

Colorado Front Range BCH Work Project

By Sherry Baker



In September, Front Range Chapter BCH did a four-day work weekend at Huerfano State Wildlife Area and surrounding public lands near Gardner, Colo. We worked for four days on same project in 2017.

In 2018, we pulled out five miles

of very old barbed wire fence. Most was down and tangled, so it had to be pulled out of dirt, grass and trees. Then we rolled it for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials to haul away.

We also fixed holes in a water stock tank, trimmed and cut trees off trails,

plus worked on a steep switchback trail which was full of loose rocks. The whole area is now safer for everyone.

We had about 20 volunteers both years and set up a camp kitchen where we shared great food and fun times. It goes to show that a group of folks who

want to join together can accomplish much work while still having a wonderful outing, camp with our horses, and get to know each other.

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# 4-H Youth Wilderness Experience

By Co-Committee Chair Kathryn Matthews, BCHC Top of the State Unit

Fifteen BCHC Top of the State Unit members contributed to the success of the 4-H Youth Wilderness Experience. It began on Saturday July 14, 2018 with setting camp. Nine 4-H youth and staff arrived on Sunday. The camp lasted three days and closed with a grand finale of the youth fixing a Dutch oven dinner for their parents.

The U.S. Forest Service Scott Valley Ranger District reserved the Carter Meadow Group Camp. Along with the U.S. Forest Service, we had support from California Department of Fish and Wildlife that provided two water stewards to work with the kids during a hike studying the streams, wildflowers, and trees along with the Siskiyou County Agricultural Department.

*Our Activities were:*

- Horse Riding Lessons
- Stock Packing
- Trail Trial
- Hiking
- Study of plants and animals in water
- Study of meadow plants and trees
- Map Reading
- Making an Emergency Bracelet

## BCHA Appoints Grants Committee

Donating to BCHA means keeping the trails open and accessible to all. Your financial help makes it all happen. BCHA offers several ways to structure your gift to promote our mission and fuel our service projects across the United States. Recently, a grants committee was appointed as a standing committee to assess and administer dissemination of grants to our member organizations. The Grants Com-

## CHAPTER CENTS

By Ginny Grulke

Is your BCH chapter always low on funds for the projects you'd like to do? Or for sending your National Board Representative to the National Meeting? Do you need new ideas and help to fundraise so you can do more? Welcome to CHAPTER CENTS, a resource for ideas.

*Current Grant Opportunities*

- We did not find any external grants that would apply to BCHA Chapters recently. But we will keep monitoring them.
- DON'T FORGET grants are available from BCHA

for chapters. Grant money comes partially from the Trails Forever Fund and partially from individual donors. The grants are reviewed and awarded once a year in the early spring. NOW is a good time to submit your application. Go to <https://www.bcha.org/chapters/grants>

*Merchandise Sales*

**Trail Rider License Plates**

If you are in one of the 19 states that does not require an official front license plate, selling Trail Rider license plates can be a lucrative fundraiser. These are attractive not only for BCH members, but also for any trail rider in your state. In Kentucky, we sold 50 in the first 48 hours, mostly through Facebook.

You can get 50 plates for about \$5 each and then sell them for \$15. If you order 100 plates, the price goes down even further.

Here is the design we used:



**BCH Lapel Pins**

Lapel pins are unisex and can be worn on anything from a suit coat to a denim jacket or polo shirt. They are easy to order online and not very expensive. Sell them to your members for a small markup. Lapel pins are also an

- Building a First Aid Kit
- Sun Dying a Handkerchief
- Crosscut Saw
- Branding Wood
- Dutch Oven Cooking
- Identifying Animal Tracks with a Scavenger Hunt

Demonstrators included a professional packer, a retired U.S. Forest Service employee who taught map reading, a certified trail trial judge, a registered nurse who taught first aid, a certified sawyer who taught safety using a crosscut saw, a retired Cal Fire employee who entertained the kids with knot tying, a Dutch oven specialist who worked with the youths to prepare their families' meals, and we can't forget our very own Sasquatch who visited the youths.

*Budget:*

Food & Supplies	\$590.97
Riding Helmets	89.94
Activity Supplies	305.67
Total	\$986.58

mittee replaces the BCHA Education Foundation entity that will be dissolved. Members of the Grants Committee are: Karen Saner (WY) Chairman, Jacque Alexander (AR) Recorder, Joanne Mitchell (TN), Michael Murphy (CA), and David Beary (IA). In January, information regarding the grant application procedure will be sent out in an e-newsletter to all members.

effective advertisement for BCHA, when you are out and about, trail riding, attending a church meeting or shopping.

Here is a sample design: (Thanks Utah!)



All use of the BCHA logo must go through headquarters.

*Online Fundraisers*

**Amazon Smile**

Amazon has a nonprofit program where shoppers can specify your organization to receive a small donation each time they shop. It does not cost the shopper anything. To read more about Amazon Smile, and setting up your chapter to receive donations, go to <http://smile.amazon.com/about>.

**A Resource to Save Money**

If your chapter or state is a registered 501(c)3, you are eligible to have a TECHSOUP account ([www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org)). At Techsoup, digital companies donate both hardware and software for distribution to nonprofits. Products aren't free, but highly discounted. The cost is often just an administrative fee. As an example, Microsoft Office for Mac is available for \$29. Browse their products catalogue at [techsoup.org](http://techsoup.org)

*Do You Have More Ideas on Fundraising or Saving Chapter Money??*

If your chapter has done a unique fundraiser or found other money-saving ideas, please send them to the fundraising committee at [ginny.grulke@gmail.com](mailto:ginny.grulke@gmail.com), and we will share in the next Chapter Cent\$.





# View from the Chairman's Saddle

By Freddy Dunn, BCHA National Chairman



## Planning for the future of BCHA

During my tenure as chairman, I have been incredibly fortunate to have active, engaged, committee leaders and members. Thanks to their dedicated energies and time, we were able to scout the trail further ahead and determine what BCHA can and should accomplish at the national level. We recognize the unique role that each state, chapter, and unit provide in advocating and promoting BCHA's mission. States and chapters provided lots of information regarding their needs at our National Board Meeting in April 2018. We listened, we planned, and we are fulfilling:

**Education** – In response to the overwhelming consensus that leadership training was needed at the chapter level, this committee has created presentations that will be rolled out in the first quarter of 2019. Their thoughtful and collaborative work exceeded my expectations. Every chapter that needs more information on their officers' roles and responsibilities will have wonderful resource.

**Advocacy/Public Liaison** – An excellent flyer was created and a telephone campaign is being implemented to contact like-minded equestrian groups. Power is always in numbers and creating partnerships is crucial for maintaining our reputation as THE equestrian trail group.

