

## May 2020 McKinley Mountainmen Schedule of Upcoming Events

Date	Category	Event	Location	Contact
12 May (Tues)	Pistol Shoot	MMMLRC Monthly Pistol Shoot	MVS Range, Mile 38 Glen Hwy, (6 pm) Indoors	Steve Anderson ph. 907-315-0874 Email: nohorn@gci.net
16 May (Sat)	Rifle Shoot	MMMLRC Monthly Rifle Shoot	MVS Range, Mile 38 Glen Hwy, (9 am) Indoors	Pat Reed: ph. 376-6826 Email: patreed@mtaonline.net
16 May (Sat)	Black Powder Shoot	Annual "Bean Shoot" Shoot BP Targets & eat big pot of "BEANS"	Gulkana AK Mi. 132 Richardson Hwy	Warren Ulrich: ph. 907-822-5738
21 May (Thurs)	Meeting	MMMLRC Monthly Meeting	Memorial Rendezvous Todd Hecker Farm Pt. McKinsey AK	Jeff Binegar: ph. 907-623-5857 Email: jeffbinegar@yahoo.com
22-25 May (Fri-Mon)	Rendezvous	Memorial Weekend Rendezvous	Todd Hecker Farm Pt. McKinsey AK	Tim Wood: ph. cell 232-4508 Email: dirttyram@yahoo.com Dan Guiney: ph. 586-907-1638 Email: daniel.guiney@yahoo.com
6 Jun (Sat)	NRA Youth Day <b>CANCELED</b>	Annual Youth Firearm Safety Camp sponsored by Alaska Gun Collector's Association (AGCA) & NRA	Birchwood Shooting Park 20269 Birchwood Spur Road (7:30am - 5:00pm)	Jim Anderson ph.: 952-0751 Email: manwhotaku@gci.net Alaska Youth Shooting Sports Association Email: youthday@agca.net
9 Jun (Tues)	Pistol Shoot	MMMLRC Monthly Pistol Shoot	MVS Range, Mile 38 Glen Hwy, (6 pm) Indoors	Steve Anderson ph. 907-315-0874 Email: nohorn@gci.net
18 Jun (Sat)	Rifle Shoot	MMMLRC Monthly Rifle Shoot	MVS Range, Mile 38 Glen Hwy, (9 am) Indoors	Pat Reed: ph. 376-6826 Email: patreed@mtaonline.net
20 Jun (Thurs)	Meeting	MMMLRC Monthly Meeting	Basement Eagle River VFW (7:00 pm)	Jeff Binegar: ph. 907-623-5857 Email: jeffbinegar@yahoo.com
18-22 Jun (Thurs-Sun)	Rifle/Pistol Shoot	NMLRA Alaskan Territorial Shoot (8am-6pm Thurs-Sat) (8am-12pm Sun)	Ft Wick, Yoder Rd, Mi 3 Talkeetna Spur, Mi 98 Parks	Rob Bargewell: ph. 907 355-2952 Email: chiefW5@mtaonline.net Keith Bayha: ph. 907-223-1993 Email: nohorn@gci.net

### President's Report

- Well, there we are after a month of hunkering down! We now might have a small idea of how a mountain man felt like with no visitors or being alone. Anyway, it's time to start thinking about the summer and get ready for Rendezvous, for the Rondy's looking forward to seeing you all there. Stay safe and let us have a good summer.

MMMLRC President, Jeffrey Binegar

### Secretary's Report

- The monthly meeting for both March 19<sup>th</sup> and April 16<sup>th</sup> have been canceled because of Coronavirus – 19 sequester! The next scheduled club meeting is May 21<sup>st</sup>. The Eagle River VFW is to open May 1<sup>st</sup> unless another quarantine extension is issued by the governor! May 19<sup>th</sup> is Thursday before Memorial Weekend Rendezvous begins Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Since doubt remains on the length of our sequester or quarantine, plus the one-day separation to meeting and rendezvous, the combination of the two is efficient! So, the May monthly meeting will be at Memorial Rendezvous! Location has been changed due to snow and wetness at Ft.

