




MOON-RANDOLPH HOMESTEAD ANNUAL REPORT

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Photo: Rio Chantel

2023



As Missoula grows and changes, it's never been more important for us to actively build the community we want to see. For more than two decades, the Moon-Randolph Homestead has bridged Missoula's past with it's future, cultivating Montana-based values of creativity, simplicity, grit, and community flourishing. Find out more:

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PRESERVATION & REPAIR OF HISTORIC INFRASTRUCTURE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD

The City of Missoula Parks and Recreation along with Moon-Randolph Caretakers, Katie Nelson and Caroline Stephens, received a Historic Preservation Award for Cultural Resources and Landscapes by the Missoula Historic Preservation Commission. Bob Oaks also received the Historic Preservation Centennial Award for community organizing around the Homestead and many other historic preservation efforts.



HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Farm house - USFS historic preservation specialists helped us to develop a plan to jack up and brace the kitchen roof before winter of 2023-2024. Fenced off-roof access. Also noted some settling damage to two windows.

Pole barn - Bad Goat Lumber completed the design, approved by FVLT, for a pole barn to be installed near the Caretaker Residence to serve as an overdue hub for agricultural and stewardship activities.

Caretaker residence - McKinstry designed mini-split and ventilation system to replace space heaters as the primary heat source. The system was installed this fall. Also installed shower, painted interior, and continued landscaping efforts.

Barn - see *Project spotlight*.

LAND STEWARDSHIP & WATER RESOURCES

Ongoing activities -

- Heritage orchard management
- Seasonal fire mitigation
- Bear attractant management
- Weed management
- Rodent control
- Road maintenance
- Fencing and gate repair

Well - in good working order after last year's pump improvements

Water truck - ongoing mechanical maintenance, new intake pipe scaffolding, new filling location. Tremendously more efficient thanks to the new tank installed last year.





Photo: Moon Cabin Archives

Project Highlight:

BARN ENGINEERING REPORT

At the heart of the Moon-Randolph National Historic District is an iconic barn constructed from repurposed boxcar siding. A central gambrel-roofed structure was constructed by homesteaders in the 1890s, with a milk room and brood house added onto either end in the early 20th century. Hauled from Missoula's North Side Railroad District to the site one wagon load at a time, repurposed boxcar material was fashioned into a unique barn whose outline resembles a caboose.

After more than a century of service, the barn now exists in a dangerous state of partial-collapse. Constructed into a slope, an earthen wall is caving into the building along much of its 84' span. Many bowed 20' posts supporting the structure consist of scabbed together 2"x6"s, gravely insufficient for the load. The roof has already collapsed into the east-end addition, further weakening the structure. Given these hazards, visitors are not permitted to access the interior of the barn. A few big snowfalls could topple the entire building. There is growing concern that the barn's collapse could compromise future efforts to rehabilitate this historic building with salvaged railroad car siding and other original materials. Missoula City Parks and Recreation installed bracing in 2017, but the structure continues to deteriorate.



Public scoping

Soliciting community input is essential to preserving any historic structure at a public historic site - particularly one as unique and iconic as the Moon-Randolph Barn. A public survey completed in the fall of 2022 demonstrated the what the Missoula community considered as the most important qualities of the barn: making it safe for interior access, prioritizing historic interpretation as a primary use, maintaining its rustic character, and - if possible - rehabilitating the barn in its current location. This input informed many decisions in the barn engineering report. See *Survey excerpts*.

Engineering report

Several expert site visits concluded that the structural integrity of the barn is severely compromised and will need to be deconstructed and reconstructed to allow for any future interior access. The completed engineering report includes foundation plans, loft floor framing plans, roof framing plans, and structural details for each section of the barn. These structural details incorporate what we expect to salvage from the existing barn: siding, sliding doors, roofing materials, windows, and character-defining features.

In honor of Historic Preservation Month (May), A&E donated a laser-scan of the existing structure. The resulting cloud-point data captured never-before-seen structural detail that was invaluable to the final engineering. We hope to incorporate the cloud-point data into future interpretation projects.

