

E. Rosebud Creek supporters seek Wild and Scenic status



By Eleanor Guerrero
CCN Reporter

On Saturday, June 29, more than 200 people attended the East Rosebud Film Festival at the Branger Ranch in Roscoe, Montana.

There was a feast of traditional chili and country music, not to mention the afternoon summer thundershower. Local landowners, tourists, supporters and the curious attended. Ranchers talked to Forest Service representatives. Conservation groups discussed with local business owners.

All came together to learn about the potential to designate East Rosebud Creek Wild and Scenic. They were not just observers, they wanted to help make it happen. The local group, Friends of East Rosebud had invited people to this event.

The Branger family hosted it on their ranch right by East Rosebud Creek. Their historic 1900 barn was set up to show short films promoting Wild and Scenic River designation and the beauty of the Beartooth mountains.

Local Rosebud Lake resident and Vice President of Friends of the East Rose-

bud, Frank Anninghofer said, "Many local businesses and most of the surrounding large ranches are supporting the efforts to designate East Rosebud Creek Wild and Scenic." He exhorted people to join the growing number of supporters such as: Switchback, Lazy EL, Bench Ranch, Top Hat, and T O Bar ranches. He said Switchback Ranch leases the land that would become Wild and Scenic from Forest Service. "They (USFS) strongly support Wild and Scenic designation along with many locals and conservation groups. This support will be most important to convince Congress."

When asked about the recent threat of hydropower development with a dam and related feeder channel he said, "The feasibility for hydro power on the East Rosebud is very limited. There is sufficient water only 3-4 months out of the year."

After the first showing of films and a good bowl of chili made after Sybil Branger's old family recipe everybody listened to a couple of short speeches.

Dave Branger described how five generations of Brangers wrote history in the East Rosebud

drainage from building the lodge at East Rosebud Lake, discovering the Arch above Arch Lakes, stocking mountain lakes with trout to building the historic Beaten Path Trail to Cooke City. During all this time, the Brangers have been active ranchers and outfitters that happily shared the beauty of the Beartooth mountains and rivers with guests from near and far.

Author Gary Ferguson explained that conservation is not a modern trend of an intellectual elite but a basic building block of the American Dream - a means by which we came to forge our very sense of identity. Little wonder, then, he said, that the earliest symbols of patriotism, were images of wild nature.

Anninghofer said that the permit for the hydro dam proposal expired on June 30th. He relayed that a spokesman for the permittee, Hydrodynamics, said that expected rates for hydropower generated electricity did not materialize. Although it was not pursuing its permit at this time, it prompted local concern that a new hydro proposal could pop up in the future should markets improve.

As a result, Friends of East Rosebud are pushing

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for Wild and Scenic designation for East Rosebud Creek. Anninghofer updated the group about recent discussions with the Montana Congressional Delegation and Forest Service headquarters in Washington, D.C. that he said provide hope that the goal of Wild and Scenic designation can be reached.

Scott Bosse and Mike Fiebig (American Rivers) introduced the Montana

Rivers Coalition that also includes American Whitewater, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and the Clarks Fork Coalition. They are pushing for some or all of the 0.6 percent of Montana's eligible rivers to be designated Wild and Scenic, starting with East Rosebud Creek. They explained that many other states have been adding rivers to the Wild and Scenic inventory over the past years includ-

ing WY, ID, WA, OR, but not Montana.

Wild and Scenic legislation does not change any prior land owner or water rights. Overall changes are actually very minor since the Forest Service already manages East Rosebud Creek as if it were Wild and Scenic.

Anninghofer thanked all who helped organize this film festival as well as all sponsors and supporters.

If you missed the event, the films may be viewed online. They were: Wild and Scenic by Daniel Lombardi and Joel Harris (vimeo); East Rosebud Episode 1 (youtube); East Rosebud Episode 2 (youtube); Brandi Roman, Granite Peak Ascent (youtube) and Greater Yellowstone Wildlife which was "Best of Show" at the International Wildlife Film Festival in Missoula (youtube). See www.saveeastrosebud.org.

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