

A Pasayten Work Party

By Robert Eversole



The Pasayten is a very big piece of very wild country in north central Washington. With nearly 150 peaks towering over 7,500 feet in elevation and over 160 water bodies dotting the landscape, the area has much to offer stock users.

Left: Jason Ridlon
Below: Robert Eversole

Summer brings many wonderful things: fresh watermelon, bluebird skies, and the BCH of Washington Annual Work Party. For the past three years BCHW statewide work parties have tackled 2/3 of our mission statement: 1) Keeping trails open for all users, and 2) providing volunteer service to resource agencies. We organize dedicated volunteers from across the state to attack the biggest and the worst trail systems with sweat, saws, horses, and mules.

This year the work was centered on the eastern side of the Pasayten Wilderness. From June 30th to July 7th the BCHW worked on making all the trails into the Wilderness from the Tonasket Ranger District passable by stock. We had our work cut out for us from the beginning and it only became more challenging as the week wore on. This is the story of the 2015 BCHW Pasayten Work Party. If you were one of the 44 amazing attendees you already know the highlights of what you accom-

plished. If you weren't, please read on.

The Pasayten is a very big piece of very wild country in north central Washington. With nearly 150 peaks towering over 7,500 in elevation and over 160 water bodies dotting the landscape the area has much to offer stock users. Over 600 miles of trails exist to grant access into the Pasayten, but maintenance on many of those trails has been lacking. In many cases these trails haven't been usable by mule and horse riders for the better part of a decade. Enter the BCH of Washington.

While all work parties are enjoyable and productive, this year's Annual Work Party went far beyond the usual.

The first of July began with a chill in the air as we rose to feed and tack 10 animals before departing the trailhead at 0630. Our first stop was the Iron Gate trailhead where we would be loading the gear, equipment and camp supplies for a Washington Trails Association crew that was to work with BCHW for the week. Vicki Gish and

I left early to clear the way for the main pack train and I'm glad we did. We found 12 newly fallen trees blocking the way. Stella, my crosscut saw, made short work of them as we slowly worked our way to our appointment.

Veteran packer Al Whitworth arrived at Iron Gate soon after and quickly organized the loads of Pulaskis, shovels, McLeods, and other assorted tools and gear that would support the WTA personnel for what was supposed to be a five-day work trip into the wilderness. The party had begun.

Almost immediately after leaving the trailhead we encountered a sobering vista of burned forest stretching along the flanks and ridges of the wilderness. This stark scene is a lingering reminder of the Tripod fire that burned an area three times the size of Seattle in July 2006. Large meadows blanketed in wildflowers greeted us as we approached Sunny Pass on the way to Horseshoe Basin where we would drop off our load. A snug camp in the wilderness would be our home for the night before returning the following morning to our next assignment. Little did we know that almost nine years to the day after the start of the Tripod in-



cident another wildfire would occur in the same area.

The nearby peaks shone like gold in the early morning sun the morning of the 2nd as we broke camp, said our good byes to the trail crew, and made our way back over Sunny Pass. After 16 miles and 6 hours, we arrived at the BCHW main camp with horses, mules, and humans alike tired after a long haul. Once the beasts were watered, fed, brushed, and tended to it was time [continued on page 8]



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There are only two sure things in life...one of them is taxes. What's the other?

A question from Ginny Grulke



By Jim McGarvey, Executive Director

Well, of course, you know the answer. Sooner or later, we will all face the end of life. But if you are like I am, you probably haven't thought about what happens when you die until you started getting some grey hairs.

Today at church we celebrated a couple's 70th wedding anniversary. When asked what it took to stay married 70 years, the wife replied, "Endurance." I think just living that long takes endurance, regardless of your marital state.

But as I watched this couple decline in health over the past five years, the reality of death started to make its way into my consciousness. Soon, I too will be stooped, hard of hearing, creaky in the joints, and hoping I will live to see another birthday cake. While it's hard to admit it, it's impossible to escape.

Since no one can escape, everyone should take time to sit back, gaze at the sky, and think about what we'd like the world to be after we pass. We need to picture our children and grandchildren as adults, having their own families, planning vacations and outdoor activities. Perhaps our children and grandchil-

dren will follow our lead and own horses and take them on the trail.

The next generation of horsemen will take our places with BCHA and our mission to keep these trails accessible to horses and mules. When they know how much is at stake, they too will be passionate about riding trails, keeping the outdoor spirit alive, protecting the precious resources of land and water, forging strong bonds with their horses and mules, and giving back to the community through volunteer work.

Our legacy as today's BCH members is to keep the mission alive, even though we are no longer around. Our

legacy gifts to the Trails Forever Fund will keep BCHA sustainable well into the future – into 2075 and beyond. Consider including BCH's Trails Forever Fund in your will or estate plans, if you have not already.

May you remain healthy and have many more birthdays!

For more information about including BCHA in your estate plans, please contact your attorney or accountant, or talk to Jim McGarvey, BCHA Acting Executive Director, at jmcgarvey@mindspring.com or 706-669-1015 (cell).



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From the Chairman's Saddle



By Don Saner, Chairman

HELLO BCHA!

I hope all of you had a great and safe summer season. It looks like fall is in the air, at least here in Wyoming. We have already had snow at the upper elevations, the leaves are starting to turn, and the elk are bugling!

On a serious note, I want to thank our partners—USFS, NPS and the BLM—for their hard work fighting on the fire lines in the Northwest and California. The fire season there is the worst it has been in many years. I have been receiving e-mails and phone calls about how the BCHA chapters and units have stepped up to assist these organizations providing pack stock support to move greatly needed supplies and gear into the remote areas where they are fighting these fires. Our members are also helping folks who have been displaced by taking in and caring for their stock and providing hay. It makes me so proud of our membership! When there is a need, BCHAer's step up to help!

As I'm writing this, our Public Lands Advisor, Randy Rasmussen, is in Washington DC meeting with agency folks and members of Congress and the Senate. One of the subjects he will be talking about is the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (H.R. 167 and S. 235). What is this you ask? These bills will allow the federal government to treat Catastrophic Wildfires like other natural disasters. Under the Budget Control Act, agencies responding to natural disasters like hurricanes, floods, or tornadoes, have access to disaster funding through a budget cap adjustment.

H.R. 167 and S. 235 would make catastrophic wildfire suppression eligible for similar disaster funding. Right now, when wildfires budgets are exhausted, the agencies are authorized to transfer funds from their other accounts in order to pay for suppression activities. Yet this practice of "fire borrowing" undermines other land management programs like recreation, which includes trail maintenance and repairs.

From the Secretary's Desk



By Peg Greiwe, Executive Secretary

Hello Friends,

October 2015 is my twenty-year anniversary working for Back Country Horsemen of America as its Executive Secretary. Who would have thought about this milestone back in 1995 when BCHA Chairman Randy Darling contracted with me to provide the executive secretary services? It was a big step for BCHA to have a contractor. It was a big step for me because volunteers were the only ones who had conducted the business of BCHA and I got to organize the processes – which is my favorite thing to do. Since that time, BCHA has grown from just a few states to 27 now. The first National Board Meeting that I attended was in Columbia Falls, MT. I have been to quite a few different locations over those 20 years. I have enjoyed working with the different chairs, board members, and now the Executive Committee. What a pleasure it has been to see the growth in our volunteerism, in our membership,

in our officers over the years, and to see the family that BCHA has become.

