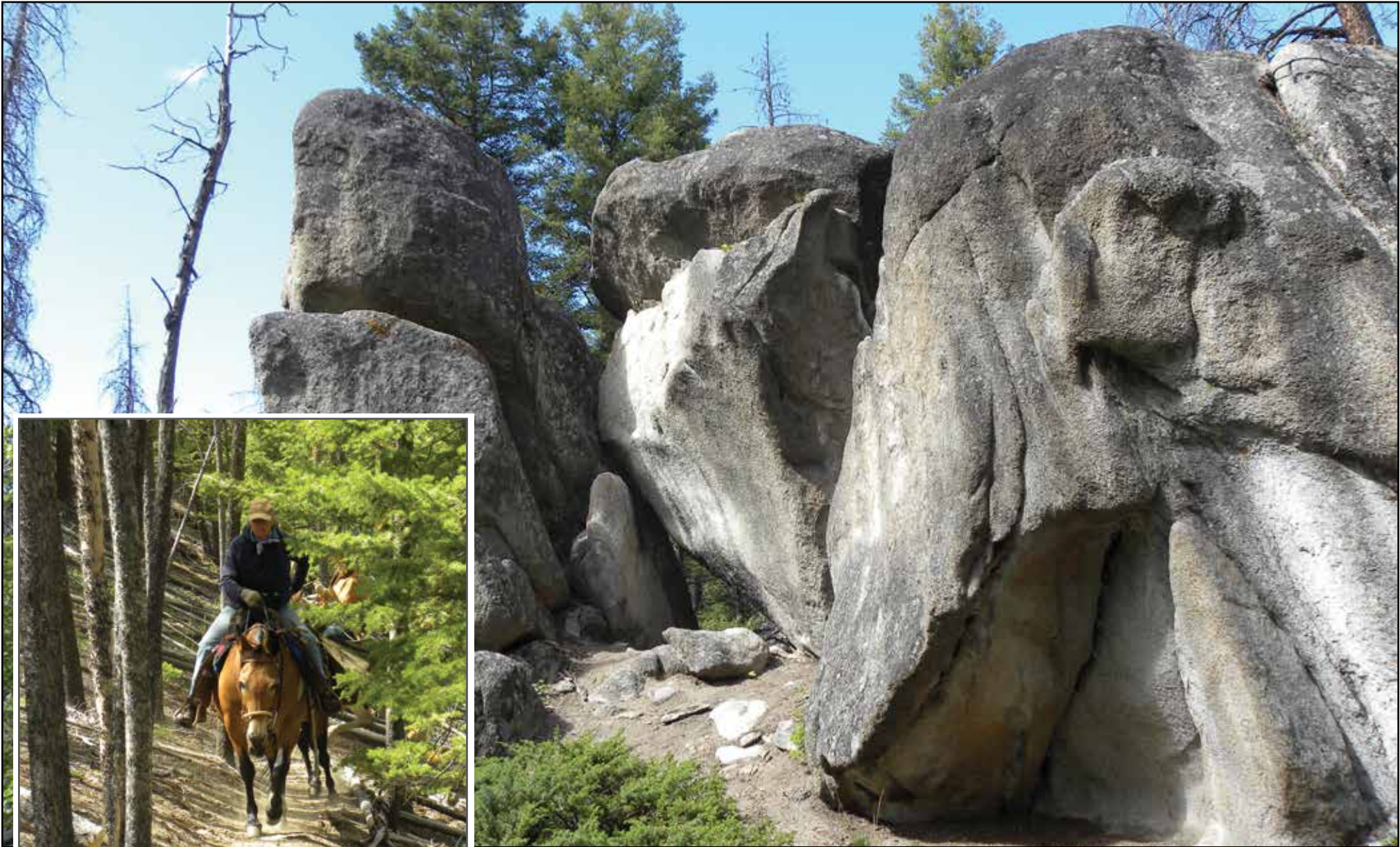


Back Country Horsemen Lend a Hoof in Trail Clearing

Story and photos by David Abrams, Mile High Back Country Horsemen, Montana



Above: Granite Spires.
Left: Nancy Leading.
Below: Aspen leaves.

“When the BLM came to us for help, we said ‘yes’ right away. We use these trails all the time, so we are happy to help.”

The three-mile trail leading to the Humbug Spires in southwestern Montana is normally a gentle, smooth going walk through postcard-perfect scenery in an old-growth forest braided with a clear-running creek. However, a series of microburst storms earlier in 2014 left the area riddled with downed trees, making the path challenging for even the most high-stepping hiker.

That’s why, on a late-summer morning, employees from the BLM’s Butte Field Office and members of the local chapter of Back Country Horsemen were busy clearing a way toward the Spires. The granite outcroppings, part of the Boulder Batholith, rise up to 600 feet above the forests like cathedral towers. The Humbug Spires Wilderness Study Area is especially popular

with rock climbers. Outdoor Recreation Planner Brad Colin wasn’t going to let anything stand in their way—especially the trees which were scattered like jackstraws across the foothills.

“This trail gets cleared every year,” Colin said. “In the past, we’ve had maybe 10 to 20 trees down. This year, it’s well over 100 trees down.”

The annual work day was also part of the Wilderness 50 celebration, as well as a National Public Lands Day.

To assist in the Butte Field Office’s trail-clearing project, six members of the Back Country Horsemen (BCH) volunteered to spend the day with their pack animals, hauling food, water, and hand tools for the workers. Some of the equestrians had already seen the trail’s condition first-hand.

“The club had taken a pleasure ride up here in August and we found it was impassable,” said Nancy Bare, a 3-year member of the BCH. “So when the BLM came to us and asked for help, we said ‘yes’ right away.”

Her riding partner Bob Sestrich agreed. “We use these trails all the time, so we were happy to help.”

After a day’s work on the trail Mile High BCH President Pat Ankelman sent this report in an email to his fellow members: “The crew that went to the end to start back counted 138 trees down on the trail on their way up to the top. So with saws in hand the crews cut the original 138 trees...an additional 40-50 dead and leaning trees were cut as well, plus over a dozen water bars and several trail repairs (were done) by

the swamper in just one day. Wow! What a day!”

Colin said he hopes to make the Humbug Spires trail day an annual event with BCH.

“Partners like this are the future for the BLM,” he added.





PO Box 1367
Graham WA 98338-1367
(888) 893-5161

Interested in Joining?

Contact BCHA or the organization nearest you for more information.

National: BCH of America Peg Greiwe Executive Secretary PO Box 1367 Graham WA 98338-1367 (888) 893-5161 FAX (360) 832-1564 peg@backcountryhorse.com www.bcha.org	BCH of Montana PO Box 4864 Butte MT 59701 long@montana.com www.bchmt.org
State Organizations: BCH of Alabama 783 County Rd 1208 Vinemont AL 35179 (256) 339-7880 lwbrock45@gmail.com backcountryhorsemenal.com	BCH of Nevada PO Box 19324 Reno NV 89511 (775) 843-2569 info@bchnv.com www.bchnv.com
Buffalo River BCH, Arkansas 18210 Simpson Lane Little Rock AR 72223 (501) 821-4053 Jacque.alexander @arkansas.gov	BCH of New Mexico PO Box 37005 Albuquerque NM 87176 chairman@bchnm.org www.bchnm.org
BCH of Arizona PO Box 4486 Chino Valley AZ 86323 (928) 445-3809 www.bchaz.org	BCH of North Carolina 110 Hobbit Lane Pisgah Forest NC 28768 (828) 577-3462 tomthomas262@gmail.com www.bchofnc.org
BCH of California 13061 Rosedale Highway Ste G Box 217 Bakersfield CA 93314 www.bchcalifornia.org	BCH of Oregon 37245 Wheeler Rd Pleasant Hill OR 97455 (541) 746-4547 www.bcho.org
BCH of Colorado PO Box 1524 Elizabeth CO 80107 www.bchcolorado.org	Black Hills BCH of South Dakota 20112 Buckin Horse Lane Whitewood SD 57793 (605) 645-2296 bhbchsd@gmail.com www.bhbchsd @blogspot.com
Florida Forever BCH PO Box 2213 Inverness FL 34451-2213 (352) 628-2973 ffbch.org@gmail.com http://www.ffbch.org/	BCH of Tennessee, Inc. 777 Cedar Creek Cave Rd Greenville TN 37743 (423) 552-3767 TJConnor@hotmail.com www.bchet.org
BCH of Georgia PO Box 1471 Blue Ridge GA 30513 706-374-7075 carlosmartel@bellsouth.net	BCH of Utah PO Box 13195 Ogden UT 84412 (801) 985-1909 www.bchu.com
BCH of Idaho PO Box 513 Salmon ID 83467 www.bchi.org	Virginia BCH 55 Lost Creek Lane Buena Vista VA 24416 (540) 570-1910 deborasensaba@gmail.com
BCH of Illinois Rt # 2 BOX 214 Golconda IL 62938 (618) 672-4841 Mulemaid@shawneelink.net	BCH of Washington 110 W 6th Ave PMB 393 Goldsburg WA 98926 (509) 276-6226 www.bchwa.org
Hoosier BCH Indiana 12784 E Rollins Lane Springville IN 47462 (812) 797-4540 hoosierhorsemen @yahoo.com	BCH of West Virginia PO Box 216 Wardensville WV 26851 (304) 897-5795 Dianeand4mules @yahoo.com
BCH of Kansas 1409 Lincoln Road Concordia KS 66901 785-243-2494 steve.lindsey@lia_ks.com	BCH of Wyoming 2446 Spriggs Dr Lander WY 82520 bighorn@vcn.com www.wyobch.org
Kentucky BCH 7900 Wades Mill Road Mt. Sterling KY 40353 (859) 744-0397 ehconyers7900@gmail.com www.kybch.com	Affiliates: BCH of Alaska PO Box 3148 Palmer AK 99645 (907) 360-0480 kaylene.johnson@gmail.com
Show-Me Missouri BCH 519 Good Hope Road Marshfield, MO 65706 (417) 425-9969 www.showmebch.org	BCH Pigeon River and Beyond, MI, Inc. 6631 E Ashard Road Clare MI 48617 (517) 296-4475 marietad@frontiernet.net

