

Boise Wildfire Rehabilitation

By Scott Nichols, Boise BCH of Idaho



On Saturday, June 13, the Boise Chapter spent the day on the Crooked River Trail near Idaho City, Idaho. In July 2016, the huge Pioneer Fire that burned for more than two months devastated the Boise National Forest located northeast of Boise. During the fire, most of the bridges and campgrounds in the Mores Creek Summit, Beaver Creek trail system and Banner Ridge trail system bridges were destroyed.

Idaho City Ranger District Trails & Recreation Manager Hank Ray prepared a Wildfire Recovery and Restoration Plan. The Ranger District conducted a National Environmental Protection Agency assessment and submit-

ted grant proposals for bridge replacement projects. In the fall of 2019, Ray received approval to begin the projects. The Boise Chapter also contacted Ray in 2019 and made plans to provide the construction labor needed.

This spring, Ray coordinated with his fire crews in late May and early June. Bridge materials were delivered to the site and foundation work substantially completed. As our construction date arrived, southwest Idaho was scheduled to be hit with two big storm events predicted to drop nearly an inch of rain. Ray was optimistic and reported he “expected only light showers.” The BCH volunteers were skeptical at

best. In southwest Idaho, we get about 11 inches of precipitation annually, so an inch of rain out of one storm is a lot of water in the desert! Saturday morning at 7:00 a.m., our biggest concern materialized and southwest Idaho was hit with a huge rainstorm – thunder, lightning, and high winds – it looked like a tropical storm.

Our trailhead meeting time was 10:00 a.m. A number of chapter members, along with Ray, were expecting help, so we left Boise and headed to the project. At Mores Creek Summit, the clouds broke up and the weather was relatively clear and dry. With raincoats, mud boots, and a few tools, we

walked a half-mile down to the bridge site. Within 30 minutes, we had 20 folks on site: members, family, friends. Ray explained the subtleties and tricks to installing three 18-foot long beams (5”x18”) and installing two layers of bridge decking. Because we had an excellent turnout, we completed the project in about five hours.

Ray noted the bridge is designed to be higher than the 100-year flood event and can support more than 120 pounds of snow per square foot. Unless it is destroyed by another fire, it looks like the Lamar Creek Bridge will be in service for years to come!



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Interested in Joining?

Contact BCHA or the organization nearest you for more information.

National: BCH of America PO Box 1182 Columbia Falls, MT 59912-1182 www.bcha.org	BCH of Minnesota 30490 335th Street Way Lake City, MN 55041 bchminnesota@gmail.com 651-345-9909 www.bchmn.org
State Organizations: BCH of Alabama 1404 Arkadelphia Road Warrior, AL 35180 (205) 936-9043 chad.bowman@hatchmott.com backcountryhorsemenal.com	BCH of Missouri 519 Good Hope Road Marshfield, MO 65706 (417) 425-9969 www.bchmo.org
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BCH of Georgia PO Box 1471 Blue Ridge GA 30513 706-374-7075 carlosmartel@bellsouth.net	BCH of South Carolina PO Box 144 Williston, SC 29853 (806) 369-0918 freedomsspringsfarm@gmail.com
BCH of Idaho PO Box 513 Salmon ID 83467 www.bchi.org	Black Hills BCH of South Dakota 20112 Buckin Horse Lane Whitewood SD 57793 (605) 645-2296 bhbcbsd@gmail.com www.bhbchsd @blogspot.com
BCH of Illinois Rt # 2 Box 214 Golconda IL 62938 (618) 672-4841 Mulemaid@shawneelink.net	BCH of Tennessee 570 Sunnyside Road Sweetwater, TN 37874 (423) 552-3767 TJConnor@hotmail.com www.bchet.org
Hoosier BCH Indiana 12784 E Rollins Lane Springville IN 47462 (812) 797-4540 hoosierhorsemen@yahoo.com	BCH of Utah PO Box 13195 Ogden UT 84412-3195 (801) 985-1909 www.bchu.com
BCH of Iowa 3445 Lima Trail Missouri Valley, IA 51555 (402) 350-3249 sue.maiwald@yahoo.com	BCH of Virginia 1950 Crockett Road Forest, VA 24551 (434) 944-1944 eckesj@verizon.net www.bchva.org
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BCH of Kentucky 2068 Pondsville Kepler Road Smiths Grove KY 40353 (859) 744-0397 jthorses2009@gmail.com www.kybch.com	BCH of Wisconsin 4418 Cedar Creek Road Grafton, WI 53024 (414) 403-0488 lisadocter@hotmail.com
BCH of Michigan, Pigeon River and Beyond 6631 E Ashard Road Clare MI 48617 (989) 350-6544 tashg98@icloud.com	BCH of Wyoming 2446 Spriggs Dr Lander WY 82520 bighorn@vcn.com www.wyomingbch.com
	Affiliates: Saratoga BCH PO Box 461 Cambridge NY 12816 859-230-0980

Dear Back Country Horsemen of America!

