

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2018



Who Are We?

Our service starts with our members—people who work tirelessly with their state and local chapters to solve some of our toughest challenges in keeping trails open for recreational use. We act responsibly: We respect the land and other trail users. Our passion for pack and saddle stock and our perseverance support volunteer efforts to preserve and maintain trails for all types of users.

We make a difference: We make an investment in horse and mule power to ensure you, your children, and many generations to come can enjoy the wonder, beauty, and joy of unspoiled landscapes and views.

As in this photo, our BCHA members can be found in your community and side-by-side with everyone (such as USFS & CCC) who is committed to accessible trails for recreation.



What Do We Do?

Our member association Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA) builds capacity to enhance the efforts of our state and local chapters. The BCHA Foundation turns generous donations into matching grants that fund the work of our members and partners.

“Huge blocks of public lands were set aside for public use...no longer is the Forest Service able to do it all...we are the worthy enabler working with partners.”

– Peter Keller, USFS Wilderness Manager, Region 5



Relocation of high mountain trail above a swampy meadow

Our grassroots members—responsible leaders who help to carry forward our organization’s mission and values—lead BCHA organizations throughout the United States.

“They are so dependable and do more than asked.” – Jon Sanstrom, Trails Manager, USFS



Whether you enjoy a back country packing trip or a front country hike or ride, your favorite trails likely benefit from the work of Back Country Horsemen.





We provide equestrian & human support for youth groups and trail crews to:

- Correct problems that cause significant trail damage, such as erosion or surface water control
- Restore trails to the planned design standard



We also assist to:

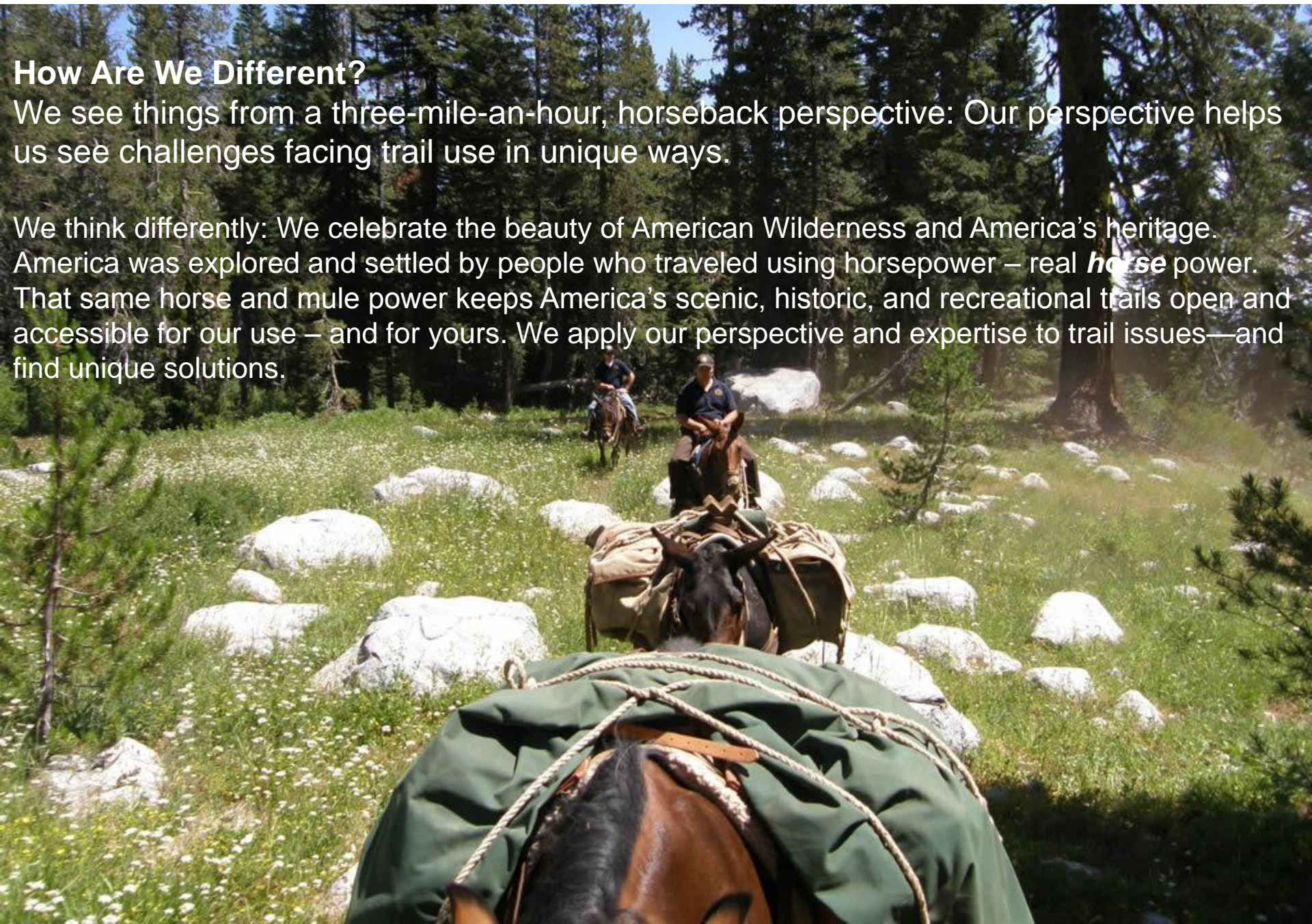
- Correct unsafe trail situations, such as removing blowdown or repairing impassable washouts
- Re-stock back country lakes, repair bridges, pack out garbage left behind by all trail users, and much, much more.

