
BCH of Tennessee Report of 2023 events



The 51st National Board Meeting, Casper, Wyoming
March 24-27, 2024

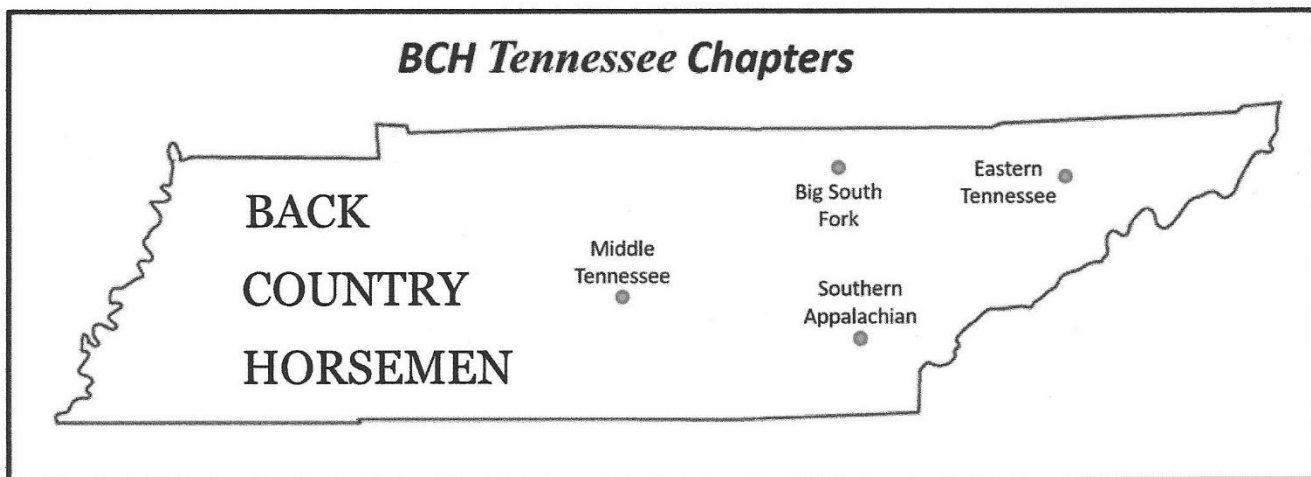


Table of Contents

1. State of Tennessee Back Country Horsemen (BCH-TN)	Pages 2 - 3
2. Back Country Horsemen of East Tennessee (BCHET since 2001)	Pages 4 - 7
3. Southern Appalachian Back Country Horsemen (SABCH since 2006)	Pages 8 - 12
4. Back Country Horsemen Big South Fork (BSFBCH since 2010)	Pages 13 - 16
5. Middle Tennessee Back Country horsemen (MTBCH since 2017)	Pages 17 - 18

STATE OF TENNESSEE BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN (BCH-TN)-2023

Organization & Outreach

Tennessee has 4 current chapters, all located in the middle and eastern portions of the state. See the map on cover page.

Our annual state meeting was held June 26, 2023, at the Department of Agriculture Extension office, west Knoxville.

Issues & Problems

Lack of youth involvement; difficulty with chainsaw certification with the National Forest; and difficulty with the Forest Service in keeping and enlarging the equine trails.

Organization Details

Chapter Name		Primary public agency & land
Back Country Horsemen of East Tennessee	BCHET	North Cherokee NF, northern two districts, Several State and County Parks
Southern Appalachian Back Country Horsemen	SABCH	USFS - Cherokee NF southern two districts, County Parks
Back Country Horsemen Big South Fork	BCHBSF	NPS – Big South Fork National and Recreation Area
Middle Tennessee BCH	MTBCH	Various State, City and County parks, No National Forests in Nashville area

BCH-TN Leadership

Chairperson	Terri Haver	SABCH	Until December 31, 2025
Vice Chairperson	Michelle King	BCHET	Until December 2024
Secretary	Kayla Swedberg	MTBCH	Until December 31, 2025
Treasurer	Steve Corley	BSFBCH	Until Dec 31, 2024
2023 National Directors	Steve Corley (Alternate) Deb McDonald Terri Haver	BSFBCH BCHET SABCH	Last Year
2024 National Directors	Steve Corley (Alternate) Deb McDonald Terri Haver	BSFBCH BCHET SABCH	Current
Saw Director	Richard Jamison	BCHET	Forever
Historian	Joanne Mitchell	SABCH	Forever
Volunteer Hours	Joanne Mitchell	SABCH	Forever
Website Committee	Joanne Mitchell Pam Corley	SABCH BSFBCH	Forever Forever
South East Public Lands	Bill Watson (NC) Bobby & Joanne Mitchell	BCHET SABCH	Forever

