

Teton BCH Uses Education Foundation Grant to Improve Signage  
in the Wild and Scenic Snake River Headwaters

By Jim Wolf, Public Lands Chair, Teton Back Country Horsemen, Wyoming



The Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF), with its pristine watersheds, abundant wildlife, and over 2,000 miles of hiking and riding trails, is one of the finest recreational areas in the National Forest System. Stretching from Yellowstone National Park on its north end and past Grand Teton National Park on its west side, the BTNF follows the Snake River and then continues south along the Wyoming Range. In 2007, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act added some 400 miles of streams and rivers of the Snake River headwaters to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. A major part of the Snake River Headwaters’ value is the ecological integrity of the area, including both its diverse vegetative and native wildlife components.

In two of the designated water-

sheds, Bailey Creek and Little Greys River to Willow Creek, the trails have become so popular with sportsmen, equestrians and other recreational users that ongoing ecological damage has become a serious concern. In particular, poor stock management practices by sportsmen have severely damaged stream banks. Also, high impact camping, poorly placed high lines, and overgrazing have compromised many popular camping sites.

In response, BTNF Greys River Ranger District Natural Resource staff partnered with the Teton Back Country Horsemen to address these challenges. We jointly decided the best approach was to create and install two attention-demanding informational kiosks at the two key backcountry trailheads. We developed specific messages that

recognized the needs and concerns across the various user groups. Key outcomes are to build awareness and protection of wildlife values, to educate on low-impact horse camping and stock management practices particularly near waterways, to reduce campsite damages, and to emphasize safe recreational practices in bear country.

Funding for the needed materials was obtained through a grant from BCHA’s Education Foundation. Over the winter and spring, the Greys River District staff designed and constructed the kiosks, incorporating customized center panels which could hold easily updatable information. TBCH took the responsibility for installation of the two kiosks.

On October 8th, 17 TBCHers and two Forest Service rangers split into

two teams and transported the kiosks some 20 miles inside the BTNF entrance to the two trailheads, following first the Greys River and then the Little Greys River. The sign sites are adjacent to the two key trailheads and existing directional signage. Fortunately, relatively soft earth and minimal river rock facilitated site preparation. With the many available hands, the heavy kiosks were easily erected. Computer-generated information displays were then inserted in the panels under protective plastic.

After installation, the TBCHers rode out on the Bailey Lake Trail to the lake’s overlook, with full appreciation of this very special recreational area.

How to Nominate a Project for the 2016 Double Diamond Award

By BCHA Volunteer Hours Committee

In 2014, the BCHA Volunteer Hours Committee changed the format for submitting Double Diamond Award Nominations. The committee felt that a means was needed to compare all nominations equally to be fair to ev-

ery project. Prior to this change, the frustrated committee received anything from a 30-minute video or a single copy of a notebook full of pictures and narrative, to a one page written letter, with seven or eight nominations to be

assessed by seven or eight committee members. Although the projects were always worthy, in the time allotted for the committee to meet, it was impossible for individual members to read each nomination and form an opinion on which was the most deserving of the Double Diamond Award.

The new format is on page 2 inside this newsletter. **Note the April 1st deadline for all nominations!**

The deadline was established so the committee members will have time to thoroughly review all the nominations before the National Directors Meeting.

The BCHA Volunteer Hours Committee, appointed by the National Chair of BCHA, will decide the winner or winners of the 2016 Double Diamond Award, which will be awarded at the National Board Meeting banquet in Great Falls, MT in April, 2017.

[continued inside on page 2]



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## Interested in Joining?

Contact BCHA or the organization nearest you for more information.

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# Back Country Horsemen of America Double Diamond Award Application

The Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA) National Board established this special annual award in 2003. This award is presented to BCHA chapters for exceptional volunteer projects and/or educational programs completed during the previous calendar year. The efforts eligible for recognition can include, but not limited to, trail maintenance, trail construction, trailhead construction, educational programs, and youth programs.

BCHA will accept applications from any chapter/unit for a volunteer project or educational program that has been accomplished during the calendar year (Jan.1-Dec.31) immediately preceding the April National Board of Directors Meeting. All award applications shall be for a specific project or

educational program, not for multiple projects or programs undertaken during the year. Multiple outings to accomplish a specific project are acceptable.

Include a **narrative, maximum of four pages**, of what the project entailed and how it was accomplished from start to finish. Answer the questions: who, what, where, when, why, and how. A **maximum of eight photos** may be included to help the committee make its decision. Support letters from the agency or private parties that were in collaboration on this project or program may also be included. Applications must be submitted by **email attachment** in Word or Adobe format, or **US Postal Service**. (Digital format is preferred; however, a hard copy will be accepted if electronic options are not



available to the nominator.) Email applications to: Volunteer@backcountry-horse.com Mail US Postal Service applications to: BCHA Double Diamond Award; 5132 County Rd. 277; Palmyra, MO 63461. **Applications received after April 1st will not be considered.**

The BCHA Volunteer Hours Committee, appointed by the National Chair of BCHA, will decide the winner or winners of the 2016 Double Diamond Award, which will be awarded at the National Board Meeting banquet in Great Falls, MT in April, 2017. For questions, call 573-406-2566. **Outstanding projects are out there! Thank you for the coming applications!**

## States, Chapters, & Affiliates – 14 Ways to Get (and Keep) Members

1. When a member renews or joins for the first time, promptly send membership card and membership packet that includes benefits, opportunities for involvement, and other appropriate information on BCHA initiatives.
2. Create a personal thank you letter for renewing members from the chapter or state president and a welcoming letter to each new member. Include in the letter a list of public service projects and standing committees. Encourage the new member to become active.
3. Call new members a few months after they join to welcome them to your organization. Make sure they are receiving their publications and ask for their initial impressions.
4. Post new member names on your web site and in the chapter or state newsletter.
5. A “who to call” list so that people get quick response to all inquiries. Include handwritten notes when you send information or other requested materials to members.
6. Use personalization whenever possible in all membership correspondence.
7. Use postcards to get your message across quickly and inexpensively. Postcards stand out in the mail, and members will more likely read them because they are brief.
8. Contact all members at least once a year for something other than money.
9. Offer financial incentives to those that renew early and prepay next year’s membership.
10. Follow up with non-renewing members by mail or phone. Send out 2-3 renewal notices. E-mail members whose membership is expiring. Offer them a chance to renew. Extend the grace period for renewal.
11. Place catchy reminder stickers outside of renewal notices, such as “You’re Overdue!” or “No You Didn’t! You Just Think You Did.”
12. Conduct exit interviews with non-renewing members. Survey non-members to find out why they don’t join.
13. The “pool” of people who can afford stock and equipment is small. However, how can you make the pool bigger? Maybe there might be a special family membership offer for kids who participate in youth programs. Parents are kept informed about upcoming youth events and opportunities to volunteer. They don’t need to be stock owners to join and support what BCH is doing for future access to the Wilderness.
14. Mail a flyer along with the dues notice that details membership benefits and services, or send the flyer along with the letter asking members to renew one month before invoicing.