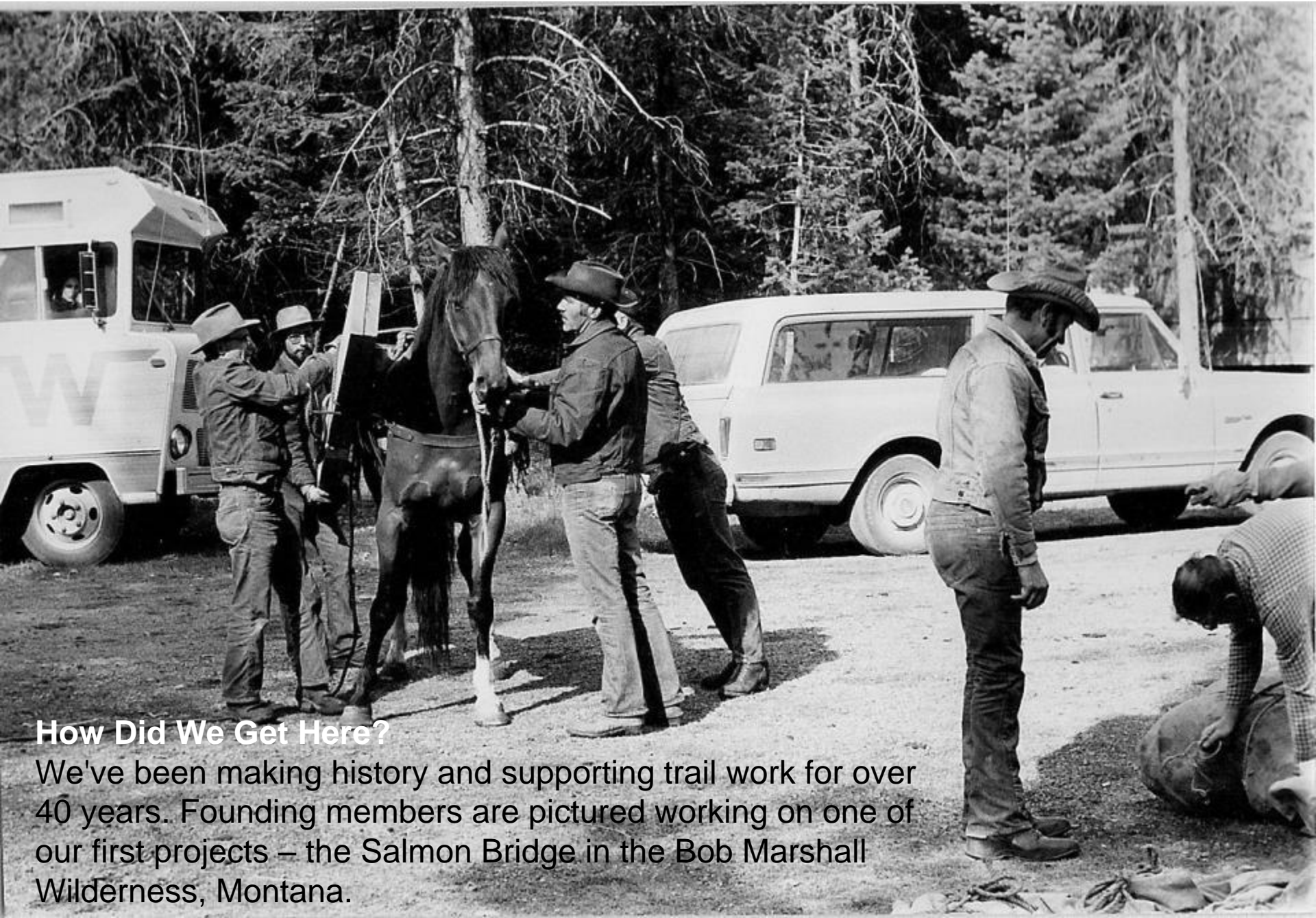
We do it all using Leave-No-Trace principles

How Are We Different?

We see things from a three-mile-an-hour, horseback perspective: Our perspective helps us see challenges facing trail use in unique ways.

We think differently: We celebrate the beauty of American Wilderness and America's heritage. America was explored and settled by people who traveled using horsepower – real *horse* power. That same horse and mule power keeps America's scenic, historic, and recreational trails open and accessible for our use – and for yours. We apply our perspective and expertise to trail issues—and find unique solutions.





How Did We Get Here?

We've been making history and supporting trail work for over 40 years. Founding members are pictured working on one of our first projects – the Salmon Bridge in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, Montana.

