Back Country Horsemen of America

www.backcountryhorse.com

Volume 25, Issue 2 - Spring 2014

Youth Scholarship

By Karen Kimball, Panhandle BCH, Idaho



Panhandle BCH Chapter in Northern ID offered a \$500 scholarship for a student of age 16 or high school graduate within the last four years. One of the requirements was Chapter membership and another was submission of a 500-word essay. Restrictions on the scholarship money were that it could only be used for college or other higher education tuition, college books, or computer and other school equipment. One applicant, Jessica Reineccus, completed all of the requirements and received the \$500 in January. We feel this was a very successful and beneficial award for young people in our community. For 2014 we are offering two \$500 scholarships.

Read Jessica's essay on the back page.

Watch our

event on April 25!

We believe that BCHA may be the best-kept secret in out. Watch our live streaming event on April 25!

to support fundraising and awareness efforts through web- we exist. For more see, page 11. sites, email and social media.

If you are not able to attend the conference in Tennes-America. And we also believe that it's time to let the secret see, you can RSVP for the online event. BCHA members and supporters can logon from their tablets, desktop com-On April 25th, you can watch the kickoff and celebrate puters, and smartphones! Invite your friends to watch and the launch of BCHA's crowdfunding campaign through donate. If you all logon to view our live event, our camour live streaming video at the National Board Meeting in paign will be a featured campaign at indiegogo.com! With Chattanooga. The power of a crowdfunding campaign is your help and support, we will raise the needed funds, inthat it energizes, inspires and invites the power of crowds crease membership, and let others in America know why

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BCH of Montana

CA Region 5 Pack Stock Center of Excellence (COE)

Excerpts from the Annual Accomplishment Report

Ecosystem Management and Restora-

While the term "pack stock" typically generates visions of wilderness and trails, its use as a tool in support of eco-system management objectives cannot be overstated. In Northern California, COE resources aided in erosion control projects, botany surveys, and an interagency fisheries project in the Trinity Alps and Yolla Bola Wilderness Areas on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Pack stock carried everything from tools and supplies to rocks and fill-dirt to gill nets and fish shocking equipment.

Community Outreach

Participating in a July 4th parade, appearing at special events, or main-

taining a visible presence on National Forest System (NFS) lands reminds the public of the agency's dedication to managing the landscape. The COE supported community outreach endeavors in FY2013 by sending riders, handlers, and stock to no less than 10 events within California and Oregon. These appearances included the Back Country Horsemen of California (BCHC) Annual Rendezvous in Norco, CA and the BCHC Northern Units' Equine and Trails Celebration in Red Bluff, CA, as well as the City of Bishop's annual Mule Days event, and the Region 6 Wilderness Skills Workshop in Klamath Falls, Oregon. The Mule Days event held annually since 1969 in Bishop CA provides an ideal venue for the COE to communicate to local communities

the value and necessity of pack stock as a land management tool. During the Mule Days celebration, the COE presented several educational clinics open to the public including a hands-one demonstration in partnership with the local BCHC chapter on packing practices and a crosscut saw demonstration with the assistance of an American Conservation Experience crew.

Future Opportunities

The COE will continue to build relationships with partners such as the Back Country Horsemen of California, American Conservation Experience, the Student Conservation Association, the California Conservation Corps, and the Pacific Crest Trail Association.

Cooperating and Volunteering Pays Off!

By Doug West, UT Southwest Chapter BCH

Thirty years ago I made an important decision about where to spend my time riding. With increasing congestion in Utah's American Fork Canyon, where my family has ridden for generations, a friend and I built a small cabin and horse barn on scenic Highway 12. Within miles of the cabin, there are literally hundreds of miles of non-motorized trails that I ride regularly June through November. During those 30 years, I have been fortunate in developing an excellent working relationship with the Fremont River Ranger District.

Even with a limited budget, the district ranger makes every effort to keep the trails open for horsemen like me and other non-motorized users. District

Ranger Kurt Robins and his Recreation Manager Cody Clark always graciously listen when I stop to offer suggestions about trail maintenance or improvements. During one of these visits, I proposed improving an existing trail-head to eliminate a dangerous highway crossing and to make more readily accessible the non-motorized trails along Highway 12. To my surprise, they not only liked my idea, but they also improved it significantly. Building a new trailhead parking area and adding a one-mile connector trail would significantly improve access.

With a limited budget, the Fremont River Ranger District built the new Oak Creek Trailhead located approximately 18 miles south on Highway 12 from the junction with Highway 24. For those unfamiliar with the area, Highway 12 is a National Scenic Highway that connects Torrey, UT with Bryce Canyon National Park. The district ranger allocated some of his limited budget to build a gravel parking area. In addition, he improved a short section of the Oak Creek Reservoir road that makes the trailhead easily accessible to trailers and cars. Using the District's fire crew, a one-mile connector trail was cut connecting the new Oak Creek Trail Head to the High Ranger Trail.

Without volunteer help, this project would not have been possible. On National Trails Day 2013, BCH volunteers from the Central Utah and Canyon Country chapters helped build a bridge across Oak Creek. The local Boy Scout Troop from Teasdale worked under the supervision of Brendan Robins, completing the connector trail for his Eagle Scout Project. In addition to the organized groups, local volunteers from the surrounding small towns of Teasdale and Torrey joined forces with the Forest Service. Even the Forest Supervisor Allen Rowley spent the day working with the volunteers.

I believe the smile on my face sums up this story. You have to be willing to ask for what



Above: Kurt Robins, District Ranger (left) Supervises Volunteers.

you think is needed; but when asking, it helps to have spent the time building a cooperative relationship with your local public land managers. If you spend the time, you too can be the first to ride a good Walking Horse across a recently completed Forest Service Trail.

Doug West is a member of

the Southwest Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of Utah. He spends his time riding his Walking Horses mostly on Boulder Mountain and Southwest Utah. If you want more information about Boulder Mountain trails, contact him at parasite.ranch@gmail.com.