NextGen BCHA (Youth)

Flicka's Midnight Stroll

By Melanie Totten

I am 11 years old and live in Kila, MT. I love to ride and spend time outdoors. My family includes my mom and dad, an older brother named Patrick, and a younger sister named Seline.

School had been out for two months and it was August 18, 2014. My brother, my dad, and I were getting ready to go camping with our horses to Granite Creek. Patrick and I took defensive horse safety in the spring and we were going on our first time Back Country Horsemen packing trip. We were going to Granite Cabin to help pack out two artists who were there painting for two weeks.

We trailered dad's horse Dusty, my sister's horse Flicka, and my horse Bo. When we got the trailer all packed and loaded, we were off. We had a 3-hour drive ahead of us. On the way we crossed a bridge that is actually made out of five cattle guards. It was in the middle of nowhere—6 to 8 miles from the highway and 6 feet above Challenge Creek—and it had huge boulders at the bottom. It was another 2 miles to Granite Creek Trailhead where we were going to camp. When we got to camp, we unloaded the horses and tied them to a hitching rail.

We arrived around 6:30 in the afternoon, so we saddled the horses and went to the first creek down the trail about a mile away. We watered the horses and rode back. When we got back it was dark. Ron Trippet showed Patrick and me how to make a fire with wet wood. After supper and popcorn, we all decided to call it a night. Little did we know we were going to be up at 1AM!

At 1 AM, my horse was whinnying and woke up my dad. Flicka was gone! My dad went to look for her but didn't find her. He told Rick Mathies that we were going to look down the road. When we got to the cattle guard bridge, we were shocked at what we found. Flicka had all four legs through the bars. She had almost made it completely over the bridge. With only 6 bars left to cross, she would have made it. Unfortunately she fell through. She looked back at us with puppy dog eyes, like she was saying, "Help me, I've fallen and can't get back up." We put a lead rope on her and I held her until dad brought the trailer. He had to drive the pickup on the bridge so he could back the trailer into the ditch to unhook it. When he pulled on the bridge, Flicka started to throw her head trying to get away it was very scary. Dad got me back in the pickup to go get help.

By now it was 2 in the morning! We went back to camp to get Rick and Ron. On the drive back to where Flicka was stuck, dad stopped and said he had to pray to Jesus for help, because he had never seen a horse with all four legs hanging in the air. When we got there Rick said "Oh my gosh!" Ron asked, "Do you have any horse mats in your trailer?" Both my dad and Rick replied, "Yes!" So we went back to camp and got all the mats out of the trailers and laid them on the cattle guard.

As if things couldn't get worse, Rick fell through the cattle guard and



could have broken his legs. Luckily he was fine!

Next, we got a bunch of saddle pads to see if we could lift her out by shoving pads under her. Ron took a pair of cinches and put them under her rear legs, with the intention of lifting her up a bit to see if we could get her to come out. My brother was holding the horse's head for over an hour to keep her calm and focused. Dad went around to the front of her and lifted her front legs onto the trailer mats. As soon as the second foot was on the mat, Flicka started to shake. At that moment her back end came out of the cattle guard.

She knew it was time to get out of there. She came straight up and moved to the right landing on the mats. She was trying to catch her balance, but while doing that she was staggering to the edge of the bridge. On the edge there is a railroad tie that is only 1 foot tall. If she went off that she would die because it is about 6 feet to the creek bottom. When Flicka came out of the cattle guards, my brother let go of the lead rope because she was above his head and moving very fast. My dad grabbed the lead rope and yanked her head to the side so she couldn't walk off the side of the bridge. Her back legs got up on the railroad tie, and then she was off the bridge and safely onto the road.

Rick came to the pickup to get his first aid kit for the horse and told me that she was out of the cattle guard bridge. I was in the car because I was going into shock. I ran over to her and saw she had a foot-long cut with 7 or 8 inches of bone showing on her left back leg. She had a hole on her right back leg that went down to the bone. On her inside front left leg, she had a 3-inch triangle cut at the knee. When we had her all wrapped up I had to walk her to keep her from going into shock and to get the blood circulating in her legs. Everyone else helped clean up the bridge.

All Flicka could think about was food. We put the mats in the trailer and went to camp to get the other two horses. We went down to the highway where we stopped to check on her to be sure that she was still standing. She was! Now it was 4 in the morning. We

had to get to our vet at La Salle Equine Clinic fast! It was a long 1 ½-hour drive to the vet. At 5 am we finally got cell service and called the vet to get people ready. When we arrived at the vet, we unloaded Dusty and Bo. Flicka would not move. She was stiff. When the vet assistant got there he thought she had a broken leg because she wasn't standing on it.

The vet sewed her up and bandaged her legs. It was 9 AM by the time we got home and unloaded the two horses. Flicka stayed overnight at the vet and came home the next day. We didn't know if she would live. The next 2-3 weeks were critical for the bones and the healing process. We put silver sulfadiazine, Derma Gel, and Emu Oil on all the cuts morning and night. We also gave her Bute Paste (phenylbutazone) and antibiotics for a month. She was licking her wounds, so we put a neck collar on her. After 14 days we took her in for a check up and had the stitches pulled. Flicka was kept in a 12' X 12' stall for almost 3 months. Then we let her in a turnout where she could move and she finally laid down and tried to roll.

Now she is fine and running free with the other horses. The cut on the left leg is barely noticeable. The cuts on her other legs just have small scars. We used a lot of Emu Herbal Wound Spray and Wound Salve on her legs. I think it was a miracle that she survived this!

See ya on the trails!

P.S. Thanks to La Salle Equine Clinic in Kalispell for all their good care and also to Penny with the Emu Ranch in Kalispell for all her help in getting Flicka well!

From the Chairman's Saddle



By Jim McGarvey, Chairman

Hello Everyone,

Looking Back

Some Deserved "Thank You's" among so many that I cannot list them all...

Well, this will be my last article as BCHA Chairman as my two one-year terms expire at our national board meeting April 22-25. In this column, we have recapped the events, projects, obstacles we overcame and obstacles still to overcome. The achievements were great team efforts with many of team member names highlighted in previous articles. I would like to mention a few folks on our executive committee who have been especially helpful during my terms. Past Chairmen **Alan Hill (CA)** and **Mike McGlenn (WA)** were able to tell me those times when they have "been there and done that" and how it all worked out. Their connections with members and chapters in our western states greatly helped in finding good folks to work on all our projects. Executive Committee member **Chuck Miller (MT)** was my sounding board. If Chuck thinks it's a good idea, then it probably is. If he isn't too excited about an idea, then it's probably time to go back to the drawing board. Our Public Lands Advisor **Randy Rasmussen** has helped immensely in bringing the BCHA to a higher level of effectiveness and national awareness with our advocacy partners and our friends who manage our federal and state lands. Executive Secretary **Peg Greiwe (WA)** was on nearly every project committee. Many of the changes impacted her position and she has leveraged these changes to further benefit the BCHA and its membership. Possibly the highlight of the past two years, and certainly the most visible was our new logo designed by **Robbin Schindele (ID)**. Our great new website honors go to **Marty DeVall (OR)**. My wife **Cindy McGarvey (GA)** deserves a great deal of thanks. Besides doing our Facebook page and many many other tasks that have greatly helped me, she has been my goodwill ambassador when I badly needed some goodwill. Finally, thank you **Ken Ausk (MT)** for, well, for just about everything.

