

BCH Education Foundation spurs youth projects across the country



Back Country Horsemen of Montana Up to the Challenge

By Kathy Hundley, Co-Chairman BCHMT Youth Education

Education has always been a part of the foundation of the BCH mission and purpose. A majority of BCH chapters already provide some sort of education at the local level, such as packing clinics for the public, 4-H instruction, booths at community expos, guest speakers at their local schools, and defensive horsemanship clinics.

At the 2013 Flathead BCH 40th Anniversary convention, a seed was planted in Montana. Former Chief of the Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Division of the National Park Service, Rick Potts, was the keynote speaker at the Saturday night banquet. I remember it well, and to this day, I still crack a smile when I think of what Rick said to his audience. Rick, who was also a Missoula BCH member, stood at the podium and glanced around the room. He was talking about the importance of perpetuating the cultural tradition of

stock use in the back country when he casually said, “And folks, I hate to tell you, if you were my pack string, I think it’s time I start breaking some colts!”

The room exploded with laughter, but the reality of the situation was taken to heart. As in many organizations, getting youth involved is at an all-time high. Rick challenged us by dangling a set monetary match if we would create a BCH youth education program. The wheels began to turn, and soon a Youth Challenge committee was formed.

The challenge that the BCHMT was taking on was going to use the skills of members from all 17 chapters around the state of Montana. A research committee looked at potential curricula for all age groups ranging from kindergarten to college. Many BCH members even went so far as to joke about the term “youth” should include all those under 50!

While the Youth Education program for BCHMT is still being molded and perfected, the summer of 2016 turned into quite a productive season. The BCH of Montana were honored and excited to receive a BCHA Education Grant in May 2016.

One of the goals for BCHMT was to be a part of the many youth camps held across the state. Volunteers stepped up and introduced kids to BCH and stock packing at (1) Glacier Institute “Learning Gone Wild” in Kalispell, (2) Lubrecht Forest “Youth Natural Resources Youth Camp” in Greenough, (3) “River of No Return” Youth Camp at Magruder Ranger Station in Idaho, (4) Boone & Crockett “Outdoor Adventure Camp” at Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch in Dupuyer, and (5) Jack Creek Preserve Summer Youth Camp between Ennis and Big Sky.

By utilizing the BCHA grant money, the BCH of Montana was able to



help sponsor and partner in the week-long Magruder Youth Camp. Other conservation organizations involved included the Montana Bowhunters Association, Montana Trappers Association, Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, Boone and Crockett Club, and Safari Club International. The Bitterroot National Forest also played a key role as instructors of Wilderness Survival and Trail Projects.

The camp was held at the historical Magruder Ranger Station in Idaho which sits between the 1.3 million-acre Selway Bitterroot Wilderness and the 2.3 million-acre Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. The concept

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State Organizations: BCH of Alabama 1404 Arkadelphia Road Warrior, AL 35180 (205) 936-9043 chad.bowman@hatchmott.com backcountryhorsemenal.com	Show-Me Missouri BCH 519 Good Hope Road Marshfield, MO 65706 (417) 425-9969 www.showmebch.org
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BCH of Georgia PO Box 1471 Blue Ridge GA 30513 706-374-7075 carlosmartel@bellsouth.net	Black Hills BCH of South Dakota 20112 Buckin Horse Lane Whitewood SD 57793 (605) 645-2296 bhbchsd@gmail.com www.bhbchsd @blogspot.com
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BCH of Kansas 1409 Lincoln Road Concordia KS 66901 785-243-2494 steve.lindsey@lia_ks.com	BCH of Washington 110 W 6th Ave PMB 393 Ellensburg WA 98926 (509) 276-6226 www.bchw.org
Kentucky BCH 7900 Wades Mill Road Mt. Sterling KY 40353 (859) 744-0397 ehconyers7900@gmail.com www.kybch.com	BCH of Wyoming 2446 Spriggs Dr Lander WY 82520 bighorn@vcn.com www.wyobch.org
BCH Pigeon River and Beyond, MI, Inc. 6631 E Ashard Road Clare MI 48617 (517) 296-4475 marietad@frontiernet.net	Affiliates: BCH of Alaska PO Box 3148 Palmer AK 99645 (907) 360-0480 kaylene.johnson@gmail.com
	Saratoga BCH PO Box 461 Cambridge NY 12816 859-230-0980

[continued from front page]

of partnering with other conservation groups turned out to be a successful endeavor which gave the 20 campers a valuable amount of back country skills and information. Campers were boys and girls 11 to 15 years old. A wide array of topics was presented—the history and purpose of BCH, Leave No Trace, containment of stock in the back country, choosing trail and pack stock, stock safety and grooming, examples of riding and decker pack saddles, saddle fitting, carging using manties, packing with panniers, quick release knots, basket and barrel hitches and pigtail-ing stock. One of the highlights for the campers was a campfire discussion about Wilderness, led by legendary Bob Marshall packer Smoke Elser of Missoula BCH and Dale Burk of Ston-eydale Press. All 20 campers received an autographed copy of Smoke’s book *Packin’ In on Mules and Horses*.

Around the evening campfire, BCHMT treated the campers to three different Dutch oven desserts includ-ing peach cobbler, blueberry cob- bler and cherry/chocolate chip cookie dough surprise! Another camp is being planned for next year with research be- ing done on a pack trip for the campers into the Frank Church Wilderness.

Photos: Magruder campers learn to manty. Retired FS mule and camper at Magruder. Magruder student leads the mules. All the campers received a copy of Smoke Elser’s book entitled *Packing In on Horses and Mules*.



Training the Next Generation of Wilderness Packers

By Margosia Jadowski, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation

When a crew of volunteers head into the backcountry of Montana’s 1.5-million-acre Bob Marshall Wilder-ness Complex for six days of trail and invasive weeds management work they don’t exactly travel light. With food for ten people, bear resistant food boxes, the camp kitchen, cross cut saws, pu- laskis, shovels, loppers, and tents, the load is more than volunteers – ranging in ages 12 to 75 – could reasonably be asked to carry. Luckily, pack support has made this kind of volun- teer wilderness stewardship possible for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foun- dation and dozens of other nonprofits across the country. We are fortunate to have over a dozen volunteer packers – some of whom are outfitters and many of whom are Backcountry Horsemen members – who give their time to pack volunteer crews in and out of the wil- derness. We also hope that this partner- ship provides opportunities for pack- ers to get out more, on longer trips, or just to see new trail. One such packer, Keith Alltucker of Choteau, MT says “packing into The Bob gives a job to my longears; without a job they are just very large, dirty pets.”

But it is also no secret that by and large the packing community is aging, and as packers retire there are very few young folks coming up to take their place. Packing can require a large in- vestment up front—one to which many young folks aren’t able to commit. It also requires a tremendous body of knowledge and skills that have been passed down through the generations,

but that isn’t always readily accessi- ble to aspiring young packers. It was with this challenge, along with the fact that our backcountry stewardship work wouldn’t be possible without packers, that we began working with the local packers to design a Packer Apprentice Program.

As one of the first such programs in the nation we’re hoping to provide a structure for folks interested in learn- ing the ropes. After attending a pack- ing clinic, this year taught by Smoke Elser, and complet- ing six trips with designated trainers throughout the sum- mer, the apprentices were checked off on a set of skills and competencies, even- tually receiving a certificate. Through a grant from BCHA and a generous gift from BCH Montana, in the inaugural year we had two appren- tices, and we hope to grow the program in the future.

The packing community has done so much to support the Bob Marshall Wilderness Founda-

tion through our 20 years working in The Bob, and we’re thrilled to have to opportunity to help give back to the packing community through this pro- gram.

Photo courtesy of Seeley-Swan Pathfinder.



BCH of Kansas Puts Up Trail Courtesy Signs

By Cheryl Thomas, Regional Director

BCH Kansas was pleased to be the recipient of a BCH Education Foundation Grant. The grant was used to purchase a supply of trail courtesy signs that could be shared at trail heads on public lands throughout Kansas. Fifty signs were purchased, and we are now in the process of distributing and posting them.