State Total 2023 Tennessee Volunteer Hours

Tennessee Chapter	Volunteer Hours	Equivalent Value
BCHET	863.35	\$40,166.23
SABCH	3,405.0	\$123,926.55
MTBCH	28	\$1,897.40
BSFBCH	1,088.5	\$61,158.90
Tennessee Total	5,384.85	\$227,149.08

Chapter: BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF EAST TENNESSEE-2023 (BCHET)

Accomplishments

1. Trails & Facilities: Cherokee NF (Northern 2 Districts - Unaka Mountain and Watauga horse trails)
 - a. Taylor Ridge Trail was re-routed to a better foot bed roughly 6 feet from existing trail bed. New trail section is approximately 75 feet. Water bars were placed as needed. Rye Patch cleared, sections damaged by logging were re-marked. Trails cleared and marked as routine maintenance: Holston West, Rye Patch, Low Gap, Bartee, Flint Mill, Meadow Creek Mtn Trail, Weaver's Bend, Poplar Cove, Cowbell Hollow, Jennings Creek, Little Jennings Creek, Brush Creek, Davis Creek, Limestone Cove, Dark Hollow Connector, Clark's Creek Rec Area including Long Arm Branch, Walnut Mtn gated forest service road cleared.
2. BCH Outreach Experiences
 - a. National Trails Day June 3 we coordinated with SAWS(Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards) to work the Limestone Cove Trail from top to bottom clearing 9 downed trees, logging 79 service hours, and 3 miles of vegetation cleared.
 - b. We encouraged all members to report non-horse campers in horse camps. Also encouraged to reach out to legislators regarding E-bikes on trails.
3. Collaborations with other Organizations
 - a. We have a working relationship with Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) and the Cherokee National Forest.

Education

1. We had one Chainsaw Certification class with the USFS held in October 2023.

Organization

1. The chapter is a 501(c)(3) organization.
2. Website professionally maintained: www.bchet.org
3. Internal Communications
 - a. Held 3 Chapter Meetings. In November we elect new officers to assume their new role on January 1.
 - b. Email updates to membership about once a month.
 - c. Held 3 Board of Directors Meetings.
 - d. Chapter Website: www.bchet.org. Webmaster is Mollie Ingle
 - e. Chapter Facebook Pages reaches
 - f. Chapter Facebook Page has 3.5k likes and gets about 35.5k in 90 days. The administrators are Michelle King and Deb McDonald.
 - g. Committees: Buckaroos Committee is chaired by Michelle King. Looking for new volunteers.
4. Common Chapter membership expiration date is December 31

5. Online renewal now offers Pay Pal.
6. Annual Membership Dues
 - a. \$30 Individual Membership
 - b. \$40 Family Membership
7. Certifications
 - a. 7 Members are certified chain sawyers.
 - b. No member is currently certified as a sawcut sawyer.
8. BCHET Committees

<u>Position or Committee</u>	<u>Individual(s)</u>	<u>Term Ends</u>
Webmaster	Mollie Ingle	Current
FB Administrators	Michelle King Deb McDonald	Current Current
Nomination Committee	Deb McDonald Larry Jeffers	Current Current
Buckaroos Committed Chairperson	Michelle King	Current
SE Public Lands Education	Bill Watson Deb McDonald	12/31/2021 Current

BCHET Officers

<u>Position</u>	<u>Individual(s)</u>	<u>Term Ends</u>
President	Larry Jeffers	12/2024
Vice President	Karen Isaacs	12/2023
Secretary	Michelle King	12/2024
Treasurer	Jamie Fritsch	12/2023
Chapter Board	Richard Jamison *	12/2024
	Jatana Norris	12/2023
	Lisa Woodson	12/2024
	Mollie Ingle	12/2023
	Theresa Symonds	12/2024
Chapter Representatives	Richard Jamison	Current
	Debra McDonald	Current
	Michelle King	Current
Volunteer Hours Coordinator	Ron Rice	12/31/2024

*State Saw Coordinator

Current & Future Projects (Goals)

1. Trails and or Facilities:
 - a. Currently working closely with the USFS on area trails to clear downed trees and repair problematic trails. We coordinate a once a month work day with their Trail Tech Supervisor and his crew. Brandon Church with the USFS has been a huge asset to our region. We continue to work toward a connector trail in the Walnut Mtn trail system. Waiting on NEPA study.