When you or a family member want to get outside and ride your horse or mule, where do you go? If you’re like most of our community, you get out on your public lands. Why? Because they’re YOUR lands and it’s your right to access and recreate on your public lands. You also know that our equine access is threatened and challenged every day in every part of the United States. That’s why it’s so important to remain committed to the purpose and mission of BCHA.

Your membership, your donation, and your sweat equity helped make BCHA the largest and longest-serving equine nonprofit dedicated to assisting our public lands agencies maintain our trails and ensure our access. We are so grateful to you for helping to create and support our almost 50-year strong organization. You help us touch the lives of people we care about – our friends, our family, and those we don’t know who are avid outdoors folks.

BCHA is your horse- and mule-centered nonprofit. We exist to ensure you and your loved ones have access to public lands and the ability to recreate on them now and in the future. Your membership, donations, and support are extremely important – whether it’s one time, monthly, or everlasting with a bequest. Donating today or setting up a recurring donation offers immediate resources that are directed to our current needs and working committees.

Our executive committee and national board of directors are committed to BCHA and work to ensure your access. Our entire team joins me in thanking you, our members, our lifeblood, for your generous partnership and support. Encourage fellow equine enthusiasts to join us.

Once all states open back up, we’ll be excited to hear more about what our you and your chapters are doing. Keep an eye out for our social media posts and campaigns. Share

What are YOU doing to INCREASE MEMBERSHIP?

By Dennis M. Serpa
BCHA Ad Hoc Membership Chair

If you want to have an organization that is healthy and progressive you need an aggressive membership campaign. Our motto “Keeping Trails Open For All” is why we need more members to carry out the never-ending work of making it so. How can we **INCREASE MEMBERSHIP**? We have an abundance of recommendations on how to find, recruit and get new members involved in BCHA. Just copy the following link for the Washington membership handbook:

<https://cdn.ymaws.com/bcha.site-ym.com/resource/collection/B8795F31-254C-4E4E-A56E-EB-1766DCF2B8/BCHWA%20Membership%20Development%20handbook.pdf>

Once we get these new members, then comes the job of retaining them for years to come. One of the best ways to keep them is to create a **mentoring program** to show them all the benefits of BCHA. Whoever brings in a new member should ensure the new member has access to everything BCHA offers. Bring them with you to meetings and activi-

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Contact us at fundraising@bcha.org
All inquiries are private and confidential

what we do far and wide, and when posting on social media, tag us: #BCHA, @BCHofAmerica! Make it possible for everyone to enjoy and appreciate what we do.

Your support helps BCHA plan for decades more success. Contact us any time at fundraising@BCHA.org.

Thank you so much for commitment,

Latifia ‘Tif’ Rodriguez
BCHA Fundraising Chair
BCHA Executive Committee

ties to get them involved and meet other members. Making them feel welcome and engaged is important to convert a new member to an active member. These activities and more can be sustained with a chapter **Membership Development and Retention Committee**. If your chapter has not started a committee with a focus on members yet, please go to the following link to help you get started:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=14IDUb-jZxRk-8kaA8HMJUzqJbLIipzQJE>

If anyone has other ideas on membership, please share them with me so we can share with our membership committees: dmserpa@velociter.net or phone 209-531-5175.

Thank you!

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View from the Chairman’s Saddle

By Darrell Wallace, BCHA National Chairman

What a year! COVID-19, our first-ever virtual National Board Meeting, and now a transition to new management.

BCHA is transitioning to three contracts for member services between June and August, while terminating our contract with Mainspring LLC. BCHA is contracting with Innovative Bookkeeping for financial management under direction by our treasurer. Wade-Tiegs will handle general administration and communications. Dana Chambers will manage membership data services. The total cost of the three contracts will, after the transition period, be far less than our previous contract. Cost savings will allow us to fund additional committee projects.

I want to thank Vice Chairman Sherry Copeland and Treasurer Mark Himmel for their hard work on the transition. Past Chairman Freddy Dunn took the lead on issuing requests for proposals and setting up the interviews. These three really went above and beyond what any of us could have expected of them. They richly deserve our thanks.

The pandemic is delaying or preventing trail work in many areas, in addition to postponed chapter meetings and state meetings. Regardless of the imposed restrictions and challenges to comply with state orders, I applaud those who have figured out how to make things happen. You are truly carrying out the traditions of back country horsemen. I encourage the rest of us to just keep on trying.

