



A HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF THE MISSOULA URBAN DEMONSTRATION PROJECT (MUD)

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PRE-MUD

The 629 Phillips Street house is roughly 100 years old, and used to house railroad workers. Throughout the Northside, “victory gardens” were cultivated during WWII. Various structures have come and gone at the MUD site, including one former residence in the southwest corner of the property where at least one MUD baby was born! Since the late 70s, MUD has provided Missoulians with resources to continue age-old traditions of self-reliance and neighborly sustainability efforts.

LATE 1970s

The MUD site begins to coalesce, as MUD founders begin joining adjacent properties on Phillips Street.

1976

- Bill McDorman purchased a house at 629 Phillips Street in Missoula, the Missoula Urban Demonstration Project’s (MUD) current location. The site, then known as “Wild Willy’s Chicken Farm,” produced poultry and vegetables.

1979

- Bill McDorman, Kerry Wall-MacLane, Perry Gliessman, and others purchased the lots at 615 and 625 Phillips Street. At the time, these were “probably the most blighted” lots in the valley, according to MUD co-founder John Schneeberger. The neighborhood rallied to clean up the properties, and the Phillips Street cooperative self-reliance project was born!

1980s

The MUD site underwent several iterations. It began as a small-scale commune, which then developed into a resource-sharing organization, intended to support Northside residents during economically trying times. As such, MUD became one of Missoula’s early nonprofit organizations, and perhaps Missoula’s first sustainability nonprofit. Even at its inception, MUD benefitted from the enthusiastic support of the mayor and key members of the City Council. Free lunch was offered to anyone willing to help work in the garden. MUD founders began to share tools and re-usable materials out of the Phillips Street site.

1980

- The Down Home Project (DHP), which was MUD’s initial name, was started with the mission of creating a Missoula-based, self-reliant learning center.
- DHP members founded High Mountain Garden Supply. Selling seeds and plants was a major way the organization maintained funds for operations during tough economic times. Pamela Lee was a key figure in directing the gardens on-site, and in the origins of the seed company.

1981

- DHP was officially incorporated with the State of Montana.

1982

- High Mountain Garden Supply was re-named Garden City Seeds, and distributed its first catalog.
- Author Gary Snyder visited MUD, as a guest of the Wilderness Institute, and enjoyed a dinner prepared from freshly-harvested MUD-garden produce.

1983

- DHP co-founders John Schneeberger and Karen Coombs partnered with Lifeline Produce to move Garden City Seeds to the Bitterroot Valley

1984

- DHP received Montana 501(c) 3 nonprofit status.
- DHP followed up on the suggestion of extension agent Lily Tuholske, and started the Northside Community Garden as a place to offer horticultural classes for kids. Parents from Head Start collaborated to care for the gardens.
- The Community Reliance Education and Development Organization (CREDO), an educational wing of DHP, began offering classes on sustainable living.

1985

- DHP began “horticultural therapy” classes as an effort to offer gardening classes to low-income residents and senior citizens.

1986

- The Down Home Project was lauded by the Reagan Administration in its “Up From Dependency” report on social programs, for efforts to relieve poverty and hunger by teaching self-reliance.

1987

- The origins for MUD’s current tool library were born with the creation of a tool lending program and library at 625 Phillips Street. Membership in this tool exchange was the origin of MUD’s ever-expanding membership program.
- The Horticultural Therapy classes are expanded to include disabled individuals, which continued to be the focus of the program for years.

1988

- A June electrical fire significantly damaged the 629 Phillips Street property (no one is injured). DHP Board member Leslie Wood and Mark Anderlich led efforts to revitalize property. Leslie provided significant personal funds to help repair the damage, and at this point was the only MUD Board Member still involved with the Phillips St. site.
- At this time, all other Board Members were elsewhere in the state (or country), pursuing other projects.

1989

- A second fire, this one in December, further damaged the 629 Phillips Street property. In an effort to recoup losses associated with the fires, the houses are rented for the first time to general community members.
- These renters were a succession of members of the “Rainbow Family”, prompting some to describe this as MUD’s one-year “rainbow period”, which included resident Chuck Mills’ successful on-site “Northside Gallery”.

1990s

Collaborations for gardens and recycling were established with Head Start, Lowell Elementary, the Missoula Food Bank, Eagle Watch Estates, and other area schools. MUD joined the Center for Resource Building Technology, and contributed to the development of a green builders network.

1990

- The “Rainbows” move out, and MUD re-orientes towards its mission as a sustainability education organization.
- The origins of the current “Work-for-Rent” program were developed, in the form of unpaid internships offered in partnership with the University of Montana’s Environmental Studies (EVST) Program. This program was tentatively called the “Liberal Arts Agricultural Experiment Station” and the “City Farm”.
- DHP Board Member Chuck Jonkel, along with Mark Waltermire, Jim Menakis, Dena Odell, Brian McNitt and Becky McNitt led volunteer “work parties” to clean, repair and remodel the site.
- Steve Nelson, Bill Burnett, and Rick Freeman were among the most active and expert volunteers contributing to these renovations, and all eventually served as MUD Board Members.
- The newly revitalized 629 Phillips Street site was opened to all wanting to “explore projects in self-reliant living”.