Issues and Problems

1. Outside organizations
 - a. We continue to see trail use by off road vehicles in areas not open to motor vehicles. Lots of damage observed in the Limestone/ Dark Hollow area. A few trails on Holston Mtn have also been discovered and damaged by off road vehicles. _We have developed a more open line of communication with the FS. Cautiously optimistic about our future working partnership.
 - b. Flatwoods Rd. was closed temporarily for repairs. Road bed graded, gravel hauled in.
 - c. Continue outreach and spreading the good word about BCHET and BCHA.

Membership and Volunteer Hours History

2000 - Incorporated as East TN Trail Riders
2001 - Joined BCHA; 367 Members; 335 hrs
2013 - 85 Members; 1,225 hours
2014 - 94 Members; 1,672 hours
2015 - 94 Members; 1,286 hours
2016 - 115 Members 551 hours
2017 - 98 Members; 878 hours
2018 - 94 Members; 1,651 hours
2019 - 84 Members; 2,237 hours
2020 - 84 Members; 1,740 hours
2021 - 93 Members; 1,577 hours
2022 - 77 Members; 550 hours

Chapter: SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN-2023

1. Accomplishments

- a. Trails & Facilities: We maintain trails in two districts of the Cherokee National Forest (Tellico and Ocoee-Hiwassee). We also help the BCH of North Georgia in the Chattahoochee National Forest. We work every Thursday, year-round.
 - i. Existing trails: In Cherokee National Forest South, we still had 3,405 volunteer hours for a dollar value of \$123,926.55.
 1. In 2023, we sawed out 558 total chainsaw trees. In Wilderness, 494 total crosscut trees. Combined chainsaw and crosscut total of 1,058 trees!
 2. We maintained the following horse trails: all horse trails on Starr's Mountain, (horse zone) in the Ocoee-Hiwassee District. We also work the Tellico District including Tavern Branch/Miller Ridge. We have been told not to maintain any of the Citico trails (more about that later) We maintain 66.6 miles in O/H and 48.2 miles in Tellico for about 125 miles total maintained to standard. We also work numerous hiking only trails with our partners.
 3. We started a new Adopt-A-Trail program in 2023. Some trails were worked almost every month. Others only three times and some not at all (since no hours were turned in).
 - ii. At Enterprise South Nature Park, a Hamilton County (Chattanooga) managed park, we secured a used picnic table on FB Marketplace for the equestrian trails "lunch spot". The park service placed the table on January 8, 2024. Enterprise South Summit Knobs has about 16 miles of equestrian trails.
- b. SABCH Outreach Experiences
 - i. We participated on Public Lands Day on Saturday, September 23 at Lost Corral Horse Camp. We did not participate in National Trails Day in 2023 at Indian Boundary (people) campground.
 - ii. We participated in the Leave No Trace portion of the TN Monroe County Schools Field Day. They had seven groups of up to 12 children per group. Went over seven principles, as fun as could be. We also participated in the Tellico River Cleanup and the Hiwassee River Cleanup sponsored by Trout Unlimited in the spring.
- c. Collaboration with Other Organizations
 - i. Our chapter often assist our partners, the Benton MacKaye Trail Association, a hiking association. We work on many hiking and multi-use trails.
 - ii. Had our annual meeting with the Forest Service meeting on January 31 at the Tellico Ranger Station.
- d. Membership: Did a separate e-mail blast for the membership including a membership packet. Membership was 25 Individual, 35 family. Down five memberships-not bad-people moved.