## National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act Becomes Law

By Randy Rasmussen, Director of Public Lands and Recreation

It’s time to celebrate our collective success. On November 18th, President Obama signed into law the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (H.R. 845/S. 1110, the “Trails bill”).

Your calls and letters of support to Congress over the past few years proved crucial to its passage.

Over five years ago, BCHA and partners American Horse Council and The Wilderness Society (TWS) began a campaign to address the growing trail maintenance backlog that affects public access and enjoyment of our national forests. We recognized that any proposal that included new money to enhance the agency’s recreation field staff would be considered dead-on-arrival in the current Congress. That would have to come later.

We sought congressional sponsors who instead would support low-cost methods and ways to leverage existing resources to improve trail maintenance in the short-term. We had to start with

the basics.

What followed became a national movement to address the trail maintenance crisis. We secured bill sponsors from both parties in the House and the Senate. We, and over 120 national and regional organizations, expressed support for the Trails bill as one way an otherwise reluctant Congress might engage in developing solutions to the trail maintenance backlog.

By the time the bill passed Congress, it carried strong bipartisan support as a result of its non-controversial nature. After all, who doesn’t love trails?

The U.S. Forest Service and its Chief sprang into action to make its trail system more sustainable after the release of a 2013 report requested by Congress from the Government Accountability Office—a report that we and TWS set in motion.

The report documented a \$314 million trail maintenance backlog on our

national forests, with an additional \$210 million needed for annual upkeep, capital improvements and operations. In addition, the agency reported that it accomplished at least some maintenance on about 37 percent of its 158,000 trail miles. Clearly, more needed to be done.

Three concepts in new law are to:

1) Develop a strategy to more effectively utilize volunteers and partners, including outfitters and guides, to assist in maintaining national forest trails;

2) Study the feasibility of using off-duty fire crews to aid trail maintenance; and

3) Ensure that the Forest Service is prioritizing its trail maintenance activities in areas most in need of additional work.

Much work remains for the agency, BCHA, its partners and others interested in these next steps. A complementary and key component is the role served by conservation and youth corps, in-

[continued on page 3]

# From the Chairman's Saddle



By Don Saner, Chairman

Greetings BCHAer's!!

Winter has set in here in Wyoming and I'm looking out the window where there is more than three-feet of snow and it is cold!

It is 23 below zero and we are not expected to get above zero anytime soon. Life in the Rockies: you gotta love it!

I'm hoping by now you all have heard that the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act is law. BCHA and our partners have been working for five plus years on this. It has truly been a team effort. BCHA asked for your help over that time period with letters, emails, phone calls, and even visits with your Representatives and you responded with gusto. This just shows you what we can do when we work together. I recommend that you take the time to find out what this law does for the volunteers on the National Forest and use it when dealing with them on your next project.

At the 2015 National Board Meeting in Sacramento, the BCHA board felt that the effort to transfer our public lands to the states was going to be one of the biggest threats to public access. Our understanding is the states do not have the capacity or the money to manage these lands. Because of this, the fear is the states would then sell them off; looking for a quick payday. Since the California meeting, BCHA has been working hard to oppose any effort to mass transfer these public lands. BCHA sent Director of Recreation and Public Lands Randy Rasmussen and Executive Director Jim McGarvey to Washington D.C. These gentlemen had an opportunity to talk to the lawmakers about BCHA's position on the transfer of public lands. Almost all of the western states have some sort of action to gain control of these lands. Please stay engaged and let your legislators know how you feel, as this is going to be a long battle. Even if you don't live in one of these western states, you still need to stay engaged because no matter

where you live in the good old U.S.A., THESE LANDS BELONG TO YOU!

A program BCHA has supported for many years is the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). One of the good things this program accomplished was saving a lot of acreage for public access. There was a Wyoming State School Section in Grand Teton National Park that over the years has been the point of long debates. Developers wanted to get their hands on it because it is right in front of the Tetons and they could make a killing selling condos. Conservation groups with other like-minded organizations wanted Grand Teton Park to gain ownership of this section, so as to keep it open to the public. Finally, The Friends of the Grand Teton Park and the National Park Foundation came up with 23 million dollars and this was matched by LWCF to purchase the section for 46 million dollars. Now Grand Teton Park has an additional 126 acres of land that we all can share and use. This is just one of the many success stories that have come out of the LWCF.

There are more Public Lands issues that BCHA is involved with, such as the National Park System at Yosemite, Rainier, and Olympia. The U.S. Forest Service has several National Forests starting to or planning to start their new forest plans. BCHA has a new Memorandum of Understanding with the BLM. If you ride on the BLM take the time to read this M.O.U. and use it when working on the BLM. And remember, if you ever need help, we are here for you: you just gotta let us know.

We are coming to the time of year where we will be collecting dues and membership information. PLEASE check your information to make sure what we have is correct. This way we can keep you, the membership, abreast of what BCHA is working on.

The National Board meeting in 2017 is being held in Great Falls, Montana. The sign-up information has been sent out to National Directors and State Officers. This information will also be on the website. I hope you can make the meeting and see your Directors at work, join one of the many working committees, and have a chance to meet BCHAer's from all across the country.

I know over the years you have heard or received information on how you can help BCHA. The Fall/Winter contribution letter has been sent out and our Past Chairman Alan Hill is the au-

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## Stewardship Act [continued from page 2]

cluding the need for Congress to pass the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act. The Act provides employment of youth and returning veterans in the service of public lands, including healthy dose of trails.

Most everyone recognizes that new funding sources for trails must be made available if we are to secure for current and future generations a sustainable and publicly-supported system of trails.