From the Chairman's Saddle



By Jim McGarvey, Chairman

There is a lot going on in BCHA Country. We have a new brand! In case you didn't notice it on the front page, you might want to take another look. In January, the Executive Committee (EC) approved Kansas as BCH state organization. For the first time in our history, Kansas gives BCHA a contiguous state presence from the Pacific to the Atlantic. In February, the EC approved Florida as a state organization. Florida has the third largest horse population in the country. Please greet our new member states with a "Welcome and Well Done!"

Issues continue to grow in public lands – from the trail maintenance backlog to user conflicts to the loss of access by pack and saddle stock users. Complexity of these issues also increases. It is virtually impossible for any one volunteer BCHA chair or EC member to know everything about all of the issues, let alone formulate a response or plan of action in a timely and accurate fashion. With that in mind, the EC approved retaining and expanding the services of Randy Rasmussen as our Recreation and Public Lands Advisor for one year, with a two-year renewal option.

Randy has over twenty years of public lands experience both inside and outside the agencies. He brings a robust knowledge of the issues facing BCHA across the country. Randy's responsibilities are to advise the BCHA chairman and key committee chairs on matters related to wilderness, wildland recreation, and trails management and



planning, and to serve as a liaison with advocacy and user groups and agency leaders related to those specific disciplines. To fund the increased scope of the contract with Randy, Jim and Cindy McGarvey are making a \$40,000 donation to the BCHA.

Our Public Lands Advisor participated in the annual "Hike the Hill" week beginning on February 10th. Randy, along with Paul Sanford of The Wilderness Society and Ben Pendergrass of the American Horse Council, met with and briefed well over a dozen staffs of senators and congressmen involved with our public lands issues. Randy also met with high-level managers of the Forest Service to discuss the GAO Trail Maintenance Backlog Report. He also met with National Park Service managers regarding our ongoing Memorandum of Understanding with the agency.



On another front, we have formed several ad hoc committees to accomplish a large set of ambitious goals including new website, e-mail program, brand, BCHA videos, estate gifting program, five-year strategic plan, and online crowdfunding campaign (see front page for more information regarding the campaign). To insure the success of these multiple efforts, we have engaged a number of talented BCH volunteers and staff to work on these projects, including: Mike Mc-Glenn (WA), Alan Hill (CA), Robbin Schindele (ID), Freddy Dunn (UT), Ami McBride (CA), Yvette Rollins (IN), Jacque Alexander (AR), Dave Rich (NV), Ginny Grulke (KY), Edith Conyers (KY), Don Saner (WY), Denis Serpa (CA), Phil Hufstader (OR), Peg Greiwe BCH executive secretary, and Randy Rasmussen BCH recreation and public lands advisor. Thank you all!

The new website and videos projects required BCHA to enlist the services of outside expertise at the cost of approximately \$15,000. We were determined to not use BCHA monies to fund these projects. Rather, we looked for personal and organizational benefactor within the Back Country Horsemen of America. So far, we have reached our halfway point with commitments and donations from BCH Utah, BCH Oregon, BCH Georgia, BCH of North Georgia, Nick Martinez (NM), Roy Coronet (KY), Chuck Miller (MT), and Robbin Schindele (ID). We will give the full listing of donors as they come onboard in summer newsletter issue.

For website expertise we contracted with Velocity Webmasters. Freddy Dunn and our website committee are working closely with the firm. The new website will be up and running prior to our national board meeting in late April. We will need ongoing volunteers to upload content and maintain specialized sections of the site. Please consider lending a hand and contact me at chairman@backcountyhorse.com

Robbin Schindele is leading the production of the new videos. One video will be used for our online crowdfunding campaign and the second will be used on an ongoing basis on our new website explaining who we are and what we do. BCHA has engaged the University of Oregon Communications Department to produce the videos under the direction of Robbin Schindele. Phil and Casey Hufstader and members of the BCH Oregon are assisting with site selections and packing in the film crews and equipment. The videos will also be ready by the national board meeting.

While on the topic of the BCHA National Board Meeting, let me bring up a couple "firsts". This will be the first time our NBM will be held east of the Mississippi. It will be in Chattanooga, TN. Another important first for our membership is live streaming portions of the NBM for public viewing. We anticipate live streaming approximately 50% of the meeting. As the agenda is not yet formalized, we do not have a time schedule. However, you will be able to view the Online Crowdfunding Kickoff on Friday, April 25th at 4:00 p.m. PDT/7:00 p.m. EDT. NBM livestreamed videos will be archived for later viewing. Jason Suit of Southern Appalachian BCH chapter will be volunteering his expertise to get the live streaming up and running. Please visit the BCHA website for further details.

Remember that all activities and programs tie into achieving our mission and purpose.

Thank you.

Please contact me anytime with your comments or criticisms: chairma n@backcountryhorse.com

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BCHA Mission Statement

- To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness areas.
- 2. To work to insure that public lands remain open to recreational use.
- To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
- To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.
- To foster and encourage the formation of new state Back Country Horsemen's organizations.

BCHA Calendar

2014 Spring - Hike the Hill

April 23-26 BCHA National Board

Meeting - TN

TBA BCHA/The Wilderness

Society Planning Meeting

2015

April 22-25 BCHA National Board

Meeting - CA

<u>2016</u>

April 20-23

BCHA National Board Meeting - NV

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Tales of the Trais

One Last Trail

By Phebe Pelot, Eagle Rock BCH

"You'll never ride again" were the oncologist's words. In June of 1990 schoolteacher Chuck Christensen was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, bone marrow cancer. The back and chest pain had been excruciating for months. He sometimes suffered so much following the subsequent chemo and radiation, he would teach while lying on the floor. But he couldn't give up teaching the Driggs, ID middle school students he loved. That would do him in for sure. He felt the same about not being able to ride. A charter member of the Eagle Rock BCH, Chuck volunteered during the summers and brought past and present students along with him to clear

A canvas corset and clamshell body brace enabled him to hold himself upright and, with much help from loved ones, he slowly gained some of the weight, strength, and courage back that he had lost. One day in October of 1990 his wife Sally left their home in Alta, WY (a few miles from Driggs). Free from Sally's watchful eyes, Chuck made his way to the corral. With much effort and the aid of a bucket turned upside down, he was able to mount bareback his beloved three-year-old mule, Teancum. As the tears streamed down his face, he began to dream of riding one last trail.