On a personal note, my injuries from my ladder accident in March are mostly healed. My buddy Jason Ridlon let me join a trail work crew in southeast Washington the second weekend in June. It felt good to lead my packhorse and pull a crosscut again! My hope is that all of you are able to safely enjoy riding the trails in your vicinity.

Happy Trails!

Darrell

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.

Thank you to our Advocacy Partners:

- Equine Trail Sports
- Fannin County Equestrian Trails Association
- North American Trail Ride Conference (NATRC)
- North Carolina Horse Council
- Old Dominion Endurance Rides Inc.
- Pennsylvania Equine Council
- Walkers & Talkers Saddle Club

BCHA Advocacy Partners are organizations, alliances, and coalitions involved in a common goal of Keeping Trails Open. To learn more about your organization becoming an Advocacy Partner email Partners@bcha.org.



LEGACY FUND TOPS \$100,000

“Keeping Trails Open for Future Generations”

By Tif Rodriguez

The BCHA Legacy Fund has exceeded our expectations. We have 60 Founding Members and many other donors — all donors belonging to the Legacy Society. These donations were similar to “seed money” for a startup. Unlike a startup, the principal cannot be spent or withdrawn. As the principal grows through more donations and bequests, the earned income will grow. Earned income provides reliable, financial support to BCHA’s programs in the future.

WHAT IS HAPPENING THAT MAKES THE LEGACY FUND A WORTHWHILE EFFORT?

The “Great Wealth Transfer” of the Boomers is already underway. Over the next 40 years, it is estimated \$48 trillion will be transferred to 94 million people. Of that \$48 trillion, it is further estimated \$6.5 - \$8.6 trillion in bequests will be given to nonprofits and charities. Bequests are gifts from your will or estate. These gifts are often financial assets.

WE ARE ASKING YOU TO CONSIDER A BEQUEST IN YOUR WILL OR ESTATE PLAN

After you have provided for your loved ones, ask yourself, why consider

making a meaningful bequest — small or large — to BCHA? Many members feel the values of BCHA closely align with their own values. While updating your will, you can easily set up a bequest for the “Benefit of the BCHA Legacy Fund.” During your lifetime, you still have full access to your property, assets and income.

HOW CAN THE LEGACY FUND SUPPORT BCHA’S FINANCIAL STABILITY IN THE FUTURE?

Members have asked, how do the numbers work? Simply, if we had \$1 million in the Legacy Fund and earned income was 3% per annum, then \$30,000 could be transferred to BCHA every year to support programs. \$100,000 seemed like an unattainable longshot, \$1 million is a moonshot but worth our effort and support. We hope you will help us secure our financial future and consider setting up a bequest for the “Benefit of the BCHA Legacy Fund.”

Contact us any time at fundraising@bcha.org or by visiting our website at bcha.org if you have questions. All inquiries are private and confidential.

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Darrell Wallace
bchachairman@bcha.org

Vice Chair
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Treasurer
Mark Himmel
treasurer@bcha.org

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Freddy Dunn
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Randy Rasmussen
wildernessadvisor@bcha.org

Committees:

Education
Craig Allen
education@bcha.org

Expansion
Truman Prevatt
expansion@bcha.org

Funding
Latifia Rodriguez
fundraising@bcha.org

Grants Committee
Karen Saner
grants@bcha.org

Media and Marketing/Facebook
Brian Peirick
double51005@yahoo.com

Public Lands
Jerry Benz
publiclands@bcha.org

Public Liaison/Advocacy Partners
Don Saner
publicLiaison@bcha.org

Volunteer Hours
Doug Stewart
volunteer@bcha.org

Web Master
Marty DeVal
web@bcha.org

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Managing Editor
Sherry Jennings
PO Box 305
East Olympia WA 98540-0305
newsletter@bcha.org

Advertising
To place an ad in the BCHA quarterly newsletter, please contact
Deborah Schatz (406) 314-1084
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BCH Kansas Repairs Trails Following Historic Flooding of 2019

By Cheryl Thomas, BCHKS Secretary

The summer of 2019 saw devastating flooding and historic high-water levels at many parks in Kansas. The majority of Kansas equestrian campgrounds and trails are located at US Army Corps of Engineers lakes located throughout the state. These multi-thousand-acre, man-made lakes were developed for flood control and were extensively tested during the summer of 2019. Trails in the eastern half of the state were under water the entire summer, and it was fall before floodwaters receded enough to begin to assess the damage. Accumulated debris, silt, and erosion were just some of the messes left behind. BCH Kansas trail volunteers were chomping at the bit to begin the work that would get these trails returned to rideable condition, even though the muddy mess didn't allow access to the trails until well into winter.