We are currently working with the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority to secure a reasonably priced property for the National Board Meeting in April 2016. As soon as we have information, we'll get it out to everyone. At the same time as we are planning to go to Las Vegas, another group of 120,000 representatives will be in Las Vegas. It will be challenging.

On a personal note, fires in the West have been awful. Several chapters of BCH have and/or are planning to help out those who have been affected by the fires. A considerable amount of the hay crop has been burned so there is concern about hay for stock over the winter. Many have been trucking hay over to the east side of Washington to help out those who have lost their feed sources.

When we receive donations to BCHA, we often get nice notes. Here are a few of them.

Thank you for all your work on behalf of BCHA. Enclosed is my donation check. My 16 year old, handsome and capable grandson will be donating 'work' time at Snoqualmie Pass this summer with his riding horse and pack horse. Thanks again for all you've done. GS

Thanks! Keep up the good work! DC

We're proud to be a member of Shoshone WY chapter. Keep up the good work. So glad BCHA is growing. B&IM

The Wildfire Disaster Funding act would provide a reliable funding structure consistent with that used by other agencies when responding to a national disaster. The time has come for this long needed reform and BCHA has taken a position in support of this bill. I am hoping you will take the time to contact your Congressman and Senator asking them to support this bill as well.

Randy will also be visiting with members of Congress and the Senate on our National Forest System Trails Bill, the urgent need to reauthorize the Land & Water Conservation Fund, USFS Chain Saw Policy, the continuing threat of the sale or transfer of our public lands, and our new and exciting national M.O.U. with the Bureau of Land Management (details on this M.O.U. will be forthcoming in our Winter newsletter).

Right after last years' National Board Meeting, the officers of the board and the Executive Committee wanted to take a look at ways to better serve our membership. I appointed a committee and they looked into an Association Management Company (AMC). With the growth, size, and scale of the issues BCHA is involved with nowadays, we could see this was more than a part-time person could handle. The committee met about twice a month by phone conferencing and some of the committee met with experts in the field to help us down this trail. We looked at the scope of work that we wanted done and then at our budget (what was costing at the time). The estimated costs we received from some of the experts were pretty close to what we are spending now. The committee put together a Request for Proposal (RFP) and this was presented to the Executive Committee and unanimously approved in

August and the RFP was posted on September 1st.

The general scope of services we are looking at include:

1. General Office- Answering the phone during normal working hours, e-mail and postal requests, minutes of meetings and calls, website updates, and social media;

2. Financial Management (BCHA will still have a Treasurer for oversight); and

3. Membership and Committee support services, Donor lists and letters, and putting together the National Board meeting.

If we are successful in finding an appropriate management company within our timeline, the new company will be at the National Board Meeting. BCHA will not be renewing Executive Secretary Peg Greiwe's existing contract. I want everyone to know that Peg has given over 20 years of dedicated services to BCHA. BCHA will honor Peg's contract through the end of April, 2016 and she has offered to help in making a smooth transition. That shows what a true professional she is. I hope you all will take the time to contact Peg and thank her for all of her dedicated service and getting BCHA to where it is now. THANK YOU Peg!

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Jim – 'Thanks' is not enough for all you have done!! And 'Thanks' for taking the Executive Director position for the next 2 years – Sincerely CS

Keep up the good work.

Thank you for all your hard

work and dedication to keep our trails open for all. CL

Enjoy your riding this fall and be careful during hunting season. See you on the trails.

Peg



31,536,000 and 5

That's how many seconds each of us has in a year and how many seconds it takes to delete an email. The most cost effective and timely method of getting information out to our members is through email. Our members want and need information on national issues that affect our trails but also local issues. Email fulfills that need. Some of our members, chapters and states fear that by giving their emails to BCHA, they will be bombarded with spam. This is certainly not the case. BCHA has never sold, given away or lent our members' email addresses and we don't plan to now. So, please, when you turn in your yearly dues with names and street information, please include your email address and let your state/affiliate know that it is okay with you to send to BCH. We all have 5 seconds to spare.

Jim McGarvey, Executive Director

BCHA

Mission Statement

1. 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.
3. To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
4. 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.
5. To foster and encourage the formation of new state Back Country Horsemen's organizations.

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BCH Foundation Grants

Great Adventure for California Future Farmers of America

By Randy Witt

Every year California Future Farmers of America high school students compete in state wide Natural Resources Management contests. The students compete in knowledge of flora and fauna, as well as mule packing. The packing portion of the contests included each team's judged ability to properly balance, load, and securely lash down a load onto a mule. The students had practiced mule packing skills at their high school, but had never used those skills in a real life, high-altitude, pack trip into the mountains. The students from Clovis East High School who competed in the mule packing portion of the contest were Jonathan Woodard, Austin Thompson, Mikaela Kirk, and Lauren Raley. Their Clovis East High School FFA advisor was Kevin Woodard. The students competed in their freshman year of high school.

In April 2015, BCH California/San Joaquin Sierra Unit member Alan Fry and Woodard started talking about taking the FFA packing team on a mountain trip. In early May Fry, Woodard, and BCHC San Joaquin Sierra Unit Vice President Randy Witt met to plan the trip and outline a grant proposal to the BCHA Education fund. By mid-May, Fry had submitted the proposal to the BCHA. In early June BCHA informed Fry the grant was approved and the adult team went to work.

While more detailed planning continued, an appeal to San Joaquin Sierra unit members was sent out asking for members to loan their horses to the FFA team for some riding training and practice, and to use during the pack trip. Thanks to Wanda Caradonna, Jim Knabke, Ted Fischer, and Randy Witt for the generous loan of their precious saddle horses! Other adults helping out with the instructions were Peter Parkin and Ted Fischer.

A big shout out needs to be given to Bob Herrick, an associate member of the San Joaquin Sierra unit. Herrick volunteered his time for the duration of the pack trip, as well as his fine string of five mules and saddlehorse. Bob tries to volunteer his time and mules at least once a month. Thank you, Bob.

Before this fun and educational pack trip could begin, there had to be a great deal of planning and preparation. One week before the pack trip was to begin, all the new riders and their mounts assembled at Witt's ranch for some riding instruction and practice. Woodard and Thompson of the FFA had almost no riding experience, but the two young women Kirk and Raley had some. Instructor Kevin Woodard had not been on a horse for twenty years, but had considerable horseback experience when he was managing a ranch. In less than three hours time, the students and their instructor received instruction on emergency one-rein stops, leg cues for forward motion, backing, move on the forehand and the haunch, crossing a bridge over a creek, water crossing and going up and down mountain steps. All of the riders and their mounts felt more comfortable with these skills before they left that day.

One week after the practice riding session, all the participants met at the Chamberlain meadows trailhead located near Courtright reservoir. The



reservoir is just a few hours northeast of Fresno/Clovis California in the Sierra National Forest. This is when the rubber hit the road (or you might say "the hooves hit the trail"). The students learned to lay out all the components of the load on spread- out mantes. They next started assembling the loads, densest items at the bottom of the panniers, with lighter, smaller items packed in around the dense bottom part of the load. We first lifted and estimated the balance of the two sides of the load and then used the spring scale to verify our estimate. We explained to the students the success or failure to keep the load on the pack stock was dependent more than anything else on the balance of the load. After adding the top load, we next put the panniers on the mules. We next squared the mantes and rolled back the edges to expose the crosses of the Sawbuck saddles. The students asked, "What's so important about seeing the crosses of the saddles?" Watching the crosses of the saddle over the mule's spine is the surest way of detecting slippage of the load to one side or the other.

