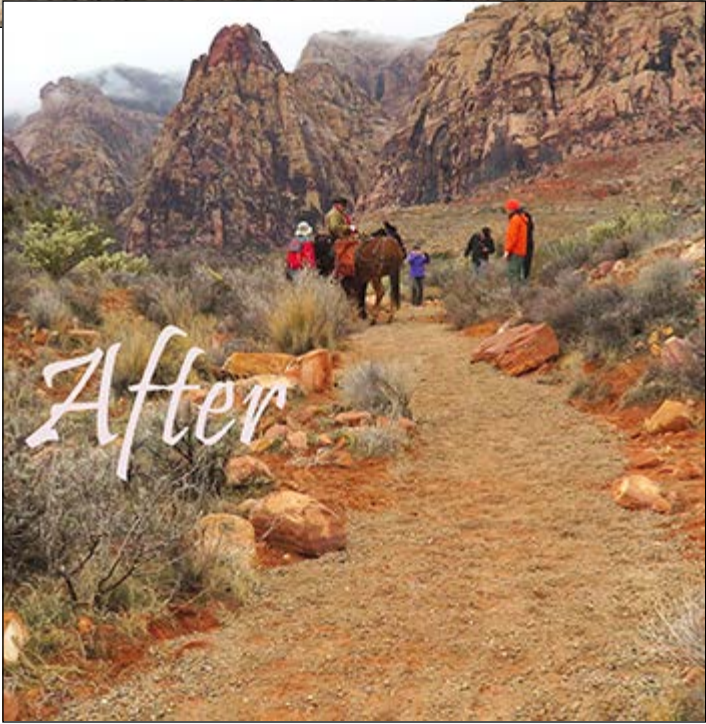
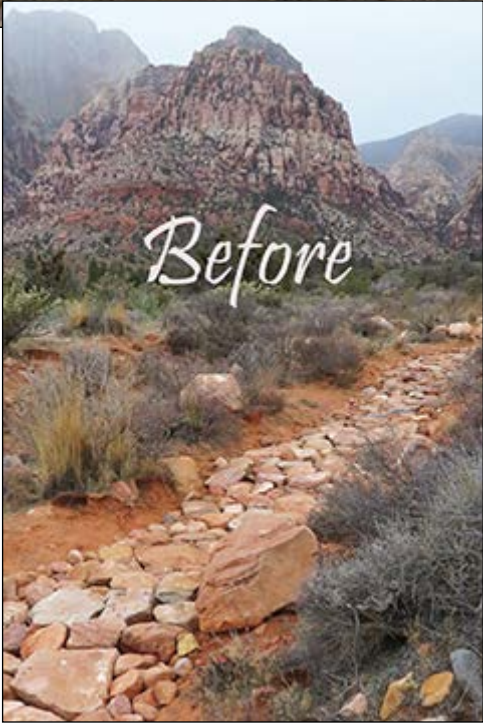


Bristlecone Chapter BCH Nevada

By Mary Sue Kunz



The BCH Bristlecone Chapter completed projects in the Las Vegas, Nevada area. We hauled gravel to build steps at Cowboy Trail Rides in Red Rock Canyon. This is a dude string operation owned by BCH director Jim Sage. Steps were needed at the Cowboy Trail Rides area of Red Rock. The “passages” are on a steep trail that is used by horses, mules, hikers and bicyclists. We also smoothed out Pine Creek Trail in Red Rock. This is a mostly flat trail that gets heavy hiker use in Pine Creek Canyon which is also in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. This last one had a bit of erosion and exposed rock that needed covering up and smoothing out. BCH hauled the gravel while another volunteer group – Friends of Red Rock Canyon – loaded the gravel, shoveled, raked, and smoothed it out. It’s a lot of physical labor and hard work, which is so appreciated. We usually haul around 12 tons in a three- to four-hour time period. Really. Sometimes as many as 14 mules are involved and several horses, plus a dog or two. We have had several of these work parties in these areas over the past few years and have gotten a lot done. It’s a labor of love and a lot of fun.





Back Country Horsemen of America  
PO Box 1182  
Columbia Falls, MT 59912-1182

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<b>National:</b> 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
<b>State Organizations:</b>  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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# BCHA Youth

## Shaping BCHA to Attract Younger People

By Ally Pike, Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead, Montana

It's early December and the warm weather hangs on for a little bit longer here in the Flathead Valley of Montana. The moderate weather has given us a few extra weeks to work around the barn, a few more beautiful days on horseback in the mountains, and a couple more sunset rides... when it's not insanely muddy. This upcoming weekend I'll be at a small outdoor gathering with some close horse friends and, as usual, we'll be talking mostly about horses the whole time. It's quite fun.

