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### **BCHA Recognized as Leading Equestrian Group at Federal Conference**

On April 16, 2010, Back Country Horsemen of America was honored to be one of approximately 200 user groups invited to attend the White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors. The goal of this conference was to bring together leaders from across the country that are working to protect their outdoor spaces. Participants included working ranchers and farmers, sportsmen and women, state, tribal, and local government leaders, conservationists, business and others who view the outdoors as integral to their communities.

“Being one of the invitees to this conference represented the high note of 37 years of being the quiet voice of reason,” reported Terry Morrison, BCHA Chair, during annual meeting of BCHA's national directors the following week. “Interior Secretary Salazar stated that there could have been thousands more groups invited, but that those who were represented the organizations that would not only take back the plans from the meeting, but would help to implement them.”

BCHA's current implementation plans call for increasing the public's awareness of history and role that packers and horseback riders played in the development of this country, as well as the work they continue to provide in the protection of wilderness areas.

Developing partnerships with community groups, land managers, other nonprofits and user groups remains a priority with BCHA, but following the brainstorming sessions at the White House Conference, Morrison anticipates BCHA will move forward on more fronts than ever. As a beginning to these plans, greater emphasis on development of community based and website youth programs is moving forward rapidly.

President Obama stated during his speech to the conference, “that few pursuits are more satisfying to the spirit than discovering the greatness of America's great outdoors.” At the conference, the President signed A 21st Century Strategy for America's Great Outdoors, the text of which can be read on BCHA's website, [www.backcountryhorse.com](http://www.backcountryhorse.com). BCHA encourages everyone to check the website for the Department of the Interior, [www.doi.gov/America'sGreatOutdoors](http://www.doi.gov/America'sGreatOutdoors), to learn how you can become involved.

BCHA is a non-profit corporation made up of state organizations, affiliates, and at large members. Their efforts have brought about positive changes in regards to the use of horses and stock in the wilderness and public lands. If you want to know more about Back Country Horsemen of America or become a member, visit their website: [www.backcountryhorse.com](http://www.backcountryhorse.com), or call 888-893-5161.