**Fundraising** – We established and planted the seeds for the Legacy Fund – a long-term fund for operations and committee support. After we reach \$500,000 in donations, earned interest will keep BCHA sustainable. We created a standing committee for grants. The committee will receive funds and distribute them to chapters in the form of grants. This committee will replace the work of the BCHA Education Foundation and it will be dissolved in 2019.

**Media & Marketing** - Facebook continues to be an excellent source for getting our name recognized across the country. It brings awareness to our mission, vision and values and will continue to be used as a direct marketing tool. Our website is being revised to be more user friendly and contain current, relevant information. And, the Executive Committee has approved a proposal from the Trailmeister to be the sole sponsor of his clinics and shows in 2019. He has 57 clinics on his calendar so far next year. The Trailmeister website, clinics, endorsements and Facebook posts continue to be some of the best advertising and promotions we can have.

**Public Lands** – This committee is in the process of reorganizing under the leadership of Jerry Benz (Ore.) with regional sub-committee chairs. This structure will allow the committee to be proactive, as well as reactive to events, issues and requests from and for all areas of the country. We have a wealth of knowledge in our membership that will advance our mission and benefit all of our BCHA member states.

Additionally, our management agency continues to support, encourage and negotiate our day to day operations and financial matters. They have helped us create programs for our members with Equisure, USRider and AirMed. These are wonderful membership benefits that we hope our members will use.

As I acknowledge and thank our incumbent leaders, I know we will have a slate of excellent nominees for the leadership positions in BCHA in 2019. My thanks to those who will continue to work diligently for the benefit of all BCHA members. We are looking forward to our National Board Meeting in Asheville, N.C. from April 8-11, 2019.

## 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.

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# Horsemen to Accept Restrictions in Five Central Cascades Wilderness Areas?

*We’re not really part of the problem, but we’re being swept into new “limited entry permit system”*

*By Randy Rasmussen, Director of Public Lands and Recreation*

Recent negotiations with forest supervisors of both the Deschutes and Willamette National Forests came to a standstill. On one hand, BCHA and BCH Oregon strongly support the need for action. BCHA volunteers have witnessed growing resource damage caused by a surge in visitation within many of the five Wilderness Areas that are the focus of the agency’s Central Cascades Wilderness Strategies Project. These same volunteers often pack out a lot of trash left behind by others. On the other hand, pack and saddle stock users are being penalized for the damage caused primarily from foot traffic.

The Forest Service’s Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project cites a “tremendous increase in visitor use in the past six years,” and locations where “visitation has increased more than 500% in the last two years.” Within the most heavily visited Wilderness Area, the Three Sisters Wilderness, overall use “has increased 231% since 1991 when the last planning effort took place,” while visitation has increased 181% since 2011. As a result, the “wilderness character” in many locations is lost or will soon be lost from a growing human imprint that includes excessive human waste, trash, eroded trails and sprawling campsites.

Yet the recent surge in visitation comes from people visiting these Wilderness Areas via foot, consisting primarily of hikers, trail runners, and backpackers. On some trails, the people are climbers accessing peaks and a non-technical, but exceedingly popular climb, to South Sister. At the same time, Forest Service data shows that visitation to these wilderness areas via pack and saddle stock remains relatively flat.

So, in a rare turn of events, horsemen are not the ones being pointed to as a primary cause of resource degradation. Equestrian use is cited in the EA as comprising no more than 1% to 3% of all wilderness visitation. Importantly, no indication of horse- or pack

***So why is the Forest Service insisting that horsemen be subject to the proposed “limited entry permit system” when we clearly are not contributing to the overuse problem?***

stock-related damage is cited in a six-year study by Oregon State University of camp and trail conditions in these wilderness areas.

Our negotiations with the two forest supervisors, while cordial, got nowhere. The supervisors emphasized the great value they place on their relationship with BCHO and the significant contributions of its volunteers. To be fair, they have consistently expressed that sentiment throughout many public

forums over the years. It’s a strong and productive relationship. Despite our plea that subjecting pack and saddle stock users to the limited entry permit system would serve to discourage and further limit visitation by equestrians, forest supervisors are reluctant to grant



Photo by Betty Applebaker.

an exemption to any user group.

How then do horsemen best respond to the current threat to wilderness character and to what degree do we accept new restrictions on our use when years of scientific monitoring demonstrates that we are not really part of the problem? At the same time, how do we prevent a further decline in equine-related visitation within these five Wilderness Areas while strengthening our partnership with the Forest Service to address the growing and negative impacts to wilderness character? How do we prevent a precedent of the agency adopting a similar limited entry permit system elsewhere that indiscriminately includes equestrian use when it can be shown that we are not a significant part of the (overuse) problem?

The response by BCHA and BCHO has been to push back formally via the administrative review process and filing a “pre-decisional objections” letter in late December. We also invoked legal counsel for additional advice and review of our objections letter. It is our hope that the issue can be resolved, and equestrian use absolved, via the objections process and that this obvious inequity does not have to be challenged in the federal court system.

As of late December, the Forest Service had yet to issue a final decision on the Central Cascades Wilderness Strategies Project. Our hope is to exclude equestrian use from the limited entry permit system via the formal objections resolution process, where we will again meet face-to-face with agency decision-makers. In this case, our objections will be put before the new Regional Forester, who is familiar with BCHA’s exemplary service record and longstanding partnership with the agency.

We hope the Forest Service sees fit not to implement a double standard that is unfair to equestrians. BCHA’s

volunteers are all too familiar with increasing restrictions on their use in wilderness areas and in accessing other public lands. For decades, federal agencies have consistently imposed limits on the use of pack and saddle stock when it has concluded the impact

of that use is or could be detrimental. At the same time, agencies typically did not imposed limits on user groups not thought to cause adverse impacts.

In terms of equity and fairness, we intend to impress upon the Forest Service that it should not impose limits on equestrians when the science has demonstrated the impact of other user groups is causing adverse impacts to wilderness character in the Central Cascades. We also have some law and policy arguments to back our claims, including language from the

relevant Forest Plans that call for wilderness managers to provide “highest priority...to those uses which are most dependent upon the Wilderness environment, cannot be reasonably accommodated elsewhere, and least affect the Wilderness environment.” We feel use by horsemen match all three criteria perfectly. And we won’t accept being swept into these new restrictions.