Trail damage at Kanopolis Lake, in the north-central area of the state, had trails completely closed to the public from June 2019 to April 1, 2020. Work days on those popular trails brought out a delightful mix of hikers, trail runners, cyclists, campers, families, park staff, and equestrians, all working together and anxiously awaiting the opportunity to get back out on the trails they love. The damage was mostly due to debris completely covering the trails, namely logs and sticks as well as some trash where the water line sat all summer. There was a small segment of trail alongside a creek that had washed out and was re-routed further up the hillside. An area of severe erosion that was worsened by flood damage was fixed. A lot of volunteer hours were spent on normal maintenance that couldn't be taken care of during the flooding due to lack of access and also lack of resources in the agency. Park staff members across the state were stretched thin all summer trying to mitigate damage to campgrounds.

Sections of the Black Hawk equestrian trails at Pomona Lake in Eastern Kansas traverse lands that were once farms and homesteads. Old trash dumps caused extensive trash and debris to wash up onto the trails and remain after the waters eventually went

down. One BCHKS work day resulted in 10 large trash bags full of glass bottles, tin and aluminum cans, and plastic bottles on a two-mile section of trail. New trail markers were posted in areas where trees with markers were uprooted by the flooding.

Summer pictures from Melvern Lake, in the east-central part of the state, showed kayakers paddling along the trail signs that were still visible above the flood waters. Riders on Melvern's Crooked Knee Trail can still see evidence of last summer's flood with driftwood caught up in trees along the trail ten feet overhead!

Clinton Lake's Rockhaven trail system includes three trails: the upper trail is marked with blue, and the middle trail is yellow. These heavily wooded trails had several trees down that needed to be cut up and cleared. Clinton's lower trail, marked in orange, closely follows the shoreline of the lake. As the orange trail began to re-surface, it was covered with wooded debris that in many places resembled pickup sticks. Some sections of that orange trail fell away into the lake. The blue and yellow trails are now cleared for 2020 summer riding; but the orange trail will not be rebuilt, rerouted, and cleared until BCHKS volunteers can get access to them this next fall and winter.

These are just a few of the examples of the aftermath seen by many of the lakes across eastern Kansas. The weather this spring has not been kind, either. Above normal rains have kept lake levels high, and lower trails are still occasionally under water. Storms with heavy winds have uprooted trees that were weakened in the water-logged ground. As trail riders are finally able to get back out on Kansas public trails, they will continue to see evidence of the record floods of 2019 with odds and ends of driftwood caught up in trees overhead, and the 2019 water line still visible halfway up the trees along shorelines. Riders will also come across BCHKS volunteers in their orange and yellow vests continually working on clearing and repairing. Trail volunteers' work is never done!





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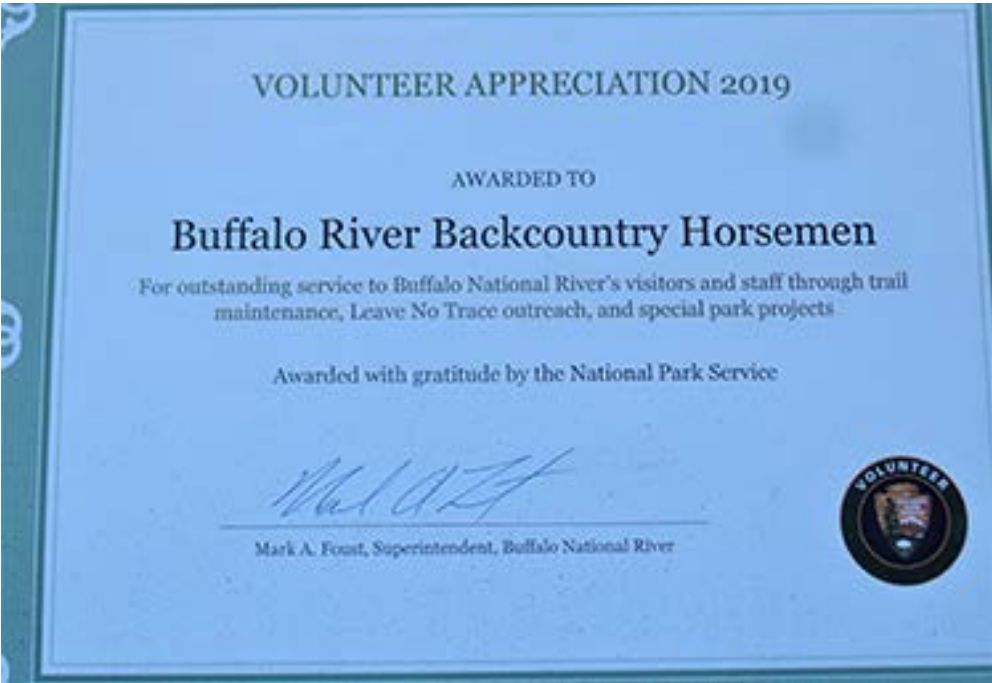
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National Trails Day Weekend for Arkansas BCH