BCH Kansas is in its third year as a chapter. We continue to work to make public land managers aware of our existence and our ability to assist in maintenance and management of public trails. The trail signs can serve a dual purpose of increasing awareness of BCH-Kansas and promoting trail courtesy and educating different user groups on accepted practices of trail sharing. Along with posting the trail signs, BCH-Kansas is scheduling work days at several of our public parks that offer equestrian and multi-use trails.

Public trails in Kansas exist on county, city, state, and federal Corps of Engineers properties and on converted rail beds (managed by a conservancy). So far, the decision to approve posting of these signs seems to depend on the local park manager. We will continue to distribute and post these trail signs throughout the state, and look forward to receiving feedback from trail users.

BCH Kansas is very appreciative of the opportunity to increase awareness of our chapter through this BCH Education Foundation Grant.



Mid Valley Unit BCH California Youth Horse Camp

By Karen Lopes

The Mid Valley Unit held its 4th Annual Youth Horse Camp June 24-26, 2016. Ten participants ranging in age from “nearly” 9 up to 14 years old attended this year’s camp, with four first-timers. We used the Kerrick Horse Camp, as it is close to the Aspen Meadows Pack Station who outfits our participants with safe and reliable stock. Kennick is located in the Stanislaus National Forest just north of Yosemite National Park in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California.

There were two significant changes to this year’s camp. First, 9-17 used to be the age range, but this year the committee decided to go with a narrower gap of 9-14 years. Dennis Serpa will be inviting our older teenage members on a work project later this summer. Second, the Mid Valley Unit board decided “MV Youth Members will not be charged fees for MV or BCHC events that include stock, packing, and/or education.” So this year’s (and years to come) three-day horse camp was absolutely free to Mid Valley Youth Members!

Riding stock from Aspen Meadows Pack Station are provided at a reduced rate, thanks to the continued support of Seth and Doug. Our youth campers spend between 8-10 hours in the saddle over a two-day span and the stock charge is just \$100 per participant. The wranglers who lead us out on the trail are especially observant of our kids and go the extra mile to make sure each of our participants is safe and has an enjoyable ride. The first day we take a two-hour ride and see wonderful views of Bell Meadows. On the second day, we rode to Camp Lake, which sits just inside the Emigrant Wilderness with views of peaks in Yosemite.

This year, BCHC Mid Valley received a \$1000 grant from the BCHA Education Fund, covering the stock charge precisely! The BCHA Education fund provides grants for chapters and units to complete activities and events that align with BCHA’s objectives, such as “To promote education programs that benefit the horse and other stock users.” A BCHC Mid Valley Unit Youth Horse Camp that involves trail riding, safety, packing, wilderness

history, and Leave No Trace all in one weekend; well that is right up their alley!

In addition to being supported this year by a grant from BCHA, Mid Valley Unit member Terri Arrington makes generous yearly donations to support our Mid Valley Youth Horse Camp, along with other MV Youth activities. Other expenses, such as tee shirts, food, and educational materials for the camp are covered by Terri’s contributions. Terri has been one of our most passionate supporters of all things youth-related, especially when it combines pack stock and wilderness experiences as well.

We made a few changes to our program this year to ensure that our participants had more hands-on practice with packing. In small groups of three and four, participants spent about 25 minutes at three different stations. First, they learned how to balance boxes with various supplies and equipment one might take on a pack trip. Next, they spent time just practicing tying the box hitch on our iron mule, “Sparky.” We even had a nice, wide step for those younger (shorter) kids. Finally, they got to practice loading a live mule, throwing the manty, and tying on the load at the final station. By the time they were finished, even our beginners seemed to have a good grasp on the box hitch! Our older participants felt like they were well on their way to their first pack trip, or maybe even competing at next year’s annual rendezvous!

Throughout the three-day camp, several committee members presented the seven principles of Leave No Trace. The kids learned about wilderness ethics, along with various reasons why everyone should practice the LNT principles. Whether it is to protect the wilderness character and its natural resources, to have a safer outing, to be prepared for wild weather, or to just increase your odds of having a completely amazing trip, there are many reasons why we should all be practicing LNT!

Camp cook Vicki Whisler, along with her co-chef Cathy Dollarhide, made sure we were always very well fed. From having coffee and hot chocolate ready at 6 a.m., to s’mores and

ice cream at 9 p.m., that kitchen was always busy! No one, I mean NOBODY, could have ever even thought they were hungry during our three-day camp! If we weren’t enjoying one of the three well rounded meals of the day, there was trail mix, fresh fruit, and drinks available at all times.

On the last day, our Stanislaus National Forest Wilderness Manager, Joel Silverman, stopped by with Anya, the Forest Service intern sponsored by Mid Valley Unit. She spoke about her duties as an intern, and then Joel talked to our kids about Wilderness, and how he works to protect it for future generations. Afterwards, as always, the participants head on up to Aspen Meadows Pack Station, and spend a good hour or more raking hay, manure, and picking up trash. Teaching the next generation about trails, wilderness, LNT, stewardship, as well as volunteerism...that is what BCHC and BCHA is all about! The camp ended with a short little ceremony. Each participant was called up and recognized, received a tee shirt, a certificate, and a handshake and/or hug from all of the committee members while parents cheered them on. Afterwards, everyone was treated to a wonderful lunch and then they all headed home.

Thank you to all of the Youth Horse Camp participants that made this such a great year! Nathan, Justin, Erika, Anna, Riley, Angie, Haley, Kaci, Makayla, and Anya. A HUGE thank you goes out to our committee members: Dennis Serpa, Dave Moser, Valerie Perry, Doug & Cathy Dollarhide, Sally Moore (camp nurse), Vicki Whisler (camp cook), John Marshall, and Karen Lopes.



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.

Coming soon...

2016 FREE-FEE Days on Federal Public Lands

Oct 9:	First Sunday of National Wildlife Refuge Week - USFWS
Nov 11:	Veterans Day - BLM, NPS, USFS, USFWS (11th-13th)

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Teaching 4-H Youth to Pack

By Rick A. Mathies, NorthWest Montana Back Country Horsemen

The NorthWest Montana BCH was chartered as a chapter of the Montana BCH in May of 2015. We organized and started this chapter in the Flathead Valley of Montana with the distinct vision in part to expose the wonders of our wilderness and wild places to the generations through fun, inspiring, and thought provoking programs and partnerships.

In November of 2015 we set forth to organize a Youth Program to perpetuate enjoyable common sense use of horses in the back country. We felt strongly the only way to continue what BCH does is to establish an emotional bond to the back country with younger generations. Without this connection, it is impossible to get them interested in protecting what BCH has fought for over four decades. We also believe teaching 4-H youth to pack not only reaches the kids involved, but also reaches a second generation – their parents. Thus, we reach two different age groups simultaneously.

With those guiding principles, I took on the task of organizing and planning a 4-H Packing class through the Flathead 4-H Extension. We gathered valuable input from the Gallatin BCH current President John Mutter and 4-H Packing Chairman, Greg Benjamin. Both have been involved in a 4-H Packing class for several years. Without their valued input we could have not achieved the success we did.

Our first objective was to enlist volunteer help for our newly formed chapter. We immediately had 13 volunteers who signed up to help, which as many of you know is no small accomplishment. Because we're a new chapter, everyone was excited to get this going. The 13 volunteers represented 15% of our membership at the time, a pretty amazing percentage for a newly formed chapter.

After several meetings to organize and set up a curriculum, a schedule and outline of what we wanted to teach, we established how we were going to do it and how much it was going to cost. As a new chapter which was virtually broke, the latter was the biggest concern. I knew that BCHA had an Educational Grant available, but didn't know if there was any money available currently or if we had proper timing to get our request into the mix. I felt it wouldn't hurt to try, so on November 20th I drafted a letter to BCHA and formally requested a grant for our program.

We set up the following schedule and packing outline:
Clinic I- Saturday January 23, 2016
Introduction and packing overview
ClinicII–SaturdayFebruary20,2016
Loading and Packing “Hands-on” practice with “Barrel Horses”
Clinic III– Saturday March 12, 2016
Horse Training & Evaluations, Packing Training with your horse, How to get your horse ready for the trail, Packing Training.
Clinic IV – Saturday April 23, 2016
Packing training, saddle fitting, working with your horse
Making loads, tying loads on your stock and Ponying pack stock
Clinic V – Saturday May 21, 2016
Evaluations and grading of each 4-H Youth on Packing learned
Overnight Camp Out – June 17 &

18, 2016 Swisher Lake Trailhead
On January 4, 2016 we received a check from BCH Educational Foundation of America for \$1000.00. This grant was made possible because Terri Arrington donated in memory of her husband. Graciously Mr. Mylon Filkins, chair of the BCH Educational Foundation called in December to discuss our request and said they would be sending a check as soon as they could get it signed.