Chuck was honored in the fall of 1990 for his efforts in completing the development of the Teton Transfer Camp in the Teton Ranger District of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest. Since the mid 1980's, the Forest Service had plans to make a trail from Banff, Alberta to Montezuma Pass, Mexico. The Great Western Trail would run along the Continental Divide. Why not ride the proposed route? Perhaps he could help with the undecided parts of the trail.

The following months were spent studying maps, making phone calls, conditioning his horse and mules, as well as inviting friends and family to accompany him. Many of his loved ones thought he'd lost his marbles. He should be getting his affairs in order. But this wasn't Chuck's first dream, and he had lived all of the others: whale hunting, skydiving, mountain climbing, making snow caves at the base of the Tetons with students, and building an underground house for a few.

In August of 1991, having been granted a leave of absence by the school board, he departed Victor, ID riding up Pole Canyon with his nephew Jube. Jube would ride along with him to his home in Logan, UT. They had only been on the trail a few days when Chuck almost lost his mule in a bog. This event was closely followed by a bout of giardia from bathing in a beaver pond. He also experienced an attack from a swarm of bees that resulted in a stampede.

But he arrived in Salt Lake on August 29, 1991 – his 60th birthday. He stayed with his sister for a few days while he received his scheduled chemotherapy and soon was off again. Many friends and relatives would join up with Chuck along the way, including Ty McCowin, the orthopedic surgeon who



Above: Chuck Christensen and Teancum, 1995 (courtesy of Dawn Fullmer).

had made the brace for him. Ty had just learned that he, himself, was suffering from Lou Gehrig's Disease. At times though, his equine friends were Chuck's only companions, besides "the Lord." He sometimes hitchhiked to town along the way to go to church. He was sure his faith would pull him through.

Survival was an extreme challenge, especially when food and water were scarce in the dry regions of Utah and Arizona. One mule suffered a twisted gut, causing Chuck to question his own judgment. Writing in his journal, he speculated that he just might have a "pigs' head and a mules' tail." Snakes, scorpions, and cacti were also constant sources of irritation in the south, but he persevered reaching the Mexican border November 18, 1991. One half of the trail was behind him.

There would be three legs on Chuck's trail north From Victor, ID to the Canadian border. Broken ribs ended the first attempt near Leadore, ID in 1993. The second was aborted near Su-

perior, MT because of injured horses in 1994. In 1995, accompanied by Eagle Rock BCH members Sharon Skenandore and Colleen Shackleford, Chuck tackled the Continental Divide for the final time. They faced snowdrifts, shale slides, and cliffs in search of a potential trail on the proposed GWT. Sharon's horse was injured forcing her to drop out and Colleen ran out of time. So Chuck crossed the border into Canada alone on July 21, 1995.

In June 1996 Chuck retired from teaching and received his last chemotherapy in December of that year. He chose to drink carrot juice as an alternative, continuing to squeeze every sweet moment possible out of life. At the time of his passing on Apr, 10, 2005, he was learning to convert cooking oil into fuel for his diesel Volkswagen Rabbit.

Chuck's daughter, LeAnn Bednar, has written My Final Ride, the story of her father's journey. I couldn't put it down. It's a great read. She can be contacted at LeAnnBednar.com or by phone in Alta, WY at 703-409-9999.



More Tales...

Packing with Vern and LaRene Smith

By Eve Wilson

Vern packed into the back country for 70 years with LaRene by his side for 65 years. Both became like mother and father to me because of all the cherished moments we have spent together. I have known them for 34 years and have ridden with them for about 30 of those years.

As a greenhorn, I learned from the ground up about riding and packing. We started hanging out in the mountains around 1988 and the pack trips became bigger and longer. Vern took my greenhorn status away when we went on a pack trip for a two-week journey into The Frank Church Wilderness in 1990.

I always felt safe when riding with them. For the record we had no "rode-os." Our animals always behaved, were calm, and in good disposition. Vern would also find the safest trails. Vern and LaRene showed me the beautiful country I would have missed. I saw the great mountains and panoramic views that only can be seen up close on the back of a mule or horse. Among the places I visited with them are The Frank Church wilderness, Sellway, and Palisades area of eastern Idaho.

Sometimes I timed Vern and La Rene when they threw their diamond hitch knots and the best time was 30 seconds. Vern would ask me to keep an eye on the panniers and tell him if the



diamond hitches had slipped to the left or right. Of course they never slipped because LaRene packed and weighed every pannier meticulously. They always had the best-looking pack string with perfectly formed diamond hitches

At day's end we would put the mules in the meadow for their evening meal, while LaRene would prepare the evening meals. My role was the "stoop and fetch" person for these back country adventures. I sure do miss LaRene's

steaks, fried spuds, berry pies, and salmon patties! Both Vern and LaRene had a great sense of humor. I also enjoyed their tales and jokes while sitting by the campfires.

Vern would always quote from his friend Joe Back, "When you are at the end of your rope...tie a knot." Well, Vern is at the end of his rope and the knot is perfectly formed tied.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES.



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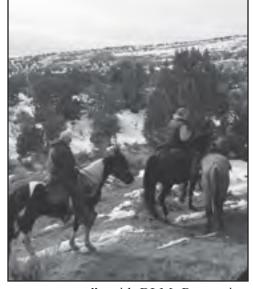


The Catch Pen UT Uintah Basin Chapter BCH Clean Up

Saturday the 15th was an exceptionally nice day for February in Vernal, UT, and members of the Uintah Basin Back Country Horsemen (UBBCH) satisfied their spring fever by doing a little clean up at Doc's Beach. Doc's Beach is a popular Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recreation area close to Vernal on the road going up to Taylor Mountain. It's a 15-minute drive from town and the BLM Vernal District has improved the site by installing a trailhead, bathrooms, and improved parking area. Many enjoy the site. "Unfortunately, being this close to town, people also find this a convenient place to dump their trash," said UBBCH President, Jody Holmes. "I don't know why when the dump only costs \$5."