Part of my joy in being with these humans is the diversity among us. I love having friends from all walks of life, the conversations are so rich and full of life. As we gather around the fire, we swap stories, questions, knowledge, wisdom, and ideas. We particularly love creating and collaborating on how we can be moving forward in the horse world, culture, and the Back Country Horsemen organization. Recently we've been talking about the big question...how do we get more young people involved? Why is there a large age gap in involvement? What can we do as individuals and as an organization? I am so blessed to have friends from mixed generations, because we can learn so much from each other. Having friends in totally different walks of life has incredible benefits, especially in the horse world, but how do we encourage more of this?

The Back Country Horsemen needs to grow to perpetuate our values for future generations. How do we entice the up and coming generation to join us? Some of the practical solutions we've had around these conversations include watching the words we use around young people and addressing the fears of young people. Reputation is everything these days, and being a role model is of utmost importance. It is important that young members have a safe place to confidently say no. What if they feel the trail is too steep or if the ride is too long? We need to treat them with respect and refrain from deriding them and telling them that they need to "toughen up".

In Montana the weather always keeps us on our toes. Nothing is ever stagnant, and we constantly adjust as the year cycles through each season. We adapt, or at least we continue to try. Adjusting and adapting is part of life which also includes keeping our communication skills up to date.

## BCH of East Tennessee Celebrating Trail Riding Advocacy Since 2001

By Mamie Hopton

On September 12, 2020, Back Country Horsemen of East Tennessee (BCHET) completed a project at the Meadow Creek Fire Tower in Parrottsville, Tenn. With a sweeping view of the surrounding mountains and valleys from the fire tower, this is a popular location for riders, hikers, and sightseers. Over the summer, the tower was covered with graffiti resulting in an eyesore where a beautiful landmark had been. In a gesture of goodwill, BCHET painted over the graffiti and installed 20 feet of much-needed hitching rails at the site. This, in itself, wasn't too unusual, but the best part of the story is the assistance we received from Tusculum University's football team.

Eighteen wonderful young men ranging in age from 18 to early 20s, as well as their coaches, came out to help us with this project. What a great group of guys! Because they were raised in cities in South Florida, many of them had never been on top of a mountain nor experienced driving on our curvy, narrow mountain roads. Some of them were a little shell-shocked when they arrived at the top of the mountain, but they were quickly awed by the incredible views they were seeing for the first time. It was so heartwarming to hear and see them calling home to share their experience with their families. Never have I seen a group work so hard and enthusiastically! They carried materials, operated the auger in groups of four (making it a good-natured competition) and used power tools under the instruction of our master carpenter. These young men were so eager to learn and participate, and it was evident how proud they were of their accomplishments. Left in their hands we can be assured the future is bright.



Ally is a member of the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead and is on the BCHA Futurity committee. Ally loves riding fast horses, skiing deep powder and climbing steep mountains.

Over the past year I have been a part of the ongoing conversation on how to involve young people with the Back Country Horsemen of America. Most recently, I was asked to participate in a panel discussion for a webinar for BCHA. The panelists talked about how to attract young people to join us in BCH. If you would like to watch the video "Empowering Youth in BCHA" it can be found on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YY88c0DCHc>

## BCHA Youth





## View from the Chairman's Saddle

By Darrell Wallace, BCHA National Chairman

We held our first-ever members' webinar in early November. We had great presentations on our opportunities to influence spending of Great American Outdoor Act funds, perspectives on Youth involvement in BCH, and how to deal with local public lands issues. We had to postpone a presentation on fundraising ideas until the next webinar, but that's a good thing. We are also asking all members to tell us what topics you want to see in future webinars, either through your state's directors or by contacting me or Vice Chairman Sherry Copeland.

We are conducting monthly Zoom meetings with all National Directors in order to get better insights of what is important to our members, and to provide information about BCHA's activities. About two-thirds of the BCH states have been represented in these calls. Check with your state's National Directors to find out if you are being represented.

I want to thank the many BCHA members who have made donations to BCHA this year. Your Executive Committee has made many thoughtful decisions in order to ensure that all of our funds are being spent wisely. Legacy contributions are being carefully invested, not spent, and I am excited that we are building a funding resource that will last for generations to come!

2020 has been the most challenging year for all of us, but we continue to cope with everything. When it comes down to it, our horses and mules are the best thing for our mental health! I hope all of us enjoy Happy Holidays and a better New Year. More riding, more packing, and more trail work for this old horseman.

Happy Trails!

*Darrell*

## Marking the Trails in Kansas

By Diana Skinner, National Director BCH Kansas

Marking our trails is an essential job and the signs need constant monitoring to ensure riders' safety. With the multitude of directionally-challenged riders out there, marked trails are greatly appreciated. As the Volunteer Trail Coordinator for the South Shore Trails at Clinton Lake, located just three miles west of Lawrence, Kan., one of my main concerns has always been keeping the trail markers in good shape. When I started marking the trails 20 years ago, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers spent \$200 to purchase scrap aluminum house siding cut into 5-inch squares to use as markers. They were a hodgepodge of colors, so I purchased spray paint in the four colors that we used to mark our trails – yellow, blue, orange, and white – and spent hours laying the markers out and painting them. Every fall I would carry four cans of the spray paint with me every time I rode and repainted the badly faded markers that the squirrels loved to chew.