2. Organization

- a. # Chapter Meetings held: 6 (every other month)
- b. # Board of Directors Meeting held: 3 March (for Citico issue only) June and December were held prior to the regular membership meetings.
- c. # Newsletters: 12
- d. Volunteer Hour Collector: 2023 & 2024-Joanne & Bobby Mitchell
- e. In 2023 we had 6 certified chain sawyers, including one new one, (Henry W). Got more certified in January 2024.
- f. We have 7 certified crosscut sawyers. One recertified in Virginia and another at the Wilderness Skills Institute in NC. Both as C-Instructors.
- g. We have two certified Trail Machine operators who have their own machines. (\$20kish)
- h. Website Name: www.SABCH.org (Webmaster: Madison B.)
- i. We accomplished creating an on-line (PayPal) way to pay dues from our website
- j. Facebook Page # likes: 1k likes, 1.1k followers; Reached weekly: 606 (6 FB Administrators were Jim Holland, Judy Hadorn, Barb Childress, Rick Harris, Joanne Mitchell, and Linda Norton). It is used to report downed trees or clear trail. Only Administrators can post. Anyone in the world can comment. Suspicious comments are deleted by Admins. Most posts are reported in the monthly newsletter since some members don't FB.
- k. Our weekly workdays are reported on our FB page (by FB administrators). Sometimes we have enough people to break into two or three teams, so each photographer goes with a different team. We always try to get a picture of the safety meeting before we start the day. This helps us fill out the required FS report.
- l. Committees
 - i. Nominations Committee - Linda Norton Chairperson
 - ii. Public Relations/Membership Committee - Terri Haver
 - iii. SE Public Land Committee - Bobby and Joanne Mitchell

3. Current and Future Projects: (Goals)

- a. We still need to DOUBLE our volunteer hours in four years to meet the National Forest Stewardship Act requirements, signed into law in the fall of 2016.
- b. Working on incorporating the younger members at the working and administrative level.
- c. Specific Trails:
 - i. We need to reopen the closed section of Conasauga River Trail #61 which was burned out, over 6 years ago. It is a connector trail from the FS road down to the River on the West end. Applied for Legacy Grant but did not get it in 2022.
 - ii. The Blue Ridge Trail #62 needs finished the last ¼ mile to Sheeds Creek Rd.

- iii. Sylco Tail #75, needs large culverts replaced due to Easter Flooding 2021, (totally washed out and worsening), many trees down (some over 30" dia), and desperate for signage. Also, a large sinkhole over a culvert on the old RR bed. The Forest Service is dragging their feet on this repair. It has been patched, not repaired.
- iv. Signage both parking and/or directional for most trails, including Miller Ridge, Cooper Gap, Yellow Creek, Bullet Creek, Sylco, Conasauga River Trail, Iron Mountain, Starr Mountain, and Tellico area.

4. Issues and Problems

- a. The FS does not appear to want to maintain or add horse trails, and feels equestrians will age out in a few years. The weekly work crew works on more hiking than horse trails. They are not responsive to our email or calls.
- b. Goals for membership increase: Hope to work more closely with the local McMinn County Saddle Club for recon purposes. McMinn Saddle Club have several rides in the Cherokee National Forest and know where trail problems are.
- c. Six members were invited to a special meeting at the Tellico Ranger District on Feb 24, 2023. The Cherokee FS wants to close the entire Little Citico Trail System, due to a 2019 study (109 pages) by Forest Service Enterprise Program Trail Unit that approximated \$200k to repair (2019 numbers). That would be a **10% loss** of equine trails in that region. Randy Rasmussen, BCHA Director of Public Lands and Recreation is aware. Randy Brown, SE Public Lands Director is aware. The new Tellico District Ranger, Andrew Connor just started at the end of January 2024. They have not hired a new Recreation Manager since Brandon Burke left in November. We are still *anxiously* awaiting the scoping letter which will give us a time schedule (30-90 days?) of the comment period. We have already had a meeting with US Congressmen Fleishman's office last year. North Carolina is watching because they may have a similar issue. Two members are our contact points when this issue erupts.
- d. There was a major flooding issue in the Tellico District in August 2023 which washed out a portion of the Cherohala Skyway. Traffic detours were long way around and tedious. Trailwork was suspended for a while.

5. Organization Details

- a. We have been a 501c3 since 2010

SABCH Leadership

<u>Position</u>	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Term Ends</u>
President	Bobby Mitchell	12/31/2024
Vice President	Janey Lynch	12/31/2023
Secretary	Linda Norton	12/31/2022
Treasurer	Madison Baldwin	12/31/2023
Chapter Board	Phil Hadorn	12/31/2023
	Larry Daugherty	12/31/2023
	Terri Haver	12/31/2024
	Jenice Dugan	12/31/2024
	Janice Butt	12/31/2024
Alternate Board	Sherry Landers Kandi Childress	forever
Chapter Representatives	Steve Burtnett, Alt-2023 Joanne Mitchell-2024 Terri Haver-2023	Current
Forest Service Liaisons	Larry Daugherty Bobby Mitchell	forever
Volunteer Hours Coordinator	Joanne & Bobby Mitchell	forever