Keeping America's trails open for over 40 years for all users



BCHA volunteers have the ability to take large amounts of supplies, camps, equipment and people deep into a Wilderness area where there are restrictions on the use of mechanized equipment. Hiking organizations – such as the Pacific Crest Trail, the Washington Trails, and the Partnership for the National Trails System – have found that they can't get much trail work done over three miles into anywhere (front country or back country). It's too time consuming for hikers to go much further in and still get a day's work done. BCHA organizations are valuable partners. We haul their camp and gear into place. They hike in and work for a week or two. We go back in and pack the stuff out. Most of our riders also carry handsaws or axes on any ride. So if we come to a tree that we can handle we cut it out on the spot. With pack and saddle stock, BCHA is uniquely equipped to keep trails open for all users. If a trail is open to stock, it is open to everyone.

What Does it Take to Get the Job Done?

"The backbone of the USFS trails program is the Back Country Horsemen and the CCC."

Jon Sanstrom, Trails Manager, USFS

"We knew the concept of working together was going to resonate with Congress..."

Lenise Lago, Assistant Budget Director, USFS, Washington, DC

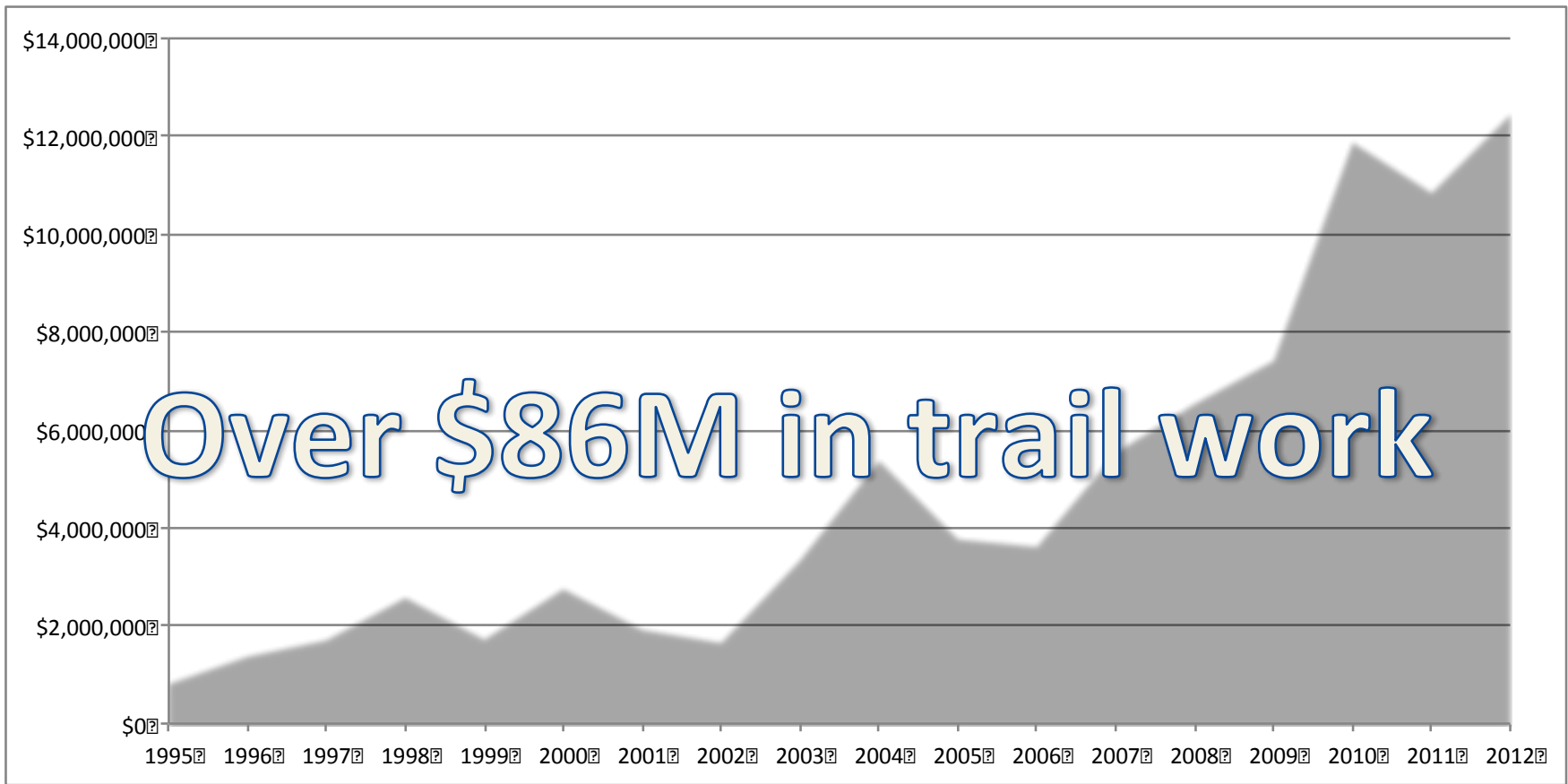
"...WTA's trail work relies heavily on our Back Country Horsemen..."

