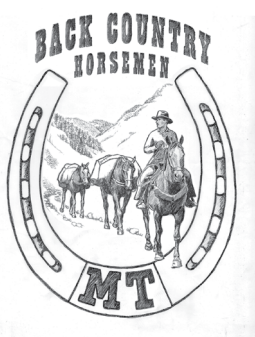


Decker Dispatch

www.bchmt.org

The Newsletter of the Back Country Horsemen of Montana - 1,059 Members

June 2018



OUR PURPOSES

- To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country, roadless backcountry and wilderness areas.
- To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
- To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
- To educate, encourage and solicit active participation by the general public in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resource by horses and people commensurate with our heritage.
- To foster and encourage formation of new state Back Country Horsemen organizations.
- To seek out opportunities to enhance existing areas of recreation for stock users.

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Back Country Horsemen of Montana put on Summer Packing Camp

BCHMT's Youth Program committee is putting together a summer camp for youth ages 14-17, on August 2-5, 2018.

Participants will meet at Indian Meadows Trailhead near Lincoln, MT at noon on Thursday, August 2nd, learning to pack in the afternoon, and attending a campfire chat with Smoke Elser that evening.

Friday morning, August 3rd, campers will learn to load up pack stock, then hike into Fickler Meadows in the Scapegoat Wilderness and set up camp.

Friday evening will include a campfire chat with Amy Pearson.

Saturday, August 4th, campers will

hike to Heart Lake to do a rehab project and learn about the principles of Leave No Trace camping and stock use.

Saturday evening includes a campfire chat with Ellie Fitzpatrick, who is leading the rehab project and LNT training.

Sunday, August 5th, campers will pack up and return to the trailhead by noon.

Candidates should apply by going to www.bchmt.org, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "Youth Summer Camp Application."

Applications are requested by June 15th.

SUMMER PACKING CAMP

for youth ages 14-17 indian meadows trailhead August 2-5, 2018

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Candidates should apply by going to www.bchmt.org, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "Youth Summer Camp Application."



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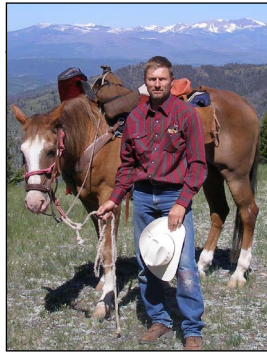
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By Mark Himmel
National Director, BCH Montana

National Director's Column

BCHA 2018 Convention Spokane, Washington

The BCHA convention started on 4/23/2018. Twenty-four states were in attendance.

There was a New Board Member Orientation for the members who were attending the National Convention for the first time. The business meeting agenda was presented and approved on consent agenda. Randy gave a brief report.

The ten standing committees each gave a report on accomplishments of the past year.

The Treasurer reported a net income of \$23,771.96. The proposed budget for next year has a surplus \$15,520. The proposed budget for next year was approved.

Afternoon reports from Headquarters (Erica), Trailmeister (Robert Eversible), BCHW membership pilot program, chain saw report (Mark).

There was a Meet & Greet Monday evening along with cowboy poetry; all had a good time. Monday evening I got cornered coming out of the elevator and was quizzed on chain saw certifications and connections. Considering no one asked questions earlier in the day I was surprised, although the questions were basic and I was able to answer all by 11:00 pm.

4/24 On Tuesday morning the states broke into regions (North East-South East-Rockies-West) and were given a list of potential questions to ask the ten committee chairs later in the afternoon. In the afternoon the committee chairs rotated from region to region answering questions. I am Chair of Media & Marketing & along with Donations & Expansion committees we started off. The first region asked me questions first and I spoke too long and took up the whole 20 minutes. Next region I was not allowed to speak which was ok. The third region really

hit me hard with questions and complaints. It was hard not to take this personal, the 20 minutes took forever. The fourth region was really nice and I received a lot of good ideas for Media & Marketing.