## Attention photographers! Here are some tips for shooting outdoors.

- Carry a tripod.
- Simplify your subject. Pick the most important element; for example, the person using the crosscut saw. Get in closer and focus on the person.
- Are you taking your pics in the deep woods? Get closer and use a flash to light up those smiling faces.
- Go up the trail, ahead of the action, and get that great shot from the front of your subjects.
- Change your point of view. Look over someone’s shoulder at the scenery, move your subject off center, or stand up on a rock for a new perspective.
- Set your digital camera’s file size to at least 1MB. If your goal is to be on the front page the newsletter, set it for 2MB and use that tripod.



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**Educate**  
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# What Will Be Your Legacy?

By Ginny Grulke

It has been said many times — in BCHA meetings, in chapter meetings and with other horse-riding friends — “We are all getting old!” Somehow, this fact still comes as a surprise. And if you are like me, my planning now considers that in 20 years (or less?), I just won’t be able to do physically what I can do now. Or perhaps, I will be one of the unlucky ones that cannot keep up mentally.

Now is the time to think about our personal future and legacy including the future of BCHA. For the future of BCHA, think 30, 50, or more years in the future. Our children and grandchildren will live in a more complex world, surrounded by robots, electronic talking cashiers, self-driving cars, artificial intelligence medical devices, and an ever-crowded planet. Their “Smart Homes” will enable them to talk to unlock their doors, set the temperature, turn on and off lights, and let the dog out. Who will be riding on trails? Will the trails still be there? Will our grandchildren and subsequent generations get to experience being on the back of a horse with no other person, vehicle or building in sight? Simply said, will they have the opportunity to experience the joys we have had riding and bonding with horses on trails in the forest and wilderness?

Keeping BCHA alive far into the future — to protect the joys all visitors find on America’s public lands and

trails — requires a solid financial base. To keep the lands from disappearing in the future, we need BCHA to be a strong voice and advocate for “Keeping the Trails Open for All.” To ensure our future existence, BCHA has initiated the Legacy Fund.

The BCHA Legacy Fund will be an accumulation of financial assets which cannot be touched for today’s operations. In fact, the principal cannot be withdrawn for any reason. The Legacy Fund will grow through the ongoing contributions of donors as well as through the investment of such funds. Only when the value of the Legacy Fund reaches \$500,000, can the interest be used to fund a portion of BCHA’s annual operating budget.

The Legacy Fund is a way to provide future generations of BCHA mem-

bers a source of income to keep BCHA running. This allows them to focus on keeping public lands in public hands and keeping trails open to equine stock use.

**We have started with a modest Legacy Fund goal of \$20,000 by the 2019 National Board Meeting.**

We are asking for \$20,000 in pledges by April 10, to be paid by April 17. Three BCH members and Mainspring Association Management (our administrative firm), have offered a matching challenge of \$8,000 if we reach our \$20,000 goal.

If you want to leave a legacy to reflect your life and what you believe is important, please consider donating to

the BCHA Legacy Fund. Donations of all sizes are appreciated and welcome. Anyone who donates to the Legacy Fund is a member of the BCHA Legacy Society. Those who donate \$1,000 or more by the National Board Meeting (April 7-10, 2019) will be permanently listed as a Legacy Fund Founding Member. After the National Board Meeting, only those donations of \$5,000 or more will be given Founding Member status. All donations are tax-deductible and all donor information is private and confidential.

In planning your gift to BCHA, consider asking your employer about matching funds. Many companies offer matching gift programs to encourage employees to donate to charitable organizations. Also, when updating your will, you might consider a bequest from your estate for BCHA’s Legacy Fund. Bequests and donations can include cash, appreciated securities, IRA distributions, and other financial assets.

To donate, contact Erica Fearn at [Efearn@bcha.org](mailto:Efearn@bcha.org) or 860-586-7540, and she will acknowledge your pledge and send you the Legacy Fund pledge agreement. If you have any detailed questions, Erica can also connect you with one of the Legacy Fund Committee members.

Thank you in advance for considering the BCHA Legacy Fund in your plans and for “Keeping the Trails Open for Future Generations.”



## New BCHA Leadership Education Courses Available

By Marybeth Conger

Committee members started to arrive at Craig Allen’s house in Hooper, Utah on November 8, 2018. They did not leave until the mission was accomplished on November 12. The team consisted of BCHA Education Chair Craig Allen, team leads Latifia Rodriguez (Architecture) of Colo., Marybeth Conger (Course Development) Idaho, Amy Lyman Cook (Field) Idaho. Craig is a thoughtful, gracious host, an amazing cook, and even scheduled yoga during two of our breaks. Properly motivated, the team worked long days, but always ate well, and had fun. The results were the following Leadership 101 courses:

- National Director/State Director
- Chapter President/ Vice president
- Secretary
- Treasurer

These training courses should help all BCH members complete the office they have recently taken, or help others to decide one day to volunteer for this position. After all, effective chapter

leadership helps BCH grow and have fun while accomplishing the BCH mission. We are planning to present this training via webinar on February 23, 2019 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Mountain Time. Enrollment information will be provided as we get closer to the date.

Be on the lookout for future education offerings. In the meantime, every state and chapter have access to the BCHA Education Architecture document. Go to [www.BCHA.org](http://www.BCHA.org), sign into the YM site, click on Chapter Resources, then select Education Architecture to access the Architecture Spreadsheet, a fluid document, updated periodically with new information. Check it out! Check it often! There is a tremendous amount of training information available there for you to use now.

If you are interested in helping to develop educational materials and looking for a BCHA volunteer committee that has fun and makes a difference, email [allenceco@msn.com](mailto:allenceco@msn.com).

## U.S. Forest Service Recognizes Back Country Horsemen of Missouri For Their Enduring Service

By Paula Hull

The Back Country Horsemen of Missouri (BCHMO) were nominated and selected for the Enduring Service Award which recognizes sustained support and engagement with volunteerism and service over many years to the U.S. Forest Service. This group exemplifies excellence in their work and commitment to the Forest Service mission. The nomination was sent to the Region 9 Regional Office in Milwaukee, Wisc. and recipients are chosen at the Regional level which covers 11 states and 15 National Forests.

The nomination narrative submitted to the Regional Office explains why this group is so deserving of the Enduring Service Award:

*In April 2017, the Mark Twain National Forest was affected by a devastating flood event. Many recreation areas and trails were greatly impacted on the Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs Ranger District (ACWRD). Recreation connects people to the outdoors and the flood impacted our ability to provide safe recreation. Assessments needed to be done in an expeditious manner and the District knew it would need assistance. The BCHMO have been a dedicated partner for many years and are instrumental in assisting with maintaining these two areas. When the flood event occurred and knowing the workload it would be to assess all District trails, all it took was a phone call to Steve Assenmacher and Sherry Copeland of BCHMO, to see if they could help. There was no hesita-*



BCHMO members Steve Assenmacher, left, and Bill Winkelmann, right, of the Mountain Riders Chapter, accept the Enduring Service Award from Mark Twain National Forest, Zone Recreation Officer Darla Rein in Ava, Missouri.