The members enjoyed a morning ride before tying up their horses and putting on their work gloves to clean up trash. In just a short amount of time, the volunteers had loaded a refrigerator, kitchen stove, and two recliners, besides many more small items. "We focused on getting some of the large items loaded and gone, since we had use of a dump trailer that day," said member Don Connolly.

The Bureau of Land Management is currently in the process of designating trails on public land in and around the Uintah Basin, and through the larger area of the Vernal BLM District. One of the upcoming areas to be looked at is Doc's Beach. "We know we have a lot of recreation use near Doc's Beach, and that can often lead to conflict among users, and damage to the land



or resources," said BLM Recreation Planner Jason West. "User groups like the Back Country Horsemen doing a clean-up project really help all people who enjoy recreating at Doc's Beach." Saturday provided a good example of the variety of recreational use. Besides the horseback riders, all terrain vehicles (ATV's), hikers, and shotgun shooters were all seen in the area. "If everyone would leave the area a little better than they found it, we could all enjoy it more," said Connolly.

A larger cleanup of Doc's Beach is planned for September to coincide with National Public Lands Day. For information on Doc's Beach, trails designation, or recreating on BLM land, contact the BLM at (435) 781-4400. For information on the Uintah Basin Back Country Horsemen, call Jody Holmes at (435) 790-4928. (Submitted by Judy Holmes).

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NM Pecos Chapter Updates

In 2013, Linda Sofia and Jeannie Greven spearheaded an effort to apply for a grant from the BCHA Education Foundation to fund fuel and equine feed during our wilderness work projects. Here is their pitch:

The BCH Pecos Chapter of NM has been volunteering for 21 years. The Chapter received the Presidential Volunteer Service Award in 2012 for its 1,900 volunteer work hours Two Ranger Districts have increasingly relied on the Pecos Chapter to help maintain some of their most popular trails while agency budgets continue to decline. We served our secondary clients, Volunteers for the Outdoors and the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, for 16 projects in 2012, by packing their supplies in and out of the back country to facilitate their work projects in support of the Forest Service and its visitors. While working alongside the public and along the trail, we take every opportunity to share our mission, purposes, and activities.

Our volunteer members sometimes need to drive up to 125 miles one way to participate in projects. The pack-in trips often require spending the night on each end of the clients' work projects, sometimes necessitating feeding 12-15 equines. In these difficult economic times our members are challenged by rising fuel and feed prices that make it hard for some to be able to continue, even though they passionately love this volunteer work. Supplementing these costs will enable our members to continue to support the numbers of projects we accomplish for our clients.

We got the grant!

In 2013, the Pecos Chapter's 54 active members volunteered 2,798.5 hours in meetings, educational outreach, training and trail work and we drove 13,328 miles. If we look at only our trail work, first aid, cross-cut saw certification and GPS training, we tallied 1,975.5 hours! With the help of the BCHA Education Foundation money and some unexpected (but really welcome) additional monies from the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, we were able to offer reimbursement to our drivers at 27 cents (whoo hoo!) per mile.

We are keeping our fingers crossed for enough snow pack and spring and summer precipitation to keep us on the trail the whole 2014 season because our project list is already pretty long! (Submitted by Patty Wilber).

CA Mother Lode Unit BCH Attend Tindell Safety Clinic

The usual MLU campout on the third weekend of each month had a little different flavor in January 2014. It was a safety awareness training clinic limited to twelve riders a few folks who audited the class. BCHC and the US Forest Service have been increasingly concerned about accidents on the trail involving pack stock and the public's perception of horse and pack stock behavior. Both organizations coordinated with Jerry Tindell to develop a special program to help back country riders improve control of their stock, promote trail safety, and improve our public image

The setting was superb on the Stovall Ranch in Wilton. We had roomy parking to circle the rigs on the stream bank with trees for highlining the stock. The group was blessed with sunny days (temps in the 60s) and cursed with cold nights (temps in the 30s). The evening potluck around the campfire was chilly but generated the usual friendly chatter and storytelling under a full moon.

The first morning featured groundwork on a lead rope so each rider could begin to understand how the animal's feet can be directed and what their weight shifts mean for controlling them. The afternoon focused on transferring ground control concepts to the saddle, especially one-rein stops. Next was a visit to "the track" which was a sandy oval just long enough to allow a lope. The instructor emphasized that trail riders must be prepared to stay aboard if their mount is spooked and begins to run.

The second morning addressed some practical skills like trailer loading, gate opening and closing, and how to stand on a rock or stump and get your mount to position itself for mounting. Participants were greatly impressed with Mr. Tindell's ability to teach the average rider to train even spirited mounts. That's a real treasure to take home from a clinic. One frustrated rider had been trying for ages to get their mount to perform the gate and mounting exercises without success. The mounting maneuver was perfected on the third try and the gate will need just a little more practice at home. The second afternoon was a field trip into the cow pasture with a pack animal in



tow to demonstrate and practice how to keep the pair working together calmly with distractions. If not, the pair was subjected to lots of circling.

While specific material was scheduled for the class content, there was plenty of time for individual questions and one-on-one help. One individual arranged for early morning tutoring before class on Sunday. The small group size and Mr. Tindell's sharp eye made sure everyone got assistance as needed. We were all really glad we went. (By Lucy Badenhoop and Jerry Heitzler).