Some Issues Looking Forward

We can all be proud of the accomplishments of the past several years. but in a way that was the easy stuff.

Still the Same...

We are still facing challenges on our public lands and, of course, this will continue but at a pace that will put more demands on the Back Country Horsemen. Flat and declining budgets for recreational trails; wildly expensive wild lands fires; the almost insurmountable costs of owning horses, land and equipment for upcoming younger

generations; the increasing instances of trail user conflict; and the issues that our local chapters face in retaining members as hard working trail volunteers; and well, I will stop there but you get the idea.

Our Need for an Executive Director...

BCHA is a 42-year-old organization whose nearly 14,000 members span the continent. The position of BCHA chairman can be time consuming depending what you want to put into the job. That alone can drive many potential candidates away. Each new chairman is required to get to know senior federal land officials. It is extremely difficult for a chairman to raise outside funding because of the limiting factor of two one year terms. You need time to build relationships for large dollar outside funding. That is one of the main reasons we continue to rely on our members who already donate a tremendous amount of volunteer hours, for virtually the entire BCHA budget. Reduced fund raising ability also limits our effectiveness of our mission on the national scene.

We have the classic "chicken or the egg" dilemma. We need to hire an executive director to raise money but we need to raise money to hire an executive director. Working closely with our Executive Committee, we have come up with a plan. When my term as BCHA Chair ends in late April 2015, I will commit to a maximum of two years as the executive director on a strictly volunteer basis. In my two years as chairman, I have not turned in any expenses whatsoever. However, I will have a modest expense budget to draw from as your executive director. My goal will be to raise in the neighborhood of \$250,000 to cover three years of salary and travel expenses for a professional executive director. I will not ask any of our membership for donations on this effort but member contributions will not be turned down!

Estate Gifting...

I think all of you have been solicited by one organization or another to set aside funds in your will or estate plan. This can be a very effective tool to build a solid foundation for the BCHA for our next 40 years. We have had a committee headed by past Chair Mike McGlenn looking into the various options. This is a bit of a complicated project but BCHA does have the favorable demographics—myself certainly included—to make this a success.

BCHA Country Store...

With the success of our new logo, we decided to ramp up our BCHA online store to sell, hats, shirts, vests, and other items. After a 90-day trail period, the Country Committee headed up by Cindy McGarvey with Robbin Schindele, Peg Greiwe, Marty Devall and I have learned some things about pricing, inventory and more. Look for more news in the future.

And Finally...

I want to thank everyone in the organization for their wonderful support for me and Cindy these past two years. We met a lot of great folks and got a couple things done.

Thank you
Jim McGarvey

Bear Country Containers

SIBBG (CA) approved and IGBC certified bear resistant aluminum PACK PANNIERS



Durable, airline approved
GUN CASES

Our products are made with an all aluminum body and all stainless steel hardware and corner ends are doubled, welded and gusseted for greater durability.



Various models of panniers and gun cases are available.

See website for details: **www.BearCountryContainers.com**

Contact us by email at: **cowboyup257@gmail.com**

Call **406.763.4364**
Box 38, Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730

Made in Montana
by Jerry Kawasaki

National Report

Grant Projects Funding—Funds Still Available

By Mylon Filkins DVM, BCHA Education Foundation

The BCHA Education Foundation directors are pleased to announce the funding of 20 grants ranging from \$120 to \$1000 to BCHA organizations in the states of Colorado, Oregon, Kentucky California, New Mexico, Kansas, Arkansas, Montana and Washington. A total of \$17,320 in grants were awarded. These grants were made available from the BCHA crowdfunding campaign and there are funds remaining. A total of \$8,000 remains for another round of grants up to \$1000 each.

The application can be made online through the link to the Education Foundation on the BCHA web site. Grants funded reflected the great diversity and volunteer efforts put forth by Back Country Horsemen. Grant projects included trail work, educational brochures, trail equipment, trail signage, youth activities such as FFA events, and training and support for a wilderness intern. The wide range of projects is a great tribute to the members of our BCHA organizations.

Kern Valley
VETERINARY
CLINIC

Ann Lange &
Detlev Lange, DVM
760-378-2486

Correction

On page 4 of the Winter 2015 issue (Vol. 26, Issue 1), the editor failed to include the byline for the article by Robert Eversole titled "Great Reads for the Trail Rider."

Distance competitive trail riding with NATRC it might be right for you!

Competitive trail rides cover a measured distance within a window of time. In NATRC rides, horses are evaluated by qualified veterinary judges, and riders are evaluated by qualified horsemanship judges.

COME RIDE WITH US. We have 23 rides and 5 clinics through July 31st in these states: AK, AL, CA, CO, KS, MO, NC, NM, OK, SC, TX, VA and WA.

Learn more



www.natrc.org + 303-688-1677

NORTH AMERICAN TRAIL RIDE CONFERENCE



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.

BCHA Calendar

<u>2015</u>	
April 22-25	BCHA National Board Meeting - CA
May 17-20	American Trails International Trails Symposium - Portland OR (BCHA will have a booth)
June 18-20	American Horse Publications - San Antonio TX
<u>2016</u>	
April 20-23	BCHA National Board Meeting - NV

Index of Sponsors

American Endurance Ride Conference	5
Back Country Store	9
BCH of California Leave No Trace Master Educator Stock Course	9
Bear Country Containers	8
Black Hills BCH of South Dakota Buffalo Hunt.....	6
Chris Tornow Saddlemaker	9
Kern Valley Veterinary Clinic	3
Kinsey Horsemanship.....	7
North American Trail Ride Conference.....	3
Outfitters Supply.....	4
The Event at Rebecca Farm.....	12
Trailhead Supply.....	5

Check out
www.bcha.org
for more advertisers!!

More Signs of Trouble for Stock Users

By Richard Cochran, Co-chair Public Lands Committee, High Sierra Unite, BCH of California

Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks (SEKI) located in the central Sierra Nevada Mountains of Central California, had recently closed the public comment period on five draft alternatives for SEKI's Wilderness Stewardship Plan (WSP). The WSP process began several years ago and became embroiled in litigation involving the High Sierra Hikers Association (HSHA) which sued SEKI over its General Management Plan (GMP). The litigation was directly impacted by the SEKI Backcountry Access Act legislation promoted and supported by BCHA and BCHC. The High Sierra Unit (HSU) of the BCH of California (BCHC) is directly involved with the WSP. The HSU requested BCHA's support in responding to the WSP. BCHA—along with BCHC, BCH of Washington, and the BCH of New Mexico—got involved in getting the SEKI Act passed in Congress.

The legislation required SEKI deal with multiple issues raised in the lawsuit in the WSP and that the WSP be in place by mid-2015. Therefore, SEKI is on a "fast track" to comply. Public comment period for the WSP ended on August 25, 2014. The HSU was very pleased to receive enormous help and support from BCHA's Advisor Public Lands Recreation Randy Rasmussen. Members of the HSU Public Lands Committee provided information and data about SEKI and submitted formal written comments on the WSP. Using this information, Rasmussen prepared a professional analysis. HSU members Robert Herrick and Dr. Karl Pendegraft also provided comment.

SEKI has every appearance of being on the leading edge of pack and saddle stock restrictions among the various units of the National Park Service. SEKI has a long history of commercial and recreational pack and saddle stock use. U. S. Cavalry used to patrol the two parks. One of the tourist attractions in Kings Canyon National Park is a downed Sequoia tree where the cavalry stabled its horses. In 1986, SEKI issued more closures and restrictions on pack and saddle stock use in SEKI than all of the previous management plans and grazing restrictions combined. SEKI's current management plan proclaims that stock use is a historic and traditional use that will be continued. However, the four alternative proposals in the WSP do not bear out SEKI's support of stock use.

What are some of the new proposals set out in the WSP that SEKI is considering? Here are some of the proposed alternatives:

Hiker Only Trails. Currently, almost all trails are open to stock use. However, in four other alternatives, the percentage of trails open to stock would be reduced from anywhere from 6.3% to 26.2%. It is interesting that the current trail system was built for stock and the current trail system was built using stock to supply the crews that built the trails.

Reduction in Stock Party Size. The current private party size limits for stock parties are 15 people and 20 head of stock in most areas of SEKI. The nearby and contiguous national forests (Sierra, Sequoia, and Inyo) currently allow stock party sizes of 15 people and 25 head of stock. One of the alternative proposals is to reduce the stock party size to a combined total of people and stock of 28.

The Closing of Meadows to Grazing for Social and Scenic Values. Behind this proposal to close meadows to grazing for social and scenic values, are requests being made to SEKI by a small vocal segment of the backpacking community. The following wording is found in the WSP.

"7 additional meadows along the

John Muir Trail (JMT) and the High Sierra Trail (HST) would be closed to grazing in order to expand the network of meadows closed to grazing for scientific and social value."