*tion at all - the response was when and where do you need us. The ACWRD has 212 miles of trails. Swan Creek and Bateman non-motorized trail systems have 44 miles between them and BCHMO were very familiar with these areas. The type of dedication from BCHMO as a partner is what makes our relationship strong. The Forest Service can rely on BCHMO. Their work during the flood ultimately is assisting the Forest Service with the USDA strategic objective of delivering benefits to the public by providing information so the district can develop a strategy plan for doing maintenance on the trails to provide safe recreation opportunities for the public.*

This is the second time BCHMO has been recognized for their service in the Mark Twain National Forest by the Forest Service. In 2014, BCHMO and the River Springs Chapter were awarded the 2014 Volunteer & Service Region 9 Award - Restoration, and The President’s Volunteer Service Award.





# Catch Pen

## Meet and Greet with Partners

By Linda Meyer



Above: Local band Valley Grass provided the after-dinner entertainment.  
Left: Barry Garten, Mount Rogers area ranger with Candy Lansford, SWVA president.

In October, the BCH of Southwest Virginia and the Mount Rogers Trail Advocates Coalition welcomed new owners Christy and Butch Columbetti of Iron Mountain Horse Camp. We're looking forward to showing all of the Jefferson National Forest to the Columbettis and working with them on our shared interests. BCH of SWVA and the Coalition partner on trail maintenance and share objectives for keeping all the trails open.

Over 50 people shared a fabulous pot luck dinner, followed by a great band and a very popular silent auction fundraiser for future projects. Mount Rogers U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Area Ranger Barry Garten and his wife joined the festivities. After the introduction, SWVA presented Garten with the latest BCHA newspaper and an honorary BCH arm patch. We would like to thank everyone who made this a memorable event.

## Mesa Verde BCH Preserving A Bit of History

By MVBCH Public Lands Chair Tif Rodriguez



When the MVBCH ventured up to one of our favorite stomping grounds for a beautiful summer ride, the trailhead for Upper Chicken Creek was full. We opted to go next door to the old Transfer Corral campground. The road all the way up to this spot is now chip sealed, so it makes for a much smoother ride! For those not familiar with the Transfer corrals, they are just north of Mancos, Colo., and the horseback riding, camping, hiking and recreation in this area is superb. Each year there is a NATRC ride held right down the road. The Transfer area has been featured in magazines, such as Horse & Rider (<https://horseandrider.com/horseback-trail-riding/colors-colorado-25184>). It struck us what poor shape they were in. It looked like work and maintenance hadn't been done on these corrals since our chapter last did it about nine years ago. We tried to adopt the site at the time, but were told the local outfitter had purview. Over the years old outfits left, new ones moved in, and unfortunately this site

was somewhat forgotten.

After getting the all clearances, we planned. About 10 people volunteered on the project. We cut down or gathered aspen poles for the fencing from the surrounding area and repurposed everything from what was available. We were able to completely restore the front two corrals and gates. The very large rear corral still needs some help. We plan to do that at the first chance in 2019.

We wrote a letter of support for the U.S. Forest Service grant application for this site. If successful, the grant is through the National Forest Systems Trails Stewardship Act. BCH was instrumental in getting this Act through Congress. We're hoping that will materialize, but in the meantime, we needed to make the corrals safe for campers and their horses. We're hoping to stay involved in the preservation and maintenance of this site. We'll hopefully have some updates if grant funding is awarded.



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# Catch Pen

## Utah BCH Wasatch Front Chapter Dedicates New Horse Camp

By President Julie Heavirland

Under the bluest of skies amid a forest ablaze with yellow aspen, an equestrian dream came to fruition after seven years in the works. On September 21, members of the U.S. Forest Service, members of BCH Utah, Weber Pathways, Community Foundation of Ogden Valley, and the horses gathered at the corrals to celebrate completion of the Bluff Springs horse camp project. We now have a camp in a remote area of the Monte Cristo mountains that can be used by horsemen and women for recreational stock use, hunting, and other horse-related activities.

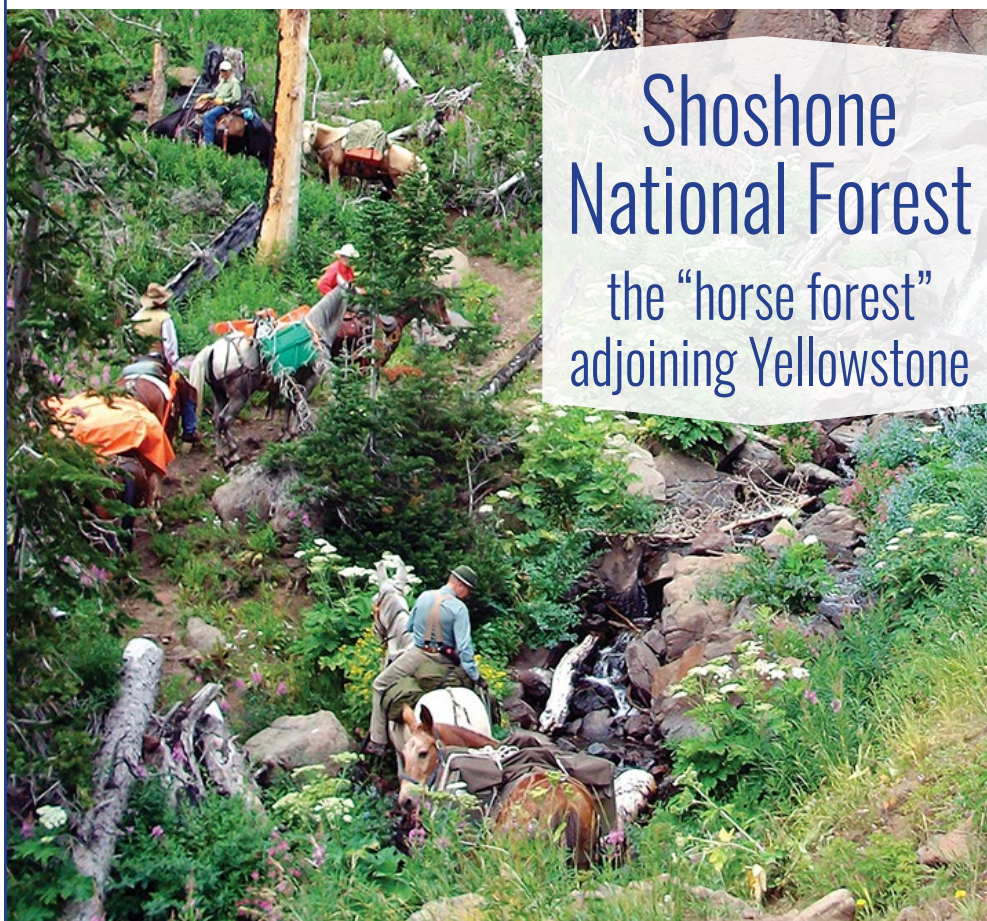
BCHU needed approval from the U.S. Forest Service, including the environmental evaluation and approval of the layout. In addition, there was a tremendous need for money. The Community Foundation of Ogden Valley helped to raise the needed funds. The community foundation matched direct donations to BCHU that totaled over \$13,000. We thank the community

foundation, the U.S. Forest Service, and key donors for making this possible. We also thank Smith & Edwards Company, a long-standing supporter of our projects, and Nate Toone of TNT Fence who constructed the sturdy metal corrals on the site.