With the first Clinic in January we had about 20 kids sign up with the Flathead 4-H Extension, and on the meeting that first Saturday we had 15 kids actually show up, each with at least one parent and some with both parents. The kids' ages ranged from 9 to 17, some of whom attended our Packing Demonstrations at the 4-H Horse Camp in previous years.

I cannot say enough about how fast these kids picked up packing. They all listened intently, asked questions and even caught us leaving out important information during training regarding horse care. You see every one of these kids already had horses, some had previous trail experience, but most of them had pasture and arena experience. Although they were skilled in caring for their horses and many had enough experience to pass Defensive Horse Safety.

The information that we taught to the 4-H Packing Class consisted of Packing, Leave No Trace, Defensive Horse Safety and How to Get Your Horse Ready for the Trail. The latter we think is equally important as many of the kids' stock are not trail seasoned. As many of us know, to go into the back country without getting your stock ready is disaster waiting to happen.

In the end, we had 13 students complete the course, 11 of them to Level 3, 1 to Level 1 and 1 to Level 2. It was just amazing how they were able to go so far so quickly. When asked if any of them wanted to do the overnight everyone, including their parents were very excited.

We decided that the first attempt at an overnight horse camping trip should be at a trailhead, so we picked Swisher Lake Trailhead in the Kootenai National Forest right next to Lake Koocanusa just south of the Canadian Border. This gave us an opportunity to help them figure out how to care for their horses while camping, how to make sure they were watered, highlined correctly and keeping an eye on them while not riding. Everyone knows if there is trouble lurking your horse will find it given the chance. Seven of the students participated in the overnight outing, others had scheduling conflicts, but everyone had a great time, and the food donated by one of our families, the Massey's, was enjoyed by all.

Our volunteers thoroughly enjoyed participating in this important project and I could not have done it without them. Everyone found it a very rewarding experience and many, if not all, are willing to come back next year. All in all our volunteers donated 480 hours, 2866 personal vehicle miles, 1032 stock hauling miles, and we used 14 stock for 28 stock days. No small undertaking. We also accomplished several firsts for the Flathead 4-H Extension, including Packing being included in the 2016 Northwest Montana Fair.


I would like to recognize all of the volunteers from our chapter who made this program a huge success, they are as follows: Chuck Allen, Andy Breland, Erica Gerber, Wendy Monfort, John Peine, Mike Raggetti, Kathy Shopa, Mike Shopa, Dan Saari, Alden Totten and Mary Westphal.

Next year we are planning some minor changes and look forward to our Level 3 students returning as they will be helping us teach the new students. We firmly believe that this is one of the major ways a Chapter can reach out to youth and we firmly believe that this effort will lead to future BCH members.

If you would like further information or how you can start your own Youth Packing project, contact Rick Mathies at 406-752-2209.

Chris Tornow

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BCHA Members Make It Possible to Award BCHA Foundation Grants in 2016

By Becky Hope, VP BCHA Foundation

BCHA Members and officers donated money, items, and bequests to make it possible for BCHA Foundation to award \$17,000 during the spring round of in 2016. The grant requests included eight youth education projects, eight trails projects, and two education requests. One request for was to assist with packing education in Mongolia. We had \$12,521 unrestricted funds for all grants and some funds restricted to youth projects. Not included in this report are the funds that are donated for a specific project by a specific donator.

Some of our funds come from the National Board Meeting through donations and raffle items from our own national officers. Donated items for the raffle included a patriotic quilt made by Peg Greiwe and two BCH pins. Melinda Wagner sold the tickets. Oscar Simpson from NM won the quilt, Patsy Breutkrautz of MN and Steve McClintock of AZ won the pins. Approximately \$2300 was raised.

We were hoping to announce additional grants, but no additional monies have come in to make that possible. We know people will be deciding project this fall to complete next spring. Please consider donating additional monies for all the good work—trail work, youth education, and LNT education. Please keep both BCHA and BCHA foundation in mind when it comes to making out your wills. Donating to either organizations will be money well spent.

For further information about donating or requesting a grant, please contact Foundation Secretary Peg Greiwe at email peg2@mashell.com; phone 360-832-2451; or mail to PO Box 385. Graham, WA 98588.

Following are sampling of projects funded this year:

- The Mid Valley Unit held its 4th Annual Youth Horse Camp June 24-26, 2016. Ten participants ranging in age from nearly 9 up to 14 years old attended this year's camp, with four of them being first-timers.
- BCH of Kansas improved Lake Scott Park to encourage riders to stop, camp and take full advantage of these beautiful trails and park. They also propose to set up no less than four pipe corrals along with appropriate footing to help eliminate the indiscriminate leaving of manure/hay piles all over the site.
- Shoshone BCH of northwest Wyoming six feed bunks at Jack Creek were redesigned, rebuilt, and repaired with funding help from a BCH Education Foundation grant.
- Traildusters Chapter BCH

Washington packed in supplies on horses and mules for four trail work events, each lasting a week and involving 10 to 14 workers. About 3,200 lbs. were packed in 47 miles (total over five round trips). About 2,400 lbs. were packed out a total of 29 miles and 18 empty pack animal miles. This project involved 130 basic hours of work and 300 skilled hours of work not including travel time. This cooperative series of work events involving PCTA, WTA, and BCHW was a satisfying accomplishment.

- With their \$1,000 BCHA grant, the NorthWest Montana BCH set up a training schedule for 4-H youth:

Clinic I- Saturday January 23, 2016
Introduction and packing overview
Clinic II – Saturday February 20, 2016

Loading and Packing “Hands-on” practice with “Barrel Horses”

Clinic III – Saturday March 12, 2016
Horse Training & Evaluations, Packing Training with your horse,

How to get your horse ready for the trail, Packing Training.

Clinic IV – Saturday April 23, 2016
Packing training, saddle fitting, working with your horse

Making loads, tying loads on your stock and Ponying pack stock.

Clinic V – Saturday May 21, 2016
Evaluations and grading of each 4-H Youth on Packing learned

Overnight Camp Out – June 17 & 18, 2016

- Emerald Empire Chapter of BCH of Oregon presented a symposium on trail readiness skills, safety preparedness, and low impact horse techniques on public lands. The Lane County Sheriff's Posse participated with traffic control and security. A Posse member led an information session on outdoor emergency preparedness, including personal locator devices. Local clinician Julie Fisher conducted hands-on training for small groups. Some great trail obstacles were provided by our chapter president Emily Elias. Quite a few young people were involved in the clinics, and they got good experience controlling and desensitizing their mounts, and preparing for safe trail rides.

BCHA Foundation officers: Mylon Filkins (president), Becky Hope (vice president), Karen Saner, Michael Murphy, Becki Krueger, [Joanne Mitchell](#), Peg Greiwe, (secretary and treasurer)



BCHA Officers, Chairs and Staff

Chairman
Donald Saner
PO Box 515
Wilson, WY 83014-0515
307-733-1356
bchachairman@bcha.org

Vice Chair
Freddy Dunn
1485 W 5650 N
Saint George, UT 84770-6197
435-862-6181
vchairman@bcha.org

Treasurer
Roy Cornett
126 E Main St, Ste 3
Georgetown, KY 40324-1850
859-806-2788
Treasurer@BCHA.org

Executive Director & Past Chair
Jim McGarvey
2408 Owens Gin Rd NE
Calhoun, GA 30701-9512
706-669-1015
execdirector@bcha.org

Director of Public Lands and Recreation
Randy Rasmussen
389 NE Cherry Ln
Albany, OR 97321-1678
541-602-0713 mobile
WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org

Executive Administrator
Erica Fearn, CAE
342 North Main Street, Suite 301
West Hartford, CT 06117
860-586-7540
efearn@BCHA.org

Administrator
John Aliberti
342 North Main Street, Suite 301
West Hartford, CT 06117
860-586-7540
jaliberti@BCHA.org