By Nancy Deisch

It could have been an almost-normal trail work day, but Buffalo RiverBCHA decided to jazz it up a bit. There was a full moon on June 5 and we do love a moonlight ride along the river, so we started with that. We made camp at one of the campgrounds along the Buffalo and set out around 7:00 p.m. for a two-hour ride to our destination, seeing elk and arriving about the time for the moon to rise. We had just enough daylight left to gather firewood and build a cooking fire. As we cooked, the moon rose and lit the bluffs along the river almost as bright as daytime. The ride back to camp was absolutely magical – there was an area where the trees lining the river were covered with thousands of fireflies. None of us had ever seen anything like it. All the river crossings were like walking through glittering silver as the moonlight hit the water. We had the joy of two pre-teen granddaughters riding with us. It

was their first moonlight ride. It was so wonderful to see those sweet reactions! Saturday was National Trail Day, so we picked a trail that led to one of the best restaurants in the area and were able to work going and coming removing downed trees, sawing out some logs, and clipping all the way. Just as we were ready to ride out, we received an unexpected honor bestowed on us by the Buffalo National River Park: a Volunteer Appreciation certificate. It was a hot day, so when we returned to camp, swimming with your horse was in order. What a great way to cool off horse and rider after a hot day on the trail. Saturday night was another meal around the campfire. Sunday was a day for another fun ride, and that was our National Trails Day weekend! The next moonrise that will cooperate on the appropriate rising time is in October. Come join us!



Buffalo River Arkansas BCH Bonfire Meeting

By Nancy Deisch

When life gives you lemons...have a bonfire meeting! That is just what the Buffalo River chapter of the Arkansas BCH did on May 8. Since the regular meeting schedule was disrupted, the logical plan was to carry on outside – physical distancing, masks, the works. It was a different kind of format with everyone bringing his/her own food,

drink, and chair; but we got ‘er done. President Jeff Blake presided without podium or gavel and we attended to necessary business. Over twenty members enjoyed seeing other people again – something sort of rare with Covid-19. However, we might just conduct all good-weather meetings this way from now on!

Clockwise: Social/physical distancing was practiced! (Photo by Nancy Deisch)

After business, getting closer to the fire felt pretty good. (Photo by Nancy Deisch)

Pam Floyd, Jacque Alexander, and Larkin Floyd study a grant proposal presentation. (Photo by N. Deisch)

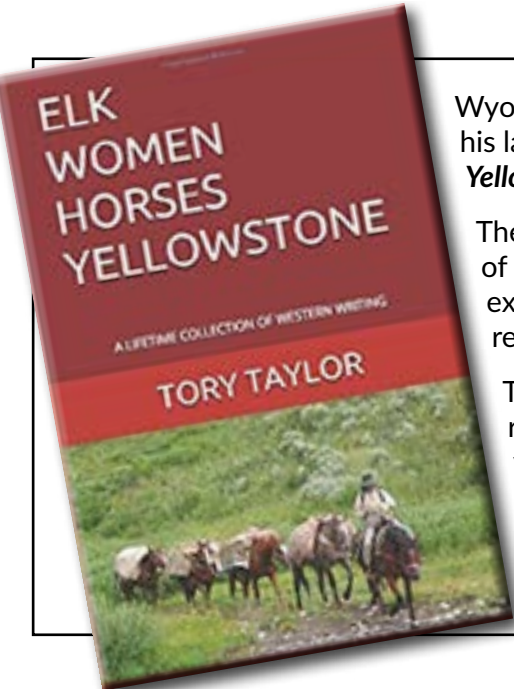


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Wyoming writer Tory Taylor announces his latest book, *Elk, Women, Horses, Yellowstone*.

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Taylor and his wife, Meredith, recently retired from thirty years owning and operating a Yellowstone back country outfitter business.

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BCHA Newsletter
Media Kit

Our BCHA newsletter is read by passionate trail riders, saddle and pack stock owners, avid back country packers and others who have an investment in saddle and pack stock and public land management. We serve over 13,000 members nationwide who belong to 194 active chapters/units and affiliates in 31 states. Our mailing list includes members, public land agency personnel (Forest Service, BLM, National Parks, state land agencies), elected officials, advertisers, other trail and horse organizations. Visit www.bcha.org for more information on BCHA.