ID Squaw Butte Chapter BCH 4-H Halloween Trail Clinic

The Squaw Butte Chapter of Idaho decided it was time to get serious and promote BCH to those who do not have a plethora of gray hair. 4-H Leader Superintendent Gail Duke welcomed Linda Erickson's offer to provide a clinic October 19th at the Gem Country Race Track in Emmett, ID. SBBCH provided registration assistance and coaches at various obstacles for the Halloween Trail Clinic. We also set up a booth with BCH of Idaho information and offered complimentary horse soaps for participants. The peppermint soap was a favorite of the participants and the horses.

All had lots of learning and some serious fun as 30 participants went through the obstacles. Experienced trail riders and coaches were posi-

tioned throughout the course. Morning was for intermediate and advanced riders and afternoon for beginners. These obstacles were awesome and helped to build confidence in the rider and the horse. Games included a costume contest, trick-or-treating on horseback, and even horse bobbing for apples.

Kudos go to SBBCH members Phil and Kay Ryan, Charles and Lorraine Chick, Bill Holt, Janine Townsend, Rob Adams, and yours truly for volunteering that day, Yes, we made a difference. We are receiving handwritten thank you cards from 4-H members who participated.

Next we are volunteering to help Gail Duke with a 4-H Trail ride so some of the Arena/ Fair horses will get a chance to get outside in the back



country. Because we must lead by example and the 4-H rule in Gem country is helmets, we should have some great

photos. Promoting BCH to 4-H is a logical way to grow our organization. See you on the trail. (Submitted by Marybeth Conger).

UT Canyon Country Chapter BCH Recap 2013 & Start 2014

The Canyon Country Chapter (Es-replace an old cabin that burned down. calante) of BCH Utah held their first meeting of 2014 on Jan. 10. Old, new, and potential members attended the combination meeting, party, and potluck. Because she did such a great job in 2013, we re-elected President Carol Kracht. She called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to another fun and interesting year of riding, volunteering and socializing.

A recap of the volunteer work that the club did in 2013 is quite impressive. Our members contributed a total of over 500 hours to various projects. Some of the projects were cleaning and clearing trash from over 38 miles of trails in the Dixie National Forest, packing out 450 lbs. of rubbish for the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area in cooperation with the NPS and the BLM, and contributing over 150 hours of labor to building a yurt at Cowpuncher's to

In cooperation with the Dixie National Forest for National Trails Day in June, we assisted with the Oak Creek Spur Trail gate installation and bridge construction. In cooperation with the BLM and Escalante River Watershed Project in July, we packed in supplies for trail clearing. It was a very successful and satisfying year for our Chapter. And that is just the work we did - there were also group rides and/or moonlight rides almost every month, including a big bash on Cinco de Mayo to celebrate our first anniversary as a club.

Now with 2014 underway, new projects are being considered, new members have joined, and new rides are being planned. On Jan. 24, several members got together just out of town for a little ride. Spring-like weather and horses with long winter coats had everyone warmed up and ready for some



Photo by Caarol Kracht. From left to right: Erica Walz on Boss, Gwendoly Zeta on Brick, Marcie Hoffman on Lucky, Tom Mansell on Abby and Cate Vining on Rose.

aprés-ride refreshments. When we returned to the trailers, Crockett Dumas who has recently been immortalized as (our newest member) and his lovely a Breyer model horse. (Submitted by mare Sara Moniet met us. Sara Moniet Gwendolyn Zeta).

is an outstanding endurance Arabian,

The Catch Pen

UT San Rafael BCH Gordon Creek WMA

In 2013 the BCHA Education Foundation awarded the San Rafael BCH funds to construct and install horse trail gates to improve equestrian access into the Gordon Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Located in central Utah, the 14,894-acre WMA is managed by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) to provide habitat for wintering elk and deer. Several canyons, two of which contain flowing water, cut through it. Along with horseback riding the area provides many recreational activities including wildlife viewing, hiking, hunting, and horn hunting.

UDWR fenced the area to exclude motorized use, but that also excluded equestrian use. This area is near the two largest cities in Carbon County and provides an excellent area for day rides. Gates provided improved access for hunters using horses as well as access to several destination landmarks (waterfalls, historic cabins and wildlife viewing areas) within the WMA.

San Rafael BCH met on site twice this fall to install the horse gates. The gates were constructed in cooperation with the UDWR. Two dedicated hunters welded the gates for their volunteer hours with UDWR. SRBCH provided the pipe. The chapter met to dig the postholes and cement in the gates. Everything went well and there are presently two horse gates in the fence along the Consumers Road. In November the San Rafael Chapter held a ride into the area to celebrate the completion of the gates and to view the new area available for equestrian use. If you plan to visit, note that the area is closed between December 1 and April 15 for the protection of wintering elk and deer. (Submitted by Wayne Ludlington)



Horse going through the gate. Rider is a BLM temporary worker.

WA Northeast Chapter BCH Clean Up



On Jan. 27, five members of the Northeast Chapter BCH Washington volunteered four pack mules and labor to load and pack out discarded camping gear, clothes, countermand and junk lo-

cated along the Spokane River below the Centennial Tail near Kendall Yards Development in Spokane, WA. The work was with and for Code Enforcement and the Park Department. Since the stuff we were hauling was from a rather large hobo camp, the city crews had bagged most of the stuff into 80 pound feed sacks donated by Justin Bag Company. The rest was put into garbage bags. This job started about 10:00 a.m. and stopped at dusk about 4:00 p.m.

As a guess, I would say we loaded and hauled about 1,500 pounds of bagged garbage up a very steep riverbank trail fourmule loads at a time. This equals tired mules and men. Does this help keep trails open in the back country? No. What it does do is show the world around us that we and our animals are a resource that is valuable to all trail users even for the Centennial Trail that we cannot take our horses and mules on. (Submitted by Bob Williams, president NE Chapter).