Wick to the Todd Hecker Farm at Pt. McKinsey! Yes, unless notified otherwise, Memorial Weekend (May 22-24) is still on schedule! Sec/ Treas. - Keith Mathis

## Shoot Reports

- The May Shoots at the MVS Outdoor Range are scheduled and the Range will be open. Pistol Shoot Tuesday May 12<sup>th</sup> 6 PM and Rifle Shoot May 16<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM. Social distancing and masks are strongly encouraged! Our sheds at MVS Range need to be moved for the Range to do dirt work and Rob Bargewell feels our Saturday Shoot would be a good day to accomplish the task.
- The Annual "Bean Shoot" at Warren Ulrich's, Mi. 132 Richardson Hwy, will be held May 16<sup>th</sup>. Not many MMMLRC have attended this shoot annually however with lack of shooting this "sequestered" year maybe we should reconsider! [Warren Ulrich ph. 907-259-3071]
- Rob Bargewell announced the 2020 Alaska Territorial June 18-21 is going to happen. Over ten shooters have responded to Rob's request to guarantee attendance! Social distancing and masks are strongly recommended here too, but there is plenty of room at facilities at Ft. Wick to allow safety shooting and camping. Rob reminds everyone shooting to come early and assist setting up the range. Those wishing to assist contact Rob to make arrangements:

Rob Bargewell: ph. 907 355-2952/Email: chiefW5@mtaonline.net

## Old Business

- Since we have not had club meeting in March or April there is no old business to discuss.

## New Business

- The Coronavirus Lockdown has greatly interfered with MMMLRC activities this year. From canceling the March and April monthly club meetings and shoots, to AGCA and Houston Gun Shows, our socializing has been "Null" for the last two months. With "cabin fever" setting in, the arrival of "Spring" and nice outdoor weather, the club officers have elected to keep Memorial Weekend Rendezvous on the Schedule May 22-24. Boosway Tim Wood and Segundo Dan Guiney say they will be ready! Looks like Pt McKinsey will be location as there is still snow on field at Ft. Wick. Location map and details will be posted closer to Rendezvous date! • As of April 30<sup>th</sup>, Youth Day at Birchwood Recreational Parks June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 is official **canceled!**

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## Split-the-Pot

- So far only 8 annual memberships have been renewed for 2020-2021. That improves the odd's in Splitthe-Pot greatly! There is still \$236 sitting in the Split-the-Pot can!

## Other Information

- Rob Bargewell announced he has 25 tokens left over from Memorial Weekend Rendezvous 2010 for anyone who wishes one (\$1.00 each). Call Rob 907-376-2952.
- Sad news to report is Sharon Coe's mother, Rose, died Monday April 13<sup>th</sup>. Joe & Sharon had to brave the virus and quarantines to take care of her arrangements and affairs in California. MMMLRC extends condolences to Sharon and Joe. They plan on returning to AK in mid-May!

- Also sorry to announce, another MMMLRC Life Member, **William “Bill” Browne**, passed away back in early March. He was active in our club for a decade or more around the turn of the century. He served as Co-Shoot Committee Chairman 1998 and 1999. Our current Shoot Chairman, Pat Reed, commented Bill was quite active for a while. He always put on a good monthly shoot. Bill was also President of McKinley Mountainmen in 2001 and 2002. And, along with his wife Amanda, he published our Newsletter from 2000 – 2002. When he was active with the club, he was very active. Bill always wore a smile and had a positive attitude. His long battle with COPD and final dependency on wearing oxygen eventually prevented but an occasional appearance at our monthly shoots. We appreciate Bill, and what the Browne’s have done for our club.



*Rest in peace, Bill.*

William Adis Brown

Born Oct 28, 1950 – Died Mar 9, 2020

## Home-Made Black Powder

### (The Secrets, The Recipes)

This article was written by Robert H. Miller (3-25-18) and published in November/December 2019 issue of Backwoodsman Magazine  
*(Please read completely before you begin!)*

Factory made powder is getting harder to find and more expensive. Government regulations and hazmat fees are the reason, and this will probably get worse in the future. Making your own is not that difficult, but you must know certain secrets before you can make it come together as an efficient, powerful propellant. I have been making black powder for about fifty-five years now, beginning at about age of thirteen. I have made about every mistake possible but finally succeeded in formulating a low-tech recipe specially designed for making it at home. Factory black is nearly impossible to improve upon. They have industrial equipment which is beyond the budget of the average person. That being said, the recipes I present here will give you a fine-functioning, powerful propellant which will serve you well. This process is not dangerous unless you are careless. ***Neither the author nor any other person or entity involved in the production or distribution of this information accepts any responsibility for the use or misuse of these materials.*** If you follow these instructions closely, you should have no significant problems.

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#### INGREDIENTS AND HOW THEY WORK

1. Potassium Nitrate (Saltpeter): This chemical is completely inert and safe until it is mixed with other combustible chemicals. It provides an instantaneous release of oxygen to cause the rapid combustion of the other ingredients.
2. Powdered sugar: This is basically a hydrocarbon, which ignites at a relative low temperature. Remember those flaming marsh mellows on the end of a long twig? It also causes adhesion of the

other ingredients allowing proper granulation. Without it, black powder (BP) is apt to return to dust after it dries.