After 20 years, I finally ran out of these markers and was really tired of repainting 68 miles of trail markers every year. I was thrilled when I applied for and received a \$400 BCHA grant to purchase new and better markers. After researching trail markers online, I chose Voss Signs to buy my new markers. Their 5-inch x 7-inch, vibrant colored, .05 gauge polyethylene plastic markers are made with maximum UV inhibitors for long lasting durability and colorfastness.

I ordered 1,000 markers to get the best price of 47 cents each, for a total of \$470 plus \$10 shipping. This was more than the grant I received but fortunately a dedicated trail rider from Missouri, Cindy Sharp, donated \$200 to my trails for maintenance so that covered the rest of the cost plus allowed me to purchase black plastic arrows and red camp arrows

to apply as needed to the markers. As an added plus, Cindy and her friends joined our Sunflower Chapter of BCH Kansas!

This past fall our Sunflower Chapter members were out in force replacing the old markers with the new markers. I live right by our campground and I try to meet all the new riders and give them an update on trail conditions. I also give them our trail map that was made possible by a previous grant from BCHA. With our new markers and trail map, it's nearly impossible to get lost on our trails unless you're riding with your eyes closed.



## 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 ensure 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](mailto:Partners@bcha.org).



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Updated 09/25/2020

Please contact the appropriate state representative first, thank you.

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1. Contact State Membership Coordinator
2. Not receiving your BCHA newsletter? Contact *Dana Chambers*, BCHA Membership Data Coordinator [memberdata@bcha.org](mailto:memberdata@bcha.org) or call 206-498-6952
3. Have an address change or going south for the winter?  
Go to [BCHA.org](http://BCHA.org) and click on the 'Membership' tab. At the bottom of the page are the forms you can fill out to take care of that.

#### Public Lands/Advocacy:

1. Contact State PLC
2. *Randy Rasmussen*, BCHA Director, Public Lands & Recreation  
[WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org](mailto:WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org) or call 541-602-0713

#### Financial:

1. Contact State Treasurer
2. *Mark Himmel*, BCHA Treasurer  
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#### Administrative: (or if you are not sure who to contact)

1. *Michelle Wade*, Executive Administrator  
[michellewade@bcha.org](mailto:michellewade@bcha.org) or call 360-443-6996

#### New Mailing Address:

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# BCHA Officers, Chairs and Staff

**Chair**  
Darrell Wallace  
[bchachairman@bcha.org](mailto:bchachairman@bcha.org)

**Vice Chair**  
Sherry Copeland  
[vchairman@bcha.org](mailto:vchairman@bcha.org)

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[freddydunn@gmail.com](mailto:freddydunn@gmail.com)

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[EC@bcha.org](mailto:EC@bcha.org)  
Tom Thomas  
Craig Allen  
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**Director of Public Lands and Recreation**  
Randy Rasmussen  
[wildernessadvisor@bcha.org](mailto:wildernessadvisor@bcha.org)

**Committees:**  
**Education**  
Craig Allen  
[education@bcha.org](mailto:education@bcha.org)

**Expansion**  
Truman Prevatt  
[expansion@bcha.org](mailto:expansion@bcha.org)

**Funding**  
Latifia Rodriguez  
[fundraising@bcha.org](mailto:fundraising@bcha.org)

**Grants Committee**  
Karen Saner  
[grants@bcha.org](mailto:grants@bcha.org)

**Media and Marketing/Facebook**  
Brian Pierick  
[brian.pierick@bchia.org](mailto:brian.pierick@bchia.org)

**Public Lands**  
Jerry Benz  
[publiclands@bcha.org](mailto:publiclands@bcha.org)

**Public Liaison/Advocacy Partners**  
Don Saner  
[publicLiaison@bcha.org](mailto:publicLiaison@bcha.org)

**Volunteer Hours**  
Doug Stewart  
[volunteer@bcha.org](mailto:volunteer@bcha.org)

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## Black Hills BCH of South Dakota Celebrates 10 Years

By Shara Kelley and Renee Bechen

The Black Hills BCH of South Dakota (BH BCH SD) celebrated its 10-year anniversary this past August with a weekend campout at Deerfield Lake, S.D. We hosted 48 members from all over South Dakota and Wyoming. First organized in 2010, the BH BCH SD chapter has held steady with about 90 active members. The years have been filled with hard work and dedication from members who are dedicated to keeping the trails open for all recreational users in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming to enjoy. We've contributed 5,800 volunteer hours on public lands valued at over \$715,000 and assisted with over 2,700 miles of trail maintenance. It is hard to believe that a small grassroots organization in South Dakota has accomplished so much in so little time.