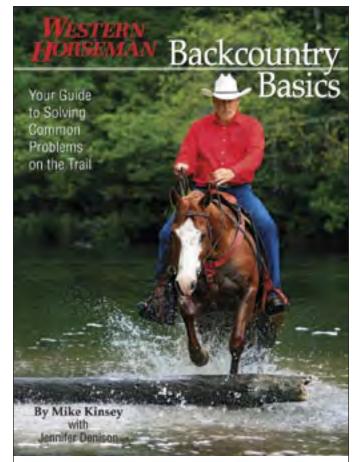


BCHU Member Recognized by Equitrekking 50-State Trail Riding Project

Judy Hansen Nelson, a member of BCHU Wasatch Front Chapter, wrote an article for the Equitrekking 50-State Trail Riding Project, which appeared online February 26, 2014. Her article and photos highlight trail riding in Zion National Park in southern Utah. See article at: http://www.equitrekking.com/articles/entry/horseback-riding-zion-national-park-in-utah-la-verkin-creek/

Judy enjoys blogging about her trail adventures with husband, Bob Nelson, and has been generous enough to share their experiences online for everyone. Her blog has trail info, photos, and maps for many Utah trails and she frequently updates this info. See her blog at: http://dreampackertrail.blogspot.com/

Way to go, Judy! (Submitted by Kathy Myers)



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From the Secretary's Desk



By Peg Greiwe, Executive Secretary

Hello Friends,

Things are really ramping up for the National Board Meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee April 23-26. Registrations are coming in, reservations are being made, speakers are confirming - all the "stuff" that is needed to have a successful annual meeting. There will be a few new national directors that we will get to know and some others that will be missed. And we have learned how to spell Chattanooga and Chickamauga! Thanks to Joanne and Bobby Mitchell and their able team in Tennessee for their tireless work to make this board meeting one to remember.

By the time you get this article, I will have been to Washington, DC with my husband for his business. Our Advisor for Public Lands & Recreation Randy Rasmussen provided me with talking points. When Dale is meeting with the congressmen, I will be able to pass on our BCHA issues. If any of you have the opportunity to go to DC, feel free to contact BCHA for talking points when you meet with your congressmen. We will be happy to help.

Lots of exciting things are going on under Chairman Jim McGarvey's leadership. We have a new brand! In case you didn't notice it on the front page, you might want to take another look. The website is being revised with Freddy Dunn's capable management, Randy Rasmussen is getting acquainted with Constant Contact to he can guide us in our e-blasts, Mike McGlenn and his committee are working on a planned giving program, Robbin Schindele is directing a BCHA video with narrator Casey Hufstader and the BCH of Oregon providing the stock and support. The crowdfunding teams are stretching their capabilities to come up with a great kick-off event at the NBM.

Our wonderful Webmaster Bob Badgley has decided to retire from BCHA's website. He has agreed to help us get through the learning process with the new site. Bob has been with us many, many years and has always been available when I have called. And he filmed the National Board Meetings for several years. What a good friend Bob has been to BCHA! Thank you, Bob!

We welcome the Back Country Horsemen of Kansas and the Back Country Horsemen of Florida as new state organizations of Back Country Horsemen of America! They have been granted conditional acceptance by the Executive Committee and will receive formal acceptance at the National Board Meeting.

We are looking for spring! The daffodils are trying to bloom and the trees are spouting leaves! I hope that the weather in your area improves and lets spring come in after such a tough winter.

Your friend, Peg

Good News from Yellowstone National Park

By Randy Rasmussen, Advisor for Public Lands and Recreation

Early into my work with BCHA, the strong service ethic shared by BCH volunteers and their ability to form lasting partnerships became abundantly clear. I'm honored to work with, and build on the work of, BCHA's founders and long-time members who have gained the respect and admiration of our peer trail organizations, agency partners and elected officials. On many occasions I have entered a meeting with strangers, yet garnered instant respect once I announced that I represented BCHA. "Oh, you are the ones that keep the trails open," or "BCH brought in supplies deep into the wilderness for our work crew!" Your work serves as a cornerstone to one of BCHA's Five Principles to "perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness." BCHA's members' voices in agency decisions affect our use and enjoyment of our national parks, forests, and our nation's unique system of public lands.

BCH volunteers' positive relations forged through years of dedication and sweat equity served you well at Yellowstone National Park (YNP). Last spring, BCHA issued an e-mail action alert encouraging members to submit comments on an environmental review of YNP's contracts for commercial stock outfitters. We anticipated BCH members would profess their love and admiration for exploring the nation's-and the world's-first national park by horseback. You exceeded our expectations. BCH members submitted the majority (54%) of 156 public comment letters received by the park from individual citizens. According to the park's November 2013 Environmental Assessment (EA), "The predominant comment themes were the significant role of [recreational] stock use in visitor enjoyment and accessibility, stock

use as a traditional part of the park's history, and opposition to restrictions or limits on day rides or backcountry use" (EA, p. 10). Make no mistake, Yellowstone personnel were well aware of the importance of the park to private and commercial stock users.

The park's EA pointed out, "... stock historically facilitated access to Yellowstone's remote backcountry" (EA, p. 4) and "commercial stock outfitters provide a service many visitors use while visiting the park and one that is often recognized as part of the Yellowstone experience" (EA, p. 71). At a time when we are witnessing other iconic national parks propose restrictions on commercial and private stock use, we must take this opportunity to praise Yellowstone's superintendent and staff for rendering a decision that will not unduly restrict commercial outfitter use in the park's backcountry and wilderness. Indeed, it appears one of the objectives for completing the environmental review was to ensure the agency's ability to issue new outfitter contracts with minimal risk of legal challenge.

Long-standing relations and mutual respect among park staff, the outfitter community, and BCH officers in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho created a positive atmosphere in which the NPS sought not to restrict use of recreational stock-but to secure its future within Yellowstone National Park. We should celebrate a NPS that is proactive, inclusive, and carries a desire to "perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness." And we should take heart knowing that the good will and respect earned by BCH founders and current officers created the foundation for this success.