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BCHA
PO Box 1182
Columbia Falls, MT 59912-1182
or www.bcha.org

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

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

Printing
Eagle Web Press
4901 Indian School Rd. NE
Salem OR 97305



Wilderness Advisor Dennis Dailey

By Mike McGlenn

On 5 May 20, BCH's former Wilderness Advisor Dennis Dailey passed away. Dennis was known to many of us as a staunch advocate of Wilderness and of the public's right to access the Wilderness. BCH was fortunate to have Dennis who was an articulate speaker and writer. Many may not know Dennis was also a singer. He was, I am proud to say, my friend. I don't recall when I met Dennis. He came on the scene of BCHA during the time I was a director and before I became chairman. During the time that we spent working together during the late 1990's thru the later 2000's I was privileged to call on Dennis for guidance. We were all lucky to have his deep knowledge of so many matters concerning BCH. When an issue with a Federal Agency would come up and we needed a letter of comment, it was time to call Dennis. He was so good at phrasing our concerns or comments in a respectful way, so that the Agency would hear us. He did so gracefully, when what I really wanted to do was tell them off. Dennis knew full well that the telling off would set us back many steps. Between us, we would craft a response that made the point in a manner that would get the job done and not destroy a relationship.

After Dennis retired, mostly, from BCHA we continued to stay in touch. Phone calls, emails, sending jokes back and forth all helped maintain a long standing friendship. During a trip with Chris a little over a year ago, we stopped to spend a night with Dennis and his wife Liz. Liz and Chris went off on a long walk to get to know each other better. Dennis and I, two aging warriors in the trail and access wars sat down in his living room with some good whiskey and told stories and talked Wilderness and trails for several hours. The light in Dennis's eyes was bright as we remembered the good times. He had won several health battles and we also talked about that. This special time is the memory I cherish most, Dennis and I laughing together over fond memories and the sparkle in his eyes.

Kansas BCH Shares Trail Etiquette Signs

By Cheryl Thomas, BCH-Kansas Secretary

As opportunities for sharing trails are increasing in Kansas, many trails users are asking how to appropriately interact with equines on the trail. Most equestrians are finding that hikers and cyclists are genuinely interested in how to safely interact and share the Kansas trail experience. In response, the Kansas chapter of Back Country Horsemen of Kansas applied for and received a BCHA grant to purchase trail sharing signs. Because of the grant, BCHKs is able to provide these signs free of charge to public land managers throughout the state. Over the past three years, almost 100 of these signs have been posted at trailheads at county, state, and federal parks. Managers of public lands continue to struggle with budget constraints and are grateful to be provided with these signs at no cost. And, the signs promote awareness of the Kansas BCHA chapter to other trail users.

Several rail-trail projects are nearing completion in Kansas, and one of these is the Flint Hills Trail. The FHT will stretch 117 miles across Kansas crossing the beautiful Flint Hills, which represent one of the last remaining tall-grass prairie ecosystems in the world. This trail is open to non-motorized use and was recently named a Kansas State Park. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism State Parks Director is enthusiastic about posting the BCHKs trail sharing signs and educating trail users on proper trail-sharing etiquette. KDWP&T has offered BCHKs a matching grant for purchase of additional trail sharing signage for this trail. Also nearing completion is the Landon Trail, a 40-mile stretch of trail on former Missouri Pacific Railroad that will link up with the Flint Hills Trail. The BCHKs trail sharing signs have also been requested for this trail. BCHKs volunteers have been actively involved in work days that continue to prepare these trails for completion. Providing trail sharing signs and cooperatively

working together with other trail users strengthens relationships and partnerships among those enjoying Kansas public trails.



Public Lands Update

Director of Public Lands & Recreation Randy Rasmussen

BCHA has been busy in its efforts to perpetuate the common-sense use and enjoyment of horses (and mules!) in America’s backcountry and Wilderness areas. Our advocacy efforts include both reactive and proactive efforts to perpetuate our use and enjoyment of our nation’s wondrous public lands. Yet many of our efforts would have gained only a modest level of traction if we were not joined by our like-minded partners with whom, together, we continue to make considerable gains despite today’s challenging environment.

BCHA and Partners Secure a “Win” to Keep Electric Bikes Off Non-Motorized Trails in the Tahoe National Forest

Last October, BCHA, BCH California, its Mother Load Unit, The Wilderness Society (TWS) and two local partners mounted a legal challenge to the Tahoe National Forest’s approval of electric motorized bicycles (or e-Bikes) on over 130 miles of non-motorized trails (see BCHA’s Fall 2019 newsletter, Public Lands Update). We filed a lawsuit in federal district court that sought to negate that approval, which was made behind closed doors and did not include environmental review, public meetings, nor did the agency invite public comment.