What makes BH BCH SD successful in accomplishing so much in so few years? First, it takes a strong leader to maintain focus and provide direction. Doug Bechen from Whitewood, S.D. is the first chapter president who was the driving force of the organization. It also takes insights and understanding public land agency policies and procedures to coordinate trail projects and yearly maintenance. Several members, including Jim and Alice Allen from Custer, S.D. brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise regarding public land agency collaboration and processes.

We were also sustained by a core group of members who both actively participated in trail maintenance and special projects, while remaining dedicated to monthly meetings. Our core group is instrumental and the backbone of BH BCH SD that supported our chapter in achieving this level of success. Thanks to all the dedicated founding members who have been with the organization from the beginning: George Beal, Keith Johnson, Lori Johnson, Renee Bechen, and Marge Kjerstad. We thank our visionary core

members including Blake and Terri Batchelder, Brad and Jayne Bilka, Tom and Deb Carter, Don and Vicki Bender, Ralph Carlson, and Harry and Amy Rasmussen. While these members are the backbone of support, all of our members who have assisted/participated in meetings, projects, and workdays are deeply appreciated.

Most of the trail work was completed on U.S. Forest Service – Black Hills National Forest (BHNF). Our work also included Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS) and South Dakota state land (Custer State Park). Some of BH BCH SD accomplishments include:

- trail clearing along French Creek in Custer State Park and Spearfish Canyon in 2014 following Blizzard Atlas in 2013,
- trail clearing due to tornado damage in 2018 in the Spearfish Canyon area,
- annual trail maintenance in the Black Elk Wilderness during the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation in and out of Willow Creek Horse Camp and Iron Creek Horse Camp.

Major projects were:

- assisting with Harney Tower Restoration in 2013 and 2014 in conjunction with the Region 2 U.S.F.S. pack string,
- Willow Creek Horse Camp Reconstruction 2016 and 2017,
- re-design of the Blackberry Trail at Mt. Rushmore in 2017 and 2018,

- and Mt Roosevelt Friendship Tower rededication in 2019.

Other miscellaneous projects included installation of hitch rails, planting shrubs/trees, installation of gates/corrals, hosting several WY and SD BCHA Rendezvous gatherings, hosting equine pack clinics and bike/equestrian educational clinics.

Noteworthy achievements include hosting the National Board meeting for BCHA in 2013 for 150 members from 32 states. To coordinate an event of this magnitude requires members who have incredible business coordination and community public relation skills. Hosting a trail ride in 2017 for former British Prime Minister David Cameron was also a commemorative event! Combining special security with western hospitality, from Mt. Rushmore to Iron Creek Horse Camp along Trail #89 for a dignitary was handled in stride.

How will we build on these prior accomplishments? The main goal includes continued trail maintenance on public lands in the Black Hills to benefit equestrians and other recreational users. Special projects under consideration include gate installations to accommodate equestrians, improved bridges and stream crossings, and completion of Willow Creek Horse Camp in collaboration with public land agencies such as – BHNF and BLM. Success over the next 10 years for BH BCH SD will continue because of a dedicated and devoted group of equestrians who want trails to remain open for future generations.



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# How to Feed a Hard Keeper

By Stacie G. Boswell, DVM, DACVS-LA  
Member Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen

Winter is upon us and pastures are thin. Even in the southern United States, most people are now feeding hay. Geriatric horses tend to lose condition in the winter, so here are some tips and tricks to help our “golden oldies” out.

### Monitoring

It’s critical to monitor your horse’s weight. A simple way to do this is by using a weight tape. By tracking his weight, you can see the progression of weight changes before your eye notices any difference, especially under his fluffy winter coat.

To use a weight tape, your horse should be standing square. The weight tape is used at his heart girth: it is wrapped around him just behind his elbow, perpendicular to his body. The number is documented. For horses who are either overweight or underweight, they should be weighed weekly. For most normal horses, tracking monthly is appropriate. Weight tape estimates also gives you a starting point for knowing how much to feed your hard-keeper, based on his desired weight.

### Feeding Time

The main reason for weight loss, or being a hard-keeper, in North America is caloric deficiency – he just isn’t able to eat enough food. In the winter, he may need more calories to stay warm. Forage that is available as grass pasture is soft and easy to chew, so aged horses often do well in summer but have trouble eating the harder hay through winter.

A horse needs 1.5-2% of their body weight in feed per day. For a 1000-pound horse this is 15-20 pounds daily. Use your weight tape estimate to calculate how much you should offer your horse to eat.

Just because a horse is standing in front of hay chewing doesn’t mean he is consuming it. If his teeth are worn, but still maintaining some function, he will need four to six hours of protected time alone with his food. It’s not possible for a horse to eat and fend off other horses if he is the slowest-chewing horse in a herd. If he isn’t able to maintain his weight on the forage provided, he needs another source of feed.