Executive Committee
Doug Bechen
20112 Buckin Horse Ln
Whitewood, SD 57793-5031
605-645-2296
bechenranch@gmail.com

Executive Committee
Ginny Grulke
2050 Delong Rd
Lexington, KY 40515-9506
859-940-4672
ginny.grulke@gmail.com

Executive Committee
Alan T. Hill
PO Box 492527
Redding, CA 96049-2527
530-221-8531
athill2011@gmail.com

Executive Committee
Darrell Wallace
5198 S Wallbridge Rd
Deer Park, WA 99006-9483
360-918-3016
exec@bchw.org

Committees:

National Public Lands
Jim Allen, Co-chair
PO Box 806
Custer, SD 57730-0806
605-673-2173
publiclands@bcha.org

Oscar Simpson, Co-chair
3320 12th St NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107-1131
505-345-0117
publiclands@bcha.org

Public Lands – State
Sherry Copeland, Co-Chair
519 Good Hope Road
Marshfield, MI 65706-8866
417-425-9969
StatePublicLands@bcha.org

Roy Cornett, Co-chair
126 E Main St, Ste 3
Georgetown, KY 40324-1850
859-806-2788
StatePublicLands@bcha.org

Public Liason and Advocacy Partners
Alan T. Hill
PO Box 492527
Redding, CA 96049-2527
530-221-8531
publicliaison@bcha.org

Expansion
Steven Lindsey
2067 Quail Rd
Concordia, KS 66901-6859
785-259-4712
expansion@bcha.org

Education
Mack Long
41088 Roberts Rd
Charlo, MT 59824-9014
education@bcha.org
Education Foundation
Mylon Filkins, DVM
Foundation@BCHA.org

BCH Education Foundation
Mylon Filkins DVM, Chair
PO Box 385
Graham WA 98338-0385
360 832 2451
Foundation@bcha.org
Peg2@mashell.com

Media and Marketing
Robbin Schindele
4600 W South Slope Rd
Emmett, ID 83617-8818
208-365-1789
media@bcha.org

Vision
Yvette Rollins
12784 E Rollins Ln
Springville, IN 47462-6321
vision@bcha.org

Volunteer Hours
Larry Zaubers
11374 US 550
Durango, CO 81303
970-759-5629
volunteerhours@bcha.org

Web Masters
Marty Duvall and Robbin Schindele
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The Catch Pen

Hoosier BCH Indiana Young's Creek Workday

National Trails Day, June 4, 2016
By Yvette Rollins

Members of the Hoosier BCH got together on a rainy weekend to remove posts, reinforce highline posts and doing hand work on trails creating drainage and spreading rock.

Each year the HBCH sit down with the Hoosier National Forest to set the year's work dates and prioritize projects that need work. We are also on call for emergency situations.

Gary Mundy, Treasurer, modeling his volunteer vest presented to him by President, Yvette Rollins as volunteer of the year. The vest was purchased at the National BCH Board Meeting. Gary not only keeps the books up to date but is a master leather craftsman's, donating many of his handcrafted leather items to HBCH for fundraisers and attending the work-days.

In addition to the commitment of working on trails the Hoosier BCH work with the Hoosier National Forest hosting Kids Unplugged Day and Get Outdoors Day providing over 200 horseback rides to kids who don't have the opportunity to ride horses.

Members of the Hoosier BCH also volunteer at Brook's Cabin in the Deam Wilderness (a historic structure that volunteers help maintain). Providing Leave No Trace Dutch Oven cooking and welcoming the community to the national forest by providing maps and other information about the forest at the close of the season the HBCH do a shoreline and campsite cleanup in the wilderness.

Photos: Trailhead maintenance work.
LNT cooking and materials.



The Catch Pen

Mother Lode Unit California Caples Creek Campout & Obstacles Training

By Lucy Badenhoop
Photos by Denise & Marshall Zavat

The fourth weekend in June 2016 was hot enough that the MLU migrated to the high country for its monthly campout. The Caples Creek Equestrian Trailhead is at an altitude of 6000' and the trails climb from there, so it's a good retreat from the valley heat.

This trailhead is still in development by the unit and its two partners (the USFS and Elegant Ears Mule Association), but should be finished this year. Recently received grant money will provide funds to purchase the remaining gravel. A work party is planned for August or September.

The group's rigs filled most of the sites that are already graveled and some of the dirt ones as well. The center picnic area served as a communal kitchen and campfire for the usual potluck meals and some Dutch oven treats by Denise Zavat.

Most of the participants arrived Friday but a few showed up early Saturday in time for breakfast. Three USFS rangers from the Amador District were invited guests for a breakfast meeting to discuss a recent grant award for the Mokelumne Wilderness. MLU and USFS agreed on a tentative packing schedule to support the grant work this summer.

After business was completed, the group said goodbye to the rangers and tacked up for the 10.6-mile training ride. The trails around Caples are somewhat technical and require physically fit stock and experienced riders.

In addition to the typical elevation changes and switchbacks, there are granite outcroppings, downed trees and water obstacles to be navigated, including one high and narrow bridge two miles from the trailhead.

The bridge was another MLU (and partners) project in 2014 when the INYO packers assisted in the timber haul to replace the planking and railings. The new lumber was provided by the USFS.



Sunday morning saw the group disperse after breakfast...some for a short ride and others heading home early to spend Father's Day with family.

Photos: Bridge (Marshall)
Creek (Denise)
Pot Luck (Denise)



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The Catch Pen

Buffalo River BCH Arkansas Kids' Weekend at Woolum

By Nancy Deisch

Despite the heat, the intrepid kids and grandkids of the Buffalo River BCH had their third annual weekend of learning and practicing Leave No Trace skills, invasive plant identification, proper trail work and tool usage, and Dutch oven cooking. All this while improving horsemanship and swimming techniques. Thirteen young cowgirls and cowboys came with 17 parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles to horse camp on the Buffalo.

On Friday morning, plant specialist Pam Stewart taught the young people different invasive plants found in the Buffalo National River Park. Then everyone (kids, parents, and grandparents) mounted up to ride out and identify some of those specimens. As soon as the ride was over, the river couldn't have been more inviting, as the temps were extreme! Later, Jacque Alexander reviewed Leave No Trace rules and gave each participant a litter bag of goodies useful in many circumstances on the river, on a horse, or in the campground. Gathering around the campfire may not have been what one wanted to do in the heat, but when a supper of kabobs (prepared by organizer Marjorie Heacock) with all the trimmings was

presented, the line formed quickly to make-your-own kabob and set it over the fire for cooking.

After Saturday morning's cowboy breakfast (cooked up by organizer Bill Kenter), everyone saddled up for a trail ride which took them to Skull Bluff, a rather "famous" place on the river. The young riders used their Leave No Trace knowledge to pick up litter along the trail

and were later rewarded for the most trash collected. The ride was once again followed by time in the river before the games (arranged, planned, and carried out under the direction of Marjorie Heacock) began. Most events were on horseback with each participant competing for prizes. Events included the egg-in-a-spoon carry; the 2-person, 2-horse, 1-piece-of-toilet-paper carry; the giant panty race; the horse-race-apple-bob; water balloon toss; and many more. Great fun was had by participants and cheering crowds as well. The last lesson of the day was given by Bobby Alexander who taught the up-and-coming cowboy cooks a few pointers in Dutch oven cooking. They prepared and cooked four different dishes – all delicious, all consumed by hungry

campers along with the pot luck dishes provided by the other weekenders.

It was time for the last ride on Sunday morning, so after another of Bill Kenter's wonderful breakfasts, everyone was horseback again, and later again, the river was a cool and welcomed ending to the ride. Packing up and leaving good friends and riding buddies is the hardest part of such a fun and rewarding weekend.

The Back Country Horsemen of America are dedicated to keeping trails open for stock use, and the Buffalo River BCH works to help the Park in that and other trail maintenance efforts.

Photos:

Pam Stewart showing the young horsemen/women samples of invasive plant species found in the Park.

Riders (young and old) in front of Skull Bluff on the Buffalo River.

Torrie and Tennille helping young contestants Evan and Owen.