This lawsuit was a big deal for BCHA. We felt compelled to remain in the forefront of advocacy efforts to ensure that the federal land management agencies, including the Forest Service, comply with existing laws and policy when making decisions that affect the use and enjoyment of our trails. We were honored when TWS offered to list BCHA as lead plaintiff in the litigation, cementing within case law a citation that reads:

Back Country Horsemen of America, et. al.,
Plaintiffs
v.
United States Forest Service
Defendant
Case No.: 2:19-cv-02149-JAM-AC

We also had the good luck of securing the Western Environmental Law Center (WELC) to represent the Plaintiffs. They did so in a highly professional manner and, at the end of the day, donated the accumulated hours of three WELC attorneys towards our cause (i.e., a pro-bono contribution).

I’m happy to report that the federal government moved to quickly “settle” the lawsuit. They lacked any defense to justify why the Forest Supervisor chose to violate agency law and policy in granting authority to allow e-Bikes on non-motorized trails. Consequently, the Forest Service was required to rescind its e-Bike approval and update the website for the Tahoe National Forest to clarify that e-Bikes are not currently allowed on National Forest System trails that have not been designated for motor vehicle use via a public decision-making process. See: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/tahoe/home>

As we wrote in BCHA’s Fall 2019 newsletter, our optimism for a rational solution with respect to the Tahoe National Forest’s recent action, appears to have been realized. That’s doesn’t mean that this or any other national forest won’t act in the near future to identify places and trails for e-Bike use. Yet our lawsuit served its purpose—to reaffirm that a high bar remains, which requires the Forest Service to undergo public involvement and environmental review in any future decision-making process.

We can use the settlement going forward as a kindly reminder, or “crop,” to nudge forest supervisors who might choose to stray from this well-worn and pre-determined path.

Electric Bikes and the Department of Interior

You may recall that, last summer, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) issued an edict to increase recreational opportunities through the use of e-Bikes (see BCHA’s Fall 2019 newsletter, Public Lands Update). The edict, Secretarial Order 3376, was specific to roads and trails that traverse our national parks, BLM public lands, national wildlife refuges, and Bureau of Reclamation-managed lands. It prompted these DOI agencies to make policy changes in order to allow e-Bikes on roads and trails “where other types of bicycles are allowed.”

In April 2020, each DOI agency published its response to SO 3376 in the Federal Register, detailing the policy changes that would be made to increase recreational opportunities via the use of e-Bikes. That started a 60-day formal public review and comment period. A common thread among each of the agency proposals was to remove e-Bikes from its current list of “motorized” recreational uses. Proponents of the change argued that an e-Bike was more similar in many aspects to a bicycle than it was a motorcycle.

In June, BCHA and opponents of the policy change banded together to submit detailed public comments that pushed back heavily on key aspects of the agencies’ proposal as it relates to shared-use trails. We underscored the obvious fact that: “A motor is a motor; e-Bikes have a motor and therefore have no place among our non-motorized trails.”

We took issue with the DOI’s attempt to blur the line between motorized and non-motorized trail use. Yet we also recognized that e-Bikes have their place on public lands, but that place is not on our non-motorized trails.

You can view BCHA’s public comment letters at <https://www.bcha.org/blog/category/alerts/>

Our national coalition comment letter to the BLM, orchestrated by The Wilderness Society, also can be found there. It represents perhaps the most comprehensive and critical review of the use of e-Bikes on shared-use trails.

Next Steps: The agencies could spend several months reviewing public com-



Photo credit: www.fs.usda.gov

ments on the e-Bike proposals, given the high volume of public comments received (for example, the Park Service alone received over 17,600 public comments). In light of the considerable threat to the safety and enjoyment of equestrians posed by fast-moving e-Bikes on shared-use trails, BCHA and others have asked the agencies to abandon their proposed policy change outright.

We don’t hold high hopes for that particular outcome, however, and expect to see a Final Rule posted by each agency in the Federal Register before the end of the year. At that time, we’ll assess with our partners what options or recourse might be in order—with a goal to reverse this and any other “erosion” of the slippery slope that leads toward the motorization of our backcountry and wilderness areas.

Great American Outdoors Act Passed in U.S. Senate!

Thanks in part to the advocacy of BCHA members and our partners, the U.S. Senate in June passed—on a bi-partisan vote of 73-25—the Great American Outdoors Act (see BCHA’s Spring 2020 newsletter, Public Lands Report, for details). It represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to steer significant resources to all federal land management agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, in order to address a decades-long backlog in the maintenance of public facilities throughout U.S. public lands, including roads, campgrounds, water systems and trails.