The students had competed in contests using the diamond hitch. For our loads the box hitch was more appropriate. It took a few tries but the students picked it up pretty quick. It took a couple hours to get everything packed up, but eventually we were on our way down the trail toward Chamberlain cabin.

The ride to Chamberlain meadow was beautiful and green. We found our campsite to have plenty of feed in the meadow, but thanks to the drought in California almost no water in the creek. We were also pleased to find the new bear boxes packed in earlier in the week, as well as the pit toilet and solar shower stall our unit constructed the year before, all to be in good order.

After breakfast the next day, Wil-

derness Rider Randy Witt led a group discussion on Leave No Trace principles. During the remainder of the day, the students practiced the box hitch, took a hike and went fishing, and the two young female members of our group went out for a ride with Peter Parkin. We also added some wooden feet to the bear boxes and angle iron braces on some added support posts for the pit toilet/shower structure.

When we arrived at Chamberlain cabin, the first order of business was to set up the highline with tree savers. The work was parceled out to work teams. While one team set up the portable hot wire fence in the meadow, the boys on the FFA team headed out looking for potable water to be transported back to camp and filtered. After the horses were secure in the meadow, we all started working on setting up the kitchen, our tents, and bags.

The first night the young women helped out in the kitchen by cooking the hot dogs and burgers. Add some potato salad, chips and some drinks and you could call it a delicious meal. The two hot breakfasts included coffee, eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes, butter, syrup and milk. Dinner the second night included tri tip sandwiches, beans, chips and more potato salad. Everything tastes fabulous at 7500 feet.

Alas, all good things eventually come to an end. On the third day, after breakfast, we began breaking camp, packing up our stuff, balancing loads, and loading them up. Adults and students were kind of tired from a busy schedule but we all pitched in and got the work done quickly. We headed back out to the trailhead riding along knowing that we had accomplished something and had a good time while doing it. As tired as we were, at the back of our minds was the question, "How soon can we go packing again?"

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BCH Foundation Grants

Sierra Freepackers

By Mary Odell

On July 5th, 15 members of the BCH CA Sierra Freepackers headed to Granite Creek. Our original plan was to pack in to 77 Corral and start on the removal of the stock fence per a Forest Service request. The Forest Service reviewed usage of the area and because the fence is in the Wilderness, it was decided to remove it permanently. Our dilemma was the nine-mile trail into 77 Corral had not been cleared. We were only notified of that about a week out, so we decided to go in and work on removing trees per our Volunteer Agreement with the FS. We wanted to open the trail so that we could go in later in the summer and start work on the fence removal.

On a hot, humid Monday, we packed up tools, had our FS required Safety Tail Gate talk, and were on the trail by around 9 a.m. We rode approximately 3.8 miles when we hit the first pile of trees. There were three trees – a very large 48” diameter tree and two

16” trees. Master Sawyer and Instructor John Gleen said it was, “initiation to trail work by fire.”

We removed the smaller 16” log. Once the tree was cut we used our leg power to send it on its way. Next we cut the large 48” tree. That did take a while. Only John Glenn and three others had any previous experience cutting with a cross cut saw. It was a learning day and a day to adjust to the altitude.

The first day was a long one, as we wanted to complete the job before heading back to camp. We arrived back to camp at 6 p.m. to an awesome meal planned and cooked by Paul LaSpada, our camp cook for the week. Thank you Paul for all you and Sandy did before and all during the week!

On Tuesday we headed out again by 9 a.m. At about 4.2 miles, we came upon our next tree. It was a 24-26” tree in multiple pieces. It took 4 cuts with the saw before we could get the pieces moved. On our way back to camp this

day, we discovered that a new tree had fallen between where we were working and the first tree we cut. Thank goodness we could get around it as we had stashed our tools for the night to save work on our pack animals.

On Wednesday we left by 8:30 a.m. as each day we had to ride a bit further down the trail. We rode past the newly fallen tree, as our tools were located below this tree and our plan was to take care of that tree on our way out. At about 4.5 miles we found a 24-26” tree that required only one cut and we were able to clear it out pretty quickly. At about another quarter mile down, we found another 18-20” tree in pieces that we were able to push and roll off the trail.

When we reached the lower end of the trail at Sheep’s Crossing on the San Joaquin River we found two smaller 8-10” trees. After lopping, we were able to lift and push them out of the

way. We had lunch and rested a bit. A couple of the members rode their horses across the bridge and back to make sure all was good.

On our way back up the trail we cleared the 24-30” tree with one cut and were able to roll it off the steep trail using gravity. Because it was on a switch back, we didn’t want to just roll it down on the trail below. We were successful.

Lucky for us we finished on Wednesday as it started to rain Wednesday night. We spent Thursday as a day of rest, but were able to get out for more riding and some fishing between the rains. On Friday we observed that Granite Creek had risen about 1-1/2 feet from the previous day. Our youth members helped with dishes, did trash detail in the area, got more riding experience and learn more about being a member of BCHC.

Remembering BCHC Sierra Freepackers member John Glenn



John Glenn, right, with the Robinsons.

Backcountry Horsemen of California and U.S. Forest Service and the world lost a dedicated, talented, wonderful volunteer and man on August 6, 2015.

John Glenn died from injuries he incurred from a freak accident. It’s been said he was where he loved to be, doing what he loved to do.

John was known for his expertise with all aspects of trail work, awarded national honors for use of primitive tools from the USFS. Along with his knowledge of tools he enjoyed sharing that knowledge, teaching adults as well as kids proper safety and handling of these tools. Most summers he led a school group on hiking pack trip to work clearing trails using crosscut saws and axes.

Just this last spring John was also awarded “Volunteer of the Year” with over 4,000 hours logged.

I personally have known John all the years he volunteered in the Bass Lake Ranger District, Clover Meadow. There isn’t a trail or place I can go without a memory of working with John in our forest.

John’s talents included; Certified chainsaw, faller, cross-cut certified, First Aid/CPR instructor and retired teaching Veterinary. He was also a proud father and grandfather.

Submitted by Denise Robinson,
Sierra Freepackers,
Co-VP State Education BCHC

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The Catch Pen

Arkansas' Buffalo River BCH Does it Again!

By Nancy Deisch

The Buffalo River BCH celebrated their second annual Kids' Camping Weekend at the Woolum horse camp near St. Joe on June 26-28. Even more activities than last year were planned for the young equestrians. Among the exercises in horsemanship and agility were:

- Races to the end of the field-and-back carrying balls
- Sharing and carrying a strip of lavatory tissue between two contestants
- Balancing eggs on spoons while negotiating the area on horse-back, getting to the halfway point of the course, jumping off one's horse, bobbing for an apple, jumping back on and dashing back to the finish line
- A balloon toss
- And other games too numerous (or unbelievable) to mention

Seventeen kids, all children and grandchildren of BRBCHA members, aged from 18 months to 15 years participated in the three-day event. The trail rides all three mornings included

trail work as well as beautiful Buffalo River scenery and were highlights of the day, followed by swimming in the river (with or without horses) to cool off after returning to camp. Hot dogs and hamburgers were the campfire fare both evenings and were well received after a day of trail work, riding, swimming and playing spirited games.