Loney Meadows Isn't Lonely

By Lucy Badenhop, BCH CA Mother Lode Unit (MLU)



MLU held it July 2016 campout and training ride at Loney Meadows 10 miles off Highway 20 on Bowman Lake Road. The 6000' elevation makes the camp a good choice during hot summer months. The high altitude is good to condition the stock and about 1/3 of the ride is a steep climb over rocky terrain. Normally, Loney Meadows is a dry camp with no amenities with only a nearby stream for watering the stock. For this ride, the cost of a porta potty was shared with another equestrian group.

Saturday's ride lasted five hours. Because of the number of riders, we split into two groups and departed in opposite directions on the loop trail around Bowman Mountain. We met at the peak at lunch for stunning view of Bowman Lake prior to heading back to camp. A treat was two musicians who entertained the campers Saturday afternoon. Member Brad Baer is a skilled guitarist and Arizona guest John Ted-



ford is a semi-pro singer/guitarist with a lengthy list of entertaining songs. After the usual potluck supper, campers sat in a circle for the main social gathering of the weekend.

Range cows passed nearby for their evening drink at the creek. Each one wearing a very loud bell. One bell alone can put the equines on alert. When there's a sizeable herd in the dark, the bells can be alarming, as two campers discovered. There were no injuries, but there was some excitement.



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The Catch Pen

San Juan BCH Colorado BCH Trail Rebuild

By Bob Volger

In 2015, members of San Juan BCH (SJBCH) and personnel from the Pagosa Ranger District began discussing the need for an extensive trail rebuild through a bog about three miles into the Weminuche Wilderness Area on the Williams Creek Trail. Pagosa District Trail Foreman Tyler Albers and Wilderness Program Manager Ros Wu discussed with SJBCH Trails and Projects Committee Chair (and FS liaison) John Nelson the construction of a raised causeway through the problem area by the U.S.F.S. Trail Crew. On Friday August 19th, 2016 SJBCH and the Pagosa Ranger District completed a week-long project that solved the problem.

The initial concept discussed by the SJBCH board envisioned the chapter purchasing the aggregate material required and using volunteer packers to haul the material to the worksite. The board also discussed applying for a grant to help offset the costs. As soon as John presented the idea to the board, there was agreement to proceed. At the same time, we found The National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance (NWSA) matching grant opportunity. Lisa Nelson volunteered to apply for the money. Even though the final plans had not been completed, the Trails and Projects Committee outlined a budget they felt was reasonable, the board gave the nod to complete the grant application. During the time between the initial grant submission and the chapter's successful award, the project itself and the budget were refined and augmented.

Tyler's final design contained an estimated 15 tons of aggregate material and the original volunteer packer idea became untenable. That amount of tonnage required the services of Lead Packer for the U.S.F.S. Rocky Mountain Regional Specialty Pack String Glenn Ryan. Glenn and his 10-plus pack mules spend their summer work season fulfilling just the sort of mission we had in mind. Ros contacted Glenn and reserved the week of August 15th-19th for his participation. The SJBCH Trails and Projects Committee felt that with a significant contribution from the San Juan National Forest, the Rocky Mountain Region of the U.S.F.S., and the Pagosa Ranger District, the chapter would be able to supply additional funds required for the pack string to participate. That is exactly how things played out.

The U.S.F.S. provided the bulk of the financial burden for the pack string. SJBCH received a \$1500 matching grant from the NWSA and matched it with chapter funds. The Columbine Ranger District provided all the weed-free hay required by all the livestock. The Pagosa Ranger District Trail Crew prepared the worksite during the week prior to the gravel packing. BCH volunteers from SJBCH, Four Corners Back Country Horsemen, and Front Range Back Country Horsemen provided the meals for crews and volunteers, helped manage all the livestock, pulled weeds from around the trailhead and within the Palisades Horse Camp, provided material and tools to construct a large temporary pasture for the pack string, built shelters over the

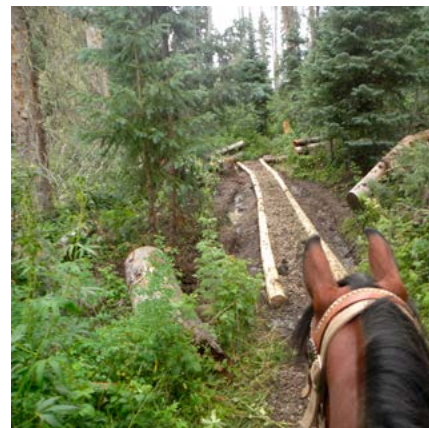
kitchen and dining areas of the camp, designed and built the gravel weighing stations, provided all the buckets required for weighing the aggregate, helped groom and saddle the mules, and loaded them for each pack trip up the mountain. Throughout each day, volunteers hauled water to fill troughs and buckets for the animals.

At the end of the day on Friday, August 19th, our collaborative effort \ resulted in over 11 tons of gravel packed to the site and the trail problem solved. Everyone involved would like to see the final few tons of gravel and finishing material packed to the causeway, but it will have to wait until next season. Projects of this magnitude may begin with a conversation, but they only reach fruition through the hard work and extensive planning and collaboration of many individuals and entities.

In addition to the participants already mentioned, the following individuals contributed in one form or another: Kristie Hefling, Laurel Penwell, Bob Parsons, Larry Fields, Randy and Joanne Senzig, Todd Rodas and Judi Hurley, Ken and Denise Bachman, and Bob and Laura Volger camped at the Palisades Horse Camp and volunteered every day. Tara McElhinney, Bev Warburton, Cheryl McCelvey, Pat Moffitt, Rodney Pepper, Dan Licarrdi, Larry Hefling, Nancy Seay, and Ted Wortman helped at times throughout the week. Vern and Kathy Jahnke loaned the chapter a cook stove and sent desserts. Camp hosts Bo and Olinda Reneau helped every day and in every possible manner. Glenn's assistant packer Treppe Osburn was invaluable as a pack string leader and able instructor for the volunteers. Public Relations Officer for the San Juan National Forest Ann Bond spent part of Tuesday at the TH and the worksite to document the project and write articles for the Pagosa Sun and Durango Herald. Pagosa District Recreation Supervisor Paul Blackman was instrumental with the trail crew on Friday and the trail crew was outstanding. Thank you Stephani Kopfman, Kristina Schenk, Zach Staley, Sky Martin, Eric Freudenberger, Ian Birdsell, and Cody Milihran. We look forward to working with you again.

Photo 1: Todd Rodas (left) of Four Corners Back Country Horsemen and Tyler Albers, trail crew foreman on the Pagosa Ranger District, load gravel into panniers that the Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Region Specialty Pack String carried about three miles up Williams Creek Trail to fix a mud bog section of the trail in the Weminuche Wilderness. (Courtesy U.S. Forest Service)

Photo 2: Trepper Osburn, a packer with the Rocky Mountain Region Specialty Pack String, prepares to head up Williams Creek Trail with loads of gravel. San Juan Back Country Horsemen of Pagosa Springs applied for and received a \$1,500 matching grant from the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance to help fund the trail improvement project. The chapter purchased the gravel, and volunteers built a weigh station and loaded gravel onto pack animals, brushed and saddled stock, hauled water each day, worked on weed



mitigation and fed the volunteers and crew for five days. (Courtesy U.S. Forest Service)

Photo 3: Glenn Ryan, lead packer of the Rocky Mountain Region Specialty Pack String, guides the stock onto the turnpike to lay down more gravel. Ten mules, along with pack horses from the Pagosa Ranger District, hauled nearly 12 tons of gravel during the week-long project in August. (Courtesy U.S. Forest Service)

Photo 4: The Pagosa Ranger District trail crew on the San Juan National Forest release gravel from panniers atop a turnpike they constructed on Williams Creek Trail. (Courtesy U.S. Forest Service)

Photo 5: Dan Liccardi (left) of San Juan Back Country Horsemen and Paul Cruz, Forest Service recreation business program manager for the Rocky Mountain Region, load and weigh buckets of gravel. (Courtesy U.S. Forest Service)

Photo 6: While waiting for the pack string to return to the trailhead for another load of gravel, San Juan BCH volunteer Bev Warburton and San Juan BCH President Ted Wortman help remove noxious thistle around the Williams Creek Trail Head and Palisades Horse Camp. (Courtesy U.S. Forest Service)

Photo 7: Wilderness Program Manager Ros Wu of the Pagosa Ranger District helped haul gravel with the district's horses. (Courtesy U.S. Forest Service)