As reported previously, the Great American Outdoors Act includes full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) each and every year going forward. The LWCF, which was established in 1964, has been characterized as America’s most important conservation and recreation program. And justifiably so!

Taken together, the Great American Outdoors Act represents the most robust and far-reaching mechanism for the support of our national parks and access to public lands in over half a century.

Next Steps: As of late June, the bill moved onto the U.S. House of Representatives for consideration, where the bill enjoys strong bi-partisan support. It appears, however, that the House will not take up the bill (H.R. 7092) until late July.

TAKE ACTION: Now is the time to call your U.S. representative to ask that they please support and co-sponsor H.R. 7092, the Great American Outdoors Act, if they have not done so already. Ask that they work to ensure that the House version of the bill includes no amendments, which would send the bill back to the Senate and could prompt some undesirable horse trading.

You can find contact information, including phone numbers, for your representative at: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map#address=>

It would be a good thing to also contact your U.S. senators to thank them for passing the Great American Outdoors Act. Contact information for your senators can be found at:

https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

A Word About Partnerships

In the introduction of this Public Lands Report, I alluded to how these exciting strides forward in protecting your use and enjoyment of America’s backcountry and Wilderness areas is made possible only through the combined efforts of your advocacy, which is echoed at the national level by BCHA, and that of our partners. BCHA is a relatively small organization. Yet the passion and commitment of its volunteers can serve literally to move mountains.

Some of our national partners are named in this report. Many are not, simply because we don’t have the space to list them all here. Suffice to say, BCHA places great value on these partners, which include the very land management agencies we sometimes are forced to challenge. The good news is that most of the time, however, BCHA and its incredible volunteers readily embrace and partner with our agency partners. It’s not only the best way to keep trails open; it’s the only way.

On The Lighter Side

By Al Sammons, Wind River Chapter, Wyoming

Each summer the BCH chapters here in Wyoming meet somewhere in the state for their annual rendezvous. Members bring their riding stock and spend several days exploring the trails of the area, sharing each other’s company, and in general socializing. The 2019 event was held at a remote Forest Service ranger station located in the Sunlight Basin area of northwest Wyoming just a few miles from the east boundary of Yellowstone National Park. It was a great time except for an unusual weather event. The following is my poem which kind of sums up what happened.

TAKE A DEEP SEAT AND HOLD ON

They had come from near and far
To gather at the camp.
Good men and women all
Who wore the horsemen stamp.

The place was Sunlight Basin
For their yearly rendezvous
With fine mules and horses
They were riders tried and true.

In groups they had ventured forth
To explore the mountain trails.
The blue sky clear as crystal
With white clouds like schooner sails.

And when their ride was over
Their mounts fed, and tack was put away
They relaxed back at their trailers
To share pleasures of the day.

But then a black cloud
Came grumbling from the west
And sent a bolt of lightning
To stroke a nearby mountain crest.

None thought much of it.
It happened every afternoon,
Just a little boomer
That would be over soon.

But suddenly a maelstrom struck
Without warning sight or thunder.
A terrible wind hit the camp
And tore it all asunder.

Trailer awnings were ripped away.
Tents, sunshades, their parts went flying.
Anything not well tied down
Was tossed from where it way lying.

The gale lasted but for a moment.
With debris flying in the air.
Then suddenly it ended
As if nothing bad had happened there.

Cautiously the campers rose
To survey what damages abound
And gather up the wreckage
That was scattered all around.

The Cloud Peak chapter’s lofty flag pole
Had snapped and was no more..
Old Glory and state flag
Were crumpled on the campground floor.

A lady from the Teton
Sitting in her sturdy chair
Got turned upside down
By the forces of the air.

A Wind River rider’s pick-up truck
Took a savage hit.
A hole bashed in the windshield,
The cab dented up a bit.

A guest from Minnesota
Lost his brand new Stetson hat.
It was found next day in Red Lodge
Hard to imagine that.

But Lady Luck was smiling.
Not a person there was hurt.
No riding stock stampeded
Though electric fences went inert.

Some advice to all you mountain riders.
Keep an eye up to the sky.
For if you see a thunder cloud
Hunker down ‘till it’s gone by.

Your canopies or sleeping tents,
Tie ‘em down hard and fast.
Don’t think a single dally
Will make your outfit last.

Or if you’re in your camp
Sitting in your favorite chair
Take a bronc riders deep seat
If you want to stay right there.

Best to keep your spurs on
Hook ‘em into something tough.
Getting picked up by a twister
Could be a little rough.

For like the Stetson hat,
As it would be a pity
If you got dumped back to earth
Up north near Red Lodge City.



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