Karen Daubert, WTA

"The enthusiasm and passion brought to the trail by partners is essential."

Liz Bergeron, PCTA

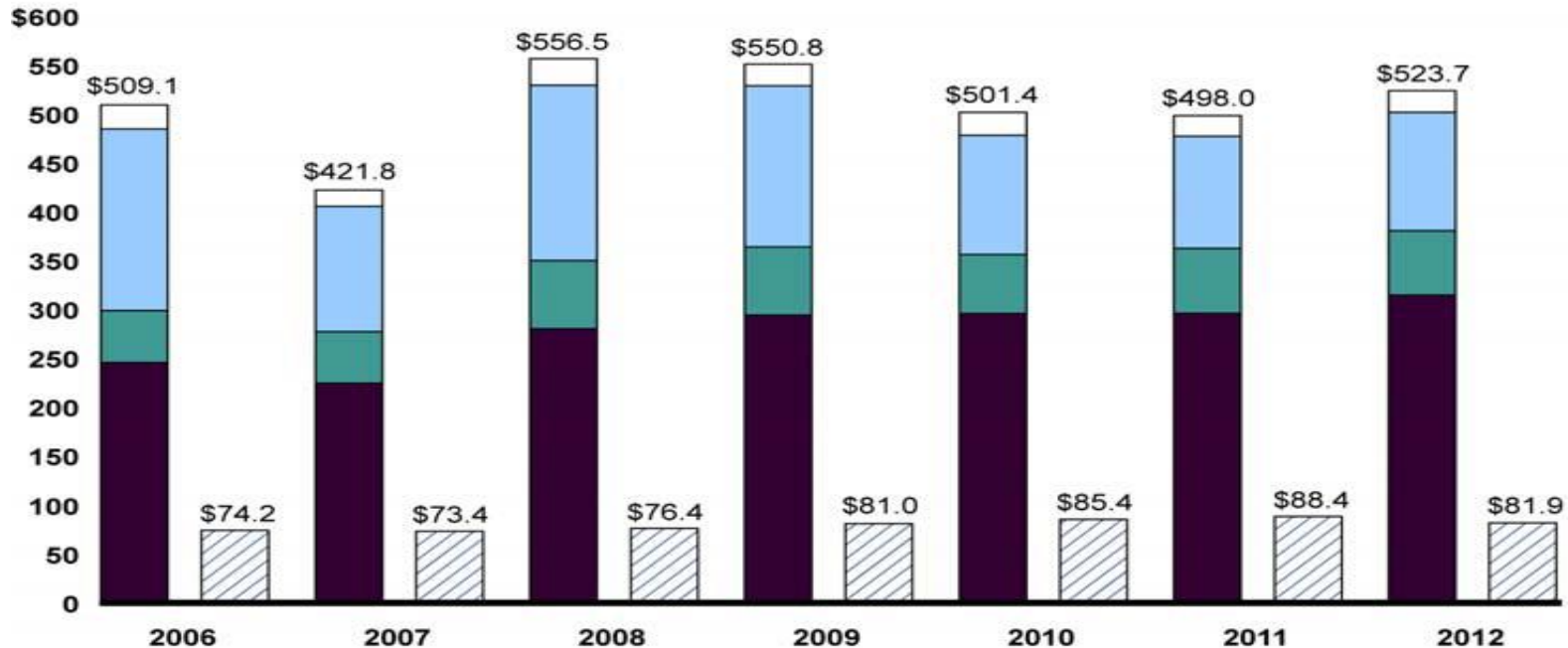
Partners in
Public
Lands
Stewardship



Across the United States, hundreds of dedicated and committed volunteers provide millions of volunteer hours, equipment, pack and saddle stock, and transportation. In 2012 alone, the value of the work was \$12.5 million and we cleared over 17,000 miles of trails. Since we began tracking the hours and the value in 1995, BCHA has contributed over \$86 million to America's trails. ***Our dollar value numbers are consistently underreported, understated, and growing.*** The work is endless and we continue to increase our commitments.

The work is never finished

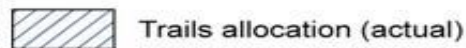
Dollars (in millions)