Importantly, the Trails bill that is now law will bind the new Administration to continue the agency's momentum to make forest trails more sustainable and to apply additional solutions to address the maintenance backlog. Without it, it would be anyone's guess

whether the new Administration would embrace or ignore these challenges.

Without the genuine outpouring of grassroots support generated by BCHA members, there is no doubt the Trails bill would have languished and died among a fractured Congress—a fate that befalls over 95 percent of all “special interest” bills introduced each session of Congress.

Yet clearly, BCHA could not have accomplished such a feat alone. In addition to the partner organizations already mentioned, we were assisted in outreach to Congress by national partners like the American Hiking Society, the International Mountain Bicycling Association, the Partnership for the

thor with his thoughts and insights on BCHA. There is also the \$5 a month club which I feel is a very easy way to contribute. For the cost of a good cup of coffee or a cheap burger, you help BCHA – with 30% of those funds going right back into the BCHA Educa-

tion Foundation to be used for grants. Thanks to each and every one of you and I hope to see you at the National Board meeting next April.

National Trail System and national and regional organizations that represent climbers, motorcyclists, hunters, anglers and many others.

The campaign to date has positioned BCHA and its partners as national leaders in the push for solutions to the trail maintenance crisis. We expect to continue to build upon our success to date. There is reason to celebrate. Much progress can be made when BCHA works in harmony with BCH states, chapters, individual members and partner organizations with a goal to keep trails open for everyone.

**The Back Country Store**  
Visit us at [www.bcha.org](http://www.bcha.org)

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...

- March 17: Resolutions are due for National Board consideration  
efearn@bcha.org
- April 20-22: BCHA National Board Meeting, Great Falls, MT  
www.bcha.org

2017 FREE-FEE Days on Federal Public Lands

- Jan 16: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Feb 20: Presidents' Day
- April 15-16 and 22-23: Weekends of National Park Week
- August 25: National Park Service Birthday
- Sept 30: National Public Lands Day
- Nov 11-12: Veterans Day Weekend

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The Catch Pen

West Cascade BCH OR Partnership with Detroit Forest Service and National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance

By Jennifer Paulson, President, West Cascade BCH, Oregon

West Cascade BCHO decided to do something different in 2016 at Big Meadow Horse Camp. The wooden pole and post corrals are always being repaired because of heavy snow loads, tree falls, rot, and horses chewing poles. Oregon Equestrian Trails and other Chapters of BCH replace old corrals with steel, 12-gauge corrals in horse camps in Oregon. Less corral maintenance means more time is spent clearing trails in national forest and wilderness areas.

West Cascade applied for a Boots on the Ground grant from Nature Wilderness Stewardship Alliance. We were awarded a \$1500 grant. We received \$750 to start, with the rest awarded when project was completed. A set of four corrals were \$2045.20. Our chapter did not have the funds to cover the cost. I called Josh Weathers of Detroit Forest Service. Josh amazed me and asked how much was needed and made it happen. I was doing a major happy dance after our conversation. Our chapter paid \$762 and U.S. Forest Service paid \$1283.20.

These are corrals special-made to U.S.F.S. specs including horsemen input for safety and durability. They are

not off-the-shelf like other corrals. We had to bundle our order with others. Once our corrals were built in October, one of our members Eric Dahl and his son Ben volunteered to drive to Milton-Freewater and retrieve the corrals – a 12-hours roundtrip drive. Another member Arden Corey volunteered to take the lead on corral install and he coordinated with members and U.S.F.S. for gravel and cement. Of course, this all happened during hunting season, so we had to plan around members' hunting trips.

The install was planned for October 21st. Corrals were brought up to horse camp, a tractor was brought by Bert Morris to remove old corrals, and level site as much as possible, and haul gravel. U.S.F.S. Recreation Manager Josh Weathers brought cement and helped pack the heavy corral panels. It took a



while for us to determine the best way to install because of trees, roots, and slight slope. But once we decided how to do it the outcome was great. We were all very proud. Without the partnership with the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance and Detroit Forest Service, the project would not have been done.

We have identified eight more sites where we would like to install corrals at Big Meadows Horse Camp in the coming years.

MLU Gravel Haul – Devil's Lake Trail

By Lucy Badenhoop, Mother Lode Unit, BCH CA

On Sept. 7-8, 2016, the BCH CA Mother Lode Unit completed the long-planned gravel haul to repair the deep ruts in the Devil's Lake Trail in the Mokelumne National Forest. The U. S. Forest Service purchased and delivered the gravel to the base of a steep hill. This was as close as the dump truck could manage and the remaining two miles had to be packed in by stock.

In the fall of 2015, a three-day work party was rained out after the first day, but it did serve as good practice for the next effort. The crew discovered the stock had a difficulty with the steep hill but a tractor could move the gravel up the hill without much difficulty. With 14.25 tons of gravel at the top of the hill, the pack string could complete more trips in a day.

Since it was a single-track trail, a total of 8 riders and 11 pack stock were divided into four teams. Riders were Lee Owing (Mid Valley Unit), Kelly Rowell, Dave Moser (Mid Valley Unit, Mike Kohlbaker, Al Kaiser, Sheryl Kaiser, Jerry Heitzler, and Carrie Johnan. Multiple turnouts were identified and prepared so the in and out strings could pass each other safely. In addition, we had a strong ground support crew. Jane Lehr of the Mother Lode Unit and Ernie Warzyca of Mid Valley assisted the stock handlers above.

Daryl Shankles brought a water trough which was placed near the gravel pile so returning stock could have a drink between trips. Since this was a dry site, Daryl also brought a 320-gallon tank, pump and hoses in his pickup, which he used to refill the trough regularly from a nearby lake.

Ranger Evan Topal of the Amador Ranger District provided a crew of 10

non-equestrian helpers to load and unload the gravel so that stock handlers would not have to dismount. They were a combination of rangers, interns, trail crew workers and Mokelumne Wilderness volunteers.

Helper crews were aligned on each side of the stock so as to maintain a balanced load. Five-gallon buckets were marked with a 50-pound line and the helpers shoveled gravel up to the line, then dumped it into the special gravel panniers, simultaneously on each side of the animal. At the top of the trail, helpers again stationed themselves on each side of the stock and simultaneously opened the bottom of the panniers to dump the gravel in the rut around the stock's feet.