Dues Cost and Structure

1. Common Chapter membership expiration date is December 31
2. We do have an online option for renewal, as of 2023.
3. Annual Membership Dues for 2024 was increased in June 2023 by \$5, anticipating National Increase.
 - a. \$35 Individual Membership
 - b. \$40 Family Membership

SABCH History

1. Membership and Volunteer Hours History

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. | 2006 - Organization formed. | 549 volunteer hours. | |
| b. | 2013 - 3,259 volunteer hours | | 80 Members |
| c. | 2014 - 3,842 volunteer hours | | 74 Members |
| d. | 2015 - 3,403 volunteer hours | | 65 Members |
| e. | 2016 - 3,439 volunteer hours | | 44 Members |
| f. | 2017 - 3,293 volunteer hours | | 49 Members |
| g. | 2018 - 3,942 volunteer hours | | 53 Members |
| h. | 2019 - 3,601 Volunteer Hours | | 44 Members (Federal Shutdown) |
| i. | 2020 - 3602 Volunteer Hours | | 41 Members (Pandemic year) |
| j. | 2021 - 4,374.5 Volunteer Hours | | 65 Members |
| k. | 2022 - 4,448.5 Volunteer hours | | 65 Members |
| l. | 2023 – 3,405 Volunteer Hours | | 60 Members |

2023 SABCH Chapter Volunteer Hours Value total of \$123,926.55

Chapter: BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN BIG SOUTH FORK-2023

1. Accomplishments

Our members participated in *monitoring* the status of trails throughout the park as part of the park's Trail Keepers program. As part of this program, our members performed routine trail maintenance and sent reports to the park on trail conditions. The Big South Fork Superintendent will not allow volunteers to use chainsaws.

All of our monthly meetings are open to the public. The 2023 BCH-TN Rendezvous that we hosted was also open to the public. We often have people who are not members attend our meetings and events. We do a lot of outreach via our Facebook Group and one-on-one conversations following a contact made through our webpage or one of our officer's email address.

Education

We held informational sessions on various topics at the 2023 Rendezvous. We regularly post educational material via our Facebook group. Sometimes we schedule special educational sessions. In 2023, we held a special session to address how one can track a horse that has become lost in a remote area such as BSF National River and Recreation Area.

2. BCHBSF Committees

<u>Position or Committee</u>	<u>Individual(s)</u>	<u>Term Ends</u>
Webmaster	Susan Riggan	Forever
FB Administrator	Steven Corley	Forever
Activities Committee	April Kapanowski	Forever
Trail Committee	Curt Steinke	Forever

3. BCHBSF Officers

<u>Position</u>	<u>Individual(s)</u>	<u>Term Ends</u>
President	Steven Corley ***	12/31/2024
Vice President	April Kapinowski	12/31/2024
Secretary	Susan Riggan	12/31/2024
Treasurer	Pam Corley	12/31/2024
Chapter Board	Steven Corley**	12/31/2024
	Curt Steinke	12/31/2024
	Susan Riggan	12/31/2024
	Pam Corley**	12/31/2024
	Phil Mendola	12/31/2024
Chapter Representatives	Steve Corely	12/31/2024
	Pam Corely	12/31/2024
Member at Large	Phil Mendola	12/31/2024
Volunteer Hours Coordinator	vacant	2023
	Tamma Trump	12/31/2024
** Attended state meeting		
*** National Director Alternate, State BCH Treasurer		

Organization

1. We got our 501c3 completed in 2022.
2. We had twelve chapter meetings.
3. We had twelve Board of Directors meetings held jointly with the chapter meetings.
4. Our elections are held at the December meeting. The new officers assume duties January 1.
5. We had 12 newsletters.
6. Volunteer hour collection: vacant for 2023
7. We now have two certified chainsawyers, even though the BSF Superintendent will not allow them to utilize their skills within the park.
8. The website is www.bchbsf.org which is not highly used except upon direct referral by one our members. Estimated traffic in 2023 of around 1,800 hits.
9. Have a NICE color brochure.
10. The Facebook has 13,214 likes and 1,436 members, active members per week around 850. The FB Administrator is Steven Corley
11. We have an Activity Committee chaired by April Kapanowski

12. The Trail Committee is chaired by Steve Corley.

Goals

1. Intend to explore new ways to work with the park in 2024. Several projects that are important to area riders and have been on the park's list for more than three years still haven't been addressed. The park has been getting funding and is doing great work to address a large deferred trail maintenance backlog. They could get more done if they made greater use of our members. The park has strict rules on what work volunteers can do and what tools they can use. We've had more luck working with the park when a ranger is present to oversee the work. We're going to explore an option to "hire a ranger" for the duration of a volunteer project to see if we can expand the kinds of things we can do for the park.