Needs



Resources

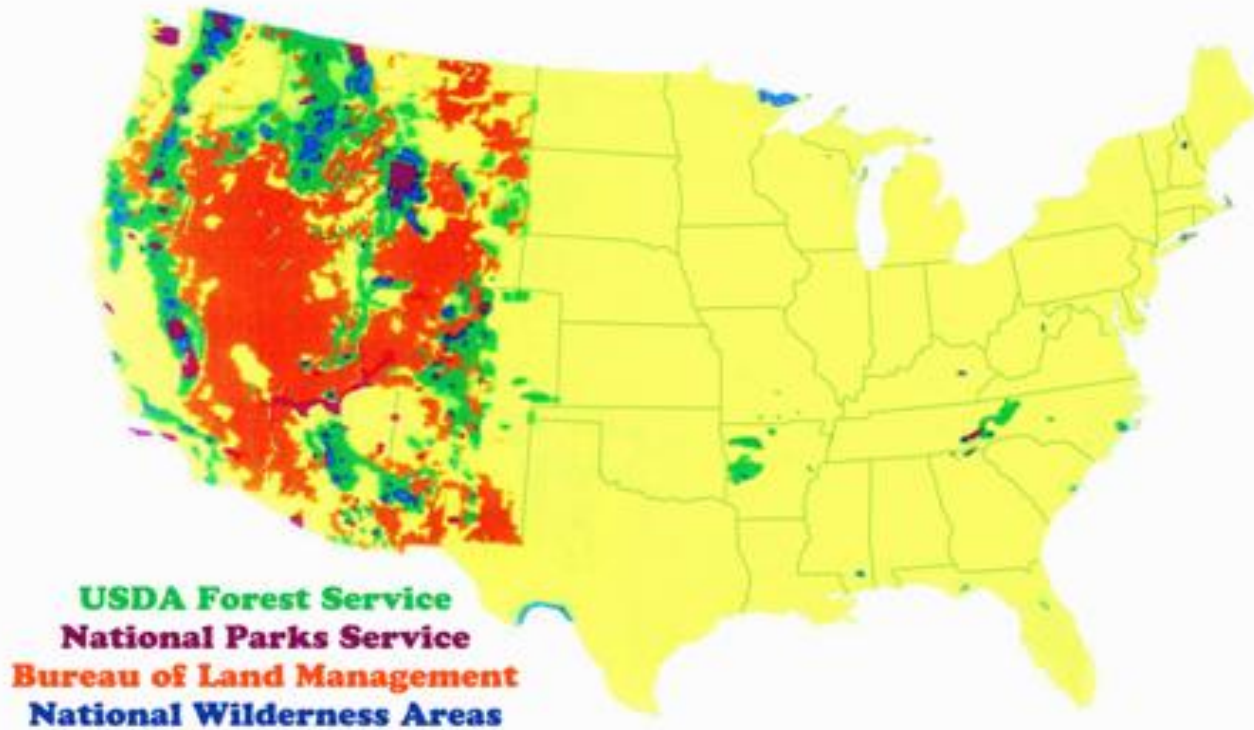


Appropriated trail dollars are level and declining with inflation, but deferred annual maintenance is growing. A huge gap exists between what is maintained and what is needed – BCHA filled a \$12.5m gap in 2012. More is needed...

Source: GAO analysis of Forest Service data.

Lots of Land... 500 million acres

Public Lands - Federal



OUR PLAN FOR AMERICA'S TRAILS

Strategic Operating Plan for 2014-2018



Tomorrow's leaders have access to back country and Wilderness – BCHA work parties travel many miles to clear and open trails.

Tomorrow's leaders have access to back country and Wilderness

Goal:

As individuals and groups, American youth will have access to back country and Wilderness experiences to enjoy and learn the value of public land stewardship.

Objective:

Leveraging partnerships with federal agencies and youth groups, BCHA will provide youth with education and opportunities to understand the importance of maintaining and preserving enjoyment of the back country and Wilderness.

Success Measure:

20 youth projects reaching 200 urban youth in all regions of the U.S. annually

“Using youth to get the job done gives youth opportunities to learn about themselves and the resources.”

– Jodi Sartori, Recreation Budget Coordinator, Washington Office, USDA Forest Service