Property boundary

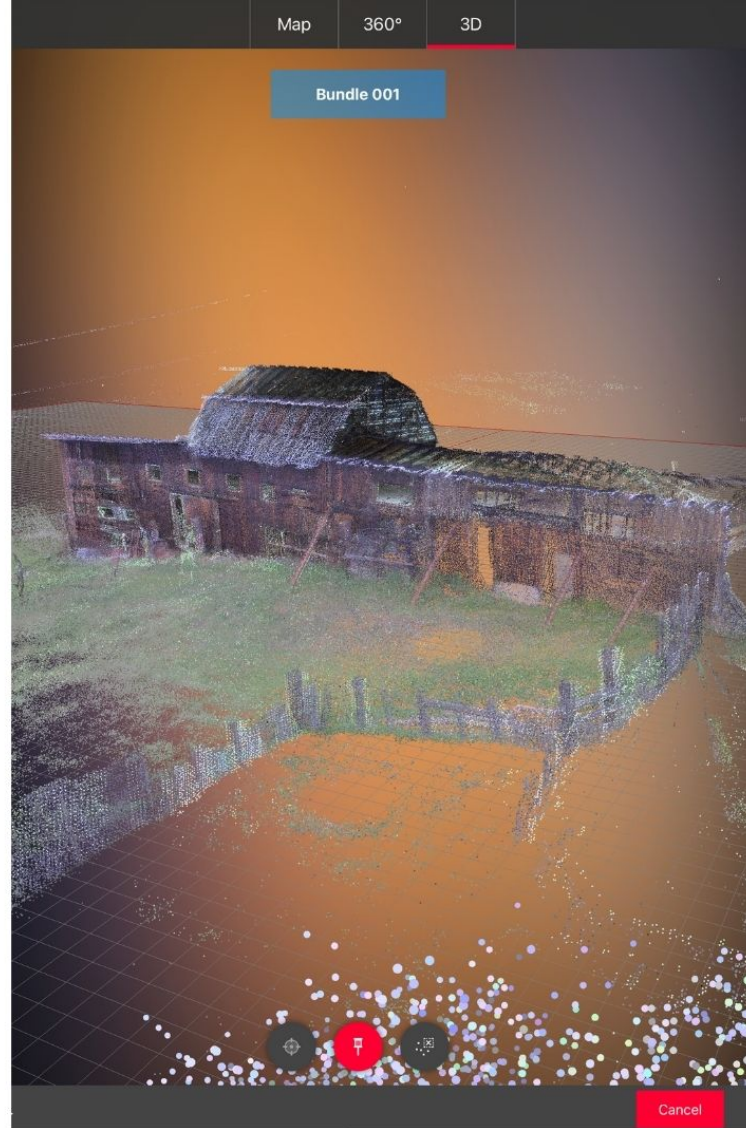
The barn is currently situated on a boundary between City Conservation Lands and private lands. This summer we completed a boundary-line survey. Both property owners want to see the barn preserved. Discussions continue on whether to rehabilitate the barn on-site or move the structure entirely onto City property.

Project outlook

With a completed engineering report and boundary survey, we are able to develop cost estimates, establish terms of the project, seek permits, and raise the funds necessary to break ground. It is an exciting time!

PROJECT SUPPORTERS

Fearless Engineers



"The barn dominates the Homestead skyline, being visible from almost every location. The most eye catching of all the structures, it also illustrates most clearly the principles of economy and re-use necessitated by hardscrabble farming. The barn is a beautiful building, one of a kind, and emblematic of the Moon-Randolph Homestead."

-Sample of public comment from the Barn Survey

CURATION & INTERPRETATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION INTERNSHIPS

This year we offered two internships for academic credit in partnership with the History Department at the University of Montana. Hazel Videon is a Master’s student in History and Malinda Gaudry is pursuing a Certificate in Public History. Both students were able to gain funding for their internships through the History Department. Critical curation & interpretation projects included:

- Inventorying and removing artifacts from the Farm House kitchen in preparation for a project to structurally brace the roof.
- Protecting artifacts and documents in the Moon Cabin Archives with archival safe containers.
- Developing an online digital map of the site.
- Assisting with volunteer events, stewardship activities, and tour-guiding.



ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

This program wouldn’t be possible without our generative partnership with OpenAIR, a local nonprofit that recruits, vets, sometimes houses, and shows the work of artists-in-residence at the homestead and other organizations in Western Montana.

Summer Session I - May 22 to June 24

Michelle Boule is an award-winning, Missoula-based dance artist who has been featured in The New York Times, The New Yorker, and Dance Magazine.

Summer Session II - July 10 to Aug 12

Kerri Rosenstein is an interdisciplinary visual artist and collaborates with various communities as an educator, facilitator, creative director, and wilderness guide.



SUMMER CONCERTS IN THE PASTURE

More than 300 people spent an evening in the pasture this summer to enjoy the setting sun and incredible music by talented musicians Martha Scanlan, Jon Neufeld, Naomi Moon Seigel Quartet, Lee Rizzo, and Dylan Running Crane.