Removal of Drift Fences and Hitching Rails. One alternative proposes the removal of 12 drift fences and 23 hitching rails in SEKI wilderness. SEKI has three fenced administrative pastures, none of which SEKI proposes to remove. SEKI also has 15 ranger stations and 3 patrol cabins and yet the alternative proposes to remove only 1 ranger station. This does not appear to be a genuine commitment on the part of SEKI to restore wilderness character by removing manmade structures.

New Proposed Trail Classification System. The details of the new trail classification system are buried in various places in two lengthy and sometimes confusing documents that are about 5" thick. Classification 1 of this system provides for infrequent trail maintenance. In many instances, a down tree effectively closes a trail to stock use—and possibly

entire areas—to stock use.

In 2011, SEKI published a Wilderness Visitor Survey. The survey is reportedly based on over 600 interviews that support some of the actions which impact stock use in the WSP. Of the 600+ people interviewed for this survey, only one participant had ridden into SEKI wilderness on a horse.

On the positive side of the WSP, the preferred alternative proposes the establishment of two new stock camps in what is considered front country (as opposed to wilderness areas). These two stock camps would be located at Cedar Grove and at a campground in the Mineral King area.

The HSU Public Lands Committee has learned that the designation of areas as wilderness created significant challenges for stock users when government agencies set out to develop management plans for the particular wilderness. Unless Congress acts to protect legitimate stock use at specific use levels when wilderness areas are designated, stock use in these areas may eventually be shut out.

OUTFITTERS SUPPLY, INC Essential Gear for the Trail

TrailMAX™ Bear Proof Pack Panniers

- Easy to use, economical panniers are ideal for packing average-sized loads
- Contoured sides fit properly on horse or mule without pressure points
- Meets all USFS & IGBC requirements for bear-resistant storage containers
- All rigging straps and top pack attachment dees included for use on a Decker or Sawbuck pack saddle

We offer a wide selection of soft-sided panniers as well!



Outfitters Supply Pack Saddles

Built for a lifetime of hard use; handcrafted in Montana of Hermann Oak Old World Harness leather with rolled breeching and breastcollar, and stainless steel arches. Two Decker tree styles, two half-breed styles and Sawbuck pack saddles available.



TrailMAX™ Saddlebags

Outfitters Supply has become the leader in equestrian saddlebag design and manufacturing. Why? Because we have used, repaired and sold saddlebags for over 25 years. We design our saddlebags to ensure that they (1) do not shift or slap the horse, (2) easily store lightweight gear for any length ride, (3) would last just as long as our desire to ride down the trail. Quality and functionality have always been our top priorities.



Also available: Cooler Inserts for our Original Saddlebags, Junior Saddlebags and Original Pommel Bags!

Premium leather hobbles, scabbards and tack, proudly made in the USA



Highline Kits, Swivels, Tree Savers, Picket Kits, Picket Pins, Hobbles, and Portable Electric Fence Kits



TrailMAX™ Scabbards

TrailMAX™ Saddle Panniers

We also proudly carry quality gear from:



WALL TENTS



Outfitters

SUPPLY

Contact Us for a FREE Catalog & Dealer List
1-888-467-2256
www.OutfittersSupply.com
7373 US Highway 2 East, Columbia Falls, MT 59912

From the Secretary's Desk



By Peg Greiwe, Executive Secretary

Hello Friends,

What a winter/spring we are having! The east coast was snowed under and the west coast was warm and/or rainy. Our daffodils are almost all

gone. Riding season is going strong in western Washington!

Your BCHA Officers and Executive Committee are deeply involved in preparations for the National Board Meeting to be held in Sacramento this year. Dennis Serpa is the local coordinator from California BCH and he is seeking volunteers to help with an optional event that will showcase mules!

If you have the opportunity to attend one of the national board meetings (held annually in mid to late April in various locations throughout the country), please do. You will learn so much. I remember my first one well before I became your executive secretary. It was held in Olympia WA. I was awestruck by the love of the back country/wilderness held by the board members. If you attend, you will not be able to

vote or comment during the board meeting; but you may serve on any of the committees with full voting rights.

We are excited about the 20+ grants that were given out through the BCH Education Foundation. These funds came from the promise made by Chairman Jim McGarvey that half of anything over our goal of \$50,000 raised during our crowdfunding campaign would be given to the Education Foundation for grants to chapters, affiliates and state organizations of BCHA. The total given was just over \$25,000! So far, everyone who has applied has received a grant (unless there were two different applications from the same entity).

Treasurer and Expansion Freddy Dunn has worked with Saratoga, NY to start an affiliate. She also worked

with Mississippi and Michigan to become state organizations. Several other members in neighboring states have been very helpful in the expansion process. Thank you!

On a personal note, my father passed away on December 30. He was 96 years old and played golf everyday up until July when his body quit doing what he wanted it to do. Dad was telling jokes to the end. He lived a full life serving in the Navy in WWII as a patrol bomber pilot (he "corked" up the English Channel on D Day – keeping submarines out). We will miss this very special man.

Peg

The Catch Pen

Mother Lode Unit Provides Access to New Benefit for BCH CA Members

By Lucy Badenhoop & Kathy Goodrich

We've all heard campfire stories about horrific injuries in the back country that required an airlift evacuation.... hopefully with a happy ending. What we rarely hear about is the \$30,000 price tag for the helicopter ride and the flight-certified medical personnel.

At a recent monthly meeting, the Mother Lode Unit (MLU) heard Sonja Vargas explain how all our members can participate in the CALSTAR Membership Program to help defray these

costs.

CALSTAR is not an insurance program. It is a non-profit emergency service launched in 1984 and is operated under county protocols. Service is initiated by a 911 response or physician's prescription only. It is secondary to any insurance coverage the individual may have. Service to members includes inter-hospital transfers if ordered by a physician.

California Service Centers (within

a 150-mile flight radius) are located in Concord, Gilroy, Auburn, Ukiah, Salinas, South Lake Tahoe, Santa Maria, Vacaville and McClellan (Sacramento). There are reciprocal agreements in place for Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada and Montana.

If you live or frequently travel outside the CALSTAR service areas, you may want to search the internet for other air ambulance programs.

The CALSTAR membership group

that MLU setup is statewide....any BCHC member is eligible. Our group rate is \$35 annually up to 150 members. At 151 memberships, the annual rate drops to \$30. The group name is Back Country Horsemen of CA.

For an application or more information, go to www.calstar.org or call 888-207-5433. You may also contact Sonja Vargas by phone 530-887-0569 or email svargas@calstar.org.

News from Hoosier Back Country Horsemen IN

By Kim Humphries

Each year the Hoosier BCH have a joint meeting with our local USFS personnel to plan and discuss issues on our Hoosier National Forest. This year's meeting was held on February 20 at FS office in Bedford.

Items on the agenda were:

Welcome to the new Forest Supervisor Michael Chavez.

• Trail Permit Fees & Usage

Here in Indiana, our Trail Permit money (equestrian and mountain bikes) are unique to our state in that the money raised stays here, on our forest, for use in maintaining the trail systems here in the Hoosier State. We like to help plan work projects that will be the best use of the "tag money." Maintaining trails takes first precedence, but we have also used the money for mounting blocks and picnic tables in prime resting spots for equestrians, as well as sweet smelling toilets and hitch rails.

• Forest Service Plan affects on Equine Trails

Any time there are revisions of the FS Plan it is best to keep abreast of how they affect our Equine trails here in the Hoosier as well as other areas of the country.

• Setting days for our volunteer trail work

We plan these together with FS reps who are responsible for maintenance and usage on the trail system. We have set 6 work days throughout the 7 month

summer season. The actual days can be found on our website calendar: <http://hoosierbackcountryhorsemen.org>

• Horse Camp Usage/ non-equine users

It was determined that this wasn't a huge issue in Indiana. Our "horse camps" are labeled for multi-use by the USFS. Some horsemen have debated the issue as two of them were built for horsemen, with horsemen and stock in mind.

• Kids Unplugged Day

Day planned by USFS and the local school system. Designed to get local school children out of doors and show them some recreational activities here on the HNF. Members of our BCH group volunteer to demonstrate Dutch Oven Cooking.

• Take Pride in America Day

HNF used to participate in this national event. Our local BCH chapter has been involved since the late 1990's. It was cut two years ago by the Hoosier National Forest supervisor. Our local chapter would like to bring this day back, as it afforded the opportunity to work with other volunteer user groups and brought awareness to Hoosier Back Country Horsemen.

• Get Outdoors Day

Organized by USFS and Bedford City Parks, similar to Kids Unplugged; members of HBCH volunteer to give horseback rides, to the public, and is a very popular attraction.

Compete. Have fun. (Or both.)
Try Endurance!

