



## Beartooth Recreational Trails Association, Inc.

PO Box 1872

Red Lodge, MT 59068

*www.beartoothtrails.org*

### **A Letter from the President of the BRTA Board of Directors - May 2020**

Dear Outdoor Recreationist, Red Lodge Nordic Center and Red Lodge Trails user and our wonderful BRTA Volunteers,

Thank you so much for a wonderful year in assisting BRTA in our quest to provide winter and summer trails to the public in the Red Lodge area! We want to keep the message positive in this time of Covid-19 and we hope that you and your families are healthy and stay that way through this trying time. As you can imagine, BRTA cannot hold our annual public meeting/social event as we normally do each May. Therefore, we are sharing the accomplishments of the 2019 - 2020 year with you electronically rather than in person to do our part in reducing the spread of this insidious virus. Below is a summary of our accomplishments during the year. You should know that two of our board members, Tom Kohley, as Carbon County Disaster Coordinator and Derek Stiegemeier, Director of Ancillary Services at Beartooth Billings Clinic are currently instrumental in the local planning effort to mitigate the effects of Covid-19. We owe them a pile of gratitude for all their effort to keep us healthy!



BRTA has been busy since the start of our fiscal year on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Here are some of the highlights. While we budgeted \$15,000 for new trail construction in the Red Lodge area, we did not get the trail completed yet as we were not able to find a contractor that had time to do the required work last fall. We are hopeful that this work will be completed during the summer or fall of 2020. The priority project is the Wellness Trail Expansion, a trail to be built on the bench above the Beartooth Billings Clinic and tie into the existing trail from the Clinic. Several other trails are in the planning stages. We also budgeted in 2020 to assist the Forest Service with funding Montana Conservation Corps for maintenance work on area trails on National Forest. We hope that the Covid-19 virus doesn't get in the way of this project.

We had a successful year of fundraising, thanks to many of you. We received a total of \$19,780 after expenses from the Fun Run, Octoberfest, Gear Swap, X-Culinary (a new event this year) and the Backcountry Film Festival (see BRTA Income and Expense pie charts below). In addition, we received an RTP Grant from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks of \$21,000 for grooming equipment at the Red Lodge Nordic Center. We also received an America Walks Grant of \$1,500 to be used for signage and trail maintenance at Coal Miner's. Folks were also generous with donations that totaled \$5,166 for our General Fund - thank you donators! Thanks to all the volunteers who made all these events so successful and without which BRTA could not provide our summer and winter trails programs!

BRTA has been involved with the Community Bike Program for several years now and it is proving to be a success. The program provides free bikes to kids who otherwise would not be able to afford a bike. Each donated bike is completely overhauled at the Spoke Wrench Bike Shop so it is in perfect running condition before it is given away and each comes with a new helmet for safety. So far BRTA has given away 131 bicycles!

As you can see from the pie charts to follow, our largest program by far, and it continues to grow bigger, is the operation of the Red Lodge Nordic Center. There are multiple parts to this program including kids and adult ski lessons and a partnership with the Silver Run Ski Team that now hosts a Nordic Ski Team that practices at our Nordic Center. Fifteen kilometers of groomed trails for conventional and skate xc skiers including night skiing with solar lighting on a portion of the trails are available. And, special events such as the X-Culinary and Mindbender occurred. The last two events are new this year and we hope to continue them next year. X-Culinary is an event where you ski a loop trail and then come back to a heated tent and get a portion of a progressive meal before you ski the next segment of trail, returning for the next portion of the meal. All 100 tickets were sold out for this event and I think everyone had a lot of fun! The Mindbender event was hosted by the Silver Run Nordic Ski Team and was a series of xc ski races with obstacles for all ages and skill levels. We hope to see you at one of these events next year!

The number of skiers at the Nordic Center continues to rise, especially when we have a good snow year like this last one. In 2006, the first year we started keeping track of the number of skier days at the Nordic Center we counted a little over 500 folks (see graph below). At the end of the 2020 season that number is approaching 4,000. Due to the increase in the number of skiers, BRTA decided to hire a part-time Operations Manager to increase the professionalism in the operation of the Nordic Center. This has increased our costs, but has allowed us to increase our service such as a steady grooming schedule Saturday through Monday each week as well as at other times for special events. We are lucky to have Bob Johnson, a long-time volunteer and former BRTA board member as the manager. Besides coordinating all of the volunteer groomers, he is a dandy mechanic and with four snow machines and other grooming equipment something is always breaking and must be fixed, usually in a hurry. Besides running the Nordic Center, Bob also coordinates the grooming of the West Fork Rock Creek road on the Custer-Gallatin National Forest. Grooming usually takes place there on Fridays and Mondays. Donations for West Fork grooming and road plowing can be dropped off at Sylvan Peak in downtown Red Lodge and at several other businesses in town. BRTA does not charge for the grooming of the West Fork and we need donations to keep the grooming going into the future.