Leave No Trace principles were taught and presentations were made of net-litter-goodie bags of helpful items with which to camp, to ride, and to keep a primitive area pristine. There were demonstrations on how to pack a horse for overnight stays, and some of the many ways to contain a horse in the back country with hobbles, high lines, and portable corrals. Saturday night after the games, Bill Kenter, (one of the originators of this weekend camp along with his wife Marjorie Heacock), hitched up his team of matching gray horses and gave everyone wagon rides around the area--a unique and lovely way to spend the evening. By



Sunday morning's ride, the river had come down enough to cross (after Friday evening's storms), and many of the youngsters made their first exciting horseback water crossing.

After the last ride and swim, everything was packed up and made ready

to break camp. Friendships and memories were formed that will last for a very long time. The whole weekend was such a success that the Buffalo River BCH may just make it three in a row in 2016. We'll keep you posted.

Moonlight Rides & Campfire Sax

By Lucy Badenhoop

The BCH CA Mother Lode Unit (MLU) returned to Jack Brooks Equestrian Camp near La Honda for some glamping (glamour camping) the last weekend in August 2015. Glamping at Jack Brooks is a real treat with flush toilets, hot showers, 42 pipe equine pens, manure and garbage collection, and picnic tables.

Plus, there's an outdoor kitchen, complete with double stainless sinks, fridges, microwaves, BBQ, and electric outlets for the coffee pot, waffle maker or any other appliances that campers want to haul in. MLU even set up its new audio system for recorded music during supper and around the evening campfire pit.

As is the unit custom, cooking teams were formed so that each group of 3-4 campers prepared one breakfast or supper for the entire weekend. Everyone got to enjoy themselves with minimum chores for the rest of the

time...basically, just caring for their mounts.

The riding weather this year was variable. Friday was the typical warm and sunny for this time of year. Saturday started out with fog, turned to a light rain in late morning, but the sun came out in the afternoon. The riders were not inhibited by the rain because of the heavy forest canopy that kept them dry. Sunday was clear and breezy...great riding weather. Saturday was a full moon so a night ride was initiated and repeated Sunday evening.

Friday night's campfire gathering spotlighted two guests who provided live entertainment. Joe Squillacioti read some poems from his "vagabond" days and Irv Mazur punctuated the rhymes with his saxophone Jazz style improvisation. It was enjoyed by all including wild turkeys roaming through the campsite.

Monday morning breakfast was



Fog and slickers.

leftovers from the prior three days, clean up the site, pack up, and head home by noon savoring another mem-

ory of good times with our equine friends.

NEMO River Valley Chapter, Show-Me MO BCH Earns National Award

Submitted by Mary K. Church

NEMO River Valley Chapter, Show-Me Missouri BCH (SMMBCH) received one of nine national 2015 Annual Achievement Awards in recognition of outstanding use of Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds. The awards ceremony, hosted by the Coalition for Recreational Trails, was held in Washington, D.C. on June 10, 2015, at U.S. House of Representatives offices. The awards are part of annual efforts by national trails and outdoor recreation organizations to promote the importance of RTP funding to states across America. The chapter was recognized in the Construction and Design Category, for the Joanna Trail Project at Mark Twain Lake, in northeast Missouri. Trail Master Mary K. Church completed a nomination form and submitted it to Coalition for Recreational Trails in an effort to recognize the outstanding

partnership between local BCH chapter members and Corp of Engineers land managers.

Trail Master Mary K traveled to Washington, D.C. to accept the award, accompanied by Chapter Secretary Becki Krueger. They accepted the award on behalf of NEMO River Valley Chapter members, COE land managers, Show-Me Missouri BCH, and BCHA. The projects receiving awards were diverse, including restoration of a multi-use trail in the Hurricane Katrina area, bicycle trails, and off-road vehicle trails. To read about NEMO River Valley Chapter's work and other winning projects, go to: <http://www.americantrails.org/awards/CRT15awards/index.html>

While in D.C., Mary K and Becki solicited support of BCHA's Resolution to Oppose Transfer or Sale of

Federal Lands and the co-sponsorship and passage of the Forest Trails Bill (S.1110/HR845) by attending Missouri Mornings Coffee with Senator Roy Blunt, visiting with staff at Senator Claire McCaskill's office, and meeting with Representative Sam Graves.

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM MARY K AND BECKI: It was an unparalleled experience to accept this award on behalf of the dedicated people who had boots and hooves on the ground on the project, and others who further the BCHA mission: COE land



managers, NEMO River Valley Chapter members, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen, and Back Country Horsemen of America. We are honored and humbled to be associated with this dedicated group of people and exemplary organizations.

The Catch Pen

Partnerships Promote Progress

Text by Lucy Badenhoop & Photos by Jere Schaeffer

In a July 2015 combined effort, the Elegant Ears Mule Association, the Mother Lode Unit (MLU) of BCHC, and two ranger districts of the US Forest Service made further improvements to the Caples Creek Equestrian Trailhead in the Eldorado National Forest.

On July 7, the USFS Pacific Ranger District donated two picnic tables, a fire ring and a pedestal BBQ. These items were picked up from the Crystal Basin Information Station on Ice House Road and delivered to the trailhead by three members of the Elegant Ears Mule Association. The fire ring was immediately cemented in place, but additional supplies were needed for the other items.

On July 27, the USFS Placerville Ranger District near Camino donated supplies (concrete, security chain,

lumber, paint) to complete the installation. Five members of the BCHC MLU, picked up the supplies and spent the day digging holes, mixing concrete and erecting two bulletin boards....one in the picnic area....a second in the day use cul-de-sac.

The first posting on the bulletin boards was a laminated copy of HOUSEKEEPING TIPS FOR LEAVE NO TRACE. Hopefully, this information will eliminate some of the early issues associated with uniformed users of the trailhead.

On your next visit to the trailhead, check out the new equipment installed in the central picnic area...all are the results of our long term partnerships between volunteer groups and government land managers.