25-50-100 mile rides on beautiful trails
All equine breeds • Mileage awards programs

Interested? Call for free info packet

American Endurance Ride Conference
www.aerc.org • 866-271-2372

TRAILHEAD SUPPLY

Your source for the best camping gear, horse and mule packing equipment and riding gear.

Shop online anytime for horse and mule packing equipment, camping supplies, tack and so much more.

We are your full service packing supply store. We don't just sell packing supplies, we stand behind every product we sell—and we use them!

We build all pack saddles in house.

406.752.4437
www.trailheadsaddle.com

The Catch Pen

Meramec Trail Work Indian Trails Chapter of Show-Me MO

By Kathy LaRue

On November 8-9, Indian Trails Chapter Show-Me Missouri BCH worked to improve a multi-use trail at Meramec Conservation Area near Sullivan. The work was done in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Conservation and assistance from Show-Me President Larry Bast and members of the Eastern Missouri Chapter. Volunteers between the ages of 6 and 75 used hand tools to reshape the trail and spread between 7 and 8 tons of donated gravel. The gravel was hauled from the parking lot down the trail by horses with panniers. Capital Quarry donated the gravel and Havin Material donated the dump truck. Chapter member Barb Wagner drove the dump truck, picked up and delivered the gravel to the work site. Volunteers also closed off an old

trail that was eroded.

"This project would not have been possible without the donation of hard work from our volunteers and our equine companions. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. The final result is a trail that will make all trail users' experience a little nicer," said Trail Boss Allison Schottenhaml.

After seeing posts about our project on Facebook, Trail Blazer Magazine contacted Chapter President Allison Schottenhaml and published an article.



Uinta Basin Chapter of UT Receives Honors for 2014 Work

By Gordon Hirschi



On February 17, Lieutenant Governor Cox's Office and the U Serve Utah Commission on Service and Volunteerism recognized members of Uinta Basin Chapter of Utah for their hard work in environmental stewardship. Uintah County Commissioner Mike McKee presented the awards. Also present was Craig Newman BLM Recreation Planner, Terry Morrison BCH of Utah chairman, BCHU Secretary Linda Morrison, and Public Lands Coordinator Gordon Hirschi. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)—an independent federal agency—has ranked U Serve Utah #1 in the nation for nine consecutive years. CNCS plays a vital role in supporting the American culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility and is a leading grant maker of service and volunteering.

In 2014 Uinta Basin Chapter work included clearing and maintaining 43 miles of trails. The chapter contributed 782 hours of service with a monetary value of \$30,742. In 2013 our chapter also received UServeUtah recognition for 883 volunteer hours with a monetary value of \$36,763. We worked with BLM's Vernal Office, U.S. Forest Ser-



vice Ashley National Forest, and Dinosaur National Monument. U Serve Utah awarded 21 certificates to Donald Connolly, Kenneth Bentley, Joyce Bentley, John Holmes, Jody Holmes, Coby Holmes, Marlie Holmes, Gene Gurr, Grizz Oleen, Cindy Oleen, Mark Karren, Jeanne Newman, Austyn Murray, Thumper Murray, Kent Morris, Mike Vanderlinden, Georgia Vanderlinden, Glenda Rich, Alan Rich, Gale Robbins, and Jackie Robbins.

!! WIN !!

FULLY OUTFITTED TROPHY SOUTH DAKOTA

BUFFALO HUNT

PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT

BLACK HILLS BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN OF SOUTH DAKOTA

\$100 PER TICKET; ONLY 500 TICKETS TO BE SOLD

Drawing to be held on October 7, 2015

Hunt to be scheduled in December 2015 or January 2016

Includes trophy bull buffalo, guide, 2 nights lodging, meals, field dressing, transport of carcass to local locker plant, and transport of head & cape to local taxidermist.

(Meat processing and taxidermy NOT included)

Hunt conducted by Routier Outfitting, Buffalo, SD www.huntsd.net

Note: This hunt is handicap accessible



Contacts: Doug Bechen 605-645-2296

Jim Allen 605-517-1761

Brad Bilka 605-381-7563

The Catch Pen

CA Winter Trail Work

By Mary Odell

Two units from California, the Sierra Freepackers and the San Joaquin Sierra (SJS), have been doing a lot of work together. Due to the lack of rain and snow this winter, we have been able to stay on top of some of our local trails. These two units are doing a lot of work together because we are closely located. Local riders will report to us about downed trees and we head out to clear up the mess.

One of these was a short ride in on a road near Bass Lake where we found a large downed tree, evaluated what needed to be done, and got to work. Because this is a front country trail, a chain saw could be used. Ted Fischer of

the SJS Unit is the trained sawyer. Ted branched the tree and various members hauled off the pieces and cleared the way. After cutting the tree into chunks we rolled the pieces off onto the side of the trail. This was not a big job so it was done quickly and efficiently. After loading up all the equipment we assessed the rest of the road for any more issues and had a nice lunch together.

Other winter projects areas include the San Joaquin River Gorge, the Ahwahnee Hills Regional Park and Hensley Lake. We also have rides that include education, training and preparing our stock and ourselves for summer backcountry projects.



Members cutting the logs: left to right: Angela Ausman(SF), William Peveril(SJS), Mary Odell(SF), Ted Fischers(SJS)

Portneuf River ID

By Richard Bingham



It's been a busy year for the Portneuf River BCH in Idaho. From an open meeting with officials of the BCH of ID last April to acceptance as an official chapter of BCHI in November, interested horsemen got involved. We organized to elect an executive committee, held regular trail rides twice monthly, scouted trails in need of maintenance, and did maintenance work on several U.S. Forest Service trails.

Almost concurrently last fall, Portneuf horsemen sent their president and state director-elect seven hundred miles to Coeur d'Alene to the BCHI annual directors' meeting to secure confirmation as a chapter of BCHI. At the same time, we cooperated with Pocatello area trail user groups to help erect a panoramic display high on the west bench on the USFS new Sterling Justice trail which connects popular City Creek and Gibson Jack trails. Portneuf River horsemen packed

30 gallons of water, 300 pounds of concrete, and support structures for construction of the display. Mountain bike and hiker groups were appropriately appreciative of the effectiveness of a pack-string to move heavy materials into roadless areas. Forest Service personnel were impressed at the number of willing hands (and hooves) that turned out to assist in the project.

Beginning a tradition of an annual dinner meeting, PRBCH members, interested horsemen and guests were treated to a delicious potluck turkey dinner in January. 2015 promises to be full of activity for the Portneuf River BCH chapter with a full slate of excursions and projects scheduled through next November. Portneuf horsemen have already been out on several low valley trails owing to unseasonably warm weather in February.

Mother Lode Unit CA Riders Spy Bald Eagle

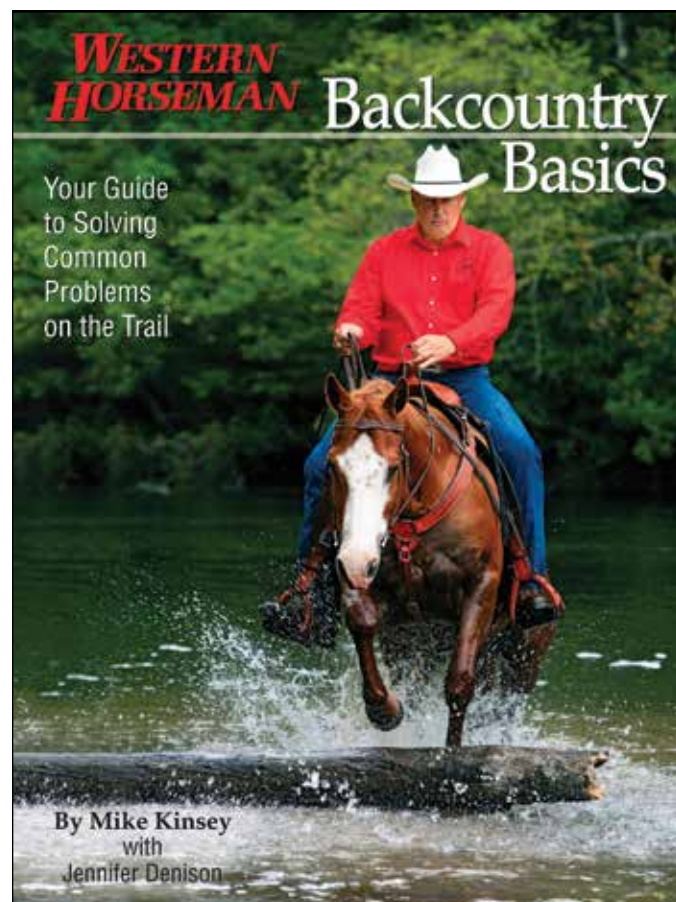
By Lucy Badenhop

The Mother Lode Unit's first campout of 2015 was chilly in the evenings, foggy in the mornings, but gorgeous during the midday for the rides. At Camp Far West near Wheatland, the riders were joined by some fishermen in boats on the lake, but didn't meet anyone on the trails. The only other inhabitants were the grazing cattle.