3. Powdered red rust, iron oxide: This acts as a catalyst to speed up the burn rate. It releases its stored oxygen when burned in combination with the above chemicals.
4. Sulfur: Ignites at low temperature allowing combustion to spread rapidly. It also produces a fuller, bright yellow, less “sparky” flame. As a separate chemical, it burns a gentle blue.
5. Charcoal/Carbon: This is a major fuel in black powder often used with sugar. When wet it can absorb large amounts of other chemicals due to its porosity.

All ingredients can be purchased online, Amazon or eBay. PN, potassium nitrate, is also sometimes available from hydroponic supplies companies. Powdered sugar at Walmart.

## ORIENTATION

Recipe #1 is the simplest recipe, with the most easily obtainable ingredients. It produces a dense, fastburning product more suitable to reloading cartridges than the second formula, which is very suitable for Muzzleloaders. The second formula is more like Pyrodex. I call the first formula “Gun Candy” for obvious reasons. The second formula can simply be called Black Powder because it looks and burns like BP. The first formula burns with a bright flame and smells a bit like burning caramel. The second burns with a bright, yellowish-white flame and smells sulfurous like BP but slightly milder. It often comes out of the granulation process less dense (fluffier) than Gun Candy (GC) due to its charcoal content. As a consequence of this, it requires about double the **volume**, not weight, of factory black to produce a comparably powerful shot, by weight, they are about the same. It is possible to compress it considerably denser with a roller and let it dry in sheets, but granulations is much more labor-intensive. You can see why the less dense mix is better for use in ML’s than in the limited confines of a cartridge case. This is its disadvantage. It is, however, easier to granulate and dry, it is more moisture resistant and it looks and burns like BP. GC needs to be stored hermetically to prevent it absorbing moisture from the air (keep your powder dry). This, along with its odd appearance and burn characteristics, are the disadvantages of GC. Both will function very well if you keep these considerations in mind.

Recipe #2, when loaded into cartridges, will produce a milder load useful for plinking and small game.

## THE SECRETS

The relative amounts of each chemical are important, but not nearly so critical as the thorough integration (mixing) of all ingredients into each other. In order to do this properly, all of the ingredients must be reduced (ground) to a fine dust. This is why factories are called “mills”. Doing this properly will make your efforts successful. Failure here will produce a lazy, inefficient product. It is as simple as that. All of the ingredients can be purchased online in finely powdered form, except for the Potassium Nitrate. It comes in two different forms, prilled (like B-B’s), and granulated like salt. Granulated is preferred because it is easier to grind into a fine dust. Prilled is sometimes a bit cheaper but requires more effort to grind to a fine dust. However, it is the same chemically, and really not that hard to grind successfully. Purchase it in some quantity to get a better

price break. You can find it in farm stores as “stump burner” but his often contains fillers of some sort. Online and from hydroponics supply stores is probably your best source. You do not need the purity of the pharmaceutical-grade products even though they work well. They are just too expensive per quantity for me.

Now, the formulas. Volume measurements are preferred here so you will not need to purchase expensive, highly accurate scales. Let’s keep it simple for the sake of making it at home. Pay attention to small amounts of water. The small amounts of ingredients shown will produce a surprising amount of powder. Small batches are easier, safer and will probably be of better quality than larger batches, at least while you are learning.

#### **FORMULA #1: GUN CANDY - CG**

1. One-quarter cup of finely powdered Potassium Nitrate
2. One-quarter cup plus one teaspoon of powdered sugar
3. One and half teaspoons of powdered sulfur
4. One -quarter teaspoon of powdered red rust
5. One teaspoon or less of water added and stirred incrementally

Put all ingredients, except water, together in a large-mouthed jar with a screw-on lid. With lid secure, shake with moderate vigor for about a minute. Observe the mixture to determine that it is uniform, diluted, rust color. If so, gently pour mixture into a plastic mixing bowl of some type. A disposable dust mask will prevent you breather more dust than you want. None of it is truly toxic except in large amounts (PN). Add one teaspoon of water and stir with corndog or popsicle stick. Craft stores have them. Stir until the water is absorbed and looks like a mix of lumps and sand. Then press it between rubber-gloved fingers to see if it will stick together into a clump. If not, add a little more water until it does. Too much water will make it too sticky and difficult to granulate. If this happens (and it probably will sometime), just mix another half batch and add it a bit at a time until you get a good, dryish, stiff, consistency. Using a serviceable kitchen tea-strainer, press and smear a walnut-sized lump of the mixture through the mesh allowing it to fall into a sheet of foam-filled poster board, watching the grain’s accumulation closely so you can distribute them more evenly. It will dry faster and more uniformly that way.