Photo 8: Here's a horse's-eye-view of the new turnpike constructed on Williams Creek Trail. (Courtesy Ken and Denise Bachman)

Photo 9: Bob Volger led the Williams Creek Trail gravel-hauling project for the San Juan Back Country Horsemen of Pagosa Springs, CO. Bob invited participation from other Colorado BCH chapters and recruited volunteers from the Four Corners and the Front Range BCH groups. (Courtesy U.S. Forest Service)

BCH Outreach Program to Mongolia: Building Trust and Bridging Back Country Cultures

By Greg Schatz, Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead, Montana

BCH Outreach Program to Mongolia: Building Trust and Bridging Back Country Cultures
By Greg Schatz

In late June and early July, Deb and I traveled to the Darhad Valley of Mongolia with Dr. Cliff Montagne, director of BioRegions International out of Montana State University (MSU) Bozeman. Our BioRegions team included Mishig Jigjidsuren¹, past governor of Khovsgol Province, and Badmaa Dovchin, our logistics coordinator and a graduate student at MSU. We were also joined by a health team of five people including two medical doctors, a soils team of four people, and six native Crow students from MSU who were comparing the native ways of the Mongolians to that of the Crows. Support staff included several Mongolian cooks, drivers, and translators.

A Commitment to the Work of BCH Leads to the Trip of a Lifetime

Deborah and I joined the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead in 1990 at Outfitters Supply, the local tack shop. If you were a member of BCH you got a 10% discount and it was cheaper for us to join than pay full price. When we joined the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead a lot of the members were the charter members who created the organization. Besides teaching us packing and other horse skills, they taught us to become involved in what the Forest Service is doing and to continue to teach horse packing to others so the traditional skills we know continue on.

Because of our commitment to the work of the BCH of the Flathead, Deb and I presented a packing demonstration in the fall of 2014. The demonstration was part of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Wilderness Act hosted by the Montana Wilderness Association. The event was held in Seeley Lake, MT and was attended by about 2,000 people. One of these people was Cliff Montagne, the director of BioRegions International. After he watched us for a while, he asked us if we wanted to go to Mongolia with his group. Of course, he explained what BioRegions is doing over there, and because we always wanted to go to Mongolia to check out the horses we gladly went along.

We were looking forward to seeing the native Mongolian horses, sharing horse packing skills and Leave No Trace principles with the herders, and learning about their culture. We spent three weeks in Mongolia and were in the remote Darhad Valley for two weeks. It took a week for travel alone. Our plane landed in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, and from there we flew two hours west to Murun. Then we took a 180-kilometer drive in an old Russian van to Ulaan-Uul, averaging 20 km/hr on a dirt track. There are very few roads throughout Mongolia and the paved roads are in very rough shape as much of the land is over permafrost.

Once in the backcountry, we met up with the local herders. We explained to them that the Back Country Horsemen

started in the Flathead Valley of Montana in 1973 because the Forest Service planned to ban horses in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. We explained that the Bob is the premier horse wilderness in the U. S. We also explained how BCH members volunteer to help the Forest Service.

There are three national parks in the Khovsgol Province with only 35 employees who need a lot of volunteer help. Our job was to help the herders in the Darhad Valley, including the head of tourism for their national parks, understand what it takes to start a back country tourist/guiding operation in their area. This included teaching them Leave No Trace skills, talking about what westerners would expect in the way of comfort on a back country trip, and showing each other how we pack, which was more similar than different.

What We Learned About the Mongolian Culture

The Mongolians have few possessions as they are nomadic. In addition to their traditional ger² (sturdy, round home), some had a small log cabin for use during certain seasons. The herders love to feed visitors and when they leave their ger they don't lock the door. They feel privileged if someone comes along and needs food or tea and helps themselves. As our group of 20 people was riding along one day, we got hit hard by a thunderstorm with lightning and hail. We saw a ger about 200 yards away and rode to it. The family was very welcoming and, even though we were soaking wet, they insisted that we sit on the beds. Of course, food and drinks were served. After the sky cleared up and we continued on our way, we learned none of the herders with us knew the people at the ger where we stopped. Can you imagine twenty soaking wet people on your doorstep? Would you let them in?

Mongolians have a tremendous respect for nature. They worship Mother Earth and Father Sky, and they are the children living in between. Water is sacred. They don't cut any living trees. Their beautiful forests of Siberian larch are not managed and we didn't see any beetle-killed trees, major forest fires, or massive clear cuts. We met a medicine maker who had an inventory of about 300 different dried plants to share with others in need of medical attention. Because nature is respected he used the entire plant. If he picked a plant, he would pick the whole thing including



Above: Mongolian herders attend the back country workshop put on by Greg and Deborah. Topics included packing, guiding guests, Leave No Trace principles for stock use and people, and back country travel. Below: Deborah tries a traditional Mongolian riding saddle.

the root. The Mongolians' main religions are Buddhism and Shamanism. Regardless of religious practice, nature is respected. We never once heard, "how much money can we make from developing nature?"

The herders don't need to argue about climate change. They know their summers are getting hotter and drier and winters are shorter. Because they are worried about grazing for several generations into the future, the herders asked for help from BioRegions International. The soils group was formed to help the Mongolians understand what is happening with their grazing and to suggest changes the herders can make now to protect grazing into the future.

Our traditional way of packing dates back to the days of Genghis Khan Temüjin, who was the first to use horses to pack gear. Genghis Khan was a great warrior who ruled over the largest contiguous land mass in the history of the world. When Genghis Khan planned an invasion, he sent an envoy ahead to let people know they were welcome to join his side. If they chose not to, they were killed humanely. They were not tortured or forced into slavery. He ended the practice of stealing women to use as wives. He insisted that everyone get along and there were no dividing lines between the haves and have nots. When Genghis Khan and his army conquered an area, the plunder was divided up among everyone, not just the conquerors.

Similarities and Differences in Horsemanship

Most of the herders rode in a decker pack saddle with a padded seat and stirrups hung on that came from Russia. The herders also used the same saddle to pack their belongings when they moved their herds of horses, cows, yaks, cashmere goats, and sheep four



times a year. A few still rode in the traditional Mongolian saddle which was not very comfortable for us. They used a halter-bridle combination to hold their snaffle bits, and these bridles were usually made from rawhide. They had a special way to cut their horses' manes called an arrow cut. The forelock and a handful of mane to grab onto in front of the saddle were left long. Between the two lengths, the hair was roached.

When it was time to stop for lunch or at the end of the day, the herders had several ways to hold their horses. If they were near a ger, the horses were tied to posts planted in the ground. Or the horses were tied to a high line between the two posts. In the backcountry they use a three-legged hobble. Sometimes they would picket to a pin and a second horse was tied to the same picket line.

In June, it is time to milk the mares to make the traditional fermented mare's milk. The foals are tied for a few hours every day to a rope on the ground between two picket pins. Here the foals learned to give to pressure and not panic if they got tangled up.

Deborah and I found many similarities between the Darhad Valley of Mongolia and Montana. The mountains, valleys and water features of the Mongolian landscape looked familiar

¹ We called him Mishig. Customarily, everyone in Mongolia is called by their given name. Last names are seldom used.

² Americans incorrectly call these "yurts" but Mongolians despise the name because it is a Russian word.

[Mongolia continued]

to our home state. We found many alpine plants similar to those we see in the Bob. The relationship we had with the herders was based on our common interest in horses. As we learned more

about the herders, we found that our greatest similarity was our respect for the natural world and our desire to protect it.

Learn more at www.bioregions.org.



Top: Greg rides with Otgonbaatar Mygmar, head of tourism in Khovsgol National Park in Mongolia.
Middle: Mongolian herders show Greg and Deborah how they pack. Their techniques had many similarities to our Montana methods, including using boxes and manties on a decker-type pack saddle.
Bottom: Certificates were awarded to the herders for completion of the back country workshop put on by Greg and Deborah and the first aid workshop put on by the health team.

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Letter to BCHA

Can Chainsaws Save Our Access to Trails?