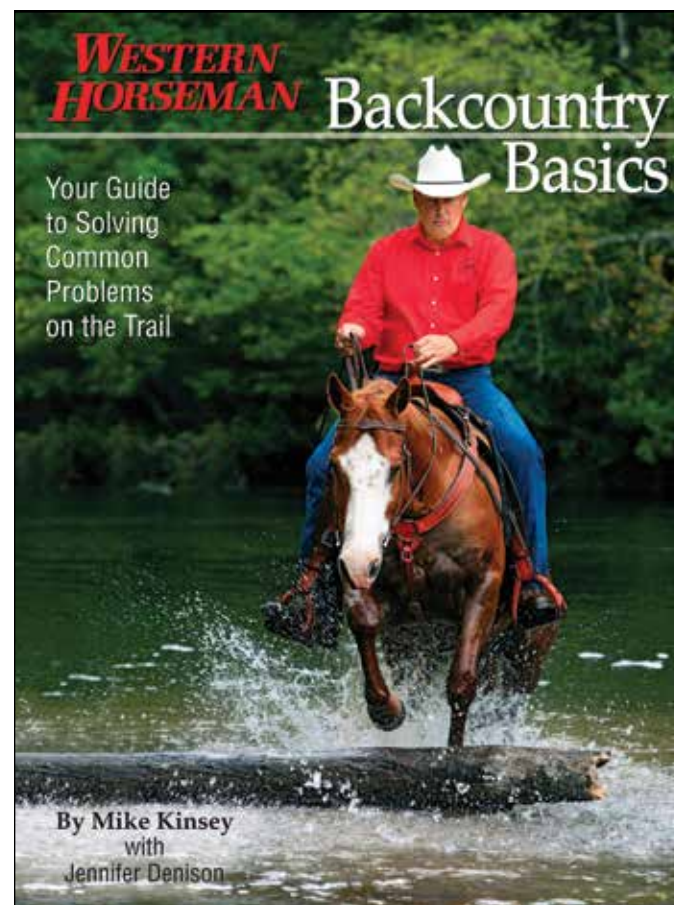
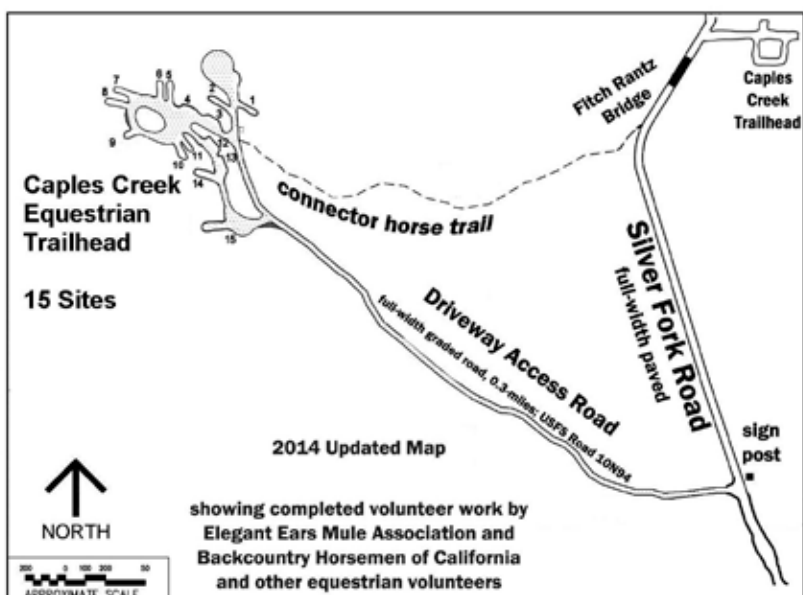
Lunch time with the new table, fire ring and BBQ.

CAPLES CREEK EQUESTRIAN TRAILHEAD

This site is developed/improved by donations and volunteers. Please respect what others have provided free for your enjoyment. Look around before departing.....LEAVE NO TRACE that you visited.

HOUSEKEEPING TIPS FOR LEAVE NO TRACE

1. This site is a trailhead – there are no services provided.
 - a. Take your personal trash home with you.
 - b. The nearest bathroom is half mile away.
By vehicle: Go left on Silver Fork Road (paved). Cross over Caples Creek on the bridge. Turn right into the hiker's trailhead.
By foot/hoof: Follow the connector horse trail to the bridge. (If you use the forest, bury your deposit 6-8 inches.)
 - c. The nearest piped water is 2 miles north (toward Hwy 50) at the Silver Fork Campground (a USFS facility under concession - water may not be available).
2. If you brought equestrian stock:
 - a. Use tree saver straps for high lines.
 - b. Disperse manure away from the site or haul it home (preferred).
 - c. Do not clean out your trailer on site.
 - d. Take shavings/bedding/feed home.
3. No vehicle parking or animal tethering near USFS picnic tables.
4. Campfires allowed only in USFS steel rings after checking the current fire restrictions for the area.



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Tales of the Trails

A Pasayten Work Party

[continued from front page]
By Robert Eversole

to take a moment for us. As I settled into a cozy camp chair I noticed a cloud rising above the forest. Thick, swirling, and the color of an old bruise, this was no sunny day wisp. A forest fire was burning in the wilderness, near the spot from which we had just returned.

As we watched the smoke plume slowly twist upward, the Forest Service soon decided that the WTA trail crews would evacuate their camp immediately, leaving behind all of the their tools and gear. The BCHW base camp was located upwind from the fire and out of immediate danger so we were safe at least for the time being. If it were safe to do so the following day, a BCHW pack crew would make its way to the WTA campsite and retrieve the gear we had just delivered – if it still existed. The rest of the day was spent with a close eye on the direction of the smoke plume.

Friday the 3rd brought good news. The fire had spread only slightly during the night. It was safe for the packers to head in and collect the trail crew’s equipment and OK for the rest of the BCHW group to continue clearing trails and replacing lost trail signs west of the area impacted by the fire. Vicki and I reported in to Kathy Young’s sign crew and proceeded up the trail to Windy Peak. Although the path to Windy Peak was nine miles away from Horseshoe Basin, traveling through the forest of fire-killed trees was a constant reminder to stay alert to the radio and to the smoke plume overhead. Shortly after midday Dave and Becky Siebel joined us as we made our way back to camp stopping to unleash Stella on the many fallen logs that blocked our way.

Independence Day found me joining the organizer and leader of the work party Jason Ridlon, Darrel Gunnells, Cathy Nelson, and Kathy Young. The plan was to install trail signage past the



Vicki Gish

crest of Windy Peak and then to work our way down the mountainside, clearing trail as we went. The long climb to the top of Windy took longer

than expected and we had to turn around after placing our trailer marker. However from the top of the peak the smoke plume from the wildfire was both fascinating and scary as the fire raged only a few short miles away.

The daily routine of the work party continued in a similar manner throughout the trip. Rise early to feed and water the animals. Grab a quick breakfast and lunch from the tireless and remarkable camp cooks led by Kim Merrick, then ride out to clear and maintain trails. Return to base camp in the evening and repeat the process the following morning. While the sounds

Pasayten Work Party by the Numbers:

- 7 days
- 44 people
- 65 horses & mules
- 7 wilderness trails totaling 42 miles of trail cleared
- Value of work completed – Priceless

of a well-sharpened crosscut singing its way through a fallen tree and the scraping of a Pulaski clearing a waterbar are soothing, there’s no denying that this is hard work.

A light coating of ash on the morning of the 7th marked the last day of the shindig. The fire was still burning, but thankfully away from the main body of trails that we had re-claimed from the forest. Over 42 miles in total of wilderness trails are once again passable by stock users and hikers that will appreciate not having to crawl, climb, and scramble through deadfall.

BCH UT Canyonlands La Sal Trail Work

By Stephen Schultz

The BCH of Utah Canyonlands Chapter is a small group in a vast area. Based in Moab, the group has riders from Grand County and Northern San Juan County. Grand County is over 3,600 square miles with a resident population of less than 8,500 people. San Juan County is Utah’s largest in area with over 7,800 square miles and a population of about 15,500 people. Combined, that’s only 24,000 residents in land area larger than Massachusetts. Over 90% of these lands are state, federal or tribal owned.

The Colorado Plateau is in Utah’s famous Canyon Country. Here is one of America’s Crown Jewels in our public lands treasure chest. Deep red rock canyons, raging white water, sculptured sandstone monuments, ancient ruins, rock art, and amazing vistas. Wherever you sit reading this, you should be reminded that these are YOUR public lands and America’s legacy!

The La Sal Mountains loom a backdrop to this amazing red rock labyrinth. This is the second highest range in the state with twelve summits topping the 12,000-foot mark. The La Sal’s are a

snow-capped island of green in a sea of barren red rocks.