At the state level, Back Country Horseman of Utah is responsible for about 8,700 volunteer hours and work on more than 1,300 miles of trails worth over \$337,000. District Ranger Sean Harwood said the Forest Service could not do without BCH, "We are grateful for everything the group does from their work on trails to their advocacy for legislation benefitting the forest."



Trailheads Museum Lodging Dining Rodeo Entertainment



### Shoshone Back Country Horsemen of Northwest WY would like to share our portion of paradise with the world-wide equine community.

Having just celebrated our 25th anniversary as caretakers of equine trails in the Shoshone National Forest, we want to welcome you to America's first national forest, a premier equine destination. It was and still is affectionately known as the "horse forest." It consists of 1,389 miles of non-mechanized trails winding through 1.4 million acres, 56% of which is designated wilderness area.

The Cody, WY area has trailheads, trails and scenery that will make your vacation unforgettable, and is the gateway to Yellowstone National Park. Cody is centrally located to experience western hospitality at its finest. The Buffalo Bill Center of the West (a Smithsonian Affiliate consisting of five museums of western history at a single location), nightly rodeos, dining, lodging, entertainment, and western culture all await you in Park County, WY.

Please go to our website at <https://shoshonebch.org> for more information on Shoshone Back Country Horsemen and our efforts to preserve this great heritage. Travel the trails less traveled and pack out the experience of a lifetime along with what you packed in.

For additional information on Shoshone National Forest:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/shoshone>

For more information on the Cody, WY area:

<http://www.codyyellowstone.org>

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# Catch Pen Lucky Us!

By Nancy Deisch, Buffalo River BCH Arkansas



Top: A hike out to Big Bluff—one of the tallest on the Buffalo River.  
Middle: Don cools his horse in the river. Those higher-altitude horses didn't quite know what to think of lower mountains and higher temps and humidity!  
Bottom: Several members of the Arkansas BCH joined the Wyoming riders.

This title has at least three meanings. First, we—Pam and Larkin Floyd, Jacque and Bobby Alexander, and Peter Deisch and I—were lucky enough to be hosted by the Teton BCH for some unbelievable riding in Wyoming near Jackson in August of 2017. Second, we were lucky again when three members (Rod and Monique Gustin and Don Harpell) of the Teton BCH came to Arkansas to ride with us September 2018! We all camped at the Steel Creek primitive horse camp on the upper Buffalo National River. There were trails enough to last the five days that we planned to ride from there (however, rain cut the riding one day

short). Several members of the Buffalo River BCH joined us for day riding on different trails, one being a popular ride up to the best-little-restaurant in the middle-of-nowhere called Low Gap Cafe. The heavy green lushness of the Arkansas forest made for different riding conditions for those used to the wide-open spaces and vistas of the Rocky Mountain trails. The shade was welcomed, but not the humidity that was a different riding condition for the Westerners. Finally, third, we have made some friends and riding/camping companions as well as lots of cherished memories that will last a lifetime. We are so lucky!

# Footlog in Olympic National Park

Submitted by Donna Hollatz, Peninsula Chapter BCH of Washington



When you're hiking, do you ever stop on a footlog and wonder how it was installed over that raging creek or river? Or even stop and be grateful it's there? Forging some of our wild creeks and rivers can get extremely dangerous. Without them, we start to lose trails. In the Olympic National Park, footlogs are installed either by a paid park trail crew or by volunteers. In the Olympic National Forest, it's all volunteers because the ONF doesn't have a trail crew. Most of the time the BCH are involved because of our extensive knowledge of rigging and the gear we have to move heavy things, not to mention the horses and mules to get the heavy stuff to the job site. For one such project on Gold Creek (Dungeness area, U. S. Forest Service land), we had a fantastic collaboration of the following groups: Graywolf Crew (volunteer trail crew led by Mike Bonomo), BCH Peninsula Chapter (led by Tom E. Mix and Del Sage), Pacific Northwest Trail Association's Quil-

cene Ranger Corps (this is a fantastic group of middle school kids from Quilcene who work at trail work during the summer.) PNTA crew leader is Tanner Boggs and Eric Wollborg is communications manager. Martin Knowles, Paul G. Hornberger, Rod Farlee, and others joined the fun. The teamwork was astounding. The log was moved, prepped, and installed. The approaches – trails leading to and from the bridge – were created to trail standards. This footlog was a long time coming. We are thrilled the U. S. Forest Service finally gave us the go-ahead to get it done, and we are proud of the result. Everyone had a great time and no one walked away without learning something new. The kids grew so much in their confidence, pride, and skills!

*Editor's note: For more about the PNTA Quilcene Ranger Corps, visit <https://www.pnt.org/qrc-takes-youth-outdoors/>*

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# BCH of California Sponsor Intern for Pack Stock Center of Excellence

By Karen Lopes

With support from various units across the state and a grant from the BCHA Education Foundation, BCHC sponsored an intern for the summer of 2018 to work with the U. S. Forest Service Pack Stock Region 5 Center of Excellence. The intern worked directly with U.S. Forest Service Packers Michael Morse and Lee Roeser (also the Regional Master Packer). With help from Morse and Roeser, Dennis Serpa developed the application and interview process, expectations for the intern, and benefits of the program to BCHC and BCHA. This was the first time many of the units in California joined forces to sponsor an intern for the Center of Excellence. The mission statement that guided the intern’s training: “To develop young adults to carry on the skills, attitude and fundamentals of packing, partnerships and LNT for the future of BCH. ”

The BCHC internship alliance is an opportunity not only to develop a passion in a young person to continue the goals of BCH, but also to strengthen our partnerships with our public land agencies. Our first intern was Kristianne Morrison. She received rave reviews from all of the people who worked with her. In addition to packing and other skills learned from Morse and Roeser, Morrison was certified on the crosscut saw by BCHC members Michael Lewis and Jack Peckham. Certification was attained at the Region 5 Wilderness Academy soon after the beginning of her internship. Soon after her certification, Bill Carter of the Eastern Sierra Unit of BCHC took Morrison on a trail clearing project to the Pacific Crest Trail. Throughout her time working for the Center of Excellence, Morrison learned a variety of skills – ranging from how to properly pack and balance loads, proper use of trail tools, how to tie a variety of knots for various purposes, as well as the principles of Leave No Trace, and why they are

important to the future of our wilderness areas.