#### **DRYING**

Never, and I mean **NEVER**, attempt to dry the mixture with any artificial heat source. A microwave will ignite even damp powder in about fifteen seconds ruining the oven and wasting GP. Yes, this happened to me and once was enough!

The following process applies to both formulas equally well, but the second formula generally dries faster and is easier to granulate. Place the foam board with the distributed mix on it, in the rear window of a car, or the front window on the dashboard, whichever is the sunniest. The window should be closed or barely open to permit some airflow.

Drying time varies according to the humidity level, heat and thickness of the layer of mix, but averages somewhere around two hours. The natural solar heat will never get hot enough to ignite the powder, but it does get the wet mix hot enough to further dissolve the PN which then further mixes with the other ingredients. This can help when perhaps you didn’t get the PN ground fine enough but depend on it. When the mix is crunchy and hard it is likely dry enough. Take it to your work area and use a spatula of some sort to free it from the foam board. This should be quite easy doing no damage to board or spatula. The board should last a long time. After loosening and breaking up any clumps, I prefer to slide the mix off onto a cheap paper plate because the plate can be folded to funnel the mix into a wide-mouthed, plastic jar for storage.

Including a dry-storage packet or two, like those in pill bottles is a good idea. You will find that a 1" by 4" straight-edged piece of sheet metal is a great aid in gathering and manipulating PN powder and finished powder around on flat surfaces.

### **FORMULA #2: BLAC POWDER – BP**

1. One-third cup of powdered Potassium Nitrate
2. One-third cup plus a heaping tablespoon of combined equal portions of powdered sugar and charcoal (Note: If your PN is very well powdered, you can perhaps add an extra tablespoon of the combined sugar-charcoal mixture. I usually test burn about a teaspoon of the mix before I add the water in an effort to catch any problem early. See Troubleshooting.
3. One and one-half teaspoons to one tablespoon of powdered sulfur
4. One teaspoon of powdered rust
5. Two teaspoons of water (and perhaps a half teaspoon more if needed) added gradually, stirring between additions. See Formula #1. Granulate and dry as per Formula #1.

### **TESTING**

Place about one teaspoon of dry, finished powder on a flat noncombustible surface (I use an anvil, but a scrap of wood will work) and ignite it with a match, a gloved hand is recommended as it could give you a bit of a scorch. Always, and I mean always, put the lid back on the container of powder and move it at least ten feet away **before** you ignite the test sample. Failure to do this can be the most dangerous aspect of making your own BP. Always have a fire extinguisher handy. A true, violent explosion is not likely, because an open container will only gush fire with a "fwump!" not a powerful "boom!" with concussion, but it is still something you never want to have happened!

### **STORAGE AND LABELING**

Plastic jars, as opposed to glass, are best for storing GP in a cool dry cabinet. A defunct refrigerator is ideal, that's what I use. The legal, quantity limit of BP is fifty pounds, make sure you stay under this limit. You may not legally sell your powder unless you have a pyrotechnic license which requires completing a course of study and fee. As stated earlier the separate ingredients are inert or barely flammable and have no possession limits that I am aware of. They are safer to keep than Crisco. I recommend that you always label the gunpowder that you make, especially with the date (even tho' the product has no real expiration date) and any special info, the quality of the powder, etc. A marker pen works well.

### **USING YOUR POWDER**

Workup your loads with different powder measures than you use for factory BP and color-code them so they do not get mixed up and cause you problems with over or under-loading. As said previously, Formula #2 is usually of low density requiring you to double the load by volume to approximately factory black. Formula #1 loads about equal in volume with factory powder. Properly made powder of either formula will serve you well. By using appropriate loads it can be made to do about anything you need. I often use a bit more wadding when using homemade BP because it provides better wad pressure for this slightly slower burning powder. My guns go "crack" when fired with either factory or homemade, it's not easy to tell the difference. I don't recommend Formula #2 in cap and ball revolvers due to volume issues. I have never tried it in flintlock because I do not own one. Several times, however, I have had sparks from a wheel grinder ignite small spills. Oh, did I mention that you need to keep your work surface free of any leftover mix or spilled ingredients? Remember that this is gunpowder you are messing with! Flintlocks should work fine, but I generally prefer a percussion cap lock firearm as they are usually more dependable.