In 1776 two Spanish Franciscan priests Dominguez and Escalante passed by looking for a trail from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Southern California. They came within sight and possibly already knew the mountain’s name. In the 1820’s, caravans on the Old Spanish Trail, with over 500 animals under pack, passed below their western wall. They looked up at the snow-covered peaks in the 110-degree desert heat and spoke the name Sierra La Sal or the mountains of salt.

Their colorful names still linger on maps in the greater area El Rio de Doloris (the river of sorrow), Sierra Abajo or the Mountains Below (south of which there was no known crossing of the Colorado River Gorge), and El Rio De Las Animas Perdidas (the river of lost souls).

Today the range is managed by the US forest service. This 1.4-million-acre unit typically has only a single trail crew. All the trail work must be done during the short warm summer months. The range itself is divided into

three subgroups by two high passes. The South Mountain group is almost entirely roadless and is closed to motor vehicles. In an area where motorized recreation draws throngs of people, pack and saddle-stock still have a place... a quiet place.

After an unusually long wet and cold spring the weather finally broke. The Canyonlands BCH gathered saws and pack animals and stepped up to the plate. We were able to trailer into the 8,000-foot trailhead only to be turned back by violent thunderstorms. In late May we got our window. A small group of riders were able to access the south end of the range and clear USFS trails #100 (Doe Canyon) and #043 (Pole Canyon) just before the riding season started.

The lower sections of the Doe Canyon trail were daunting. With the local climate changes, groves of Aspen trees have died off and blown down. This left a section we called The Sea of Logs. Previous years have been bad, but this year was worse. We had no option but to tie up, unpack saws, and bust it out. [continued next page]



[BCH UT continued...]

It is hard to explain the satisfaction one feels when a tight group of humans and animals team up to accomplish a tough task. We smiled, cut log after log, and joked. The horses grabbed a bite and stood together in unusually close quarters for a few hours. They seemed to sense the situation and calmly waited. After very slow progress we finally broke through and moved up. As we gained altitude the Aspen trees were healthier and fewer logs were down.

We picnicked a late lunch on a grassy meadow at 9600 feet before cut-

ting through our last bad section. We were able to finish the task and return to the trailers before dark.

One gains a great deal of respect for people who volunteer time, money, and skill to take horses into bad places and work to benefit the general public. Sometimes the BCH is the only group who can do the task. To all our BCH chapters and riders... we may never meet each other... but I respect what you do.

Thanks.



South Korean Forest Service and BCH Idaho

By Phil Ryan, Squaw Butte Chapter & Public Lands Representative

Over the past 15 years, the Squaw Butte Chapter of BCH Idaho has worked on many different projects. We packed out old elk camps left behind by hunters in the Boise National Forest. We packed out rolls of PVC water pipe from the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. We hauled barbed wire out of the Owyhee Wilderness. We packed numerous trail crews into the national forests and wildernesses here in Idaho. Our latest project was a new one.

On May 29th we received a request for help from Pam Graviat. Graviat is the International Trade Specialist for the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. Graviat explained that a group from South Korea would be meeting with the Boise National Forest to discuss policies on trail riding, safety management, overnight camping on public lands and horse trails and facilities in the national forests. The group would also meet with the Idaho Outfitters and Guides association, tour the Idaho Equine Center in Nampa, and visit Eagle Island State Park to see urban horse trails. The most important thing that the group wanted was to see firsthand forest trailheads, horse trails, bridges and campsites for horse users. That's where BCH entered the picture! The Boise National Forest and the Outfitters and Guides pointed them in our direction.

On June 8th, the group of South Korean Forest Service employees and businessmen arrived in Boise. The South Korean government is going to expand their horse riding trails from just two and will build ten more. The new trails are planned over the next five years with a budget of \$8 million dollars. The mountains of Idaho are most like those in South Korea.

We arranged to meet the group and Graviat early on Wednesday June 10th

in a wide spot on the road called Banks next to the Payette River. As a side note, I was assured that the South Koreans could speak English. Well, they could speak English about as well as I could speak Korean!!!! Thank goodness they had an interpreter with them.

We convoyed up the road next to the beautiful Payette River, drove over the mountain and down the other side to the Peace Creek trailhead to show them what things a horse trailhead should have, hitch rails, feed bunks, lots of open space for truck and trailer parking and, of course, water. We had a wonderful question and answer session standing in the open meadow. We had just as many questions for them as they had for us. We kept the interpreter quite busy.

We walked the trail over an excellent example of a horse bridge spanning Peace Creek and wandered along the trail showing them the good and bad things for trails that were designed for horse travel, things like trail width, how far to cut downed timber on either side of the trail, short bridges over bogs and small streams, water bars to allow water to run off the trail and lots of downed timber from a burned area. More questions, more answers, more interpreter hand gesturing!!!! An interesting question our visitors had was about complaints from hikers walking in horse poop. I'll let you figure that one out for yourselves.

We loaded everyone up and once again drove a wonderful Idaho back country road, up a switch back road, down the other side of the switch back road, over water bars, ruts and, of course, the spring road grading crew one lane roads with an interpreter driving who was from Los Angeles! They will never forget that ride!!! We finally stopped at one of Idaho's famous hot springs and they all dragged or tumbled



out of their van.

"Having fun yet?" we asked. We got lunch down them and then headed back to Sweet and Rob Adams's home. Rob is Squaw Butte Chapter's trail coordinator. At his home we held a hands-on packing clinic with Rob's trusty mustangs. The group had never seen anyone pack an animal before and the visual demonstration helped them understand the reason for cutting four feet on either side of the trail tread. We demonstrated loading pack boxes, man-ties, chain saw and tool carrying boxes and bags. Western saddles were new to them since they ride English style. They understood why we have high-back saddles due to trail conditions riding up and down steep grades. We showed them all the tack we use, all the items we carry in our horse trailers and items we take with us on every project. The men informed us that walking the trail, seeing the national forest and watching the packing demonstration was the highlight of their visit.

As they prepared to return to Boise, we exchanged gifts and gave each BCH

Idaho shoulder patches, a 2015 BCHI calendar and a cut and polished geode stone from the Gem State. There was much hand shaking and group picture taking and some long speeches in Korean. I think we may have been recruited into the South Korean Army!!!

I hope they went away with a good understanding of what makes a good horse trail and that developing trails is just the first step but that yearly maintenance is a never-ending process. Trails in South Korea or Idaho will always need to be cleared and the BCH of Idaho will be there to partner with other user groups and government agencies to keep the trails open for everyone.

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The Zenith Crossing Project at Big South Fork

By Ruth Reynolds; Photos by Sharon Farley

In August, the Big South Fork BCH of Tennessee and the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area completed installation of a hard surface crossing of North White Oak Creek at Zenith in the BSFNRRA. According to Bruce Russell, BSF Back Country Horseman chapter president, “Helping the National Park Service with this project benefits everyone. The historically and environmentally significant Zenith area of the park is very important to recreationists. A hardened stream crossing will allow hikers, bikers, and horse riders access across White Oak Creek while protecting the stream banks.”