Of her experiences, Morrison said, “I’ve learned so much about trail work and different tools and methods to repair a variety of trails. I had the experience of crosscutting down trees, rock work, and building checks and water bars. I never knew how much work went into the trails we love so much until this summer; a lot of hard work is put into it. I was very happy to be a part of it, and I will carry on helping to maintain trails for all to enjoy. Michael has educated me so much on how the Forest Service protects and keeps our Wilderness thriving. I was also able to see firsthand how the pack stock helps during a fire.” Morrison added, “A very important skill I learned was how to evaluate the trail to make sure it was safe and secure for riders and pack stock.”

Morrison described a normal day at the Center of Excellence, “We packed out supplies to the trail crews every week. A normal day was picking up the food order, checking every single item, refilling propane tanks, and building the loads for the resupply heading out the following day. We packed in everything from eggs to a 50-gallon jungle can that is used for warming water. When building the loads, I learned how to pack items efficiently according to size and weight. The most important detail is to make sure the load is rattle-proof. When we packed out, we also had trash and other items to bring out with us after the resupply. It was a great learning how to get the loads even without a scale, my human scale – my arms – were pretty accurate by the end of the season.”

With continued support from the BCHA Education Foundation and our local units, BCHC intends to continue this internship program for years to come.



Top: Trail clearing on the PCT with Dr. Bill Carter.  
Middle: Intern Kristianne Morrison.  
Bottom: Kristianne leading a resupply load out to Long Lake.





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# BCH California Mother Lode Unit Supports the Historic Pony Express Trail

By Treasurer and Grant Writer Lucy Badenhoop

## Background

2018 is a major milestone for the national trail system. It marks the 50th anniversaries of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and the National Trails System Act. The BCHC Mother Lode Unit partnered with other non-profit organizations and the U.S. Forest Service to improve public access and trail maintenance on the Pony Express National Historic Trail (XP). Multiple projects were planned in 2017, then initiated in 2018. The XP Trail is protected by the National Park Service and stretches through eight states – from St. Joseph, Mo. to Sacramento Calif. – for 1,966 miles Each June, the XP riders reenact the original ride in 10 days and nights, just like it was done in 1860-61. In even years, they ride east in even years and west in odd years.

An especially difficult trail maintenance challenge is the 47 miles of alpine trail over the Sierra Nevada mountain range, following the U. S. Highway 50 corridor through the steep granite canyon carved by the South Fork of the American River. The Echo Summit tops out at 7,382 feet. Each year, the six- to eight-week window for trail maintenance from snow melt to the June reenactment date is a race against nature to remove down trees, cut back annual vegetation growth and repair bridges, culverts, washouts and mudslides.

This annual effort is hampered by the lack of a work party staging area in the canyon. Volunteers parked on the shoulder of Highway 50 or in parking lots to tack up for trail work. Often, they needed to ride across the highway traffic to reach the work sites. Some of them drove four hours round trip, so the actual work that can be accomplished in a single day is limited.

## Equestrian Trailhead Restoration

The first priority was to restore and enlarge the XP Corral Trailhead near the midpoint of the canyon to allow overnight staging of work parties and provide a trail access venue for the general public. Spearheaded by Eldorado National Forest Recreation Officer Josh Sjostrom, the U.S. Forest Service supported the effort. The U.S. Forest Service provided environmental approvals in nine months, followed by landscape designer plans, and letters of support for grant applications.

Three long-time equestrian trail supporters—Darryl Shankles of Burro Trucking, Doug Veerkamp General Engineering, and Gary Cooper of G&O Towing—made in-kind donations of their heavy equipment and skilled operators to prepare the site and install gravel. Shankles of the BCHC-MLU unit led the multiple onsite work parties. Other volunteers included Steve Smith, Joshua Major, Mark Miser, Frank Henderson, Vicki Jowise, Jerry Heitzler, and Elk Grove, Calif. Boy Scouts of America Troop 186.

BSA Troop 186 helped with the finish work by installing riprap (cobblestones) to prevent erosion in critical areas around the site, especially three spots that impact the seasonal creek. Troop 186 also agreed to adopt 12 miles of the XP for spring pruning and

fall culvert cleaning. An Eagle Scout candidate is proposing a mapping project that will be used by the U.S. Forest Service to create a Recreational Opportunity Guide (ROG) for handout to trail users.

## Ford Replaces Bridge

The second priority XP project was to reopen a four-mile section of the trail



near Kyburz, Calif. that was closed due to the total destruction of a bridge during the winter of 2016-17. This started with environmental approvals by the U.S. Forest Service to reroute the trail about 150 yards upstream from the bridge crossing to a spot suitable for a ford.

The next step was to find volunteers with the knowledge and skills for building the rerouted trail and new ford. Four folks who routinely build new trails and water crossings for the Tahoe Rim Trail and Pacific Crest Trail, stepped forward: Don and Cheryl Bailey, Clay Grubb, and John McKenna. Other helpers included David and Hannah Heitzler, George Lazar, and Kathy Becker. It took 25 man-days, but the job was done in time for the June 2018 XP reenactment.

## Financing the Projects

The financing for these two major efforts (mostly to purchase materials) was supported by cash donations from both partners (XP-CA and BCHC-MLU) and two grants obtained from



Photos top to bottom:  
**XP Corral TH:**  
Doug Veerkamp on grader.  
**The Crew (left to right):**  
Frank Henderson, Doug Veerkamp, Mark Miser, Daryl Shankles, Steve Smith.  
**Kyburz Ford:**  
Clay Grubb & John McKenna.  
Don Bailey.

the National Wilderness Stewardship Foundation. While both projects are usable in their current condition, they still require more work to produce a finished trail feature. There's more to do next year.