EDUCATION & VOLUNTEERING



YOUTH PROGRAMMING PARTNERSHIPS

- City of Missoula Parks & Recreation: After School Programs, Animals & Bugs Camps, Homestead Camps, Stewardship Camp
- Growing up Green Nature School
- Historic Museum at Fort Missoula History Camp
- Lolo Public Schools 4th Graders
- Missoula Writer's Collaborative: Words with Wings Camps
- Sentinel High School: Childhood Development & Nutrition Classes
- Sussex Elementary EcoThon
- YMCA Camps
- YWCA GUTS! Program

ADULT PROGRAMMING PARTNERSHIPS

- City of Missoula Parks & Recreation: Missoula Movers
- Doug Johnson Photography Workshop
- Five Valleys Land Trust: Hands-on-the-Land Volunteers
- Glacier Tourism
- Grizzly Peak Senior Center
- Historic Museum at Fort Missoula Volunteer Tour
- Let's Go Pleine Air: Painting Group
- OpenAIR: Welcome Party, Artist's Talks, Workshop
- Opportunity Resources
- Rocky Mountain School of Photography: Workshops
- Watershed Consulting: Pruning Workshop

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA PARTNERSHIPS

- Agroecology
- Climate Change Studies Program
- Emmaus Lutheran Campus Christian Fellowship
- History Department
- PEAS Farm Internship

2,599
SITE VISITS

119
VOLUNTEERS

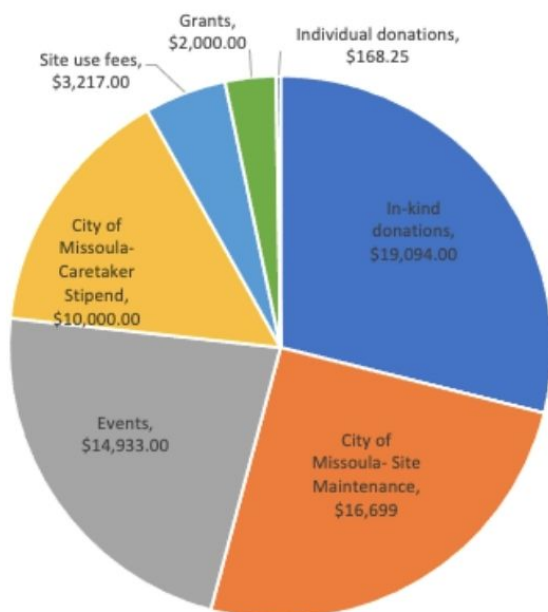
445
VOLUNTEER HOURS

405
INTERNSHIP HOURS

1,650
INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

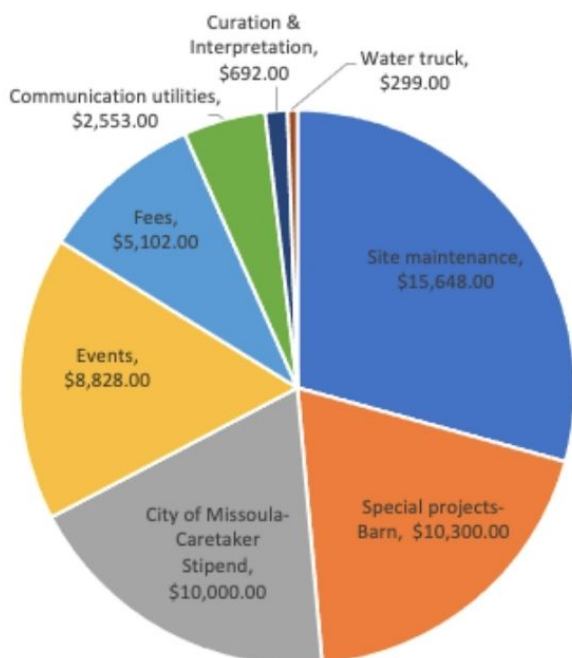
1,818
FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

FUNDRAISING



INCOME

- **In-kind donations** - engineering contribution by Jennifer Anthony, A&E Architects, & Fall Gathering donations. *NOTE: This total does NOT include 445 hours of volunteer labor accrued this field season.*
- **City of Missoula site maintenance** - labor, annual \$6k budget for site, and additional infrastructure
- **Events** - Fall Gathering, concerts, workshop revenue
- **Caretaker stipend** - line item budget from City
- **Site use fees** - field trips, photography sessions and workshops, weddings, private tours, etc.
- **Grants** - \$2k plus \$11k carry-over from last year
- **Individual donations**