National Insurance – The Time Has Come

By Nick Martinez, BCHA Vice Chair

BCHA is in the process of looking into getting general liability insurance on a national level. For states with smaller membership, one of their biggest expenses is sending national directors to the National Board Meeting, so an additional expense of insurance could be daunting. Generally, states with smaller memberships tend to get event insurance when using public venues such a county or city fairgrounds as regulations require insurance in order to use those types of facilities.

The general liability insurance BCHA is researching is 3rd party, which means the insurance does not cover BCHA members. What it covers are members of the public if they are injured or hurt at a BCHA function or work ride at the national, state, or local chapter level. National organization insurance eliminates the need for state

and local chapters to obtain insurance for all functions, rendezvous, or work rides. In the long run this type of insurance would be more cost effective and advantageous to states with smaller membership. At this time the preliminary estimate of the cost for this insurance would be \$12 - \$15 per member, based on our national membership.

Last year in New Mexico, the state board paid approximately \$2,500 for general labiality and directors and officers insurance. The breakdown was \$1,550 for general liability and \$950 for directors and officers. Our members did not object to the small, small increase in dues. We are interested in hearing your opinions and feedback about this type of insurance. I ask that you will take time to comment and let me know your thoughts, which can be sent to me at ennicolas@earthlink.net.



2013 Fundraising Report to the Membership

Thank You, Donors

Thanks to you, millions of Americans and visitors to our beautiful country will enjoy safe and accessible trails. Your generous gift in 2013 made a difference to everyone who loves the back country and the wilderness. Thanks to you, young people and adults who ride the nation's scenic and historic trails on the back of a horse or mule have access to those trails. Your donation helps ensure a seat at the table when pack and saddle stock trail access is negotiated at the national, state, and local levels. Your willingness to help provided grant money for trail projects and youth projects so that urban kids can understand the value and legacy of our national treasures. Thank you for all you do and for your belief in the purpose of BCHA.

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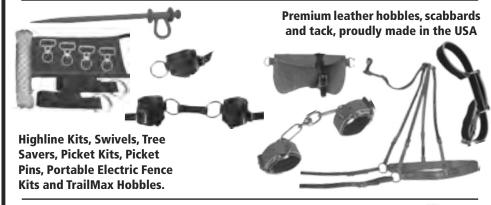


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Thank you to all our donors from 2013 from the Board of Directors of the Back Country Horsemen of America

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Zoe Sollenberger

Every effort has been made to make this list as complete and accurate as possible. If you have any questions about it, please contact Peg at the national office and every effort will be made to correct the records.

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Elanor Moon & Marcy Ott

Add My Support

Since BCHA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, donations are tax deductible. The BCHA National Board has authorized the formation of special categories of BCHA membership at the national level. Contributions from these special members are designated for education, promotion and expansion according to BCHA philosophy and purposes. Projects beyond the normal BCHA budget might include the development of educational and promotional literature, participation in regional or national training symposiums and assistance on behalf of BCH organizational efforts. Membership may be obtained for individuals as well as organizations and is renewable on an annual basis.

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BCHA Keeps America's Trails Open and Accessible Takes Horsepower and Funding

By Jim McGarvey Chairman

We believe that BCHA may be the best-kept secret in America. And we also believe that it's time to let the secret out. As BCHA members, we know how our horses and mules are vital to maintain, repair, and preserve trail access for millions of Americans. We know it takes people power, too. People man the chainsaws, crosscut saws, and manage the packing in and out. BCHA members work to collaborate with others, too - the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the other trail user groups. We are most effective when we meet with folks face-to-face and this takes money. Money for travel and seed money to help get collaborative projects started.

Many of the other trail user groups volunteer, but we all know trail riding clubs or trail user groups whose members do not volunteer – most of us know several clubs. On Friday April 25, at the National Board Meeting in Chattanooga, the Back Country Horsemen of America will be launching a new initiative – an online crowdfunding campaign. The power of a crowdfunding campaign is that it energizes, inspires and invites the power of crowds to support fundraising and awareness efforts through websites, email and social media.

All of us have repeatedly been on trail work crews when trail riders or hikers come upon us. We exchange pleasantries; they thank us and move on. Now we have an opportunity to ask those folks to help with a small donation. Through crowdfunding, we can also expand our reach to a larger pool of potential donors and not limit ourselves to trail riders but also hikers, hunting and fishing organizations and others. When one thinks about it, we can throw a wide net. But for this to succeed, our closest circles and membership must contribute and share. We need your help to make this a success.

Here's how it works. BCHA will forward professional, customized emails to you and ask that you forward these emails encouraging trail club members to donate to continue BCHA's work to keep America's trails

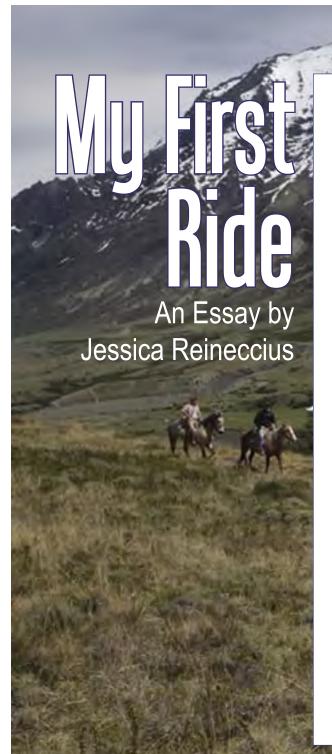
open. Individual donors and clubs will be directed to a special website located at indiegogo.com (check it out!). All donations are tax-deductible. During our campaign, a visitor to indiegogo. com will see a video that tells the story of our 40-year effort to keep America's trail open and today's threats to those trails. BCH of Oregon member Casey Hufstader is the narrator, BCH of Idaho member Robbin Schindele is the director, and the University of Oregon Media and Educational Technologies will complete the videotaping and editing.

BCHA engaged Jonathon Stalls to coach us in our campaign. Jonathon successfully coached the Continental Divide Trail Coalition in their 2013 crowdfunding campaign. Jonathon is a long distance hiker on our National Scenic Trails; he's completed a walk across Scotland; and, he completed a yearlong walk across America that raised \$500,000 for micro lending charities in developing countries. Jonathon's love for the trails complements BCHA's beliefs and purposes.