# Monster Logs: BCH California Mother Lode Unit Trains with New Equipment

By Lucy Badenhoop, Mother Lode Unit, Back Country Horsemen California

In 2018, MLU was fortunate to receive two National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance grants for mileage reimbursement (one for wilderness packers and one for trail maintenance volunteers). Each grant also allowed the purchase of equipment. MLU Trails Committee Co-Chair and Education Committee Chair Jerry Heitzler spent extra time researching what equipment would increase the unit’s capacity to solve trail issues. One recurring issue was large diameter logs greater than 3 feet across. Monster logs present two problems: chain saw bar length and how to move the half-ton section after it is cut. Heitzler consulted with several rigging experts and used their recommendations for new equipment.

The trail maintenance grant was used for a 32-inch chain saw. The wilderness grant was used for an array of rigging equipment for moving heavy objects (e.g., grip hoist, winch, cables, straps, pulleys). Both categories of equipment are needed to do the job. Next, MLU assembled the volunteers for the one-day field training on an actual trail obstacle with easy access near Pollock Pines, Calif.

- Clay Grub - experienced teacher of rigging operations for PCT & TRTA crews
- Jerry Heitzler and John Marshall – BCHC-MLU members with rigging experience
- Mike Kohlbaker & Steve Smith – BCHC-MLU certified sawyers
- Randy Hackbarth – BCHC-MLU trail scout and traffic controller
- Lucy Badenhoop – XP-CA Trail Representative & BCHC-MLU project manager

A 48-inch diameter, six-ton, 40-foot long log was blocking a one-mile section of the historic Pony Express Trail, just East of Pollock Pines. The log was crossed the trail at a 60-degree angle. The single-track trail was on a hillside that was about 45 degrees steep and which left the log suspended about a foot above the

tread, but otherwise resting firmly on the ground. About one third of its length was below the trail and two-thirds was above the trail. There was a danger that cutting the log into pieces would result in one or more sections rolling down hill onto a county road with residential traffic. The trail is parallel to a county road and located in the road easement. County permission to work the site was obtained. There was also a one-foot diameter, chest-high companion log about two feet away.

Fortunately, the site was heavily wooded, so suitable anchors for the rigging were available nearby. Two workers rigged two tree anchors on the lower third of the log to prevent it from rolling onto the county road after the cut. Two more workers limbed the companion log and removed a 10-foot section to gain access to the larger log. To reduce the diameter three to four inches, they chipped the bark off it on the two cut lines for a four-foot section to be removed.

Once the stabilizing rigging was in place on the lower section, two cuts were made about 80 percent of the diameter at the planned opening. A third anchor was rigged around the section to be removed, thus keeping it from rolling onto the road below. This rigging was specially prepared to allow rolling the smaller piece uphill a few feet after the final cuts.

To everyone’s relief, the only piece that moved after the finish cuts was the cutout that dropped a foot onto the trail tread. The specially rigged roll strap moved it uphill around the end of the lower log, then parked it off the trail tread. Some trimming of the main log on its protruding edges enlarged the opening for pack stock. The trail now has a slight S curve around the log ends, which serves as a choke point to slow mountain bikers.

The entire operation took the team of seven volunteers 49 work hours, 15 travel hours and 727 travel miles to open a one-mile section of the historic Pony Express Trail. With this new capability successfully tested, MLU can tackle an expanding spectrum of trail obstacles to keep our favorite trails open to the public.

## Zack Wenzel Thinks Packing is a Great Way to Explore Montana

Interview excerpted from Wenzel’s senior paper by BCHA Editor Sherry Jennings

**Your senior project at Bigfork High School was horse packing. Why did you choose this project?** This is something I have wanted to do for a while because to me it seems like a great way to explore Montana. I was lucky enough to have my Uncle John Peine as my mentor.

**How did you learn about horse packing?** The main way I learned was through a series of classes with the Flathead County 4-H Club and an overnight packing trip with the NorthWest Montana Back Country Horsemen. I took six four-hour classes with the 4-H club and the BCH. I also participated in a two-day ride and packing trip to put some of my skills to the test.

**What was the most difficult challenge you faced?** I came up against several challenges in my journey, including not knowing how to ride a horse. Some of the challenges of this project were the fears, unfamiliarity with the topic, and the hard work that it took to be successful. I was skeptical at first because I knew absolutely nothing about horses or what it takes to ride one. I was most nervous about getting hurt if I fell off or was kicked or stepped on by a 1400-pound horse. This fear was probably the hardest challenge that I had to overcome. I think this fear came from not knowing a lot about horses and how they react to certain things.

**What were some other challenges to learning about packing?** Another challenge to learning how to pack horses was that I was not familiar with the horse packing terms. I was confused by the terms the instructors and others in the class were using. For example, I was not familiar with some of the different types of knots. Some were called half-hitch knots and some were full hitch knots. The cinch on the saddle was also something that I had never heard of, but I learned that it is the piece of equipment that goes down

around the horse’s belly and holds the saddle onto the horse.

**Interesting. Many people may not be familiar with the terms, either. What special tools and equipment are used for packing?** One of the most widely used pieces of horse packing equipment is a manty, which is used to hold the goods that you are packing. Manty is Spanish for horse blanket. A manty is a waterproof piece of canvas that is used to wrap whatever you are packing in so that nothing gets wet. They are approximately 8 feet wide and 8 feet long, and there are usually two manties used per horse. After wrapping your equipment in the manty, you then tie it onto the horse using sling ropes. Sling ropes are usually half inch by 30 feet long. Only one sling rope is used per manty. The other equipment used on the horses were a pack saddle, a stout halter that goes around the horse’s face and holds the reins, and a lash cinch with 45-foot rope, which goes underneath the horse and holds the saddle on. Having the proper gear for riding was important for comfort and safety.

**You could have written your senior paper without going on a pack trip. Why did you decide to do it?** Knowing that my Uncle John is very into horse riding and packing, I wanted to learn about this hobby and what he does when he is on a trip. Since I met my uncle’s friends and the people that he goes packing with, I was interested to see what they do when they are gone



for 3- or 4-day trips in the middle of nowhere. I believed that this experience would really push my limits because I am especially fond of animals, I don’t like to get super dirty, and I usually like to enjoy the safety of my own home at night. Needless to say, this horse packing trip challenged me in many ways.

**You said previously that you had some fears about your senior project. Are you more enthusiastic about packing now?** Although I was pretty nervous about choosing to learn horse packing for my senior project, I am glad that I chose it. One reason is that I got to spend a lot of time with my Un-

cle John, which was a lot of fun. I had a chance to learn about his passion and he made the entire project interesting to learn about. Second, I learned a new skill that I can use to explore the great outdoors. There is so much to do and see in Montana and I am excited to use the information I learned about to explore places I wouldn’t be able to reach with just my truck. I am proud of myself for overcoming my fear of riding horses and thankful to the people who helped me learn all about horse packing. I look forward to getting together with my uncle and talking about planning our next trip.