- The Phillips Street site and programs were renamed the Missoula Urban Demonstration Project. The Down Home
- Project continued to exist in the Bitterroot, and started a handful of education and conservation programs, including the award-winning Bitterroot Ecological Awareness Resource (B.E.A.R.).

1991

- A loan was secured to purchase the 629, 625, 619, and 615 lots from the original founders/owners. The property was consolidated under the ownership of the organization itself. The original owners sold their lots at reduced prices to the organization.
- Most of the founders, despite their past personal, physical and financial investment in the DHP, had moved out of Missoula, and many out of Montana.
- The 625 Phillips Street structure, which served as the seed store/Northside Gallery, was deconstructed, with intent to build a straw bale greenhouse and native plant garden in its place.

1993

- Steve Carroll joined the MUD cohort, and contributed to the development of several new programs.

1994

- MUD launched Missoula's first community composting program, Coffee-to-Compost, a program which has provided nutrient-rich coffee grounds to the Northside Community Garden and other community gardens ever since.
- MUD began an annual sale of local nutrient-rich manure to local gardeners, which became an annual local manure sale, providing Missoula gardeners direct access to nutrient-rich poo from llamas and other local animals.
- B.E.A.R., still headed by Kerry Wall-Maclane, received statewide recognition from the Montana Environmental Education Association for excellence in promoting "creative learning and joyful experiences in the natural world".
- Garden City Seeds separates from DHP to become a for-profit venture. Today, GCS is owned by Washington-based seed company, Irish Eyes.

1995

- The late 1990s were what then-Board member Jack Rowan referred to as the era of MUD women", as key roles and development became the responsibility of Caitlin DeSilvey (who served as co-director with Steve Carroll), Gail Gutsche, and Bronwyn Troutman. The organization has subsequently enjoyed over a decade of instrumental women at MUD's helm.
- The Home Grown Neighborhood Network was launched, matching novice gardeners with experienced local horticulturists.
- MUD summer camps were established (and run for a few years) in partnership with the Montana Natural History Center, offering a weeklong summer exploration of "the wild in our backyards".
- MUD's first signature logo, the sunflower and gardening tools, was developed by Kerry Topel. Her sign can still be found at MUD today.
- MUD's budget expanded from the nuclear \$7,000 to more than \$75,000 as programs, funders, and personnel gained momentum.
- Under the direction of Caitlin DeSilvey and Steve Carroll, MUD served as a charter member of a community-wide group seeking to secure healthy, sustainable, affordable food services in Missoula. Caitlin wrote key grant applications for this new project, and MUD offered to supervise and develop a community garden network modeled on MUD's Northside Community Garden.

1996

- Garden City Harvest is founded, as a result of these efforts by MUD and other community organizations and members (see last point above).
- MUD completed construction of Missoula's first-ever code-approved straw bale structure, thanks to the help of many volunteers. Originally conceived of by Judd Landis, Walt Redfield, Steve Nelson, and Gary

Marbut were instrumental in the completion of the structure. This structure has served as a greenhouse, workshop, and office over the past 10+ years.

1997

- The Tool Library was formally established, as a result of a Title I grant secured in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, the North Missoula Housing Partnership, and both the Northside and Westside Neighborhood Associations. In the first 10 years, the library operated out of a few venues, including at MUD, and in neighbor (and future Board member) Bob Oakes' garage. As a result of this, and other ventures, Bob went on to found the North Missoula Community Development Corporation, where he still serves as Executive Director.
- Rick Stern assumed responsibility of co-director, replacing Steve Carroll. A year later, MUD re-organized, and Rick became the first Executive Director. He was tasked with implementing significant site renovations identified in strategic planning sessions in 1997-1998.
- Matt Hisel became responsible for deconstruction of old structures, and the construction in their place of a model solar home. This building, then named the Sustainable Home Energy Demonstration (SHED), took a few years to complete, and currently houses the Tool Library and MUD greenhouse. Matt ultimately addressed MUD's challenge to responsibly deal with donated re-usable materials by co-founding Home ReSource in 2003.

1998

- The Down Home Project was formally dissolved. The three primary aspects of the organization, Bitterroot Ecological Awareness Resource (BEAR), Garden City Seed Company, and the Missoula Urban Demonstration Project officially became separate entities.

2000

- Rachel Goen was hired as the new Executive Director, following a nation-wide interview process. She was the first director not expected to live on-site. Under her management, MUD's focus expanded from the Northside to include all Missoula residents, a consistent membership tracking system was established, more funds were raised in one year than any previous, and the horticultural therapy program was revived with assistance from Karin Schalm.
- MUD participated in launching Missoula's Sustainability Alliance.

2001

- Karin Schalm assumed leadership of MUD, and emphasized re-engaging long-term MUD members and securing new grant sources.

2002

- MUD's "Coffee-to-Compost" program switched from a gas-fueled truck to bicycles with custom-built trailers, designed by Al Gooday to haul coffee grounds.