What should you do next? Around the middle of April, start visiting our website www.backcountryhorse.com for more information about the campaign. At the same time, e-mails will begin arriving at BCH national directors and state organizations with instructions to forward to their membership. Then, mark your calendars for Friday, April 25th at 4:00 p.m. PDT/7:00 p.m. EDT.

On April 25th, you can watch our kickoff and celebrate the launch of the campaign through our live streaming video at the National Board Meeting in Chattanooga. If you are not able to attend the conference in Tennessee, you can RSVP for the online event. BCHA members and supporters can logon from their tablets, desktop computers, and smartphones! Invite your friends to watch and donate. If you all logon to view our live event, our campaign will be a featured campaign at indiegogo. com! With your help and support, we will raise the needed funds, increase membership, and let others in America know why we exist.





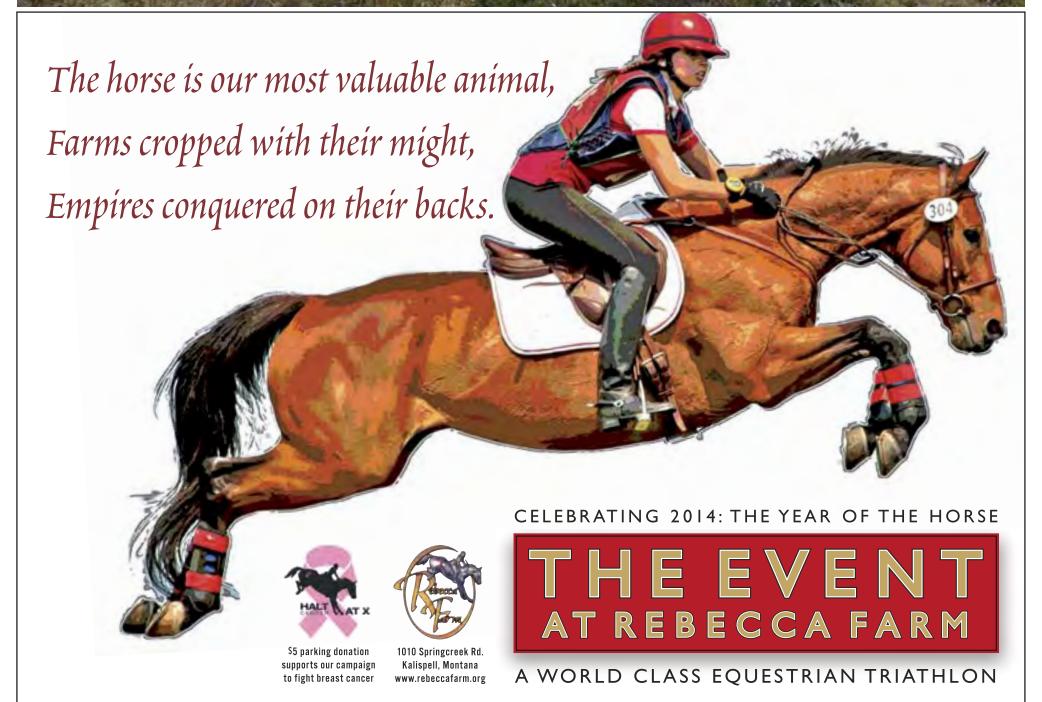
I can remember the first Back Country Horseman ride I went on. It was up the St. Joe River at a camp called Red Ives. My paint horse was not a seasoned trail horse yet, he was an arena horse, mostly used for reining and barrel racing. That year, he had actually taken my mom on a few scary attempts at trying to be a mountain goat. She had warned me the whole windy one lane dirt road up to camp that he likes to jump logs and ditches unexpectedly and gets dizzy if he stops in the middle of the river and usually starts out really hot headed, jigging and side passing until he gets tired. So I was a little nervous knowing it wasn't going to be an easy flat ride and that is was also a work party, meaning chainsaws and lots of pack animals, not that I wasn't experienced, but my horse was.

When we arrived at camp, the view was amazing! There were mountains I swore touched the sky and a river that had so many switchbacks, it was like everything I had seen in the movies. In the morning, the coffee was perfect as usual: hot, black and grainy. Everybody saddled their animals and we split in two groups headed up the mountain. My horse was behaving perfect! He acted like an old pro, sure-footed, careful and easy going. The trail was beautiful. It was green, the deer were everywhere and the weather was a perfect 80 degrees.

I had one of the jobs of trimming branches that hung low in our faces while on horseback. Anytime we dismounted, to saw big down trees off the trail, my horse stood grazing. There were a lot of one-foot wide trails with the mountain on one side, and straight down cliff on the other, but my paint horse was not scared. He knew where every hoof touched the ground, and I trusted him (mostly because I had no other choice).

The trail clearing took most of the day, and when we finally met back up with the other half of the club, I was proud of my young horse. Just as it was starting to cool down, only about an hour left of riding, we heard some yelling. A team of pack mules, tied together, came flying up behind us, passing the whole group, continuing down the mountain. Their owner on foot chasing as fast as he could, then a couple men on horseback preceded to help catch the mules. It was actually quite comical, but I couldn't help but be glad it wasn't me. Nobody was hurt and the team was caught once they realized they had separated the group. Camp was a comforting site. Dinner was made from everybody's contributions and I had never tasted such delicious Dutch oven cooking. I was hooked.

The next day was a non-work-party ride to a secluded camp resort only accessible by foot. We followed the river, crossing a dozen times to end up at a field full of flowers two feet tall. This just put the icing on the cake. Of all the rides I have been on since, I always compare them to Red Ives. It is by far my favorite and most memorable and I hope to make it again this year. The Panhandle Back Country Horsemen is an amazing group of good people doing great things all while bonding with their horses. I'm so happy to be a member of an organization that's so driven and fun to be around and I am excited for 2014!



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