# The Catch Pen

## Pecos New Mexico BCH Chapter Assists BSA Scout with Eagle Project

By Nichole Tucker, Pecos Chapter, BCH New Mexico

Thanks to the BCHA Education Foundation Grant the Pecos New Mexico Chapter was able to assist Dallas Mullin with the completion of his Eagle Scout Project. Dallas is 14 years old, lives in Edgewood New Mexico, and is a member of Boy Scout Troop 465.

The Eagle Scout project was located at historic Beatty's Cabin, located in the Pecos Wilderness in the Santa Fe National Forest. The cabin is located approximately seven miles from the trail head at Jacks Creek. Work consisted of cementing a new step on the tack shed, which included foundation work, finding the stones to be used, mixing, and placing the cement to hold the stones. Other work completed included re-routing the creek that runs through the horse pens, removal of a fallen tree that damaged one of the pens, creek diversion making the trail near the cabin more passable, and reconstruction of

several tie rails around the cabin. The scouts worked Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 1st - 3rd and the BCH members stayed until Monday.

Dallas needed pack support to pack in the gear and food needed for the participants. Because of the generous BCHA Education Foundation Grant the Pecos Chapter was able to provide the food and supplies at no cost to the Scouts and BCH Volunteers that helped with the project. The money awarded to the chapter went toward project supplies, gear, and food for the workers, and feed for the equines that packed it all in. Overall the project had 26 workers and 19 equines.

While the Scouts were busy completing their work, the remaining BCH members were able to ride out and clear some remote trails from Beatty's Cabin. We worked on Trail 25 to Trail 246 toward Truchas Peak. Trees



were cleared including 2 big wrecks, cleared with two-man crosscut saws. We followed this trail to the intersection with Trail 257, clearing more trees and opening the trail to stock. We then took Trail 264 back to Trail 25, clearing a few more trees along the way. Sunday a few members cleared Trail 25 to Trail 251 which goes toward the Continental Divide and Truchas Lake. Over the weekend the Pecos Chapter cleared more than 25 miles of remote trail.

We are very thankful to have received the BCHA Education Foundation grant. With the grant, we were

able to assist not only in clearing trails and preserving back country access, but also to introduce young people the joys of the wilderness. We all learned what can be accomplished when two worthwhile organizations work together to preserve our wilderness areas.





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## The History of the Ultimate Dutch Oven

By Denene Torgenson

Wondering how the Ultimate Dutch Oven became the affordable, high-quality Dutch oven it is today? It all started in 1991 with Dent Sorensen. Born and raised in Salina, Utah, Dent was tired of the old method of Dutch oven cooking, which necessitated sitting by the fire to watch the Dutch oven and stir the food every few minutes. He also needed an oven that wouldn't require any oil or grease, as his wife had MS and couldn't have that in her diet.

To solve both problems, Dent found a 15-inch tire rim, cut the lugs out, and welded a cone made out of iron, strapping it to the bottom of the tire rim. He added a fry pan, used the other half of the rim for a lid, and began experimenting with recipes. Because of the cone, his creation worked just like a convection oven – and he didn't have to stir or use any oil! He also found that he could cook several dishes, like chicken, vegetables, and biscuits, on different layers of the same oven using very little heat. The clever little invention worked well on a stove top or as a convection oven, surprising hungry guests at every turn with its performance. Understanding that he had something special, Dent patented the oven, and the Ultimate Dutch Oven was born.

The business is now run by Dent's three children, Craig, Eddit, and Denene Sorensen, who purchased the company in 1996. They regularly give demonstrations at retail stores and special events, earning awards and accolades along the way. The Ultimate Dutch Oven now has fans all over the country, from a catering business in Provo, Utah to a Chuck-a-Rama restaurant! Their latest adventure is a partnership with Camp Chef, the largest manufacturer of high-end outdoor cooking products in the country. With Camp Chef's help, Ultimate Dutch Oven, Inc has been able to significantly lower the oven's price and increase its availability, leading to one of the most powerful, affordable Dutch ovens on the market. Now, anyone can own one. Try it for yourself today! [www.ultimatedutchovens.net](http://www.ultimatedutchovens.net)



# Message from the Executive Director



By Jim McGarvey, Executive Director

## Where will BCHA be in twenty years? Where will you be in twenty years?

Back Country Horsemen has come a long way since that campfire in the Bob Marshall Wilderness in 1973. We are approaching 14,000 members with chapters in 31 states. We are considered one the premier organizations for “Keeping America’s Trails Open for All”. *Where will BCHA be in twenty years? What will it look like? Will BCHA still exist?*

As members, we have all come a long way also. We have learned the skills of keeping trails open; how to safely handle our stock and ourselves in back and front country trails and many have taught those skills. You have given a lot and volunteered a lot and just like the question above for BCHA: *Where will you be in twenty years...?*

Most of the members in your chapter probably look like the members in my chapter: 55+, a little worse for the wear and have horses and mules that just keep growing taller and taller. Also at 55+ we start to think about our kids and grandkids and how to help them after we go riding down that great trail in the sky.

Just as we plan for the future in our personal lives, we also can plan on how to overcome the challenges facing a future BCHA, it’s chapters and members across the country. How do we attract and keep new members? How do we get young people away from their mobile devices and out volunteering on the trails? How do we preserve and provide continuity of our back country skills? How do we make sure that some future Congress does not sell Our Land to the highest bidder?

How do we keep the Back Country Horsemen of America strong now and strong in the future?

One way to help both your family and the BCHA is with a new project of the Back Country Horsemen of America, in cooperation with Crescendo Interactive of Camarillo CA. Together, we have created a new website [www.bchalegacy.org](http://www.bchalegacy.org). This website is a gateway to help you provide for your family in the future and, if so minded, provide a small portion to keep BCHA strong in the future. This website is your entrance way to providing confidential will planners, estate planning guides, calculators, tax news from Washington and much more.

Email or call me with any questions or comments.  
[execdirector@bcha.org](mailto:execdirector@bcha.org) or cell 706-669-1015

# The Catch Pen

## The AR Buffalo National River BCHA Centennial Ride and Clean-up 2016

By Pam Floyd, Vice President, Buffalo River Back Country Horsemen, Arkansas



A year of planning, months of scouting and grooming trails, and 11 days and 133 miles of camping and riding on the Buffalo National River in northwest Arkansas. Those are the stats, but the numbers don’t begin to tell the story of what members of the Buffalo River BCHA are calling their trip of a lifetime.