Adding a commercial diet that is nutritionally balanced is the best option. The ones with the highest calories are either Triple Crown Senior or Purina Senior Active (both come in a purple bag). These complete feeds can be fed as-is, and as the sole source of food for a geriatric horse.

Beet pulp is not recommended because it is not nutritionally balanced - its calcium/phosphorous ratio is extremely high and it is a poor source of trace minerals. It has fewer calories than the feeds mentioned above.

For any hard keeper, you may add corn, vegetable, or other oil to your horse’s food. Begin with one tablespoon twice daily and gradually work

up to one cup twice daily over the course of three to four weeks.

The premolars and molars (“cheek teeth”) of a horse serve as a built-in food grinder. They are made of hard enamel and softer dentin, which wear away as they function to grind forage. Though his teeth erupt continually, when a horse reaches his mid-twenties his teeth will reach the limit of wear and he will no longer be able to grind forage. He also may be quidding – spitting out wads of inadequately chewed forage.

Horses with worn teeth are dependent on bagged feed. Many senior feeds are designed to be fed as the sole source of nutrition. Another option is to replace that need with an equal weight of alfalfa or timothy/alfalfa pellets. Often, this does need to be soaked so that the horse can swallow it. Soaking may also prevent him from choking.

Remember, a horse needs **fifteen to twenty** pounds of food a day! This means one 50-pound bag of feed will last for only two to three days if a horse cannot chew hay.

Stacie G. Boswell is a Board Certified Large Animal Surgeon and the author of *The Ultimate Guide for Horses in Need* (horseandriderbooks.com) <https://stacieboswell.com>









Photos: Using the weight tape. Reading the weight tape. Keep a weight chart.



Weight Chart				
Date	James	Shaqa	Zee	Notes:
8/31/20	1190	1033	874	YIKES!!
9/14/20	1158	1003	847	Wahod! Progress
10/7/20	1178	1019	904	2 steps fwd;
10/30/20	1158	1033	880	

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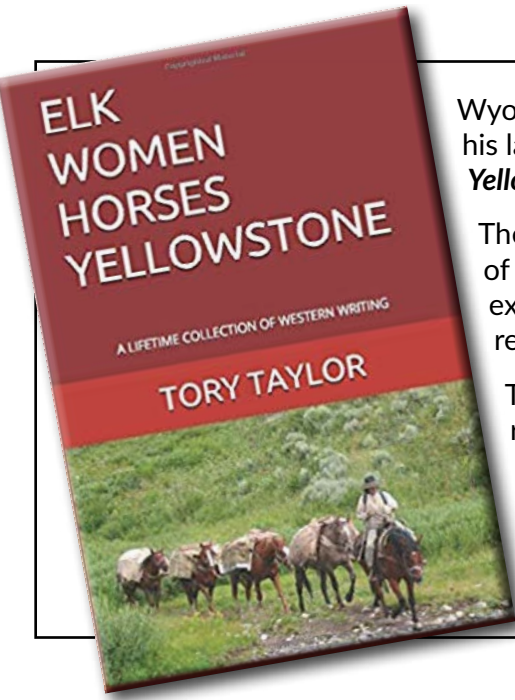
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Taylor and his wife, Meredith, recently retired from thirty years owning and operating a Yellowstone back country outfitting business.

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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 12,900 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](http://www.bcha.org) for more information on BCHA.

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### Design, Layout and Sponsorship Director

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

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Eagle Web Press  
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# Public Lands Update

By Randy Rasmussen, M.S., Director, Public Lands & Recreation

Public debate is likely to intensify in 2021 regarding the appropriate role of motorized electric bicycle (e-bike) use in outdoor recreation, including the appropriate role of electric mountain bikes (e-MTBs) among back country trails. The issue is not going away any time soon. This Public Lands Update summarizes recent changes in policies by federal land management agencies on the e-bike topic and what BCH chapters can do when the e-bike debate comes to public lands in your backyard.

### Final Rules for E-bike Use Issued by DOI Agencies

The e-bike industry continued its aggressive push to open public land trails to e-bike use, driven primarily by an objective to increase e-bike sales across the nation. They chalked up one such success in 2020 via the Department of Interior (DOI), which in early October announced final regulations for e-bike use by the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These new policies provide a green light to local agency managers who seek to authorize e-bike use on trails where traditional bicycle use is currently allowed (for details, see [BCHA's Summer 2020 newsletter](#)). In short, the new policies treat e-bikes as a non-motorized trail use, akin to a regular bicycle—a reversal of policy that previously (and rightfully) recognized that e-bikes operate via an electric motor.

### Draft Directives for E-bike Use on National Forests

Now the good news. It appears that the U.S. Forest Service is unlikely to match the fervor by which DOI agencies rushed to facilitate and expand access for e-bike use on non-motorized trails. In late September, the Forest Service issued “draft directives” that clarify how and by what criteria e-bikes are to be managed on national forests. The draft directives were circulated as part of a 30-day public review and comment period.