On Saturday, the trail boss followed the lake's east edge out and the perimeter fence on the return leg. The group met up with a bald eagle about halfway through the 10-mile ride. The leafless tress allowed a stunning view from horseback.

With the gentle terrain and wooded trails meandering along the shoreline, one participant thought it a good place to practice with her new pack animals. It was her first time taking them on the trail after all the tedious hours of practice at home. The equines turned out to be a compatible team and the rider got lots of experience handling the lead rope in non-familiar territory. More experienced packers were quick to share their tips with the novice.

There were three rigs that camped overnight and several more riders came just for the Saturday ride and stayed for the pot luck supper. Sunday midday, a few riders took a 6-mile ride on the west edge of the lake before packing up and heading home.



StartemRight.com

***Your horse is speaking ...
are you listening?***

Tune ups based on
your Horse's Behavioral Needs
Clinics & Consulting,
**55 years of Behavioral Diagnostics
& Training**

**Kinsey Horsemanship
126 Docheno Road
Belton, South Carolina 29627**

**(864) 933-6713 (EST)
info@startemright.com**

BCHA Officers, Chairs and Staff

Chairman

Jim McGarvey
2408 Owens Gin Rd
Calhoun GA 30701
706-669-1015
chairman@backcountryhorse.com

Vice Chair

Donald Saner
PO Box 515
Wilson WY 83014
307-733-1356
Sanerent@centurylink.net

Past Chairman

Mike McGlenn
1992 Harmony Rd
Bellingham WA 98226
360-739-2619
FAX 360-966-2263
mike@mikemcglenn.com

Treasurer and Expansion

Freddy Dunn
1485 W 5650 North
St. George UT 84770
435-862-6181
freddydunn@gmail.com

Acting Executive Director

Jim McGarvey

Executive Secretary

Peg Greiwe
PO Box 1367
Graham WA 98338
888-893-5161
Fax: 360-832-1564
peg@backcountryhorse.com

Advisor, Public Lands Recreation

Randy Rasmussen
37326 Soap Creek Rd
Corvallis OR 97330
541-602-0713 mobile
quietrecreation@gmail.com

Education

Pete Kriger
28797 Live Oak Canyon Rd
Redlands CA 92373
909-910-4619
pkrigerjr@yahoo.com

Education Foundation

Mylon Filkins DVM
Foundation@backcountryhorse.com

Media and Marketing

Robbin Schindele
4600 W. South Slope Road
Emmett ID 83617
media@backcountryhorse.com
208-365-1789

Public Lands

Jim Allen
PO Box 806
Custer SD 57730
publiclands@backcountryhorse.com
605-673-2173

Public Lands

Oscar Simpson
3320 12th Street NW
Albuquerque NM 87107
publiclands@backcountryhorse.com
505-345-0117

Public Liaison and Advocacy Partners

Alan T. Hill
PO Box 492260
Redding CA 96049-2260
530-221-4354
Fax 530-221-9267
athill2011@gmail.com

Volunteer Hours Chair

Larry Zaubers
11374 Highway 550
Durango CO 81303
970-759-5629
lczaub@gmail.com

Web Master

Marty Duvall and Robbin Schindele
web@backcountryhorse.com

Fear

By Helen Glidden, Heartland BCH ID

Let’s talk about a subject most of us know—fear. Most horsemen will encounter a fearful situation now and again. Many of us have certain fears from past bad experiences, from horses that did things to scare us, from accidents that resulted in injury, and other frightful events dealing with horses. After all, these mostly kind animals weigh a 1,000 pounds or so. Even a nice, friendly, cooperative 1000-pound animal can scare or hurt you, even if he isn’t meaning to do so. Horses have fear too. Often the thing that causes us fear is a horse’s fear reaction. After all, horses are prey animals—those that predators want to catch and eat, so they have a heightened sense of danger.

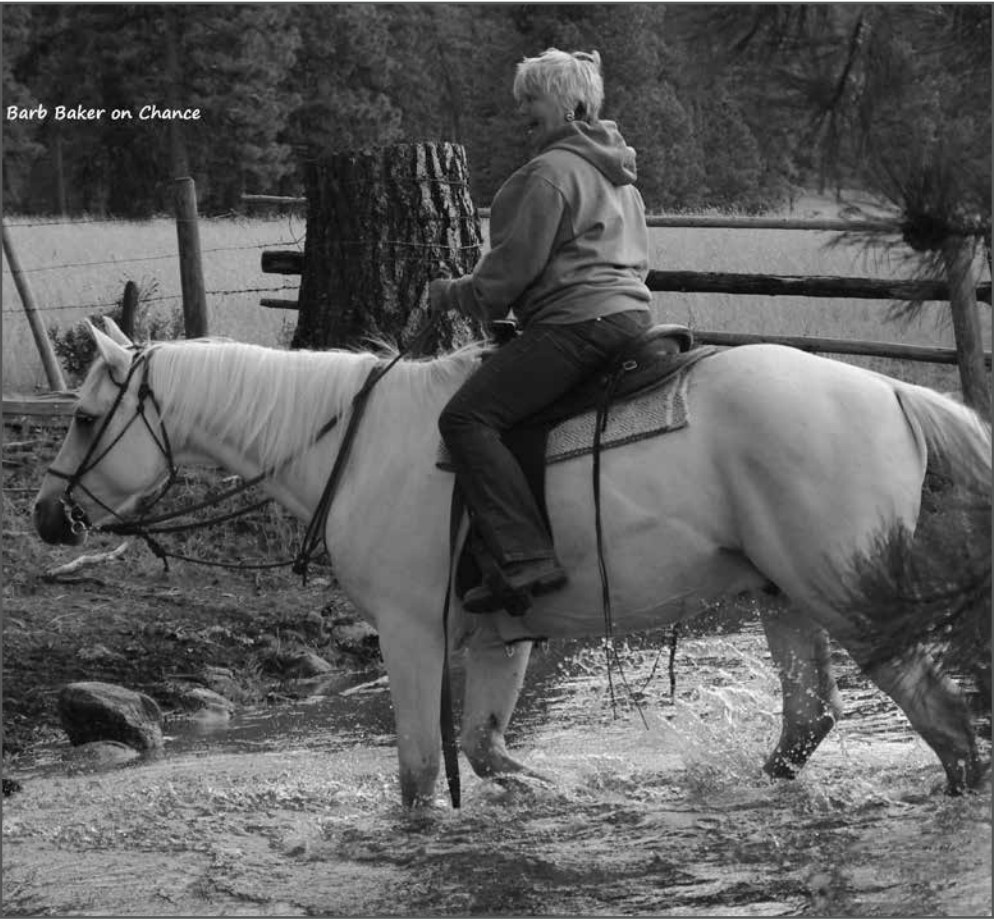
However, horses can have a great deal of courage. Think of horses that pull carts and carriages through busy city streets with lots of scary things around them. Consider a roping horse that knows being tangled in a lariat while doing his job is not a reason to panic. How about drum horses with big kettledrums strapped to their sides? We see many horses that, through training, overcome fear and stay relaxed through hell and high water.

Many times, I pretended to be brave when I was afraid. I have pretended to the point that the horse believes me to have courage. I’ve trained horses professionally and for my own personal use for 40 years. I have made many mistakes over the years, but I’ve done quite well and am good with horses. I have learned many ideas the modern ‘natural’ horse trainers espouse and find they help me resolve problems that stumped me.

I have 40 years of solid knowledge gained through personal study; hours and hours in and out of the saddle; from lessons, demonstrations, and observation; and through trial and error. Horses and clients’ horses I’ve trained have survived the trial and error without much harm. Through the years, I’ve learned how to set both the people and the horses up for success. This article explains some of what I have learned from the good and the bad experiences I’ve had. Here are some thoughts on how to have more good experiences than bad.

Fear is about the future. Perhaps you sense something bad is about to happen and you don’t know what the horse is going to do. The fear is about the unknown thing—something in the future that hasn’t happened. When on horseback, training yourself to think in the moment helps keep fear under control. While on your horse, if you feel fear raising it is easy to become paralyzed or frantic. Learning how to diffuse your own emotions helps you make a good decision to prevent trouble: pretending you’re not afraid works.

One thing that makes the pretense of courage work is the knowledge and practice you have gained about horses in many situations. Courage comes from confidence you have in an older, well-trained horse that you know can handle the situation, even if you don’t. Once I helped a rider who had fear of riding through a stream. She got on my good ole’ boy—“been there done that” kind of horse. Although she had fear as they approached the water, there was a big smile on her face as he casually



Barb Baker on Chance.

walked through. She became relaxed because he knew what he was doing even if she didn’t. If I am asking a young horse to approach water and he is being uncooperative, I can assess the problem he is having and turn to my knowledge of training ideas and methods before he does something reactive.