Clean the gun or at least wipe the bore with a moist patch and ramrod after several shots. When finished for the day, pour hot soapy water down the bore, swab with ramrod and patch, rinse with plain water followed by a dry patch and then oily one, then a dry one to get the excess oil out. Oil soaked powder is useless. Always make sure the nipple's touch hole is clear so primer's fire can get to the powder. A bent paperclip can work to keep the hole clear. Factory primers especially #11's can become nonfunctioning as they age, presumably because the air and damp damage them. Toy paper caps can be made to work well if lightly glued (sticky tree sap or non-water glue, children's stick glue works well) burn side down over the touch hole. Filling the nipple hole with fine powder beforehand makes this more effective. Toy paper caps seem to have a long self-life. Most of my recent made ML's are set up to use 209 primers and basically never misfire, but few factory guns except in-lines can use them.

## **PART II: OBTAINING INGREDIENTS IN A GRID-DOWN SCENARIO**

During a grid-down scenario, your survival guns will sit useless if you have no gunpowder. You can either stockpile ahead of time or learn to get your ingredients by making them, as they will probably be unavailable commercially during a crisis. The good news is that our ancestors in the 19<sup>th</sup> century often made their own gunpowder from organic sources and it worked just fine. PN can be made from chicken manure or any kind of urine (human is the most easily available) and wood ashes (fireplace) or lye.

Here's the story. Put about two gallons of wood ashes into a large pot of water and bring to a boil for about five minutes.

Dip it out with a large ladle and pore it through a cloth strainer into a five-gallon bucket with a bungee cord or clothespin can hold it in place. Then pour about two gallons of urine into the hot ash water and stir well. A chemical reaction will occur from this mixing that will make PN. A secondary reaction will produce calcium carbonate (seashell material) which will settle to the bottom. The PN in the solution will begin to crystallize as the water cools down. PN only dissolves well in hot water. A small amount of even less dissolvable rare salts will appear on the surface before the PN crystallizes, strain them out and discard. Pour off the solution into a metal pot and boil it down nearly dry. Collect, dry and grind the PN crystals and they are ready to us.

Sugar, of course, can be obtained from fruit juices (watermelon. Etc.) by drying it. Rust can be gotten from rusty iron by scraping with a knife, sandpapering or course steel wool. Allowing wet steel wool to rust will also get you a nice quality of rust. With these ingredients in hand, just follow formula #1 omitting the sulfur, it will work fine. I add sulfur to this formula to make the flame brighter and fuller, but it can be considered optional at least in Formula #1.

For most people, it is better to just stockpile the ingredients against a time when they may be unavailable at any price.

A bow and arrows are a good option here as you can make them yourself. For self-defense, they are particularly good because you can send ten arrows accurately (humans are large targets) in the time it takes to reload a ML once.

A magnesium block fire-starter is the best, easiest to use, longest lasting most reliable in adverse conditions and most indestructible fire tool ever devised. It beats matches, lighters and everything else. No, I don't sell them. Get one at least, they're cheap! A machete makes a fine hatchet or sword, and Old Hickory butcher knife or large carbon-steel pocketknife are necessities. You will also need: candles, twine, paracord, fishhooks and line, wool blankets and tarps. These things can help you survive uncertain times ahead.

Again, I wish you well, Amigo.



***Still selling raffle tickets to support the 2021 State Rendezvous***

*(Tickets will be available for purchase at Memorial and State Rendezvous)*



**Bench Copy of an “1830 Rifleman’s”  
Knife**

Maker: Robert Levine  
 “Custom Knives and Leatherwork”  
 Tullahoma, TN *(originally of Anchorage, AK)*

**Bob prices this Knife is over \$1000.  
 Raffle tickets are \$5 each, or 5 for \$20**

**Drawing will be held Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup> at the  
 Alaska State Rendezvous, Pt. McKenzie AK. (July 11-19, 2020) You  
 need not be present to win!**

For Tickets Contact Mary Mathis ph. 907-715-6352

<b>McKinley Mountainmen Muzzle Loading Rifle Club Membership Application Date:</b>									
<b>Name:</b>					<b>Spouses Name:</b>				
<b>Mailing Address:</b>					<b>City, State, Zip:</b>				
<b>Email:</b>					<b>Home Phone</b>				
<b>I want the newsletter EMAILED to me:</b>			YES	NO	<b>Cell Phone</b>				
<b>Please circle your muzzle loading experience level</b>				Novice	Intermediate	Expert	Range Officer		
NRA membership? Yes / No		Member Number:		NMLRA Member? Yes / No		Member Number:			
<b>Membership Rates:</b>									
Individual: \$30 / yr		Family: \$35 / yr		Life: 10 x annual rate		Circle one:			
New Member		Renewing Member		Life Membership Names / Ages of					
Children if family membership:									

**P.O. Box 770555, Eagle River, Alaska 99577-0555**

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