

Pond restoration, hunting signs, sage thinning, clean seed, hounds tongue

September 9th, 2014



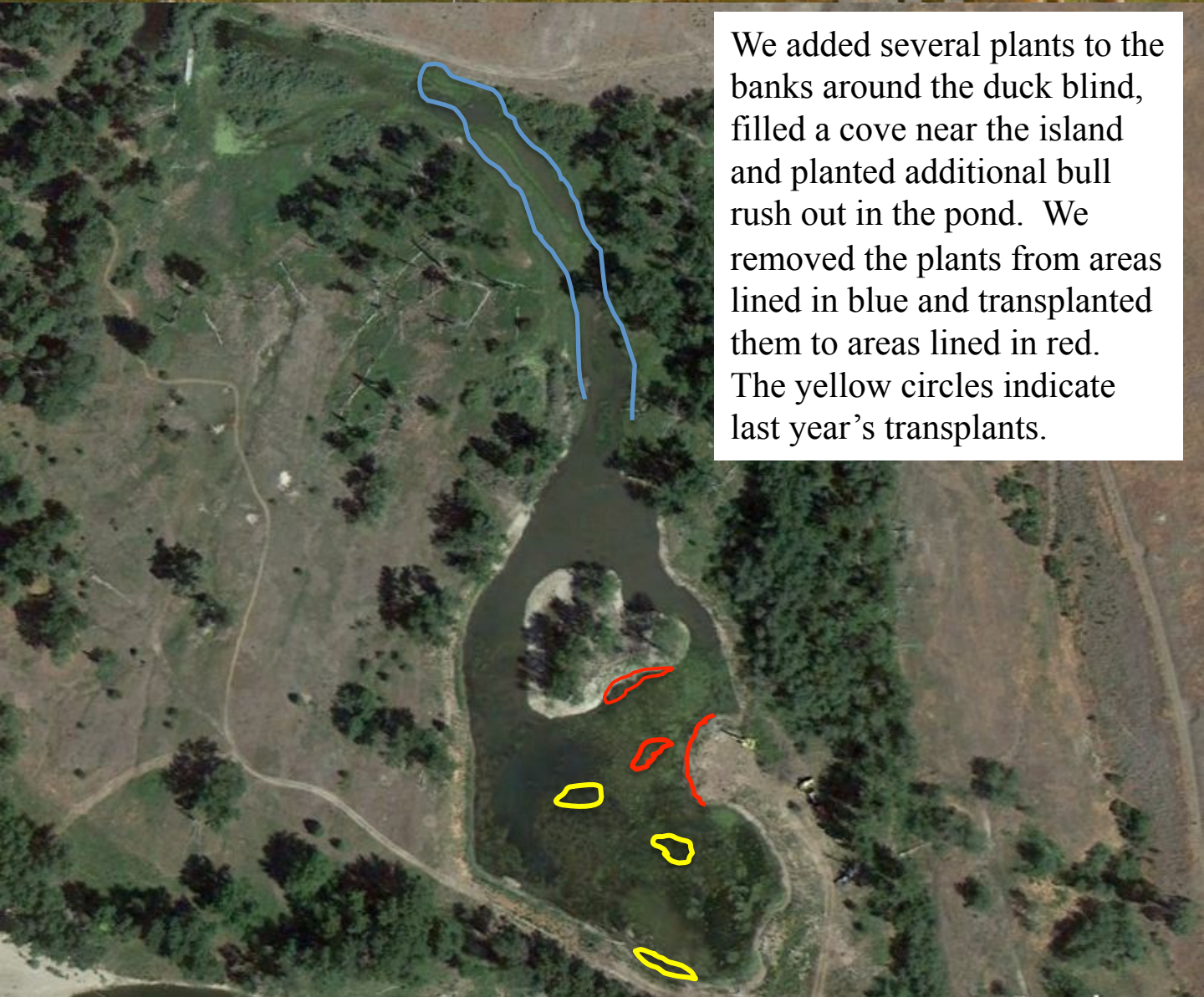
By Jeff Clarke

Rushes, reeds and other aquatic plants line the edges of the northern half of Clubhouse Pond. The newer south half of the pond lacks many of these species.



Last week we transplanted 20 boat loads of aquatic vegetation from the northern half of the pond to the bare southern banks and shallow waters. Sedges, bull rushes, smartweed, and water hemlock were a few of the plants we moved.





We added several plants to the banks around the duck blind, filled a cove near the island and planted additional bull rush out in the pond. We removed the plants from areas lined in blue and transplanted them to areas lined in red. The yellow circles indicate last year's transplants.



A couple weeks ago the field crew placed a large log in the pond with hopes that turtles would use it to sun bathe. Less than a week later, we counted 25 turtles on the 10 ft. log! The next day we placed five more logs in the pond.

We worked in the pond for a week and observed few bull frogs.
Last year we saw many more while we worked in the same areas.



A salt marsh moth caterpillar sat idle while we worked in the pond.





Big sage dominates the mid-elevation ecosystems on the ranch. In many areas, it has become too abundant and threatens to shade out the native grasses and forbs. This week the field crew started a sage thinning project to prevent a closed canopy. We removed most small plants and left large intact patches for the critters. We will continue to thin more sage next week.



When we find small conifers and shrubs within the dense sage, we remove their competition and protect them from ungulates.



