clearing Refrigerator Canyon to the wilderness boundary and a small crew clearing from the Big Log Trailhead to the Hunters Trail junction. On June 6th, National Trails Day, a larger crew was assembled. After a rendezvous at Hunters Trailhead 22 people ranging in age from 8 to 60 were split between two trailheads. The Hunters Crew was horse/mule back while the refrigerator crew was mostly on foot and tasked with a previously scouted blow down patch of close to 100 trees.

The Hunters Trail is a steep, shade less, somewhat hated trail but had surprisingly less down trees than usual in the lower part until it transitions to the higher north facing slopes that were burned. Work progressed slower at this point and with a strict turnaround time of 3:00 pm in place due to previous overly long excursions just over 7 miles was accomplished on this day. A small incident caused the 3 of the crew to turn around early. The Refrigerator crew made incredible progress and had the blow down patch out of the way and the trail cleared to the Bear Prairie junction by 2:00 pm.

In the weeks since small groups have been chipping away at the last remaining miles of trail. As of this writing the furthest reaches still remain to be cleared but hopefully by the end of summer the “Gates” will be fully accessible...until the next windstorm.

The Elkhorns were a similar scenario, we had 7 sawyers, 4 swampers that spent 2 days, (132 man hours) and only a mile of trail was cleared, we are still working on it to allow us to get pack stock in to pack sign posts for the FS.