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, encompassing 125,000 acres of the Cumberland Plateau in Kentucky and Tennessee, was established in 1974 to protect the free-flowing Big South Fork of the Cumberland River and its tributaries. The scenic gorges, sandstone bluffs, unique diversity of eco-systems and flora, and a rich array of natural and historic features provide visitors with a wide range of outdoor recreational activities. With 182 miles of Horse Trails, an abundance of commercial camps and resorts, and three National Park Service camps, equestrian visitors can experience a backcountry adventure unique in the eastern United States.

The Zenith Crossing Project, was conceived and initiated in joint venture in 2014 to replace a natural ford con-



sisting of head-size and larger rocks in North White Oak Creek. North White Oak Creek and its accompanying O&W Trail (an abandoned railroad right-of-way and major artery for users) bisect the BSFNRRRA. North White Oak Creek morphs into a raging river each spring, rearranging itself and destroying previous efforts to make a crossing at Zenith environmentally friendly and safe for use during the rest of the year. BSF Back Country Horsemen raised funds through trail rides, camp outs, raffles and auctions. Volunteers purchased materials, built off-site to federal environmental standards, transported into the creek gorge, and installed the **sixteen two-ton concrete slabs** that constitute the hard surface crossing.

BSFNRRRA conducted environmental studies, approved and supervised the installation of the crossing, and upgraded infrastructure in the Zenith Day Use Area. In a comprehensive plan to restore the Zenith Day Use Area, BSFNRRRA sought and received appropriation through a 2015 National Park Service Centennial Challenge Grant. “The Centennial Challenge Program is a great way to leverage federal dollars, said Niki Stephanie Nicholas, Park Superintendent. “Our park could not maintain and improve all the park’s trails on this scale without the support of our partners.”

The Zenith area is one of the few developed areas inside the legislatively protected gorge area of the park.

NextGen BCHA (Youth)

Eagle Scout Achievement

By Louise Caywood

The long-standing aim of the Boy Scouts of America is to help produce strong leaders who will have the skills to maintain productive lives and enrich the world. This past July Pierce County Chapter BCH members, led by Tom Fabion, helped Scout Thomas Leonard produce his Eagle Scout project.

Part of their process to achieve rank in the BSA is completing an Eagle Scout Project. The actual performance of the work project is only one step of their project. To demonstrate leadership and provide a service to the community, an Eagle Scout applicant chooses a project advisor and submits the project to him for guidance and validity. The Scout is in complete charge of organizing including logistics, food, water, recruiting help and instructing how the work will be done. With Advisor approval, the project application is then examined by the Council or District Advancement Committee for approval. With the physical work completed, Thomas then submits a final report to the BSA Council.

Thomas' project involved leading 35 people, BCHW members and other troop members, in a re-route of 1.2 miles of trail in the Elbe State Forest. Supervised by Thomas, workers chopped vegetation, removed large rocks, tree stumps and logs. Working on virgin soil, special care was taken to allow for ground settlement and drainage, insuring the trail is sustainable and will not require extensive maintenance through the years.



A Study of Crosscut Saws or Power Saws for Trail Clearing

By Dan Applebaker

At a recent BCHA National Meeting a friend, who has had the responsibility of clearing hundreds of miles of trails over many years with both traditional crosscut saws, noted the benefits of power saws. My friend had just mentioned the faster cutting speed and increased efficiency of using power saws instead of crosscut saws for clearing down logs from trails. A member of a large environmental organization and a diehard advocate of wilderness purity challenged the statement that a power saw cuts faster than a crosscut saw. The challenger asked, “Do you have any data to back up your claim?”

My friend is also very much of a wilderness advocate (as BCH members are) and believes very strongly in our wilderness preservation system. He also believes that the traditional crosscut saw is the appropriate tool for routine clearing of wilderness trails—as long as preserving historic access and the purposes out lined in the Wilderness Act can be accomplished by their use.

The GAO Report on Forest Service trails clearly established that the Forest Service is not able to maintain thousands of miles of trails to provide access for the use and enjoyment of thousands of acres of wilderness by the American public and visitors. In 2012 the Forest Service reported maintenance on only 37% of 158,000 miles of trail and only 25% was done to maintenance standards. Continued lack of maintenance on trails will eventually make the reconstruction of these trails and structures prohibitively expensive. As a result, thousands of miles of trail will be closed and eliminated from the trail systems. The risk of losing a huge percentage of our trails, and concentrating all use on the remaining trails, was a huge wake-up call to some of us.

As a result of the discussion at the BCHA meeting, my friend suggested a study comparing the use of crosscut saws to power saws in trail clearing. An experienced sawyer working with the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) conducted one comparison, but we knew of no in-depth studies. I have to admit that I had trouble justifying the time to do a study to reinforce the obvious. I mean, after all, is not the efficiency of the power saw why the logging industry changed from crosscut saws to power saws sixty years ago?

The BCH of Oregon decided that a comparison study of the efficiency of crosscut saws and power saws in cutting times, safety, and fatigue of the sawyers was justified. The study was conducted in February 2015 on trails adjacent to Wilderness on the west slopes of the Cascades. Casey and Phil Hufstadler (Oregon’s National Directors) took over the project of planning, organizing, and administering the study. All sawyers were volunteers with the High Country Wilderness Packers chapter of BCH of Oregon. Present at the site while cutting was being conducted, were several independent observers, representing three separate agencies and landowners. Observers were invited to observe, comment, and add credibility to the study. The independent observers were: an Oregon Department of Forestry retired Forester, a USFS retired cutting contract administrator, and an Oregon Occupation Health and Safety retired safety officer. Filming of

the study was by an independent contractor.

The object of the study was to provide cut times between equally skilled volunteer cutters on the same log using crosscut saws and chainsaws. The crosscut saw was borrowed from the PCTA and was sharpened just for the study. The chainsaw was borrowed from the local saw shop and was a factory saw with a new chain. The volunteer sawyers each have regular jobs and are not professionals for any agency or summer trail crew. The sawyers were selected for their experience and to have similar capabilities with their respective tools. This was done to match as closely as possible the experience, skill and capabilities between the sawyers of the two sawing methods.

Six separate field cuts were executed and each session was videotaped and timed. After six trials, it was obvious that the ratio in cut times stayed the same between the two separate teams. More cuts would not provide additional data. The degree of difficulty for each team was identical, as cuts were made side-by-side with each type saw. All diameters were measured to a tenth of an inch and time was recorded to the nearest second for each of the exercises.

Are power saws really faster in cutting time when clearing trees from backcountry trails? The results show significant reductions in cutting time by using power saws, so the answer is yes. Although the study was designed to show only differences in cutting times, it also showed using the power saws significantly reduced fatigue and increased safety.

1. The actual sawing time of the total number of logs in the study for the crosscut saws was 25’ 30” while the same sawing time for the same logs with the power saws was 3’ 20” seconds or a difference of 22 minutes and 10 seconds. Cutting speed for the power saws is 7.65 times faster than the crosscut saws. Although it was not considered in this study, it is worth mentioning that if labor efficiency is important (and it certainly should be for an Agency that cannot get their job done now), the actual saw time could be considered as double on the crosscut saw if the time for two sawyers on a crosscut is compared to one on a chainsaw.

2. Crosscut sawyer fatigue was evident in the videos. The sawyers were young men in relatively good physical condition, but the crosscut sawyers showed fatigue on the larger logs even with breaks to wedge and oil the saw. The power saw operation was nearly effortless. This difference could be significant for older sawyers who often work on volunteer crews.

