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**Back Country Horsemen of America Keeps You Informed  
by Sarah Wynne Jackson**

Our right to ride horses on public lands is threatened from many different directions and for many different reasons. Back Country Horsemen of America is the leading organization in our fight to preserve that right partly because they try to know about changes before they take place.

No, they aren't psychic. These folks put in countless hours attending public land planning meetings, talking with public land managers, and keeping tabs on what's happening "on the ground" at various public properties. They take that information and figure out how it will affect our freedom to ride horses on all of America's public lands, from wilderness back country to suburban front country and everything in between.

How can you stay informed about changes on the verge of taking place that might prevent you from enjoying your favorite trail by horseback tomorrow?

On the Web

Start with Back Country Horsemen of America's website, [www.backcountryhorse.com](http://www.backcountryhorse.com), your one-stop spot for all things "back country." Right on the Home Page, the left hand column is dedicated to the latest news, such as the BCHA National Board Meeting, updates on the Trail Classification Assistance Program, and memorandums of understanding between BCHA and other organizations.

Just below the banner photo at the top of the page, the News Feed tab gives you direct access to press releases and other news from the American Horse Council, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service. Keeping up with the goings-on of these organizations is key; Back Country Horsemen of America finds that success often lies in keeping our ear to the ground and taking action as changes begin to take place rather than attempting to reverse them after they've occurred.

Under the Resources & Info tab at [www.backcountryhorse.com](http://www.backcountryhorse.com), the National Hot Issues and State & Local Hot Issues pages provide links to details and statements about problems we all should be concerned about. The Calendar page lists many opportunities across the nation to join in our fight to keep horses on America's trails.

## Publications

Also under the Resources & Info tab at [www.backcountryhorse.com](http://www.backcountryhorse.com), the Newsletters page links to each issue of BCHA's quarterly publication. Every issue has over 20 pages of the latest information and happenings from the movers and shakers who are Back Country Horsemen of America.

BCHA Chairman Mike McGlenn and Executive Secretary Peg Greiwe write regularly about topics that affect you. Articles also cover the projects and conflicts currently being tackled by the National Board of Directors and the BCHA committee chairs (Education, Public Liaison, Wilderness, and Media Communications). BCHA State Organizations share stories and reports about their local projects and right to ride battles.

On the Press Releases page, links lead to statements Back Country Horsemen of America has submitted for publication in magazines and newspapers about their activities, vision, and methods. In addition to the newsletter, these are an excellent way to get to know BCHA and keep up with their many projects and activities.

They're on Facebook, too!

The premiere organization in protecting our freedom to enjoy our beautiful lands by horseback is also on Facebook. Enter "Back Country Horsemen of America" in the search field at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), and you'll find them.

You'll see alerts on situations that need immediate action from all of us. View posts and photos of BCH folks across the country saving trails for horse use. You'll also discover announcements for Leave No Trace clinics, work parties, and packing workshops. In addition you can use their Facebook page to network with other equestrians to find out how they're dealing with the right to ride issues they're facing in their area.

Join the Movement

The more we learn about the situations that threaten our ability to enjoy America's wild lands by horseback, the more we realize how vital it is that we all get involved. What better way to participate than by becoming a Back Country Horsemen of America member?

For only \$45 a year, you can join forces with the most influential group protecting America's equestrian heritage on our public lands. You'll also receive BCHA's quarterly newsletter and have a voice in their efforts to preserve pack and saddle stock use in America's back country. Take part in your local Back Country Horsemen group's meetings and activities, and forge new friendships, gain knowledge, and preserve horse use on public lands for generations to come.

### Create Your Own BCH Group

If you're one of many folks in your area who share the vision of Back Country Horsemen of America and don't have a BCH unit in your state, you'll all benefit the most by forming a BCH unit. Becoming a BCH state or affiliate organization gives your group the right to use the name "Back Country Horsemen," pursue the goals and objectives of BCHA, and receive the support and guidance of the knowledgeable folks at Back Country Horsemen of America.

Your BCH group will have direct access to the advice and experience of BCHA's Public Lands Committee to assist you in using ground breaking methods to create mutually beneficial working relationships with the land managers in your state. The Education Committee compiles information you can use to teach equestrians in your area the newest ways to ride responsibly.

Establishing your own Back Country Horsemen group also gives you camaraderie with over 14,000 people across the nation who share your goals. The potential for the exchange and development of new ideas, collaboration to achieve a common objective, and the expansion of your own skill and knowledge is outstanding.

### About Back Country Horsemen of America

In their quest to protect our right to ride horses on public lands, BCHA also seeks to keep equestrians from coast to coast up-to-date on the specific challenges threatening that right. They spend time developing innovative solutions, such as an original approach to sharing trails with other user groups and inventive techniques for assisting with the

maintenance of public lands lacking funding. They want to keep you informed so you can prevent "No Horses" signs at your favorite trails.

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 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), call 888-893-5161, or write PO Box 1367, Graham, WA 98338-1367. The future of horse use on public lands is in our hands!

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