Plans for the Buffalo National River BCHA Centennial Ride and Clean-up began almost a year ago when Park

Superintendent Kevin Cheri invited the group to participate in the 100-year birthday celebration of the National Park Service. As a local chapter of BCHA, our primary focus is maintaining the trails of the Buffalo National River and its watershed; so, it was easy to decide how best to honor both the NPS and our beloved River. We would ride and camp the length of the river from the White River to Ponca, picking up trash and cleaning trails as we went.

Now, this may not be everyone’s idea of a good time, but as fellow Back Country Horsemen and trail enthusiasts, you will understand that this had all the makings of a perfect birthday party!

For the full story and photos, visit the Back Country Horsemen of American website <https://www.bcha.org/blog/2016/11/21/buffalo-national-river-bcha-centennial-ride-and-clean-up-2016/>



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The cost of this advertisement was underwritten by a generous donation from a BCHA member

# The Catch Pen

## Wasatch Chapter BCH Utah 3rd Youth Camp Out

By Julie Heavirland, Wasatch Front Chapter, BCH Utah

The Wasatch Front Chapter of BCH UT put on its 3rd Annual Youth Camp Out at Weber County's North Fork Park in Ogden Valley in July. The event was made even bigger and better this year thanks to a \$500 grant from BCHA.

About 16 kids came and had a great time meeting some new horsy friends. They spent lots of time riding the trails in the park and gaining confidence with their trail riding. They played games on horseback and participated as teams in a scavenger hunt. And in addition to all that, they spent time playing games developed by the Leave No Trace organization and learned about the principles so they will be good trail users no matter where they are.

For many it was their first experience camping with their horses. Each kid received a special T-shirt and some gifts to take home with them to remind them of what they learned and the fun they had over the weekend.

The Wasatch Front Chapter followed up the weekend by sending each attendee a survey to record their thoughts on the weekend. The feedback from the kids was all positive and they all want to come back when we have our 4th Youth Camp Out! When we put on these youth camp outs each year we are providing an opportunity for young people to learn how to be good trail users and gain the confidence so they

can go out and experience the back country trails and appreciate the efforts of those who have come before them to keep the trails open.



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# The Catch Pen

## Stock Tank Project in Water Canyon UT

By Paul Sloane, Southwest Chapter, BCH Utah

Water Canyon lies within the wilderness portion of the 480,000 acre Dixie National Forest Wilderness Pine Valley Ranger District. Located 35 miles north of St. George, UT, the district encompasses the small town of Pine Valley. Its namesake Pine Valley Mountain looms 10,400 feet over both the town of Pine Valley and the city of St. George. For decades, cattlemen have been herding cattle up the mountain trails into the high meadows to allow the herds to graze on the tall grass during the summer months after the snow melts and before the fall weather hits.

Most likely those ranchers were the ones who installed a redwood stock tank at a location named First Water – a natural spring at about the 8,000-foot elevation. This spring was gravity fed by pipe to the 6-foot diameter tank. The tank kept an ample supply of water in storage for the cattle over many years until it was severely damaged by a fallen aspen. The tank was now unusable.

The BCH of Utah Southwest Chapter works very closely with District Ranger Joe Rechsteiner on a variety of projects within the forest. In 2015 we approached the Forest Service for projects within the Water Canyon area. Our chapter donated to the BCHA Education Foundation specifically for Water Canyon. The FS requested replacing the stock tank at First Water.

The project was a challenge because the trail is steep and rocky and takes about two hours to ride from the trailhead to First Water. Hauling a 6-foot diameter tank up the hill was out of the question. Given budget constraints the use of a helicopter to bring in a tank was also out of the question. Because the tank was located in a Wilderness area the FS did not want a standard galvanized stock tank. They wanted something that would blend in as much as possible with the forest.

I could not resist the challenge given my engineering background in plastics and product design. The solution was to make a tank that would be manufactured in segments small enough and light enough to be packed in on pack animals then assembled on site. Like any new product there were successes and failures over the next year. In the end the design ended up with a tank consisting of thirteen formed segments made of rigid ABS plastic and held together with a specialized adhesive. It takes a least seven days for the adhesive to properly cure, but once it is cured the bond is permanent. An outer support wall was made of cedar planks and steel bands around the circumference for strength. Total weight of the tank is less than 135 lbs.

On June 16, 2016, we assembled a group of BCHA members and FS personnel, loaded up two pack animals, and headed up the hill to install the tank. The total installation time was just two hours including preparation of



Finished tank (L-R) Will Gilbert and Joe Rechsteiner, USFS Rick Tabet, BCHA.



Pack string riders (L-R) Joe Rechsteiner, District Ranger Will Gilbert, USFS Jim Wallick, BCHA.

the site for the tank. About ten days later we returned to the site to turn water into the tank. Apparently, the cattle were very interested in the tank and had roughed the empty tank up a bit but no damage done. The spring had a flow rate of 15 gallons per hour so it would take a little over twenty-four hours to fill the 370-gallon tank.

We returned once again a couple of days later to check on the tank and discovered the cattle were very anxious to get to the water and had caused a fair amount of damage. They were leaning in against unsupported walls without any water to provide resistance. An unexpected occurrence that led back to the drawing board. The solution was a 6-foot diameter steel ring that would fit just under the upper lip of the tank on the inside circumference. This ring also had to be segmented for transporting and assembled on site.

Completed ring assembly in hand we once again we packed our mule and headed up the hill to complete the tank. The ring was just what the doctor ordered giving the tank the rigidity needed to withstand the leaning cattle. The tank is now full and providing water to the cattle on the mountain. Our water tank project consumed a lot of time and energy but is well worth it if it helps future cattlemen, FS Rangers, and horsemen with water storage in difficult to reach locations. For more information email paulsloane@infowest.com

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# The Catch Pen

## Gravel Haulers--Doesn't Everyone Want Some?

By Nancy Deisch, Buffalo River BCH, Arkansas

Every now and then, it is not necessity that is the mother of invention, but finance. For several years, Buffalo River BCH has needed some gravel hauling bags. But since we didn't need them every workday, it was hard to ante-up for them. BRBCH board member Larkin Floyd had the perfect set up and equipment for turning wishes into reality. All it took was few extra yards of heavy-duty canvas, a sewing machine that can handle it, and lots of intuition, imagination, and know-how in putting projects together (a pattern with directions didn't hurt either).