3. Fatigue and safety are also factors. There is increased risk of injury due to fatigue and the necessity to put a sawyer on both sides of the log in the crosscut sawing operation. The chainsaw operator can operate the saw with less exertion and can also stand on the safest side of the log to make the cut. There is also concern that the necessity of limbing with an axe in the crosscut saw operation is a higher risk than limbing with a chainsaw (and it is certainly slower).

The study did not consider other factors such as: travel time between

trees, age of crew, number of crew members, steepness of trail, steepness of the side hill, brush levels along the trail, and logs stacked up on each other. In a day’s work, the travel time between trees would be the same regardless of the type of saw used. However, other factors need consideration when deciding the degree of efficiency of use of the power saw over the crosscut saw. In “on the trail” situations the advantages of the power saw may be much greater than reflected in our study. A couple of situations that we routinely face in trail clearing are mentioned here as examples.

- To cut 80, 12” diameter trees in a mile, the power saw would save 1 hour and 50 minutes per mile over the use of the crosscut saw.
- To cut 30, 25” diameter trees in a mile, the power saw would save 2 hours and 54 minutes per mile over the use of the crosscut saw.

The point is the use of power saws significantly reduces the time it takes to clear down logs from trails. Power saws can provide a safer work environment by reducing sawyer fatigue and placing the sawyer in a safer position while cutting. The power saw often allows the clearing of trees that simply cannot be cut with a crosscut saw because of the position of the down tree on the ground. In that case the trail must be closed, the log drilled and shot off with explosives—or removed with a power saw.

The difference in cutting time and overall efficiency may not be sufficient to justify changing current trail maintenance practices when down trees are cleared annually, when there is a normal volume, and trees are a normal diameter. After a significant climatic event or when down trees have not been routinely cleared from the trail for an extended period of time, the efficiency of power saws could make the difference. It’s a big difference between meeting Congressional intent in the Wilderness Act and leaving the area unrepaired and


unfit “for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.”

BCH of Oregon approve of the use of traditional tools for routine clearing of trails in wilderness (as did my friend in the start of this article). If the opening of trails can’t be completed with traditional primitive tools, or if we have to sacrifice maintenance on other important trails, we fear that the lack of maintenance will eventually lead to closure of many trails. If wilderness trails are to be dropped from the trail system due to lack of maintenance because of lack of funding and manpower, we suggest that the Agency reevaluate the use of traditional methods and minimum tools with their Minimum Requirements Assessment. As a result of changed environmental conditions, the huge maintenance backlog, and limited budget, those traditional tools may no longer be adequate or appropriate to provide the necessary trail maintenance to accomplish the purposes of the Wilderness Act. A reevaluation of current methods may allow the agency to initially open unserviceable trails with power tools and then return to the traditional practice of routine maintenance using primitive tools. In cases such as these, the Agency may decide that managed and limited use of motorized trail maintenance equipment is not only appropriate, but necessary to provide the access so important to preserve our wilderness trail systems - and our wilderness preservation system itself.

Dan Applebaker holds a Forestry Degree from Oregon State University and is retired from a career of administering logging contracts on Forest Service administered lands and managing private timberlands. He has competed in many logging shows in double and single crosscut saw speed bucking and has done volunteer trail clearing for the Forest Service for more than 30 years. He is a founding member of the Back Country Horsemen of Oregon.

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Bar B Q Flats Project

Submitted by Doc and Deb Wesslius

How long does it take to tear down and replace a 1000-foot fence? Two days if you have 30 BCH of Washington (BCHW) volunteers, a tractor with a backhoe, two tractors with frontend loaders, two quads with trailers, plus every tool imaginable to dig post holes in rocky terrain.

Bar B Q Flats is a pine forest in the Wenas valley, which has long been a popular back country stock riding destination and connects to higher country with views of several mountain ranges. The land managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) had historically been available to the public. However, the access road to the recreation area crossed private property, leaving the public with intermittent access on owner preference. As directed by 2013 legislation, DNR solidified agreements to gain ownership of an access road for future public right of entry. In March 2015 the state Board of National Resources authorized DNR to proceed with a package of land transactions and infrastructure improvements that would assure permanent public access.

Eighty acres were traded plus DNR purchased another 560 acres, and planned to develop dispersed camping in the flats. “The people of Washington will enjoy exploring BBQ Flats for generations,” said Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark. “I appreciate Representative Judy Warnick’s (R-Moses Lake) leadership to expand outdoor recreation opportunities in this part of the state, and to help give DNR the resources to achieve it.”

The land-swap with private property owners included a provision for an access road to be fenced on both sides to protect private property rights. Jeff Jones, DNR South East Region Recreation Manager, and Stephanie Margheim, DNR Volunteer Specialist, pre-arranged work parties for outdoor recreation organizations to start the access

road fencing improvements. During the first work party Jeff and Jody Taylor (BCHW-Wenas Chapter) supervised tearing out the old fence and the new fence construction on one side of the access road. Volunteers from five BCHW chapters (Wenas, Yakima, Pierce, Lewis, & Tahoma) and independent members put the construction projects ahead of schedule. Originally it was anticipated that part of the fence could get torn down and cleaned up during the three-day work party. BCHW volunteers showed up with tools and equipment to not only tear out 1500 feet of old fencing but also ready to build the fence; 1000 feet of the fence was put in place. Setting around the potluck table in the evenings the volunteers were obviously proud of their achievement and support of the BCHW mission statement – “to assist government agencies in their maintenance of public lands.”

After DNR personnel completed the 1500-foot boundary fence, a second BCHW multi-chapter work party was organized to construct an 8000-foot long elk fence on the other side of the 80-foot wide access and property boundary. Led by Jeff and Jody, volunteers from five BCHW chapters (Wenas, Pierce, Lewis, Tahoma, & Traildusters), independent BCHW members plus local community volunteers started installing the elk fence.

Prior to the work party a private construction company drove 12-foot metal posts 4 feet into the rocky ground. Once the 800 metal posts were in place Jeff and Jody coordinated the installation of the 8-foot high elk fence. During the two-day work party 35 volunteers installed 1-½ miles of woven field fence. After the lower section of the fence was installed on the metal posts a second section of woven field fencing was added atop it to make the 8-foot high wildlife barrier fence.



BCHW - Wenas Chapter arranged a work party on National Trails Day to help DNR complete the 8000-foot elk fence. On a very hot day, 13 volunteers labored to finish the project, which included a wildlife migratory gate.

Improvements to the dispersed camping area include a graveled access road with metal entry gates, an improved loop road in the flats itself and three vault toilets (2 single seat restrooms and 1 double seat restroom). Recognizing the 1406.5 volunteer hours contributed to this project, DNR planned an appreciation and dedication lunch at the flats for the volunteer workers. The gathering will be reminiscent of the days when cattlemen gathered in

the flats for a barbeque after fall roundup; thus its namesake. Due to an active fire season for DNR staff this summer the commemoration for the completion of a job well done is rescheduled.

The enhancements to the popular back country riding area took several years of negotiations and a sizable DNR budget allotment. Once again Bar B Q Flats will be a favorite destination for spring riding and fall hunting opportunities. As outdoor recreationists it is now our responsibility to maintain the pristine setting in the flats and respect the private property of the neighboring land owners.

See more photographs at www.bchw.org/photo_gallery.



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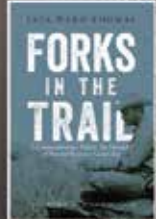


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