BCHA researched, prepared and submitted detailed public comments on the draft directives. Importantly, the draft directives appeared largely consistent with the position advocated by BCHA and others that e-bikes must be treated as a motorized trail use. Consequently, BCHA offered its support for the thrust of the draft directives and commended the Forest Service for its effort to “develop guidance that appears consistent with existing agency policy and that demonstrates an awareness and appreciation for all national forest stakeholders, including traditional trail enthusiasts such as BCHA’s membership.” We also recommended improvements that should be made in the final directives.

### BCHA Position on the Use of E-bikes

BCHA has not issued a formal policy statement on e-bike use. In general, however, BCHA opposes attempts by federal land management agencies to superimpose motorized forms of travel on non-motorized trails shared by hikers, equestrians and others. It is our view that allowing motorized vehicles on trails that were neither designed



nor previously managed for motorized use could have significant adverse impacts on the safety and enjoyment of non-motorized trail users.

BCHA understands that e-bikes have their place on public lands. The questions of where, and under what circumstances, should be addressed at the local level and include the involvement of affected stakeholders and environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). BCHA’s position has been to recognize the opportunity that e-bike use represents to people who would not otherwise have the means (like horses!) or the physical ability to explore and enjoy public lands without the motor assist provided by an e-bike. Yet BCHA supports the view that motorized recreational uses should occur only on routes or in areas that have been officially designated for motorized use.

In cases where a federal agency proposes to change the classification of a non-motorized trail (or trails) to allow e-bike use, BCHA chapters need to be prepared to roll up their sleeves to either change or negotiate the final outcome. Again, a federal agency doing so should follow public engagement and review requirements of NEPA; BCH chapters need to cry “foul” if the agency is not, or if they claim they can take a short-cut, like use of a “Categorical Exclusion” in lieu of more detailed NEPA analysis. This is important, as it’s only through the NEPA process where BCHA and BCH New Mexico recently convinced the U.S. Forest Service to withdraw a proposal that would have added e-bikes to a proposed non-motorized trail system.

### E-bikes and the Lincoln National Forest

BCHA chalked up a significant victory in our efforts to ensure an open public process and rigorous environmental analysis under NEPA by the Lincoln National Forest, located in southern New Mexico. In September, the District Ranger issued a Draft Decision Notice withdrawing a portion of an otherwise good recreation management plan that would have authorized e-bike use alongside hiking and equestrian use on a new trail system. BCHA and BCH New Mexico submitted a detailed public comment letter in August on the agency’s draft Environmental Assessment (EA), documenting concerns over safety, user conflict and the potential to

displace traditional non-motorized trail users. The District Ranger listened! Their decision rationale read:

To be responsive to public comments on the draft EA, which were largely supportive of the project, but which were also focused on the incompatibility of traditional uses such as horseback riding and hiking and E-bikes on the proposed single track trail area #1 mainly due to the potential speed discrepancy (~20-28 mph versus 3-10 mph) and ensuing safety issues, I have decided to eliminate the use of E-bikes in single-track area #1; only non-motorized uses (hiking, horseback riding, and regular mountain bikes) would be authorized.

BCH New Mexico followed up by conveying their appreciation to staff of the Lincoln National Forest. They also offered to help defend and publicly support the agency’s decision should e-bike interests push back. In a reversal of fortune, BCH New Mexico ended up strengthening its relationship with this Forest—when we initially worried about straining this relationship by documenting and voicing our opposition to the original proposal. Moreover, the detailed public comments we developed for this proposal can be used as a template for other BCH chapters who might find themselves facing a similar situation.

### E-bike Proposals Coming to a Forest (or Park, or BLM Lands) Near You?

BCHA chapters and equestrians, in general, need to be prepared for the moment when their federal land management partners announce a proposal to authorize e-bike use on otherwise non-motorized trails. In many places, it will be assumed by agency trail planners that equestrians will simply accept and learn to accommodate e-bikes on shared-use trails. In other places, agency planners will ask local equestrian representative what trails they might be willing to concede to e-bike use.

In an ideal world, federal agencies would require e-bike advocates to design, construct and maintain their own set of trails for their specific use. Or they might insist that e-bike use is appropriate only on trails authorized for motorized use, like motorcycle or ATV trails, in recognition of the fact that e-bikes are propelled in part by motors. But in the short term, don’t expect agency decision makers to fully understand concerns about safety and user

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conflict shared by traditional trail users like horsemen. We'll need to make the case at the local level, and be prepared to document those concerns.