One evening in September three Arkansas BCH members got together at Larkin's workshop and measured, cut, sewed, and manipulated that canvas into some pretty good-looking bags (if we don't say so ourselves). Previous to that evening, Larkin had already welded flat metal into hoops and then welded chains to those hoops to be integrated into the tops of the bags where they hook over a sawbuck saddle. After all the sewing, Larkin now intends to rivet the metal hoops into the tops of the bags thinking rivets will be sturdier than stitches. This enterprise took three people four hours (not counting the welding or the riveting), and now we know why the darn things are pricey.

We are anxious to haul some gravel to some sites we've have in mind for years, so we'll send pictures when we do, but here are a few of the work-in-progress.

Maybe the second set would be easier—it seems like that's always the case—but we will never know.



Pictures top to bottom: Peter Deisch and Larkin Floyd measuring/figuring... Larkin stitching up a storm. Ta-da! Larkin and Nancy holding the almost-finished product.

## BCH of MN - First Year - First Project - Luce Line Trail

By Ken Olson, Secretary, BCH of Minnesota

On Feb 8, 2016, the organizing committee of BCH of MN adopted their by-laws. A few months later we officially became a non-profit organization and were accepted as a new state organization by BCHA at the 2016 national board meeting. Many of the BCH MN members have been actively involved in horse trail and campground maintenance work for several years through the Minnesota Trail Riders Association and other groups. But now it was time for BCH of MN to get on the map and organize a trail work project of our own!

The Luce Line horse trail (an abandoned railroad bed that runs from western MN all the way into the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St Paul) runs parallel to the paved bicycle trail. A 1/3-mile section of the horse trail between Silver Lake and Winsted was very wet and needed to be moved to drier ground on the other side of the bike trail. The trouble was that there were a lot of trees, brush and tall weeds to be cleared. A good "starter project" for a "start-up" organization!

Three BCH members met with the DNR Trail Manager Kristy Rice in July to scout out the work and make plans. Since the project seemed like it would take two days, we chose Sept. 9 and 10. A trailhead parking area near Silver

Lake was the overnight camping spot. Members were notified and things were all set.

BUT the summer of 2016 was one of the wettest ever recorded in Minnesota history! A week before the work days the reroute trail area was partially under water and the mosquitoes were so thick that no one was going to be able to work! So "plan B" was developed - reschedule to Oct. 14 and 15 with hopes of dry weather.

On Oct 10th, we phoned Kristy Rice and she said things were looking "pretty good." In Minnesotan that means "we go for it"! Since a couple of our workers were busy harvesting corn and soybeans we determined that we needed to start early on Saturday and if we didn't get done, finish on Sunday. Five eager-beaver workers showed up on Saturday with the right tools and ready to work. To our delight by mid afternoon we had exceeded our expectations and completed the reroute!

There was a lot of brush and quite a few trees that needed to be removed. We were up to the task, and with the use of our President's pull-behind brush cutter, the trail was open and ready for use. \One wet spot will require some gravel but the DNR can handle that so riders should have a good trail by next spring. This wasn't a huge project but

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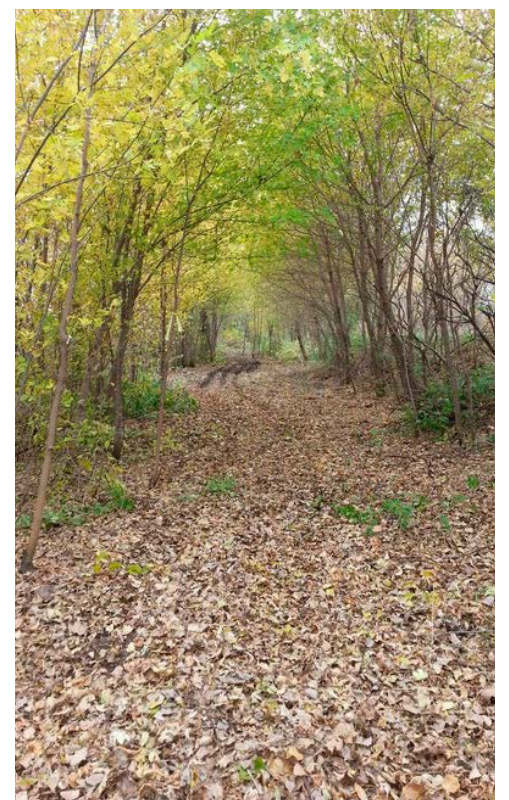
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Although the work was challenging, BCH MN members are already talking about other projects to take on

next year. It looks like 2017 will be the year to establish two or three regional chapters of BCH of MN with each of them taking on projects in their areas.

Spring Sponsorship Deadline:  
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## BCHA Newsletter Media Kit

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# Wilderness Rider Spreads LNT Message Along Pony Express Trail

By Lucy Badenhoop, Mother Lode Unit, California BCH

During September and October 2016, I played a new role in support of the back country and wilderness trails in Utah, Nevada, and California. This role consisted of providing and driving a support vehicle with supplies for a horse and rider across the desert and mountain sections of the Pony Express Trail between Salt Lake City, UT and Sacramento, CA.

My volunteer effort was in support of Megan Lewis from Wales UK who was completing the final leg of her around-the-world ride on horseback. This was an eight-year effort covering about 13,500 equestrian miles. Megan travels three months each spring and three months each fall. She has been periodically accompanied by her cousin Rowena Gulland also from the UK.

Megan began her trek on the Asian coast of the Pacific Ocean, followed the Great Wall across China, and then crossed the Gobi Desert, through Central Asia, across Europe, the UK, and Ireland to the Atlantic Ocean.

In 2015, she began the North American segment in Newfoundland, Canad

and made it as far as St Joseph, MO where the Pony Express Trail begins. In 2016, she finished the Pony Express Trail in Sacramento and went on to the Pacific Ocean at Bodega Bay.

As the mobile support team for Megan and her horse for about 650 miles across three states, there was ample opportunity to practice and advocate the Leave No Trace (LNT) principles along the Pony Express Trail.