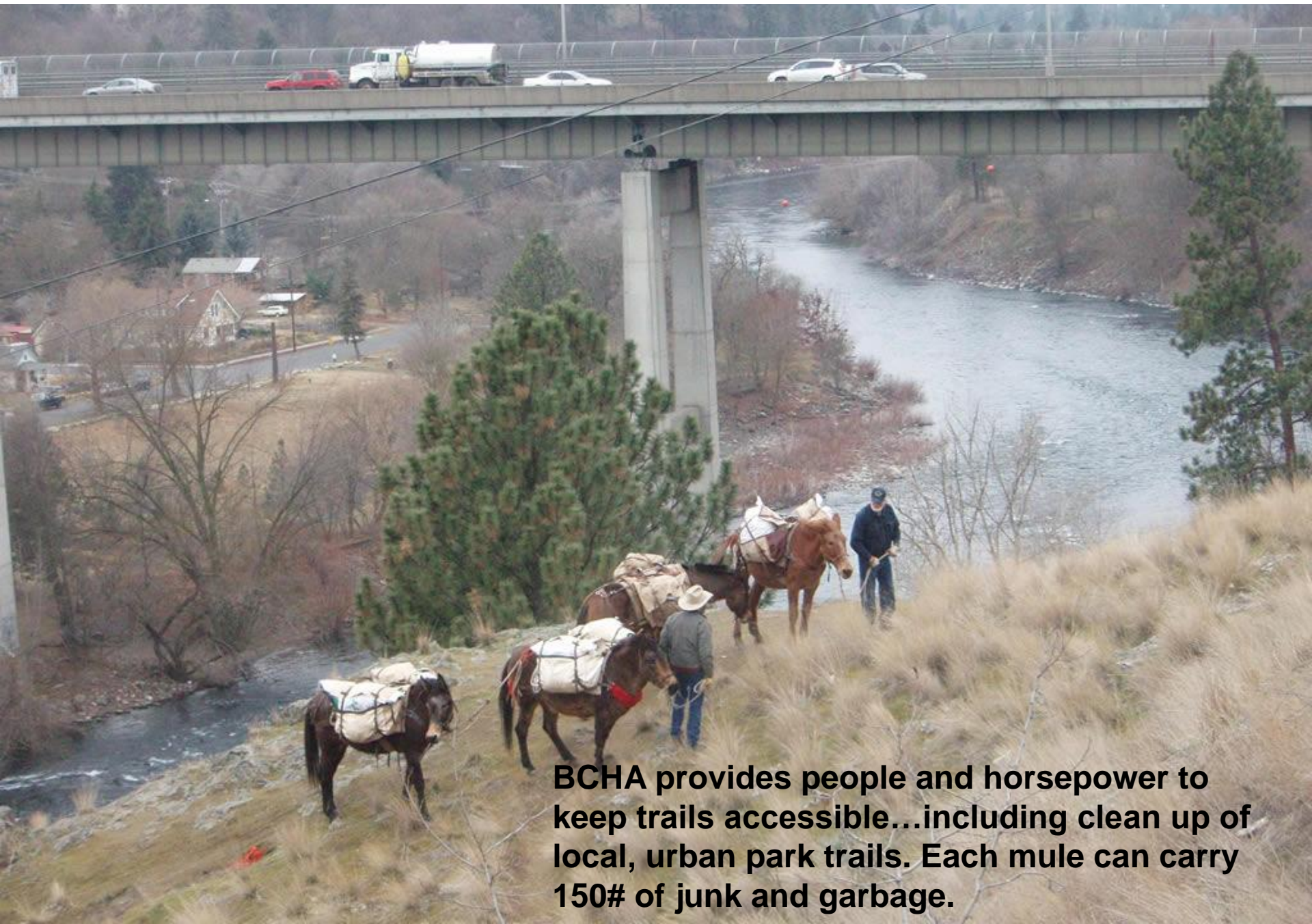
Tomorrow's leaders have access to back country and Wilderness

Strategies:

- Coordination with conservation corps and youth groups, United States Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management to leverage opportunities to provide outdoor and Wilderness experiences
- Work with other youth groups, including but not limited to, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Future Farmers of America, 4-H, Northwest Youth Corps, Student Conservation Education Association
- Host campouts, work parties, trail rides, and school events for the youth of America
- Educate young people and their parents about gentle use of the land and protection of the Wilderness
- Teach clinics on how to pack and ride safely

Fiscal impact:

BCHA, its youth partners, and other volunteers leverage trail dollars many times over in delivering substantial projects to clear and maintain trails.



BCHA provides people and horsepower to keep trails accessible...including clean up of local, urban park trails. Each mule can carry 150# of junk and garbage.



BCHA provides people and horsepower to keep trails accessible...for everyone

BCHA provides people plus pack and saddle stock to keep trails accessible

Goal:

Americans, visitors, and recreating public will be able to access America's local, state, and national trails.

Objectives:

- Leveraging partnerships with other trail use organizations, the recreating public will have widespread participation in fair and safe trail use for all ages, abilities, and skill levels
- Work with land managers and congressional delegations in Washington, D.C. to increase awareness of trails issues and ongoing needs to keep trails open
- Americans who own horses for recreational use will have the benefit of trail use

Success Measures:

- 15,000 miles of trails cleared, maintained, or repaired annually
- 300,000 volunteer hours annually

