

Back Country Horseman Illinois State Report for the Year 2025

The state of Illinois currently has one chapter, Back Country Horseman of Illinois (BCHIL), which works primarily in the Shawnee National Forest across southern Illinois. The current board of directors consists of:

- Cricket Simons – President
- Gail Boyd – Vice President
- Gloria Ehlers – Treasurer
- Gloria Heggy – Secretary

In 2025 the decision was made to change the closure of reporting for the year from December 31 to September 30 to align with the US Forest Service fiscal year end. Year 2025 therefore is a shortened reporting period from the traditional twelve months to a one time nine months period. We are pleased to report volunteer contributions of **\$72,580.28** including **963** volunteer hours for the year January 1, 2025 – September 30, 2025.

Our major accomplishments for 2025 included:

- Annual Membership Appreciation Luncheon hosted at Hayes Canyon Campground. The luncheon is funded through membership raffles held at the monthly meetings.
- First Aid training for 10 members. The USFS held training at their Harrisburg office where 3 members participated. An added training class was hosted by BCHIL where an additional 7 members received/renewed their first aid certificate.
- The USFS hosted a two day Chainsaw Certification course at their Vienna office where 6 members participated resulting in 2 B buckers and 4 A buckers received/renewed their certification.
- The USFS hosted a one day Spray Application Certification where 4 members received/renewed their certification.
- Participated with a booth and pack horse at the R.E.C. Fest in Alton, Illinois with over 2000 attendees.
- Lusk Wilderness Projects
 - Crosscut day - Indian Kitchen Loop
 - Crosscut day – Owl Bluff
 - Build Turnpikes – Indian Kitchen Loop
 - Pack Day – Indian Kitchen Loop (15,390 lbs of gravel packed in), 12 pack horses
- Poker Run Fund Raiser held for the first time to raise money for gravel and future trail work
- Over 289 trees bucked from 30 different trails in the Shawnee National Forest over the course of nine months. Tree damage to trails was higher than usual due to ice storm damage.

Back Country Horsemen of Illinois continues to work closely with the US Forest Service and the various volunteer organizations that support the Shawnee National Forest.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Ward

Volunteer Hours Recorder