Campsites varied among RV camps, public lands, Indian reservations and private ranches. In each case, once LNT practices were explained, the welcome mat was extended. Additionally, stops at the historical markers for Pony Express Stations, sometimes resulted in exchanges with other travelers. These meetings provided additional opportunities to share LNT principles.

After a few weeks of LNT sharing, Megan took the concept a bit further. She decided that fertilization of select-ed desert plants was preferable to the dispersal method of manure disposal.



Megan at Fish Springs.

## Yellowstone Calls Me Back

By Carole Genaro, member of Great Divide and Wind River Chapters, WY BCH

The Wyoming BCH members gathered for their annual state Rendezvous at this year's chosen site Turpin Meadows, in the northwest area of the state. Meeting others, riding new trails, discussing issues, enjoying good food and weather were on the agenda. For me personally, the gathering presented more opportunities to promote the National Park System's invitation to Find Your Park ([www.findyourpark.com](http://www.findyourpark.com)).

Over the years, day riding Yellowstone National Park's extensive network of trails has become a passionate endeavor of mine. Sharing this "secret" – day riding is possible, highly enjoyable, and easily accomplished (see BCHA newsletter July 1997) – has led to helping others get started exploring our national parks with their horse or mule.

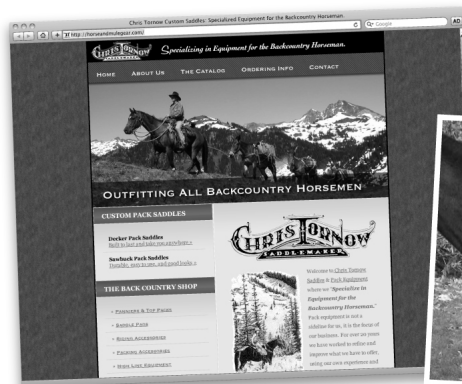
This past summer I went from rendezvous to YNP trails enjoying the company of eleven others over a three plus week period. Riders joined me from North Dakota, Missouri, Texas, and, of course, Wyoming. What fun! Riders explored Mystic Falls, geysers near Old Faithful, Heart Lake, and Black Canyon of the Yellowstone as well as other areas. Festivities were held in Gardner to celebrate the park service centennial.

Fire closure of the south entrance road and our National Forest campground altered our plans, but "there's always next year!" We moved to north entrance and trails, so not all was lost. Plans are beginning to surface for this upcoming summer. More adventures await!

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“That’s Some Tree!”

History from Horseback

By Doug West, Southwest Chapter, BCH Utah

I heard the story, but didn’t believe it. A giant sequoia tree grew in the Pine Valley Mountains in southwestern Utah above St. George. As a natural-born skeptic, I dismissed the story as apocryphal and went on feeding my four-days-a-week riding habit.

I had visited the California and Oregon coasts and knew that redwoods and sequoias are coastal trees definitely not native to the Southwest. The Pine Valley Mountains are a desert range located just north of St. George and west of Zion National Park. Signal Peak towers 10,365 feet above the desert valley where I ride during the winter months. The mountains are part of the Pine Valley Wilderness which is known for its incredibly diverse plant life, but giant sequoias are not part of this natural ecosystem. Finding a coastal tree at the junction of three distinct ecological zones – the Mohave Desert, Great Basin, and Colorado Plateau – made no sense.

Pine Valley Mountains

If you come to ride, be prepared for steep, rocky trails with grand views. It was while riding one of these trails that I came face to bark with the mythical Pine Valley Mountains Giant Sequoia. You can actually drive to the tree in a high-clearance vehicle, but what’s the fun in that? On a good horse, you can take the circuitous and somewhat hazardous route that my Friday riding buddy, Jim, showed me recently. I’m not sure I would call Jim’s route a trail, but you have to understand he takes great delight in scaring the hell out of me. After seven or eight miles of crashing through the brush and hanging off some perilous drops, we arrived at the historic Browse Guard station that we could have driven to.

“That’s Some Tree!”

This misplaced coastal giant, according to the Utah Division of Forestry, is 108-feet tall and 11.25-feet in circumference. Perched at over 6,000 feet altitude on the east slope of the Pine Valley Mountains, this magnificent sentinel watches over the valley below and the Kolob Canyons section of Zion National Park to the east. Ac-



cording to Brian, a retired Forest Service silviculturist\* who worked on the Dixie National Forest, the tree’s height varies because the top dies periodically and is replaced by new growth because of its modified environment. Brian told me that during the last ice age giant sequoias were native to the area, but not today.

How and when the tree was planted is an open question. The Utah Division of Forestry estimates its age at 83 years, but who actually planted it isn’t all that clear. As you may know, southwestern Utah still has a number of active polygamous communities living in the area. Fred, the retired Wilderness Ranger on the Pine Valley District, offered me an interesting theory. With all the people who told him their grandfather planted the tree, he speculates it might have been a polygamist.

Silviculturist Brian believes the tree was planted by someone in the 1920’s or 1930’s who was trying to reintroduce giant sequoias all over the west. This may have been Walter Cottam, a University of Utah horticulturists, that the local paper, The Spectrum, reported in 1986 as having planted the tree. The existing tree may be the only survivor of these efforts to reintroduce giant sequoias to the area. Another frequent explanation is that the tree was planted along with others in 1933 or 1934 by a Forest Service employee working at a research station located by the Browse Guard Station. My wife’s unsubstantiated theory is that Louis L’Amour planted the tree while manning a fire tower in the area and writing one of his western novels. I guess we will never know for sure.

More recent efforts to reintroduce giant sequoias to the arid southwest have been unsuccessful. Brian has some Forest Service records documenting a 1979 Sequoia Planting Study around the Vermillion Cliffs. He also described a 1992 Eagle Scout project “to provide friends for the existing



tree.” UPS delivered 100 trees – 50 giant sequoias, 25 cedars, and 25 jeffrey pines – to him from a California nursery and the Boy Scouts planted them in the area around the existing tree. Within four or five years, all the cedars and pines had died, but six to seven sequoias were still alive. Unfortunately, “the big fire” a few years later destroyed most of the trees around the guard station. The Forest Service made sure the big tree survived the fire, and the tree continues to thrive because of where it

was planted. Brian told me the tree was placed in “a perfect little aquatic zone along the creek.” He speculates that other sequoias might have survived within the vicinity of the guard station. I might have to take my horse and go look again this spring. Since I value my life, I will avoid what my riding buddy Jim calls a trail.