In the meantime, here are a few things you can do to monitor developments by federal land managers in your area:

1. Engage in local trail coalitions (if they exist in your area) and keep your ears open within the trails community about pending trail proposals and developments.
2. Forge alliances with other trail groups, like hikers, bird watchers and others in order to expand your network. For example, American Hiking Society maintains a list of local allied hiking groups that can be searched by state <https://americanhiking.org/hiking-resources/#hiking-alliance>
3. Call agency offices to ask that you be placed on their (email) mailing list for announcements about all recreation- and trails-related projects in locations of interest to your chapter.
4. Monitor the list of pending projects of local land management agencies. The US Forest Service maintains a website <https://www.fs.fed.us/sopa/> with quarterly updates for your national forest. The BLM maintains a register of planning projects that allows you look up recreation projects by BLM state and district <https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/eplanning>
5. Meet occasionally, have phone calls or zoom meetings, with agency trail managers to discuss potential work projects and any specific concerns you have about e-bike use on non-motorized trails.
6. Volunteer to post "No e-bike" signs at non-motorized trailheads before e-bike trespass becomes a significant problem and encourage agency law enforcement to enforce the rules.
7. Become proficient in spotting an e-bike (e-MTB) on the trail. You can educate yourself at this website <https://peopleforbikes.org/tag/e-bikes/> or do a simple search for



Photo by Jim Allen, Black Hills BCH of South Dakota, on the Custer National Forest.

- photos and videos of e-bikes (and, importantly e-MTBs) online.
8. Document cases of e-bike trespass on non-motorized trails and document any accidents or unpleasant run-ins with people using e-bikes on non-motorized trails. Share any such documentation with BCHA and agency law enforcement personnel. Such documentation may prove critical in making the case against shared-use trails with motorized e-bikes.
  9. Be courteous yet firm in any encounters with e-bike riders on non-motorized trails. Educate them about the rules. More often than not, the agencies have not adequately posted e-bike prohibitions or directed e-bike riders to trails they can enjoy without posing hazards to equestrians. Again, document any such encounters and share the documentation with the relevant law enforcement officer(s) and your BCH state public lands officer.
  10. You might consider renting an e-bike for a day from your local bike shop (seriously!). Take it out for a spin on (paved) trails or dirt roads to get a feel for this new technology. An opening line by e-bikes advocates is sometimes "You've probably never even seen or ridden an e-bike." Prove them wrong by describing the model you tried out. I did. And now I can describe how e-bike technology, in the hands of young thrill-seekers on the trail, frightens me as a horseman.

## Working With Public Lands Managers

By Jerry Bentz and Darrell Wallace

It has been a while since we reminded our newer members (and leaders) a little of our BCHA learned experience:

- 1) No table pounding, yelling, or foul language - it only makes things worse.
- 2) Don't make things personal, even if the individual seems to be vio-

lating law or policy.

3) Avoid naming public employees when criticizing in public - their fellow employees will support them, even if they're wrong.

A longer article about this will be printed in a future edition.

## Twin Rivers BCH of Idaho Dry Diggins Ridge Trail #140 Clearing

By Rod Parks

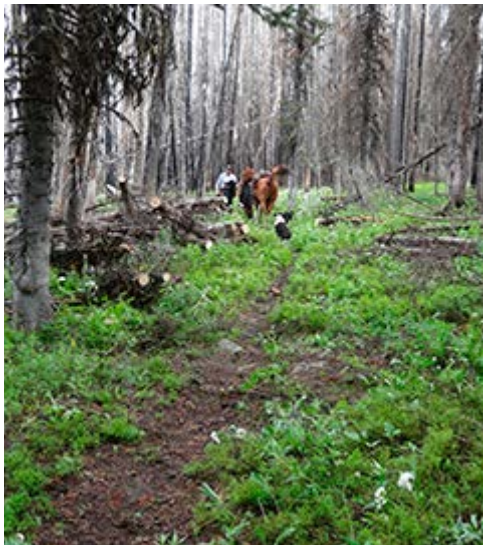
The Hells Canyon Wilderness is comprised of 216,981 acres of high mountain peaks, ominous canyon rim-rocks, breathtaking vistas, and quiet solitude. The Wilderness is located on both sides of the Snake River Canyon and administered by the Wallowa Whitman National Forest. Fires over last 15 years have made keeping trails open an impossible task. Many years the trail crew consists of one person and volunteers. In 2016 on a summer pack trip, we attempted to ride to McGaffee Cow Camp down Dry Diggins Ridge Trail #140. Trees had been over the trail so long that finding the tread in places was a challenge and we never made it. Some of us decided to open this trail up. The project became even more challenging with the Covid-19 restrictions.

On July 22, six of us headed to Riggins, Idaho, then 17 miles up the steep road to Windy Saddle Trailhead. We loaded up gear and stock and headed down the trail eight miles to set up camp for a week clearing the Dry Diggins Ridge Trail. As is usually the case, the Windy Saddle Trail had not been cleared yet, so there were challenges going around and over trees as we did not want to leave the 11 stock standing in the trail any more than necessary. We did cut what was needed to proceed. The estimate was 200-250 trees down on the 3.6-mile-long trail. We went

from eager to get it cleared to "what in the world had we got ourselves into", and then on to "we will never get it done" as fatigue set in at the end of the first day.