Nevertheless, I need to assess the situation before he starts to react. I need to be prepared before a bad thing happens. The first thing we all need to remember to do is: breathe. When you are breathing you have less tension in your mind and body. When you are breathing the horse can believe you are not afraid. If you stop breathing and tense up at the same time, the horse stops breathing and tenses up.

After remembering to keep breathing ask the horse to stop and stand. Do proper groundwork to prepare the horse for the real thing. All riding starts with the horse knowing he is to stand still for mounting. The horse needs to learn to stand while I have my foot in the stirrup, while I’m standing in the stirrup laying all over his back, while I’m swinging my leg over to settle in the saddle, and when I’m dismounting. We do nothing else until that is learned.

If the horse can’t stand still at the water crossing despite his training, we can use his movement to advantage. Try moving him in a small circle. Keep his feet moving until he settles and relaxes. A best practice is to give the horse time to assess the situation with his horse brain and comes to think it’s his idea to go ahead. You urge him forward and when he complies, you ease off. If he backs off or tries to turn, you keep him straight and thinking forward instead of backward. Once he settles, look calmly in the direction of the fear, stop, do nothing, and wait. When he sighs or licks his lips you ask him to step forward again. Every step forward is rewarded with easing off the aid, praising with your voice, or rubbing his withers.

If he is still too nervous, turn him away from the water and allow him to retreat from his fearful place and find a place where he feels comfortable standing still. It isn’t important for the horse to succeed in facing whatever he is afraid of right away. If you’re alone, does it really matter if you get your horse across the stream first try?

It may be better to retreat, go to some other task or obstacle and come back again another day. What is important is to maintain trust between the two of you. It is important that through that trust, the horse remains obedient to your cues and aids. If you become too pushy and deviate from what aids the horse knows, you may create unnecessary difficulties. Sometimes the very best thing to do is NOTHING.

If worse comes to worst, ask him to stand long enough for you to dismount. In my riding life, I have never had a horse spook out from under me or take off when I’m dismounting. My experience demonstrates the horse can have self-control. You need to transfer that same self-control at any time and for any task. Whether dealing with a young horse that hasn’t much experience or an older horse that comes across something strange to him, practice the techniques I’ve learned. We need to realize that horses, young and old alike, sometimes don’t know the mechanics of handling things. It seems to take three successes to reinforce and confirm a behavior. If possible, you want to avoid a bad experience. If the first time is a disaster, you need to be careful handling the same situation again to overcome the problems you encountered the first time. If the first time comes out okay, you’re on the road to success.

Tom Dorrance once remarked that taking a 10-minute break can do wonders for both you and your horse. You just have to find a place where you both can stop and breathe. Maybe let your horse graze near the water. Maybe you should have a snack. Eating helps both horse and rider relax. Share an apple with your horse. Sit on the log near the water while your horse unwinds.

When the horse’s emotions raise, his brain sets into fight-or-flight, freeze, or fidget mode. If your emotional temperature goes up with his, you need get your own emotions under control. First, you need to breathe. Second, pretend you know what you’re doing and imagine a good outcome for yourself and the horse—a picture in your mind’s eye of how it will go well.

So, if you see me on the trail and I’m just sitting on my horse sharing an apple, mostly doing nothing you can bet on our success. Nothing better than that!

National Report

Public Lands Report

By Randy Rasmussen, Advisor Public Lands Recreation

Write Your Member of Congress to Support “Forest Trails” Bill

BCHA was delighted when, in February, Representatives Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) and Tim Walz (D-MN) reintroduced the Forest Trails bill in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill, H.R. 845, is titled the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (in short, the “Forest Trails” bill). It is essentially the same bill introduced last July that garnered nearly 30 bipartisan sponsors before Congress sputtered to a close in late 2014.

BCHA and its partners, American Horse Council and The Wilderness Society, are driving a national response to H.R. 845. This effort has been a priority among BCHA’s public lands initiatives for the past three years. We believe the bill has a good chance of passage during the current session of Congress and are proud of the diverse coalition of trails- and recreation-related organizations that have joined in support of the bill (see sidebar).

H.R. 845 is intended to remove barriers within the U.S. Forest Service that currently prevent partners and volunteers from doing more trail maintenance on our national forests. If enacted as currently written, H.R. 845 would:

- Direct the Forest Service to develop a strategy to more effectively utilize volunteers and partners to assist in maintaining trails;
- Address the liability issue that hampers volunteer and partner trail maintenance activity in some national forests;
- Provide outfitters and guides the ability to pay permit fees in trail maintenance activities instead of dollars;
- Prompt a feasibility study of use of off-duty fire crews to augment trail maintenance; and
- Prioritize nine to 15 specific areas for trail maintenance within the national forest system.

Please call or write your member of Congress today and ask them to support H.R. 845, the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act. You can find contact information for your member of Congress on the following website: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/>

In your own words, tell your representative why you support H.R. 845, the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act. Tell them of your passion for, and commitment to, keeping national forest trails open and enjoyed by horsemen and others. Lastly, please ask them to consider co-sponsoring H.R. 845.

If you are a resident of Wyoming or Minnesota, please include in your message a heartfelt “Thank You!” to Representatives Lummis and Walz, respectively, for introducing H.R. 845 on behalf of Back Country Horsemen.

H.R. 845 and the work of BCHA and its partners continue to generate high-level dialogue between Congress, the U.S. Forest Service, and regional and national trail organizations in our search for solutions to the growing trail maintenance crisis on our national forests. Please help us continue this important momentum by contacting your member of Congress today.

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING H.R. 845 (AS OF FEBRUARY 2015)

- America Outdoors Association
- American Hiking Society
- American Horse Council
- American Motorcyclist Association
- American Quarter Horse Association
- Assoc. of Outdoor Recreation and Education
- Back Country Horsemen of America
- Continental Divide Trail Coalition
- Equine Land Conservation Resource
- International Mountain Bicycling Association
- Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
- Minnesota Horse Council
- Minnesota Trail Riders Association
- Montana Outfitters and Guides Association
- Montana Wilderness Alliance
- Montana Wildlife Federation
- National Coast Trail Association
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- National Wildlife Federation
- Professional Wilderness Outfitters Association
- Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards
- The Access Fund
- The Mountaineers
- The Wilderness Society
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Western Governors’ Association
- Winter Wildlands Alliance
- Wyoming Outdoor Council



The Back Country Store

has apparel, CDs, trailer decals, bumper stickers, and more.

Visit us at
www.bcha.org



Backcountry Horsemen of California

Leave No Trace Master Educator Stock Course

2015 Course Schedule

Date:
June 8th through 12th, 2015

Location:
Bowerman Barn, Weaverville, California,
Trinity National Forest

Description:
Stock Course, Trail Head Camp,
NO PERSONAL STOCK, NO DOGS

Price:
\$550

Contact:
Ruthie Heuer
(559) 568.1260
rmheuer@gmail.com



Deckers, Sawbucks, adjustable pack saddles, panniers, alforjas bags, saddle accessories, and much more!

Specializing in Equipment for the
THE BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMAN
Call Toll Free +1 800-435-9744
visit: horseandmulegear.com

Tales of the Trails

Old Spanish Trail Ride

By Richard Waller



TnT Railbed, Amargosa Gorge

We were clipping and sawing and thrashing our way through the dense muddy mesquite thickets of the Amargosa River gorge on a hot windless desert day, wondering if we would make it through. What brought us to this day and place?

Several weeks before, we had assembled our team at Hesperia Lake Horse Camp in California: Jim Clark of Ojai, Otis Calef of Santa Barbara, Kathleen Phelps and myself from Arroyo Grande, and our husband-and-wife film team Ned Clark and Benedicte Schoyen. We also had our invaluable shuttle driver and general aide de camp Rod Thompson of Ojai.

Early one morning we loaded our animals into Jim's six-horse stock trailer and drove I15 south to Glen Helen Regional Park. This marked the start of our Old Spanish Trail (OST) ride. We considered starting at the original terminus of the trail at Pueblo De Los Angeles in downtown Los Angeles; however, the prospect of riding 50 miles of Los Angeles area streets and roads dissuaded us.

We offloaded Jim's two mules Echo and Hallelujah, Otis's mule Pretty Boy Floyd, my mustang Robinson Jeffers, and Kathleen's Arab Izzy. We mounted up and rode to the Cajon River wash with Jim ponying one of his two mules. Like me, I'm sure everyone wondered what the next month and 600 miles would bring.