Doug West winters in St. George, Utah, with his wife Trea, dog Maynard, and three Walking Horse mares. Contact him at parasite.ranch@gmail.com.

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# Bear Resistant Containers

By Ed Haeffliger, BCH Washington

“Where did my food go?”  
“Are those bear tracks where I left it?”

A duo of questions like this can lead into quite an adventure – the kind of which no one really wants – unless you happen to be a hunter with a current legal bear tag, then the bear becomes your supper!

Many years ago my wife Sue took a nine day pack trip out of Bishop, CA. She was working for the California State Veterinarians at the University California Davis. One of the teaching professors was the owner of the Rock Creek Pack Station who offered a packing course and animal care class in the backcountry, so off she went! In the beginning of the trip, Mr. Bruin was nowhere to be seen. On the third night, a bear paid them a shopping visit. He slipped in so quietly and unnoticed, that even the wrangler’s dog slept through the bear’s midnight icebox raiding call. The next morning, the cooler chests were open, browsed through, and even a tube of toothpaste that was lying next to a sleeping member of the party was gone! Sue is very wise to the ways of wild animals and felt pretty sure he was following them around for several days after that.

Fast forward to 2016. National parks and wilderness areas may now require that all back country food be stored in a bear resistant container. Food may include stock feed if it is sugar coated, “sweet feed.” Unless a container is provided at a camping site, then you need to obtain one and use it during your stay in these locations.

At first thought, this requirement tends to raise the hair on the back of my neck, “big brother knows best.” But the more I think about this, the better this idea begins to appear. Every time we allow a bear to steal any of our food, we are training them to visit us or another back country camper. Remember Yogi Bear and his sidekick Boo-Boo! The cartoon is a lampoon on the realism of feeding wild animals. I believe that all campsite attacks on campers will stem from a big-toothed critter’s instinct that here is a fast food outlet set up just for his use.

Over the years packing for the Olympic National Park, I saw this requirement roll out first for the civilian community and later for the professional backcountry staff. Because of this, I am very familiar with many different types of these containers. I have had to pack in hundreds of them for the trail crews’ use during their stays.

Okay, Ed, what does that mean to me as a stock camper? I will be using a bear resistant pannier! Well, I have a couple of responses for you to consider. A smaller bear canister can easily carry all of the food and bear-attracting toiletries a small party will use on a weekend outing. Then, there is a serious cost difference between panniers and canisters. For example, a set of bear resistant panniers will run from \$350 to \$600, where a large bear resistant canister will only cost around \$80. The container that holds what bears can sniff out is all that must be bear resistant. This means you can put your bear canister in any pannier, hard or soft. For a weekend trip, a small family group preparing themselves to travel in lightly with one pack animal, could deal with



the safe handling of bear attractants for a price of two canisters (between 1400-1432 cubic inches, for a cost of \$160). That is a lot of food! For a large project or a long-term stay in elk camp, then the larger container (pannier) may be required.

I have included photos of two of the most common bear canisters. They are both very good products and both certified for use in bear country. I suggest that you avoid any products that are not certified. If bear canisters are required, using nothing or non-certified container will get you a healthy fine, which often comes with an order to vacate the area.

One photo shows the two bear-resistant canisters I am most familiar with. The clear one is a Bear Vault. It is capable of holding 700 cubic inches of food stuffs. It measures 8.7” in diameter and is 12.7” high and weighs about 2 lbs. 9.25 oz. The lid is screwed on and locked into place with some tabs on the side of the cap. This is not a water proof container, but if stored upright, it will be very water resistant. The one on the right is a Bear Keg. It is capable of holding 716 cubic inches of food-stuffs. It measures 9” in diameter and is 14” high and weighs about 3 lbs. 7.25 oz. The lid locks into place with three strong quarter-turn locks. This unit is also not water proof.

Water resistance is best addressed by placing canisters in an area that will not be subject to extra heavy rain exposure. The protocol for all food storage and food prep or cooking is at least 100 yards from where you sleep and this does not change when you are using any bear resistant food storage.

In the second photo, I show both of the canisters inserted into a hard-sided non-bear resistant pannier.

Both units are very well made and will do the job they are designed to do. For long-term storage, I warn you when a bear has time to work on a project (I mean days not hours), anything may fail given a bear’s strength and imagination! I really like both of these and can see how they can be used by a packer/camper as an alternative to bear resistant panniers.

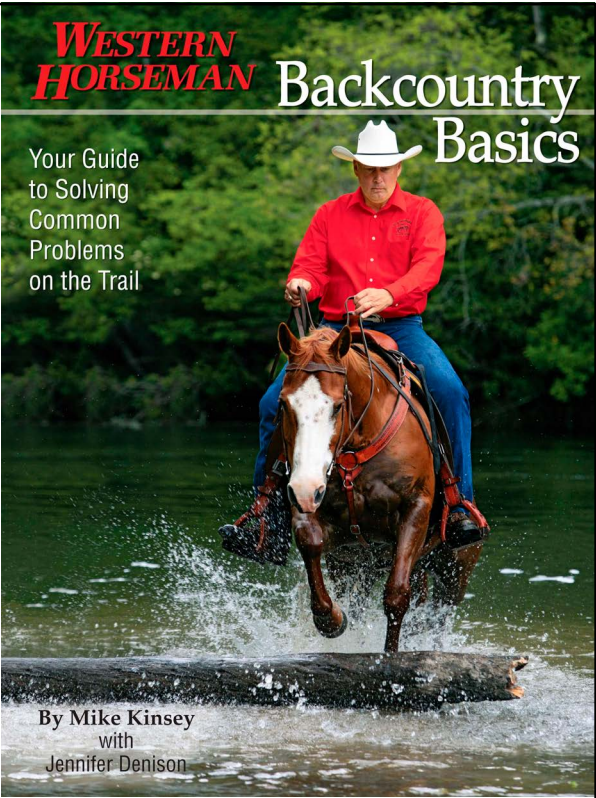
The Bear Keg, 406-695-3394, [www.counterassault.com](http://www.counterassault.com)

The Bear Vault [www.bearvault.com](http://www.bearvault.com)

In a final remark, I am proud to state that both of these products are made in the good old U.S.A.

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