By Dennis Dailey

Dan Applebaker and Ralph Bradt have sparked a debate over chainsaw use in the Wilderness in the BCHA newsletter. In his Fall 2015 article (p. 11), Applebaker argued for the conscientious and responsible use of power saws to keep Wilderness trails open and accessible. In a letter to the editor, Bradt (Spring 2016, p. 2) presented an eloquent defense of traditional wilderness management practices and the use of crosscuts in the Wilderness. The debate is not a new one.

Appropriate use of motorized tools has been a major topic of debate since the initial formulation of the first National Forest Service (NFS) Wilderness Management policy. Director of Recreation for the NFS Richard Costley convened the team that drafted the original policy. Costley described the process, “we tussled – argued – wrangled – and as I remember it, the material in the first drafts was pretty well larded with weasel words...in our threshing, we did establish some additional very important rationalized premises, such as – relative cost, efficiency or convenience were not to be over-riding considerations in making decisions... Looking back now I’m suspect that we probably reached judgements [sic] because we simply couldn’t come up with agreement...and probably wouldn’t be

able to agree on language to describe it” (Presentation Region 9 Wilderness Seminar, 1976). If the original policy makers couldn’t agree, it doesn’t surprise me debate about the intent of the law continues fifty years later.

While it would appear obvious to many that “chainsaws cut faster than crosscuts,” as Mr. Bradt claims, there has been considerable dialogue within the Forest Service and the wilderness community to question that assumption. For example, a 2013 General Accountability Office (GAO) study noted, “The general prohibition against power tools is not a complicating factor because crosscut saws are as efficient or nearly as efficient as chain saws.” The GAO report anticipated a NFS study of the safety and efficiency of both methods in 2015, but the Forest Service chose to cancel that study soon after the GAO report was published.

If we don’t consider alternatives, trails can be closed or become inaccessible.

As long as the questions persist, many managers will be reluctant to do the impartial analysis necessary to determine which method best meets the

intent of the Act. Contrary to Bradt’s assertion that Applebaker “totally misses the point of why we use crosscuts in Wilderness”, Applebaker requested the agency look at all legal alternatives prior to making a decision that would result in a trail being closed or becoming unavailable for the intended use. Contrary to the commonly held opinion that motorized tools are prohibited in Wilderness; they are only prohibited if they are not the minimum necessary to meet the purposes of the Act.

A primary purpose of the Act was to provide “for the use and enjoyment of the American people.” The trail system in our wildernesses (with minor exceptions) existed at the time of designation. It is an inherent part of the character of each wilderness not a compromise provided to concentrate use and protect the Wilderness environment. The NFS trail system has been in a state of decline since the 1950s—a conclusion of *two* GAO studies. The maintenance backlog is big and growing bigger. If traditional tools were adequate to preserve the access and *character* of the Wilderness prescribed in the Act; or, if Congress were willing to fund the task of maintaining trails with traditional tools and methods, we would not be having this debate. However, neither is true. Before trails are removed from the system or consciously allowed to become inaccessible through benign neglect (which is becoming a convenient practice to avoid the controversy over more direct methods to ‘right-size’ the trail system), it is totally appropriate, as Applebaker suggested, to ask the agency to analyze the effects of a decision on crosscut versus power saws.

The consequences of *not* considering motorized tools will result in a reduction in trail access and the amount of wilderness available to customary use. Reduced access will likely change the recreation setting by concentrating more people into a small part of the

Wilderness. Reduced access may also displace traditional users who seek the solitude the Wilderness Act intended. More concentrated use increases adverse impacts on campsites and trails, foments inter-party conflict, and may result in more use restrictions. Use restrictions typically are imposed disproportionately on pack and saddle stock users. Requesting a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Minimum Requirements assessment to consider the effects of trail management decisions and the alternatives available for managing the trail system is not only appropriate, because it clearly impacts the human environment, it is a legal requirement in accordance with NEPA.

Can chainsaws save our access to trails? We won’t know unless we ask the question.

Dennis Dailey served as BCHA’s Senior Advisor Wilderness, Recreation and Trails until retirement in 2012. Prior to that he worked as a Wilderness Resource Consultant, Policy Coordinator for Wilderness Watch, and for the Forest Service. His assignments with the NFS included resource assistant in the Bridger and the Bob Marshall Wildernesses and District Ranger on an all wilderness district in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Dennis’s extensive discussion of the points in Mr. Bradt’s editorial is available in the Back Country Horsemen of Oregon’s Fall 2016 Newsletter at www.bcho.org/wp/highline-newsletter/

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Made in Montana
by Jerry Kawasaki

Hello BCHA!

We are getting to the time of the year to start thinking about our volunteer hours report. These reports are so important to BCHA. It is amazing when you step into one of the Public Land Managers office and show them the hours and all that BCHA has contributed. They are always impressed with what we have done over the year. BCHA Volunteer Committee Chairman

BCHA has been working with different agencies for 40-plus years. We have learned how to have effective relationships with Public Land Managers. I requested a member of the Executive Committee who has mastered this ability to write a paper we are calling *Better Behavior for BCH*. This paper will be published on our website. If you are new to the world of dealing with the many different Land Managers, or even if you are an “old hand”, please check this out. Information in this paper can help everyone get better.

BCHA has a busy fall schedule planned! In September our Director of Recreation & Public Lands Randy Rasmussen is attending the Continental Divide Trail Coalition strategic

This year BCHA is doing a push in the northeast part of the country. BCHA Expansion Chair Steve Lindsey and volunteers will man a booth at the Equine Affair in West Springfield, MA. We are hoping to bring the northeast-

As these events unfold, we will be providing reports to the membership with the information of what happened.

I also wanted to let you know how great it has been working with Erica Fearn (Executive Administrator BCHA), John Aliberti, and the rest of the Association Resources Team. They have been working hard to get a handle on all our members and getting to know who the officers are of the states and chapters. There are still a few of you out there who need to get your information to us, so please check with your officers and make sure we have a way to contact you. This will help us serve you better!

By Randy Rasmussen, BCHA Director for Public Lands & Recreation

Bikes-in-Wilderness Bill (S. 3205)

Not only does the name of the bill ignore horsemen but, if enacted as written, it would guarantee that mountain bike use would become the favored trail use in most all of the nation's 765 Wilderness Areas. The bill represents an enormous unfunded mandate that would consume agency budgets and result in endless bureaucracy and litigation. Its short 2-year timeline for agency decisions would guarantee that most trails in designated Wilderness areas would be made available for mountain bike use. The bill specifically calls for amending the 52-year-old Wilderness Act (something that's never been done) and, as such, represents a new height of arrogance and overreach. As a result, the wilderness experience currently enjoyed by horseman, packers and other visitors would drastically change—to say nothing of safety issues that concern stock users.

With little chance to gain widespread support in Congress, BCHA nonetheless has little choice but to fully engage with our allies in beating back this ill-conceived bill. BCH Utah al-

National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (H.R. 845, S. 1110)

The bill would establish a program to expand the use of volunteers and partner organizations and would ensure that the Forest Service is prioritizing its trail maintenance activities in areas that are most in need of additional work. The bipartisan bill is co-sponsored by 87 Members of the House of Representatives and 24 Senators. BCHA's significant involvement in shaping this bill, along with partners The Wilderness Society and American Horse Council and many others, has helped to position BCHA as a national leader in the search for solutions to the trail maintenance crisis. We hope to continue building on this success.

If you want to glimpse into a window of how a committee markup is conducted, and to hear an impassioned and humorous plea to colleagues from Minnesota representative Tim Walz, I encourage you to view this video from the House Ag Committee hearing on HR 845: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evW13BVqOP0>

Scroll to minute 17 to begin the 6-minute discussion of HR 845. BCHA is mentioned twice!

Yosemite Wilderness

BCHA is engaged in a coordinated effort with BCH California to ensure that the voice of backcountry horsemen

The message from BCHA/BCHC members was clear, yet polite, that a meadow grazing ban (proposed in one of three options) is viewed as “too onerous by all stock users.” Accordingly, we have offered alternatives and hope that the proposal disappears among the alternatives considered in detail in the forthcoming draft Wilderness plan.

We will continue to reach out to BCHA members with action alerts during key times of the planning process so you can weigh in. Our involvement is critical because wilderness management decisions that result at an iconic national park, like Yosemite, have the potential to ripple across the National Park System. If we set the stage for constructive dialogue and problem-solving, we greatly increase our chances of furthering BCHA's objectives and purposes as reflected in our mission statement.