We had two crews working with crosscut saws and used hand saws on the smaller trees. We were lucky that we could drag many of the trees off the tread after only having to make one cut. We were glad to be over 6,000 feet in elevation as it was over 100 degrees in Riggins almost every day we worked. In many areas, one or two crew members had to spend some time trying to find the original trail as even the elk and deer had abandoned using the tread. After three hard days cutting and dragging trees out of the way, we could see that we were going to get the entire section cleared. Day four we celebrated the project completed with 430 trees removed and some brushing. Everyone had their jobs and just kept their heads down until we finished. The next day, some rode to the high mountain lake while the rest of us rode to Dry Diggins Lookout for a view of the Snake River in Hells Canyon. On the trip back to Windy Saddle Trailhead we cut more trees that we had left on the way in

Dry Diggins Ridge Trail before and after pictures.  
Don Klements on left and Steve Cooper on right packing out.



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# Why Some Longtime BCHA Members Supported the Legacy Fund

By Latifa Rodriguez, Executive Committee BCHA

Biff and Tess Stransky are no strangers to BCHA. After presenting a successful low-impact “horse sense” clinic, they realized the need to further educate people on Leave No Trace (LNT) and common-sense horse use. The message of BCHA was just the ticket to further the education of horsemen. In 1995, the Stransky’s founded the Four Corners BCH Chapter in Durango, Colo. They have continued to educate members of many chapters with LNT principles throughout the years. As their chapter continued to grow, they helped other nearby communities begin their own chapters. Biff and Tess clearly understood the need to maintain access to trails, to assist in reducing deferred trail maintenance, to keep trails open for all, and ensure public lands stay in public hands - now and in the future.

Currently, Biff and Tess are members of the East Valley BCH in Apache Junction, Ariz. When they learned about the BCHA Legacy Fund, they wanted to take their involvement a step further. After seeing the solid financial potential of the Legacy Fund – an endowment-type fund – they did not hesitate to become early seed contributors and Founding Members. Both agreed that it was the right thing to do because the values of BCHA were their values, too. As Back Country Horsemen for over 25 years, Biff and Tess have embraced BCHA’s mission and seek the importance of BCHA continuing its work for years to come. The Legacy Fund is all about *Keeping Trails Open for Future Generations*.

- Scan the QR code to make a donation, or
- Visit [BCHA.org](https://www.bcha.org) to make a one-time or recurring donation, or
- Mail your donation to:  
BCHA  
PO Box 1182  
Columbia Falls, MT 59912-1182
- Be sure to tag us in your social media posts  
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Biff and Tess in the Superstition Mountains of Arizona.

**GUARDIANS OF THE TRAILS**

The guardians are those who have named the Legacy Fund in their will and shared with us.

*Please consider a bequest to support the future financial security of BCHA.*

Contact us at [fundraising@bcha.org](mailto:fundraising@bcha.org)  
All inquiries are private and confidential

# What Three Years in BCH of Minnesota Has Meant to Me

By Ken Olson, Back Country Horsemen of Minnesota

I have worked as a volunteer on horse trails and in horse campgrounds since Russ Wright invited me to a National Trails Day work party at Zumbro Bottoms many years ago. As I worked alongside Russ he told me about a group of snowbirds in Arizona who got together once a month (and sometimes more often) to work on trails when he and Darlene were in Apache Junction during the winter. That’s when I first learned about BCHA.

For several years Russ always mentioned BCHA when we talked. The thing about it was BCHA was brought up when we were having fun working on trails as volunteers. I really enjoy the out-of-doors and the spectacular places my horse took me. It might seem strange to some that working on trails was fun to me but it was! As I rode down many trails in many places I always saw where someone had cleared a tree from across the trail or built a water bar to stop erosion. Often that someone was a volunteer.

Now I was a *someone* and Russ’s BCH concept of keeping trails open to horses and volunteering to maintain trails was stuck in my head. In the fall of 2015, four of us started talking about forming a BCH organization

in Minnesota. I already knew several more people who were crazy enough to enjoy working on trails as volunteers and would probably join us. We were right: there are other riders who enjoy working on trails (and in horse campgrounds) as volunteers and since then we’ve had a lot of fun doing a lot of work.

After three years of BCH of Minnesota I have a much larger circle of friends who all have a significant investment in the trails and campgrounds they have worked on – all while having fun doing it! We have put up new tie lines, rebuilt many existing tie lines, cleared many trees from trails, filled mud holes, rerouted trails to safer ground and built manure bunkers. Some people would probably tell you I’m a little bit crazy to have fun doing all of this BUT I love doing it. You can see what you have accomplished. And you know what? All of it benefits all of the riders who use the camps and trails in Minnesota!

So what have three years of BCH of Minnesota meant to me? Friends, a sense of accomplishment and more FRIENDS! These are the right kind of friends: hard workers and great people!



The Hay Creek tie rail.  
Ken at Overlook, Reno.