SPENDING

- **Site maintenance** - larger expenses included modern updates to Caretaker residence, in addition to regular site labor and upkeep
- **Special projects** - engineering and boundary line survey for barn rehabilitation project
- **Caretaker stipend** - 0.5 FTE - coordinate curation & historic preservation projects, maintain site & partner relationships, fundraise, interpretation, events
- **Events** - Fall Gathering, concerts, workshops
- **Fees** - accounting & administrative fee to NMDCDC, professional memberships
- **Communication utilities** - landline & satellite internet (due to surrounding terrain), website
- **Curation & interpretation** - archival material, professional development
- **Water truck** - maintenance, registration, insurance

ACCOUNT BALANCES

- **\$16,473** - NMDCDC Hill & Homestead Preservation Account
- **\$1,711** - City of Missoula Parks & Recreation Homestead Account (replenished with \$6k in June)



THE FALL GATHERING

Only in Missoula would hundreds of people walk a half mile (or more!) to a harvest party in the rain. This year we increased our ticket cost to \$20 to address rising expenses while still keeping the event accessible to 50 volunteers who enjoyed free admission, music, and dinner in exchange for a couple of hours of service. We received a record amount of in-kind donations worth \$5,704 and a record number of contributing organizations and businesses (35).

SPECIAL THANKS to:

- **Western Cider**
- **Masala**
- **Clearwater Credit Union**
- **Good Food Store**
- **Tandem Bakery**

HOMESTEAD CIDER

Volunteers picked a pallet bin worth of apples from the heritage orchard this fall. In big apple years like this one, we partner with Western Cider to produce a cider specific to the Homestead orchard. Matt LaRubbio, part-owner of the cidery and former Caretaker at the Homestead, has continued to support our work - donating kegs, taps, cider, and labor for the Fall Gathering. Cheers to that!



**TO SUPPORT OUR SITE STEWARDSHIP, HISTORIC INTERPRETATION, AND
COMMUNITY BUILDING EFFORTS, DONATE TODAY AT
WWW.MOONRANDOLPHHOMESTEAD.ORG.**



COOPERATIVE USE AND MANAGEMENT

1993-2023

30TH ANNIVERSARY

RANDOLPH RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT

WITH FIVE VALLEYS LAND TRUST

Two years before he passed away, Bill Randolph put a conservation easement on the property with Five Valleys Land Trust (FVLT) to preserve the land's ecological and agricultural values and ensure that the property would never be subdivided. FVLT continues to offer their expertise and volunteer sweat equity to safe-guard these foundational values.

When the City of Missoula purchased the property from the Randolphs with Open Space Bond funds, it was a group of Northside residents and advocacy by the North Missoula Community Development Corporation (NMCDC), that convinced the City to manage the ranch as a historic site. The NMCDC continues to serve as the Moon-Randolph Homestead's nonprofit fiscal sponsor, administering site use fees, donations, and several grants. Their work supports the community flourishing present at this site. It also celebrates the dignity and creativity of ordinary folks like the Moon and Randolph families who have made Missoula the quirky and vibrant community we love.

We are so grateful to the City of Missoula's visionary support for this unique site. The Conservation Lands program provides invaluable stewardship support and administers a small annual budget dedicated to the site. The Historic Preservation Office and Commission continues to offer critical expertise on so many of our projects. We're lucky to live in a city that values community assets like the Moon-Randolph Homestead.



STRATEGIC PLANNING IN 2024

The coming year will offer a valuable time for reflection and visioning as we prepare to update our strategic plan. The *2015-2024 Strategic Plan*, spear-headed by former Caretaker Matt LaRubbio with input from many Missoulians, has served as an invaluable road map charting out priorities over the last ten years. As a public historic site, we, at the Moon Randolph Homestead, recognize our role and responsibility in contributing to a community understanding of both our complicated past and our hopeful future. We're excited to lend thoughtful guidance and our best foresight to the next decade.

For information on how you can get involved, please email Moon-Randolph Caretaker, Katie Nelson at moonrandolph@gmail.com.



Contact Us

www.moonrandolphhomestead.org
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Illustration: Beth Raboin

EXCERPTS

FROM THE
FALL '22 BARN SURVEY

"I'm not a person who feels this way with many places, but the Homestead feels so timeless--as though we are here now, but also in another era. It is truly such a special place."

"The barn dominates the Homestead skyline, being visible from almost every location. The most eye catching of all the structures, it also illustrates most clearly the principles of economy and re-use necessitated by hardscrabble farming. The barn is a beautiful building, one of a kind, and emblematic of the Moon-Randolph Homestead."

"The rawness and proximity to nature of early settler life shows clearly through, and behind it all the vastness of the landscape and the depth of time that preceded it."

"...a place where community building happens fluently."