2003

- Rebecca Richter became the Executive Director, and focused on revitalization of the demonstration site, reinvigorating the internship program, and developing new programs.

2004

- MUD's site now demonstrated sustainable building techniques, native plant landscaping, organic gardening, composting, use of salvaged materials, solar energy and greenhouses, and energy efficiency. It was further enhanced through expanded garden space and wheelchair-accessible pathways.

2005

- MUD revived its MUDDi Gras party, last held in 2001. The widely-attended February community event featured the reunion of Cold Mountain Rhythm Band, a parade down Higgins Street and games for kids.
- MUD launched two new programs, Sustainable Neighborhoods and a Farmers Cooperative, to encourage stronger connections among Missoulians.

- MUD initiated a Sustainability Coalition, with representatives from 22 local non-profit groups, and became a member of the Missoula Downtown Association.

2006

- MUD collaborated with EVST students insert names to host the first Annual Downtown Earth Day Celebration in Cara's Park.

2007

- MUD won the Transportation Best Practices Award from Missoula In Motion for its new Truck Share program.

2008

- The MUD Board of Directors dissolved the Executive Director position, and turned MUD back towards its roots in group-leadership management, accompanied by increased time commitments and responsibility for all individual Board members.
- In the spirit of volunteer-leadership, MUD tapped into the AmeriCorps*VISTA program for assistance re-structuring programs and management strategies. Kara Lawrence becomes MUD's first VISTA – directing programs and development for the organization.

2009

- The office was moved from the 629 property and into the straw-bale structure in the center of the site. Both the 629 and 619 properties became rentals for people involved with MUD's mission and vision.
- Monthly summer "MUD Mingles" (member potlucks) were resumed, and efforts to re-organize and recruit participants for workshops began with a 2009 series theme, "Get Dirty Missoula!"
- The MUD Board of Directors, staff and volunteers recruited enthusiastic volunteers and interns, and began making significant improvements to structures and demonstrations on-site.
- Bethann Garramon and Adam West assumed responsibility at MUD, serving as VISTAs. They focused on re-structuring MUD internally, enhancing program operations, site management, internal protocols, fundraising efforts, communication via website and email, and community relationships.
- Through a re-organized "Work-for-Rent" program, Bethann and Adam's families lived on-site, helping provide hands-on experience living a holistic sustainability-oriented lifestyle.
- Chickens return to the MUD site! 6 Dominique hens from a local breeder take up residence at MUD, bringing the demonstration full-circle to its origins as Wild Willy's Chicken Farm. Thanks to a Missoula ordinance legalizing urban chickens, MUD once again demonstrates another key aspect of urban sustainability – the chickens instantly became a major attraction for children of all ages.
- Bethann Garramon and Anna Semple began re-structuring MUD's children's' education program. The Youth Education Program in Sustainability (YEP!) was established, with a focus on backyard sustainability topics which could be taught at MUD by volunteers and in schools by local school teachers. Curriculum was correlated with Montana Office of Public Instruction education standards, providing a meaningful education experience for local children.
- Volunteer technology consultant Bob Ruby, and AmeriCorps volunteer Mike Manhart assisted Bethann Garramon in development of an online Tool Library database. Bethann and Bob developed a new public MUD website, providing current information and resources in a user-friendly online format.

2010

- New program mission statements as well as MUD's vision and mission statements are formed – along with a new central logo and logos for all the programs (thanks to efforts by designer Alton Helm and assistance from Chris Jackson).
- Management of "Coffee-to-Compost" was transferred to community partner 1000 New Gardens, which ensured this community resource program continued, while allowing MUD to focus on programs more closely aligned with our mission.
- The Tool Library contained approximately 1,000 tools, and was one of less than 20 such tool libraries in the nation. The current Tool Library staff, Christopher Preston, Jake Hansen, Mike Manhardt, and Yvonne Sorovac, are responsible for management and day-to-day operation of this key popular service program.

- Margaret Alexander, who joined the leadership team as the next MTCC AmeriCorps*VISTA, planned the 2010 Garden Party, and worked to organize and update fundraising database information and MUD's fundraising strategies.
- *Backyard Culture*, MUD's resource and current events newsletter fully transitioned from paper to an online, monthly publication.
- Ann Quirk is recruited to replace Bethann (Garramon) Merkle in January of 2011, and joined the MUD team a couple months early.
- Two key volunteers, Rhian Clark and Monica Kronenwetter, do incredible work to help YEP! reach more Missoula-area youth

2011

- Ann Quirk assumed full responsibility as the sole MTCC AmeriCorps*VISTA at MUD, contributing to MUD's five programs as well as community outreach and fundraising efforts and projects.
- MUD celebrates 30 years as Missoula's key backyard sustainable living skills resource. Highlights included 30 workshops, and events throughout the year, including gathering together the founders and "old faces" of MUD at the annual Garden Party.
- MUD purchased property on Wyoming Street (next to Home ReSource) with a \$96,000 Community Development Block Grant awarded to them in order to relocate and expand MUD's Tool Library and Truck Share programs. Fundraising efforts are on going and the project will be completed by July of 2012.