If your BCHA unit is still involved in the work season, or if weather has put it to a stop, it is not too soon to consider whether a state or chapter project is a potential nominee for the *BCHA Double Diamond Award*. The *Double Diamond Award* was established in 2003 to recognize outstanding volunteer projects; the 2016 recipient will be announced at the BCHA National Board Meeting banquet in Great Falls, MT in April 2017. A few basic facts for a unit's specific project to be considered for the Double Diamond Award are:

It is one specific project, accomplished Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2016.

It can include, but not limited to, trail maintenance, trail construction, trailhead construction, educational programs, and youth programs.

Multiple outings to accomplish the project are acceptable.

More details on how to nominate a project will follow in the Winter Edition of the BCHA Newsletter.

If you have questions before then,
email volunteer@bcha.org or call
573-406-2566 **or**

Go to <http://www.bcha.org/get-involved/volunteering/double-diamond/>

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December 5, 2016

BCHA Newsletter Media Kit

Our BCHA newsletter is read by passionate trail riders, saddle and pack stock owners, avid back country packers and others who have an investment in saddle and pack stock and public land management. We serve over 14,300 members nationwide who belong to 180 active chapters/units and affiliates in 27 states. Visit www.bcha.org for more information on BCHA.

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Note: For questions or graphic design and layout of your ad, please contact Deborah Schatz at (406) 892-0200 or deborah.bcha@gmail.com.

Annual subscriptions for non-members are available by sending your name, address and \$45 to:

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John Aliberti, Association Administrator
BCHA
860-586-7540
1-800-893-5161
FAX: 860-586-7550
E-mail: Jaliberti@BCHA.org

Managing Editor

Sherry Jennings
PO Box 305
East Olympia WA 98540-0305
E-mail: BCHAEditor@comcast.net

Design, Layout and Sponsorship Director

Deborah Schatz
4720 Trumble Creek Road
Columbia Falls MT 59912
(406) 314-1084
E-mail: deborah.bcha@gmail.com

Printing

Eagle Web Press
4901 Indian School Rd. NE
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Monument Valley and Douglas Mesa The Ride of Dreams

By Susie Drougas

The Navajo woman Effy Yazzie rode in front of our group. She was astride a gold palomino that blended in with the red dirt and large rock formations. Her voice, heavily accented with Navajo, told us stories of her Monument Valley home. We saw the tree under which her mother was born, hidden deep in a rock canyon. The Hogan Effy and her cousin accidentally set on fire. Caves, hidden springs and window rocks. The many ruins of the Anasazi. So many petroglyphs! Never having thought about it before, I began to wonder, “Who were these people that left so much behind and disappeared into thin air?” Our Monument Valley trip was more than just a ride, we were transported into the customs and life of the Navajo Indians. As we rode and learned, it was not unusual for one of our guides to break into song, the haunting melody echoing off the canyon walls.

We planned this trip a year in advance and chose an outfitter that was recommended to us by friends: Don Vinson, Monument Valley Trail Rides, www.MonumentValleyTrailRides.com. The Valley is Navajo reservation, so you must have a guide to ride it. Don has everyone gather at the store in Gouldings, Utah on Sunday afternoon at 1 p.m. and caravan to his camp in the park. We had 37 riders, so quite a few rigs bounced in on the uneven sandy road. The camp is in a canyon of high red rocks in a primitive area called Pancake Flats. We had corrals and water for our horses. The rock walls gleamed golden in the morning sun and provided an amazing echo chamber for our nightly Navajo singing and dancing entertainment. It was also a perfect backdrop for the girls from California to “shadow dance”—but that’s another story. I noticed our esteemed president, Kathy Young, was quite adept at the Navajo shuffle.

Our campfires were a lot of fun, we potlucked three nights and the Navajos cooked for us three nights. We met people from all over the United States and exchanged ideas and stories. The riders included BCHers from Kansas and riders from San Diego and Mammoth, California.

Don also hosts a ride to Douglas Mesa, it’s the week after his Monument Valley ride. We decided to do

both since we were there. Sadly saying good-bye to our new friends, we went into Gouldings, washed clothes, bought food and toured the wonderful John Wayne Museum. John Ford filmed five John Wayne movies there. We actually watched “The Searchers” the day before we arrived. We immediately recognized the rock formations from the movie the minute we got there.

Douglas Mesa is also on the Navajo reservation. It is a lesser known ride, but equally spectacular. Don Vinson said he was going to make it more visible on his website – it’s a link now. We ended up with just Mike, I and Kathy on the ride. So we had our two guides, Nes Begay, Chanley Holiday and our host Don Vinson. There were six of us. It was cross-country riding down draws and canyons—who knew that horses could climb up rocks like that? I have to admit, we’re all a little crazy and love that stuff.

The San Juan River was breathtaking. The ground opened up before us and we were suddenly gazing into a mini Grand Canyon. I don’t think we spoke for an hour—just taking in all in.

We have done a lot of long distance traveling with our horses, if you haven’t, it’s a lot easier than you probably think. You need to get all your certifications and shots required for the states you’re traveling. We have life-long brand inspections because we go so often. From Yakima we went 10.5 hours to Rupert, Idaho the first day, then 6 hours to Price, Utah and then 5 hours to Gouldings, Utah. We broke it up that way on the way down so we’d be fresh for the ride. On the way home we did two 10.5 hour days, Douglas Mesa to Rupert and Rupert to Yakima. The fairgrounds are always willing to accommodate travelers and our horses had water and boxed stalls. I would recommend calling ahead, a rodeo or play-day could affect the accommodations. We always bring our own hay. There is hay available in Gouldings.

This is a definite bucket list ride! Don is a great host and this is a dream trip.

Susie Drougas is a member of Back Country Horsemen of Washington since 1985 and contemporary Western author. Her series is available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and at her website at www.SusieDrougas.com

BCH Education Foundation

by Peg Greiwe, Executive Secretary/Treasurer

Some confusion exists about the relationship between the BCHA and the BCH Education Foundation. These are two separate 501c3 organizations. This means that you can donate to either one or both and deduct your donation(s) from your income taxes.

The Education Foundation is not affiliated with nor “under” the BCHA. Neither one has any authority over the other.

That said, both organizations support our work on trails, preserving the historic use of stock in the backcountry and the education of our youth in the

love and care of the backcountry. We work in conjunction with each other to fund as many grants as possible to support these goals. The Foundation was set up to deal with grants for worthy projects. BCHA was not set up for handling grants on a large scale.

Our Board of Directors is made up of President Mylon Filkins DVM (CA), Vice President Becky Hope (OR), Michael Murphy (CA), Karen Sanner (WY), Becki Kruger (MO), Joanne Mitchell (TN), Secretary/Treasurer Peg Greiwe (WA).

Donations to the Education Foun-



Photos: Kathy Young at Monument Valley.
Kathy Young and Mike Douglas arriving at Monument Valley.
Don Vinson on Douglas Mesa.
Douglas Mesa Anasazi Ruins.
Don Vinson, ride host.

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ation may be made to “BCH Education Foundation” and sent to PO Box 385, Graham WA 98338-0385. Questions regarding grant applications may be sent through the BCHA website to Foundation@bcha.org. Calls may be made to Peg Greiwe at 360-832-2451 or her email peg2@mashell.com. We plan to accept credit card donations and will notify you when that happens. In the meantime, you are the means to fund grants for trail work, education and service. You are also the dear souls who do the work, too! We cannot do it without you!

By Lucy Badenhoop, BCH CA Mother Lode Unit

The U.S.F.S. ranger on our partnership team was especially helpful in negotiating access to pump river water without disturbing the frog's habitat. The water truck

BHC-MLU is proud to participate in these local partnerships that promote public access to public lands. Readers are encouraged to spread the news of this new facility to their equestrian friends by sharing the flyer. <http://www.bchn.us/Images/Caples%20Creek%20Flyer%20v6%20Oct%202014.pdf>



Message from the Executive Director



By Jim McGarvey, Executive Director

A Nice Benefit at No Cost

To ensure everyone receives this new benefit, include the email addresses of your chapter members to the BCHA when sending in your yearly dues. Individual's email addresses will not be given out or sold.

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Mike and Susie Drougas on Douglas Mesa

[Read the complete story on page 14]



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