**About Zack:** Zack graduated from Bigfork High School in 2018. He played tackle and defensive tackle for the BHS 2017-18 varsity football team. He is a member of the NorthWest Montana BCH’s 4-H Trail and Packing Program.

*Zack doesn’t shy away from challenges, such as blocking a 300-pound lineman. But as he said, horses “have a mind of their own.”*

**Zack’s Uncle John:** John is a board member of NorthWest Montana BCH, a trails coordinator, and an instructor in the 4-H Trail and Packing Program. He was Captain of the Riverdale Police Department in New Jersey before he retired and moved to Montana.



# Adventures in Trail Riding and How to Reclaim a Beautiful Mountain Trail

By Robyn Lay, BCH of Eastern Tennessee

## An Impassible Trail?

It was a brisk March morning in 2017 when my husband Richard and I planned to go on a mountain trail ride. I had just been cleared to ride again after having a total hysterectomy to remove uterine cancer and had experienced a whirlwind of emotions in the preceding months. This was the longest I had been off a horse since we became horse owners again after retirement some 12 years before. I am what some would call horse addicted and I needed a good ride to lift my spirits.

The trail we had in mind was in the East Tennessee mountains and no one we knew had ridden it. We had passed the connector many times before and wanted a change. I could find no accounts of the trail from horse folk but I did find one obscure article from a semi-local hiker and his review was over five years old and not very promising. His review said, “I am going to suggest that you stay away from this hike if you value your safety and security. The Brush Creek and Burnett Gap Trails are so terribly maintained as to make them virtually impassible.” He went on to describe a hike that seemed very disagreeable. It was an 8.3-mile loop that took him over five hours.

## Following the Rabbit Trail

The beginning was very easy, wide, and well-marked. I think it was an old logging road. Once we began to climb, it seemed that we didn’t stop climbing for a long time. There was some deadfall and most blazes on the trail were not very visible, but at this point the direction of the trail was obvious. The further we got up the mountain the worse conditions became. Many instances we could find no markings on any trees upright or prone. Silently thanking God my horse will go just about anywhere, we picked our way using the “less of the evils presented” choices. This method occasionally brought us back to sections where we could see much-faded trail marks.

The further we got up the mountain, the worse the trail became in both terrain and tree blazes. Add to that, the weather looked threatening. Dark clouds filled the skies and the wind began to pick up. Further on, we ran in to a lot of scrub briars. Thankfully we carried our duck cloth ponchos. At one point we rode through whip-like saplings that were well over our heads with huge rocks to navigate in the footing.

Even though our horses were not in the best shape for this work, they were troopers and did their jobs well through this maze of brush. They are a mother and daughter pair of beautiful Appaloosas and seem to be made for this kind of terrain. I led this adventure following what looked like “critter” trails and it worked pretty well up to this point. But upon reaching the top of the mountain, the “trail” seemed to be ending and the wind was a force to reckon with. There were large trees, huge rocks, saplings and other scrub growth, and the land itself was narrowing quite a bit. I worried we had taken a rabbit path that was going to dead-end at a cliff. We had not seen any blazes in a long time.

## No Easy Way Back

It was difficult to find a way to navigate, but that section was short and came out to what looked like the end. It was like a backbone of sorts with drops on both sides. The views here were simply breathtaking, sublime. The land was still fairly wide, though to continue we would have to skirt to the downside to get around fallen brush. Not knowing what was around that particular curve, Richard dismounted and walked looking for tree marks. Because it was so narrow and overgrown, we didn’t know if we were on an actual trail or a critter path! Also, at this point we were getting cold and rain looked likely along with that chilling wind. It was so peaceful and beautiful on top of this mountain that it was an easy thing to put my worry aside and take in what God had made and shared with us.

Richard was gone a long time but did find a yellow blaze on a tree so we were on the right trail and continued on. We had one rougher bit of trail and rocky terrain to hack through before finally reaching the Burnett gap connector trail. Once we were through all of these obstacles – keeping in mind trail markings are few and far – very far between, we had a nice section of wide and much clearer old forest logging road on the Burnett Gap trail. This easier path did not last. We eventually came to blockages and had to search diligently for the trail. Many times, we just winged it to find our way. The day was getting late and we were periodically getting rained on lightly. Thankfully, no cloudbursts were unleashed. Our horses were exhausted and I worried we would be bivouacking on this mountain for the night. Battling brush, trees, briars, rocks and weather and even lunching in the saddle to save time, we finally could see the Forest Service gravel road we had used to get to the trailhead. It was nearing dark and the road was a sight for tired and sore eyes!

We could not find the actual trail – the safe way down to the road, and ended up dismounting and leading the horses down because it was just too steep to ride. I actually could not even lead my horse down and just turned her loose to follow my husband which she eagerly did. It is so steep in this area it is difficult to walk it on two legs!

## Reclaiming a Beautiful Trail

We still had over a mile of gravel road riding to get back to the trailer but I was so thankful we were off the mountain before dark! That ride had taken us nine miles and almost seven hours to make. This ride is the reason we decided to join the Back Country Horsemen in our area. We felt an urgent need to reclaim this trail (and others) because it was such a beautiful and peaceful, though strenuous and challenging ride. We felt a huge sense of accomplishment and, if I am to be honest, I truly believe there was some divine intervention because I still marvel that we found our way at all. Without experiencing it, you just cannot understand how truly awful this trail was in the way of trail blazes, deadfall and obstacles. Also, when the blazes are as old as those were they are sometimes difficult to distinguish from



mosses that grow naturally on the trees.

I was very excited to tell my friends about this trail because I knew they would enjoy it too. The susceptibility for trails, such as this one, to be lost is disturbing. Once these trails are lost we will be hard pressed to get them back. I am sure our area is not alone in losing some of its more challenging trails. I urge everyone who is a member to please help clear all the trails and not just our favorite ones. We truly can’t afford to lose a single trail for any reason. Prior to Richard and I riding this trail it had not seen hoof prints in more than 10 years. That is a true tragedy in my opinion.

Since our first ride, we have ridden this trail four times clearing and

marking as we go with friends and members of Back Country Horsemen. We still have work to do planned for this coming February. The Burnett Gap side is clear and has been ridden a lot since we cleaned it up. We even had a couple of mountain bikers following us last time! This trail can now be done in around five hours. It is a strenuous up and down route with a couple of fairly steep slopes, but the views are stunning. Friends and members of Back Country Horsemen are planning to work more on this trail in February because there are still areas that need clearing and marking especially on the Burnett Gap end of the trail. I hope some of our local riders will come help us work on it as well as ride this magnificent trail in the Spring of 2019.