Issues and Problems:

1. Outside organizations: From the superintendent down, the park is a very closed and tightly managed organized organization. No change in this is anticipated in 2024. We continue to explore ways that we can help the park that the park and our members will both accept. To be clearer about that, we have quite a few members who would be willing to do more but not under the severe constraints placed on them by the park. Many of those constraints are also placed on the park staff so, they may in fact be appropriate. They do however, limit the amount of volunteer participation in the park.
2. Our members tend to be older, retired, and female. We have few members that are willing and able to do a lot of volunteer work in the park. So, our volunteer hour contribution to BCHA is likely to be lower than the national average. Accepting this, our focus has shifted towards building an equestrian community that supports the park in other ways and that supports BCHA through membership dollars. We reached 100 memberships in 2023. This was a big push. We may be approaching a natural limit on people who might join but we're going to try and see a 20% gain in 2024.

Dues Structure:

1. Individual Dues are \$30yr.
2. Family Dues are \$40yr.
3. All annual dues expire December 31. There is no online option.

Membership and Volunteer Hours History

Year	Number of Members	Volunteer Hours
2010	31	
2011	35	
2012	35	
2013	35	
2014	35	100
2015	18	1,593
2016	17	107
2017	29	375
2018	44	446
2019	44	136
2020	44	389
2021	54	1,577
2022	74	1,296

Year 2023 BCHBSF had 1,885.50 hours at a \$61,158.90 value!

Chapter: MIDDLE TENNESSEE BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN-2023

Accomplishments

1. We cleared trail on the “East Fork” side of the Central Valley Trail system.

Organization

1. We are a501(c)(3) Organization since we incorporated in 2015.
2. Internal Communications
 - a. Held 8 Chapter Meetings
 - b. Held 0 Board of Directors Meetings
 - c. Did not mail any newsletters
 - d. Chapter Website: none
 - e. Chapter Facebook Page has 159 “Likes” for 2023, reaches 60 weekly, the FB administrator is Kayla Snyder. In January 2024, revamped the entire FB page to be more user friendly.
3. Certifications
 - a. No member is a certified chainsawyer.
 - b. No member is a certified crosscut sawyer.
4. MTBCH Committees

<u>Position or Committee</u>	<u>Individual(s)</u>	<u>Term Ends</u>
FB Administrators	Kayla Snyder	forever
Officers <u>Position</u>	<u>Individual(s)</u>	<u>Term Ends</u>
President	Jason Lancaster Kayla Snyder	9/28/2023 12/31/2024
Vice President		
Secretary	Kayla Snyder	12/31/24
Treasurer	Jesse Johnson	12/2023
Chapter Board		
Chapter Representatives	Kayla Snyder	2024
Volunteer Hours Coordinator	Kayla Snyder Kimberly Tomlin?	2023 2024

Current & Future Project (Goals)

1. This year, we aspire to work with other organizations and local youth. This includes the Boy Scouts and kids who want a “trail skills” lesson added to their repertoire of horse knowledge. This connection would be made through Josh Guin at Crossroads Ranch.
2. We have had a lot of requests for trail maintenance at the East Fork Recreation Area and Central Valley Trailhead, which are two ends of the same trail system.

Issues & Problems

1. The arrest of our long-standing president, Jason Lancaster has caused some issue with people dissociating from our chapter.

Dues Cost and Structure

1. Common chapter membership expiration date is December 31. We elect officers at the December meeting. They assume their office on January 1.
2. We do not yet have an online option for renewal
3. Annual Membership Dues
 - a. \$35 Individual Membership
 - b. \$45 Family Membership

Membership and Volunteer Hours History

2015	28		2021	16	
2016	16		2022	16	\$ 522.00
2017	23	\$ 774.00	2023	28	\$1,897.40 value
2018	23	\$ 642.00			
2019	23	\$ 362.00			
2020	15	\$ 1,795.20			