BCHA provides people plus pack and saddle stock to keep trails accessible

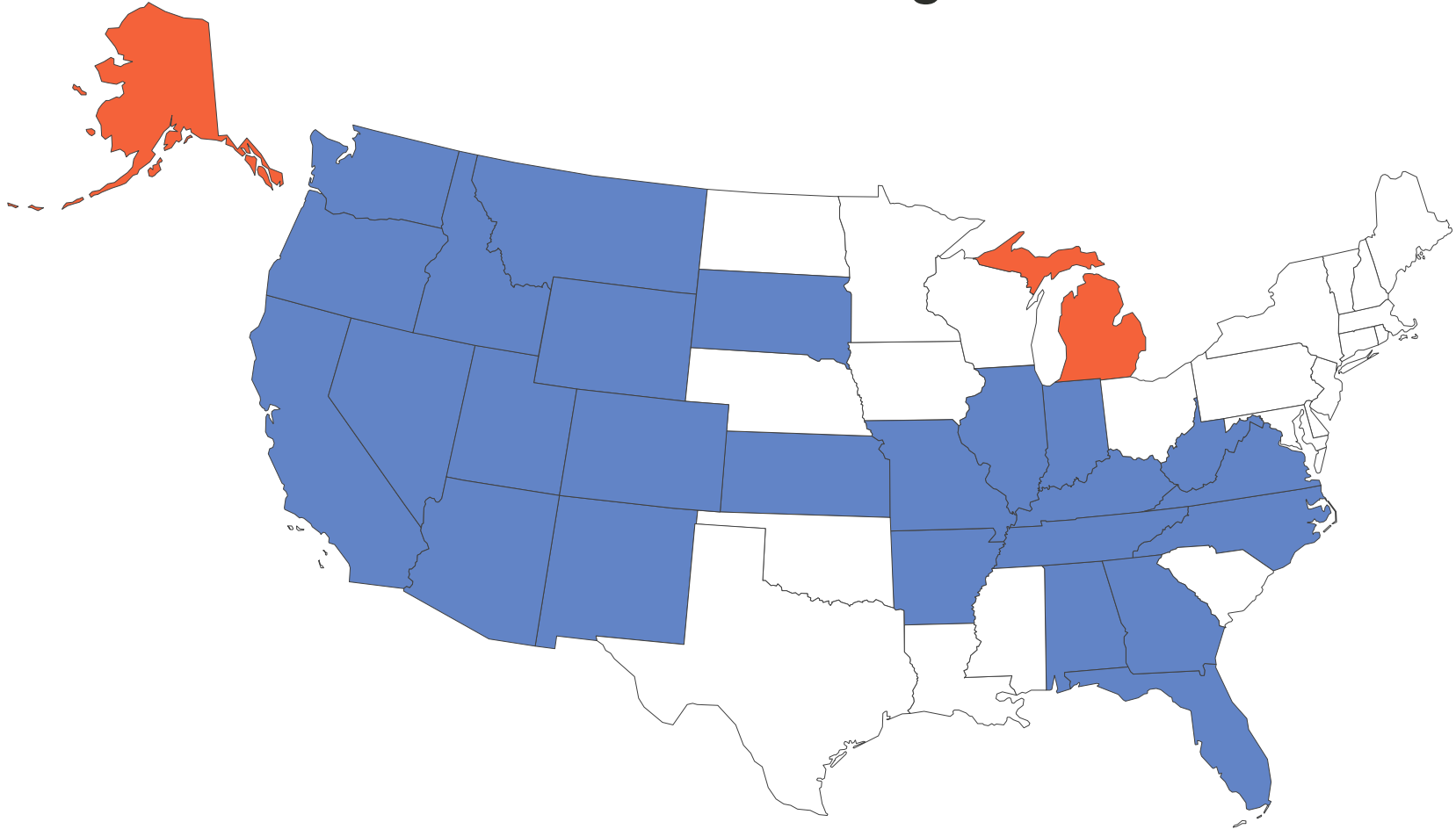
Strategies:

- Memoranda of Understanding with agencies
- Coordination with states/units/chapters
- Working with partners, such as the American Horse Council, The Wilderness Society and American Hiking Society, recreational horse and mule owners have a favorable trail use environment
- Face-to-face meetings with the USFS, NPS, BLM, US Fish & Wildlife, and legislative staff in Washington D.C. to ensure preservation of trails for stock use
- Face-to-face meetings with NGO trail partners such as American Horse Council, American Hiking Society, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and The Wilderness Society to ensure recreational trail users know about our work to preserve and maintain trails, including the importance of our volunteer work on behalf of all trail users

Fiscal impact:

Costs are substantial to work, maintain, clear, log trails, in addition to delivering trail crews, camp supplies, food, tools, and materials to a work site. BCHA members have a significant capital investment in stock and equipment that we provide to help leverage limited trail maintenance dollars.

BCHA Member Leaders Have Accessible, Broad-Based Information and Knowledge



*Current and **Affiliate** Members are located from coast to coast*

BCHA member leaders have accessible, broad-based information and knowledge

Goal:

BCHA's member organizations will have access to needed information and tailored services to increase capacity to serve local and regional trails

Objectives:

- To better meet current and future strategic needs, organized regional programs will build the capabilities of BCHA leaders
- Accurate and timely information and tools for members' organizations
- Build capacity with states and local chapters

Success Measures:

- Regional leaders identified and trained
- One regional meeting in each region annually
- Horse and mule owners' trail use preserved