Last fall and winter many elderberry bushes were destroyed by elk and deer. In less than a year, all the bushes made a full recovery and now boast large clusters of berries. Some of the shrubs grew at least five feet this year!



Sometimes, too many berries can hinder a tree's growth.



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The field crew posted new signs every 200ft along the ranch's borders. The signs will legally notify any passersby of the boundaries.

The river grew enough to consume part of this buck and rail fence. The field crew removed it and rebuilt it around other trees and shrubs in the Clubhouse Floodplain and Tongue Creek.



The crew from Jump Trading helped build this buck and rail fence around cottonwood suckers. When given protection, cottonwoods explode!



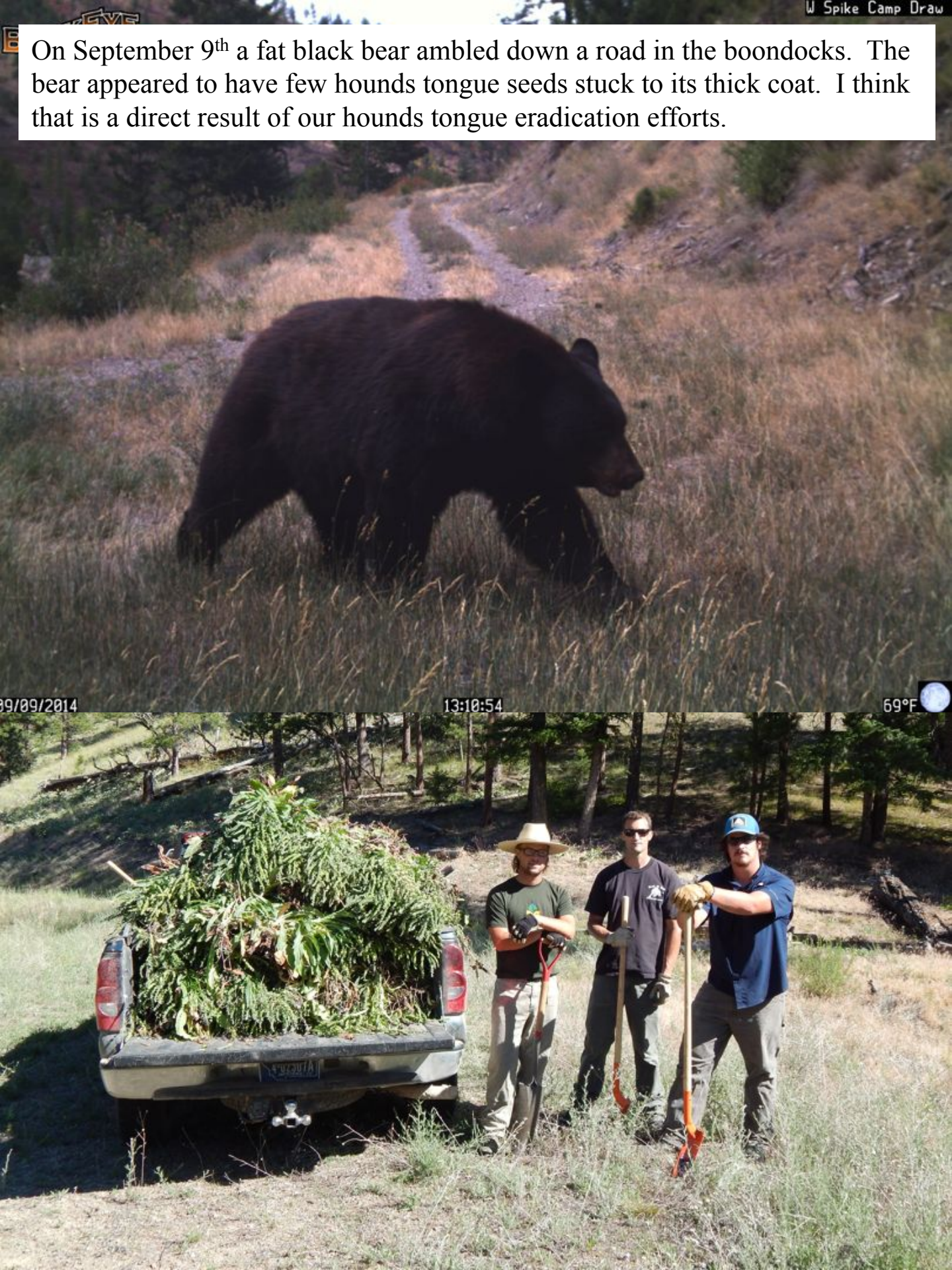


I wanted to burn the wood pile in Partridge Alley to make room for additional debris. Others thought we should leave the pile to provide shelter for critters. This yellow bellied marmot now resides in the unburned pile.



Mike Henning and crew hauled several dump truck loads of slash out of the boondocks. Rather than burn the wood, they will use it to make additional “wildlife houses” and erosion prevention structures.





On September 9th a fat black bear ambled down a road in the boondocks. The bear appeared to have few hounds tongue seeds stuck to its thick coat. I think that is a direct result of our hounds tongue eradication efforts.

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Several of the willow cuttings that we stabbed into the ground in Partridge Alley have grown into multi-stemmed bushes.



April



September

Rocky Mountain bee plant flowers fade and are replaced by copious seed pods.





Asparagus berries ripen.