We rode the wash, then up onto old Route 66, eventually across several sets of railroad tracks to the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). Then we rode east along the PCT to the tunnel under I-15 which comes out at the base of Crowder Canyon. The PCT climbs through this canyon which was also used as part of the OST by the traders from Santa Fe to Los Angeles. The route was historically accurate for our ride. We ordered food in the "ride through" at the McDonald's next to the PCT. That confused the staff, so we tied up and went inside. Back on the trail we ascended the canyon into a very strange badlands country that tops out on a ridge above Summit Valley which put us at the top of the watershed of the Mojave River.

A little over a week later we were at the sink at the end of the Mojave River

near Baker, CA riding through Zzyzx, (yes, that is the spelling!). We may have been the first horsemen to ride the length of the river in over 150 years. There were some sections of private land, military land, and riparian jungle we didn't ride. However, we rode nearly the entire length of the river. From Baker, the route took us north through vast desolate Silurian Valley for several days. My horse Jeffers suffered a stone bruise in an extremely rocky area of the valley. I was forced to ride Echo the mule most of the remainder of the trip.

Echo is a great mule. I could have read a book, or slept, he had no surprises. We made it to the Amargosa River gorge. In rock climber's terms, this was the crux pitch of the route. The first part of the gorge is a lovely ride in a desert canyon. Then came the jungle, the mesquite, and cottonwood jungle with deep bogs on a very hot day. This was the place that we clipped and sawed our way through. We worked the mules and the horses through our cuts and across the bogs, eventually coming up onto a very nice trail. It was the roadbed of the old Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad which once ran through the canyon and we were ever so happy to see it!

We had a few miles of easy riding for couple of miles below the China Garden Date Ranch and their very welcome ice cold date shakes. Our pickup trailer and film crew were not where they were supposed to meet us. They had driven in several hours before, but were told by an "experienced" desert hiker that there was no way through the gorge, even for a hiker. They were told they would have to turn back. Our crew returned to our Dumont Dunes camp expecting us to have to come back. Borrowing the phone from the ranch as there was no cell service in the canyon, Jim called his cousin Rod and we were back on track. Rod returned, we loaded our muddy animals, and drove to Resting Spring Ranch a lovely oasis in the desert.

The spring here was used by the traders on the Old Spanish Trail. We spent a rest day, drove to Tecopa, and gratefully soaked in the Inyo County free hot springs. Ranch Manager Allen Hardt was a wealth of information



L to R Otis Calef-Richard Waller-Jim Clark-at Stump Spring

about the trail. When we rode out, he guided us via his ATV through the sandy hills east of the ranch to an overlook where he pointed out the trail and his cairns. He had built rock cairns over the years, which were works of art, marking the alignment of the OST that he had carefully scouted out. Thanks to him we had a pleasant ride through the desert to Emigrant Pass. One wonders just how many Emigrant Passes there are in the West.

The trace of the old westbound mule caravan track is obvious. We were able to follow it and ride up right up the 166+-years-old tread to the summit of the pass then down the far side. Again, perhaps we were the first riders in all those years to use this track. We set camp out in the broad desert valley that night with a brilliant carpet of stars above us. The next morning we continued on across the vast emptiness. Kathleen picked up cell service and learned from her husband back home that their dog was very ill. She decided to return home to help care for it.

Jim, Otis, Rod, and myself continued reaching Las Vegas and beyond following the trail. We rode the 50-mile waterless journey between Las Vegas and the Muddy River. We rode down California Wash for two days—from its western rim on down to the Muddy River. We rode across the flat tableland of Mormon Mesa east of the Muddy then a precipitous drop on a steep trail into Halfway Wash running to the Virgin River, up the river to Mesquite, AZ. That's where Rod left us and Eddie Gibson (another friend of Jim's) joined us for the rest of the trip. We headed north over Utah Hill, leaving the Mojave Desert at Utah hill in Utah. The Mojave Desert is delineated by Joshua trees. We saw our first Joshua trees in Summit Valley on our first day over 300 miles away. Here we saw our last Joshua trees about where the first Mormon pioneers saw their first. The trees were named after the prophet Joshua because of the tree's upraised branches which reminded them of the prophet's arms.

BCHA Treasurer Freddy Dunn made arrangements with Kent and Trudy Thurgood of the BCH of Utah to stay at their ranch in Central. Kent

and Trudy were very hospitable and they made it a wonderful experience. They told us great stories of the area and its history. The Thurgoods allowed us to stay in their bunkhouse during the only rainy/snowy weather we encountered on our ride. We are very grateful to them. One evening Kent barbecued elk burgers for us, from an elk he had recently taken. On another evening we took them to a small steakhouse in the enchanting mountain hamlet of Pine Valley. Greatest of all, Kent arranged with private landowners for us to ride Magotsu Canyon on the OST. We were lucky enough to ride behind locked gates on old ranches dating from the early settlement days of the 1850's. We were a bit unlucky with the weather. It was a bitter day, riding into the teeth of a icy north wind. This was a far cry from our hot sweltering rides across the Mojave Desert.

After saying our goodbyes to the Thurgoods, we traversed Mountain Meadows which is about 5 miles long and a mile wide with good water. It was used by the traders to recover their stock after the long dry desert stretches both east and west. We then rode Holt Canyon, down to the Escalante Desert (where, interestingly, the local brand inspector examined our papers). What made it interesting is that his name is Klayton Holt—a direct descendant of the family the canyon was named for over 150 years ago. Our final segment of trail was across the flat expanse of the Escalante Desert. Three days of riding ended at Parowan Gap with its world class petroglyphs. We camped our final night at Parowan Rodeo Grounds, in Parowan, UT. Parowan will be our first night's camp on the second leg of the OST from Parowan to Santa Fe, NM next August 9.

You can view the video trailer for our film at:

<http://bit.ly/1CLYkig>

The Catch Pen

Trip to Lion Peak

Story & Photos by Michael Lewis, Redshank Riders Unit President
Submitted by Rhonda Strickland RSR Unit Newsletter Editor

It started out as an ordinary day. It was a bit chilly but good riding weather. The report came in that there were a number of trees blocking the PCT in the Lion Peak area; a few small trees south and a large one right on the face. The decision was made that we would take the Cedar Spring Trail from the north and a small crew would come in from Penrod Canyon from the south and meet somewhere in the middle.

We arrived at trailhead, loaded up and started up the trail. As we ascended it appeared we were riding into a fog blowing in from the north. Danny's words to me were, "It'll burn off when the sun gets higher." The further we rode the more I realized this would not be the case. We hit the PCT and headed south, pushing through wet brush and picking our way down the trail through the fog.

Then it appeared out of nowhere, our hazard tree, passable by hikers but not riders. Already soaking wet, we dismounted, pulled off our gear, and kicked the mules out into a small meadow just off the trail. After sizing it up, we went to work clearing the debris from around the tree, sawing off the branches, and then finally removing the tree itself. Cutting it into manageable pieces, the trail was cleared in no time.

About then some of the crew coming from south showed up. They had cleared the other trees. Then, out of

the fog, three hikers came down the trail. They had come in Cedar Spring Trail and were headed to Hwy 74. Not the best day for a hike but they were dressed for it. Here is where it gets interesting. As we were finishing up loading the gear a couple of gals, dressed in shorts and light tops, come out of the fog hiking south. Danny and I just looked at each other and stared. Here we are, dressed in winter coats, long handles, gloves, scarves, with our hats pulled down to our ears and they are dressed for a sunny hike in the hills. Come to find out, they were down from Canada to do some winter hiking where the weather was warm. Go figure.

Finally, they headed south and we got ready to go north. That's when I realized my riding mule had disappeared. Knowing she did not go back the way we came, I started to take the trail South. Walking at first I didn't see or hear her, I sped up to a trot and finally caught a glimpse through the trees. Then it was an all-out run to catch her. Thankful for a long lead rope, I caught her and headed back. I guess she wanted off that ridge more than we did and was following whoever was moving. The trip down was cold, wet and windy with some snow flurries thrown in, but uneventful. Hats pulled down and tipped towards the wind we finally got off the ridge, down Cedar Spring Trail, and back to the trailers.



All and all I would call this a good trip. We accomplished what we started out to do and came back with a story to tell. Remember, "The worst day riding is better than the best day working."



TWO AS ONE

PROUD TO HOST CCI 3* EVENT IN 2015

THE EVENT AT REBECCA FARM

A WORLD CLASS EQUESTRIAN TRIATHLON



\$5 parking donation
supports our campaign
to fight breast cancer

DRESSAGE • CROSS COUNTRY • SHOW JUMPING • JULY 23-26 • 2015
FREE ADMISSION • 4-DAY TRADE FAIR • JULY 22: YOUNG & FUTURE EVENT HORSE SERIES
PRESENTED BY MONTANA EQUESTRIAN EVENTS, INC.



1010 W. Springcreek Rd.
Kalispell, Montana
www.rebeccafarm.org

2014 CIC 3* CHAMPION TEAM
MATTHEW BROWN & SUPERSOCKS BCF