

BCH Membership Meeting  
September 15, 2021

Presentation by Smoke Elser on the etymology of names in the Bob Marshall Wilderness

- Smoke was a commercial outfitter in 55+ years
- 70% of the BMW has burned
- On the origins of names in the BMW:
  - Young's Creek and Kid Mountain
    - Named for Kid Young in Ovando
    - SE started working at White Tail Ranch in 1955 in the area
    - Kid Young was a trapper, he named and made a lot of the trails in the BMW
    - Young was born in ~1889/90
    - There's an old cabin at Lodge Pole Creek on the way to Young's Creek, which is one of his old cabins
      - Long Ridge to Jenny Creek (named after his girlfriend)
    - On the way into Young's Creek, you pass into a valley:
      - Kid Mtn then Fossil Mtn
      - Hole in the Wall in the valley has great fishing
      - Young's Creek flows into the South Creek
  - Danaher Valley
    - Named for Tom Danaher, a railroad worker
    - Late 1880s, when the railroad was finished by Garrison, he ended up in Deer Lodge
    - He found work on ranches near Deer Lodge, then as a trapper in BMW
    - At the time, he thought a railroad track would come through that part of the BMW, so he figured he'd build a town to anticipate this
    - He homesteaded it with a few cows, his wife and 2 daughters
    - He wanted to build a town so he went to the barns Drummond, Butte, etc and if he saw a Norwegian or German immigrant, he'd buy them drinks and try to recruit them for homesteading
    - This worked, to a degree, and they built cabins, fences, etc
    - Hollopeters, Foxes in the Condon valley are the descendants of these immigrants who were recruited by Tom
    - The dam on Bar Creek was hand-made to flood the valley to irrigate it
    - Danaher is the same elevation of Missoula, so not much snow

- Horse Hill in the valley is named for where Tom wintered his horses
  - Homesteaders left after the first winter once Tom stopped paying
  - Tom bought up their land as they left, and ended up with 36k acres down to Basin Creek
  - He stayed for 7 yrs, then around 1907/8 and he moved to Lincoln, where he built the log hotel there, which is still around to this day
  - Then he travelled all over, and he died in Deer Lodge
- Grizzly Riders
  - SE started his outfit with 15 horses, 12 saddles for \$2k in 1964
  - SE took Tom Collins down into BMW for fishing with his family in 1965
  - Collins worked for the foundation at the University of MT and was having trouble raising funds
    - SE thought to invite 20 successful alums and their guests for a ride into the BMW. 38 people signed up, including CEO of PNW Railroad, head of Boeing
  - SE looking for dude horses with tack to take this group out
  - SE brought the group in via Meadow Creek Lake (Helena Nat'l Forest at the time)
    - No permits needed at the time
  - The group stopped at Trixie's Saloon for breakfast
    - Trixie McCormick was a trick rider for Buffalo Bill's Rodeo, born in Helmville
    - She performed with her horse, Dollar, for them
  - SE met them at the Indian Meadows Trhd, above Lincoln
    - Takes forever to get the dudes on the horses
    - The full string was 1.5 mi long, 107 stock total
    - Mike Chandler was one of the wranglers
  - One of the dinners was helicoptered in for Dale Moore's birthday
  - On the 2nd day, a morning t-storm spooked the horses in all directions
    - Took them all day to catch them
  - Then they headed out to the falls at the N. Fork of the Blackfoot, which was owned by N. Pacific Railroad
    - There was a plan to put in a hydroelectric dam to power the valley
    - But the rock wouldn't hold a dam
  - The Grizzly Riders are celebrating their 56th anniversary this year