BCHA member leaders have accessible, broad-based information and knowledge

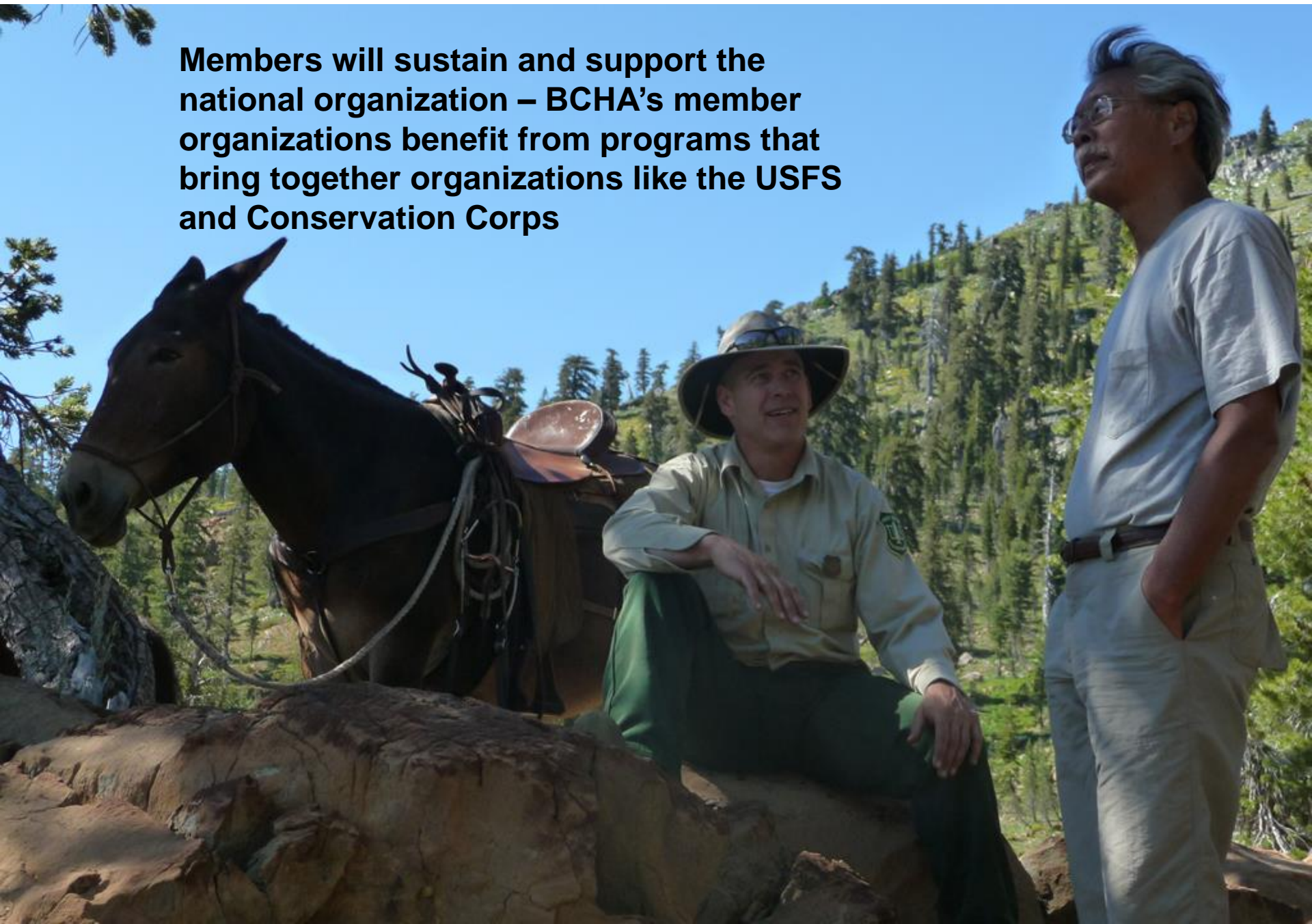
Strategies:

- Educate chapter and state organizations on how to identify and successfully apply for grants; find alternative resources; develop partnerships with youth groups, donors, and sponsors
- Regional leaders, state, and local groups know their area best: BCHA will help them leverage the knowledge and skills in each area to support the work
- Regional leaders coordinate and connect with BCHA for agency and legislative assistance
- Regional team meetings so members can exchange best practices, information, and skills training
- Major ongoing, active advocacy efforts at chapter, state, and national level by all members
- Education and safety training, including defensive horsemanship

Fiscal impacts:

- National organization meeting costs are contained
- Resources developed and distributed effectively
- BCHA investment maximized

Members will sustain and support the national organization – BCHA's member organizations benefit from programs that bring together organizations like the USFS and Conservation Corps



Members will sustain and support the national organization

Goal:

Membership and fundraising will support costs to “be at the table” with agencies and like-minded organizations to support the right to ride on public lands and assist regional leaders. Responsible stewardship of the land means more than just doing good work—it means making the most out of every donation we receive. *Some of our greatest challenges exist in some of the most scenic and remote areas that are difficult and costly to access.*

Objectives:

Financially stable, growing membership base

Success Measure:

\$100,000 in fundraising initiatives each year to leverage member dues.





Strategies:

Annual fundraising plan

“We’re like a big family working together to help get the job done.”

– Peter Lewis, California CCC Backcountry Manager

Fiscal impact:

At least \$100,000 will be raised each year to build capacity and provide assistance through matching grants for state, affiliate, chapter, and unit members in their efforts to keep trails open and accessible.

Our Mission is Fulfilled by Our Members and Your Support

We believe:

- Responsible stewardship of the land means more than just doing good work—it means making the most out of every donation we receive
- Common sense use and enjoyment of pack and saddle stock in America's back country and Wilderness areas is part of America's heritage and legacy
- We have a job to ensure public lands remain open to recreational stock use for the benefit of all trail users, which includes our extensive national volunteer efforts to preserve and maintain trails
- In our duty to assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of public lands trails and resources
- We have a duty to educate, encourage, and invest in active participation by young leaders in the wise and sustainable use of the back country resource
- We can fulfill our goals best by building capacity of existing and new Back Country Horsemen's organizations