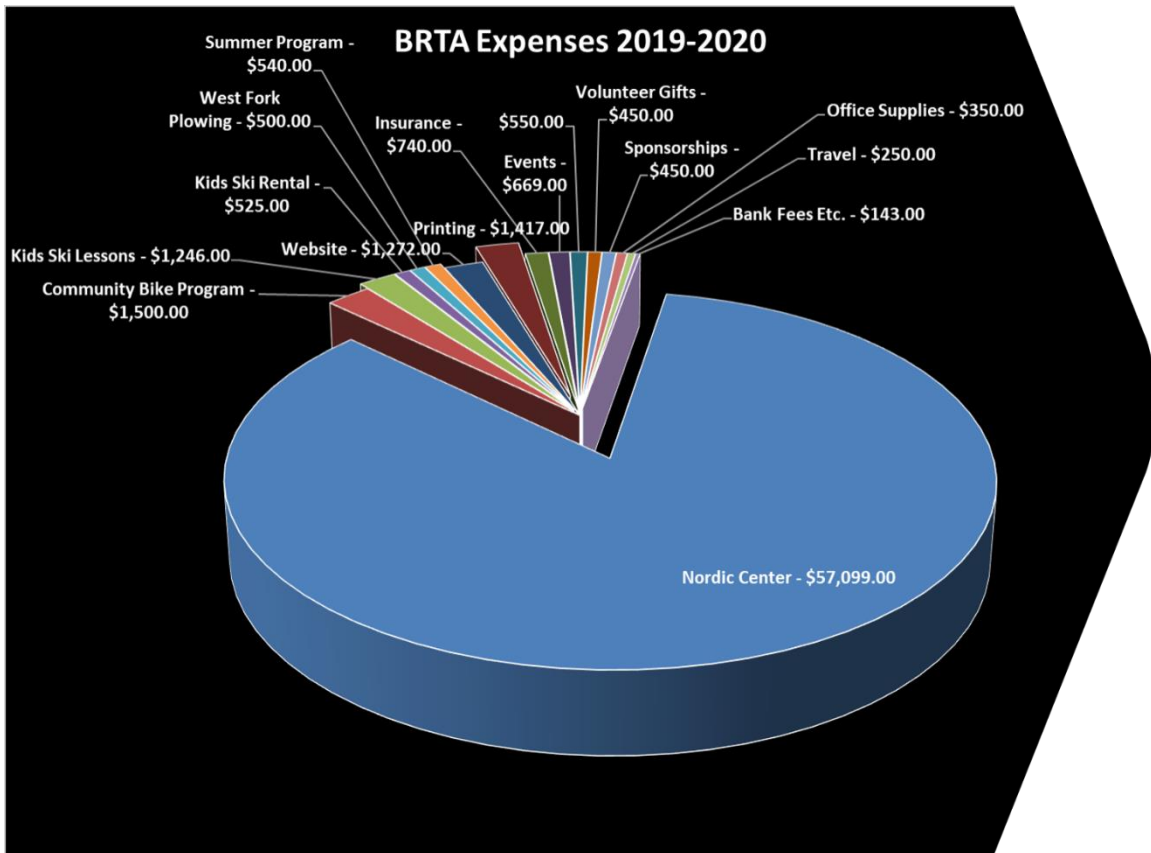
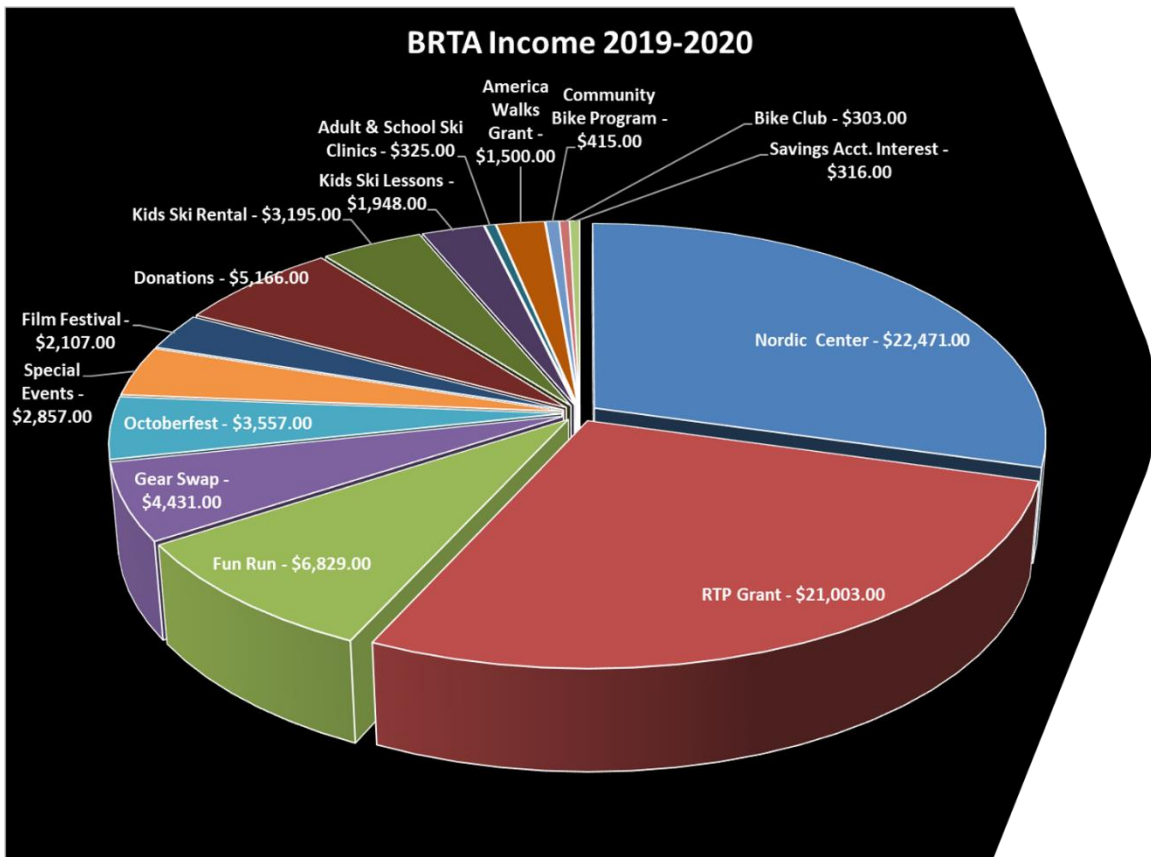
I can't say enough about our volunteers. To the volunteer BRTA board of directors who are instrumental in running committees and coordinating much of the fundraising activities, thank you. A sincere thank you to the hundreds of folks on our volunteer list, who when asked, respond with helping hands; to the Trail Adopters who maintain the trails in the City of Red Lodge through our Adopt-A-Trail Program and volunteer groomers who keep the Nordic Center and West Fork ski tracks in great shape, thank you! We couldn't accomplish what we do without you!

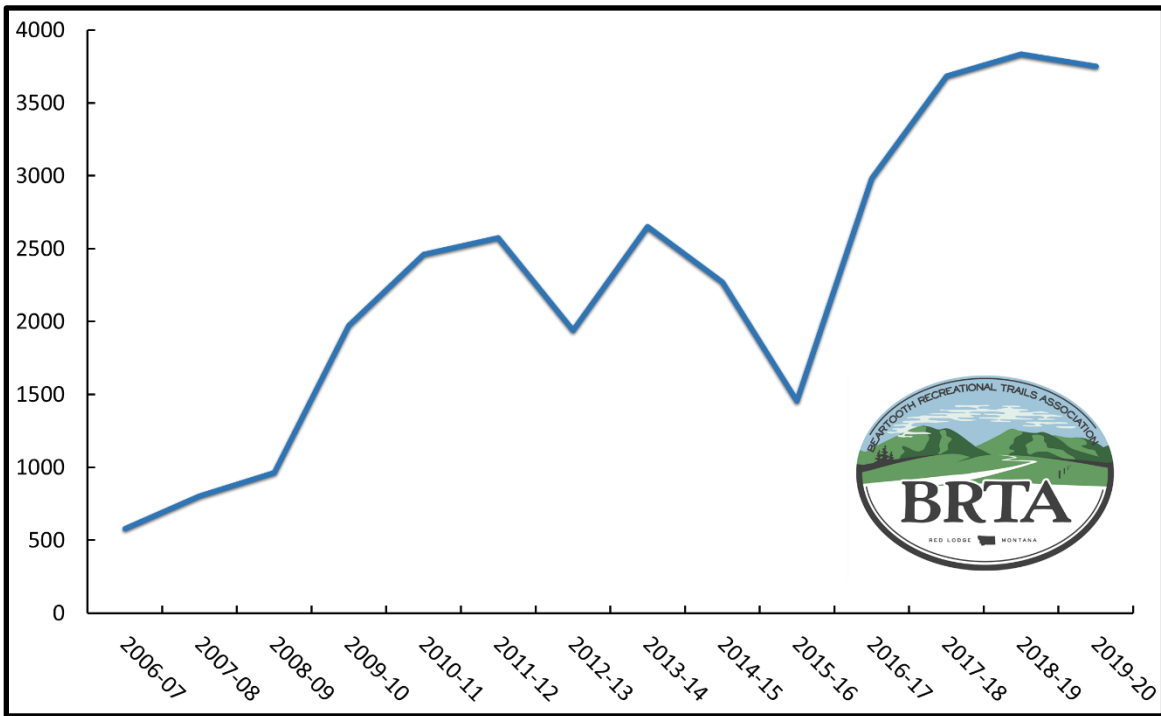
Wishing You Happy Hiking, Biking, Horseback Riding and Skiing This Coming Year!  
Stay Healthy and Stay Apart and We'll Get Through This Covid-19 Thing Sooner and Not Later,



Terry Jones  
President of the BRTA Board

PS: Please visit the BRTA website at [www.beartoothtrails.org](http://www.beartoothtrails.org) to view a slideshow (pdf) "2020 Virtual Annual Meeting"





**Red Lodge Nordic Center Increase in Number Skier Days 2006 to 2020**