After the meeting adjourned for the day I again found myself answering questions that went through dinner and well into the evening. (Topics like State Board set up, communication with FS, grants, resolution, etc.)

4/25 We broke into committee assignments and proceeded to come up with an action plan for the committee. The first suggestion was could BCHA change its name and the second was how about changing our Mission Statement? Not sure how serious they were, although my prediction was that with that change of direction, BCHA would be splitting up by end of year.

Afterwards we got into a very good discussion and established an action plan for Media & Marketing. When the Board got back together each Committee Chair presented its action plan for the coming year.

The resolution was read and after brief discussion the vote was taken and the resolution passed.

Elections were held end of day:
Freddy Dunn – Chairman
Darrell Wallace – Vice Chairman
Sherri Copeland – Treasurer
Ginny Grulke – Director on Executive Board
Mark Himmel – Director on Executive Board
Mike McGlen – Non-Director on Executive Board

Meeting adjourned.

The evening banquet was very nice and entertaining, we had a great time.

Letter from the Chair

When you take on a new position, whether it is with a company or a volunteer organization like the Back Country Horsemen of Montana, sometimes a person doesn't realize how much is involved. I will be the first to tell you, as your new Chairman for BCHMT, I have a lot to learn. When I first started on the state board John Chepulis was ending his term as Chairman and Mark Himmel was starting as the new Chairman. After that, Connie Long took over the helm as the first woman Chairman for the BCH of Montana. What a proud moment that was for all of us. At that time I started as the State Treasurer and Brad Pollman was the Vice Chairman. Connie guided me along and helped me succeed. As Brad moved into the Chairman position, I also moved to the Vice Chair position. Brad has been a great example for me to follow.

Each position I have had at the state board level has taught me something new. Each Chairman brings a different perspective to the position. Observing each of them through the years and watching how they handle situations is something I hope to capitalize on.



By Mack Long
National Director,
BCH Montana

Survey Results 2018

At our pre-convention Board Meeting in Lewistown, I passed out a survey for each chapter to complete via the State Directors. The purpose of the survey was to check in with our Montana BCH membership to get their perspective on how aligned the local chapters, state chapters and national (BCHA) are moving forward. Further, it was an opportunity to check in on how BCHMT and the local chapters are interacting.

Following is a summary of their answers. At the May 19, 2018 State Board of Directors meeting, I will provide the response sheets to Rich Carl, State Chairman and Keni Hopkins, State Secretary should anyone need

Mark Himmel was instrumental in my decision to first join the state board and become the State Treasurer. Mark always said to me not to take too much on and to pace myself or I may burn out.

Well, Mark, I will let you know how that worked out in a couple of years.

One thing that has always impressed me while serving on the state board is the knowledge everyone brings and the passion they have for the BCHMT mission. It is truly something great to be a part of.

There seems to be no shortage of issues to work on when it comes to our public lands.

I recently attended the LAC (Limits of Acceptable Change) meeting, held in Lincoln, MT, discussing wilderness areas. The Forest Service holds the meeting and discussed how use in the back country is changing, and the front country is seeing an increase in use.

I have also attended a MTC (Montana Trails Coalition) meeting in Helena, MT. Brad Pollman helped with BCHMT becoming a part of this organization. The MTC is a collection of all user groups in Montana who are con-

cerned about funding trails. From what I can see, it is important for BCHMT to have a presence.

At each of these meetings BCHMT keeps receiving praise for the work we do.

With summer coming and trail work beginning it is important to stay safe on the trail. Make sure everyone on a project has the required training and looks out for each other.

Our youth camps will be starting soon. The work Kathy Hundley and Greg Schatz have been doing to organize these groups has been phenomenal. Please support these youth camps however you can.

Well, I am off to learn more!

Rich



Rich Carl
Chairman
BCH Montana

National Director's Column

the specific responses soon or in the future.

The first 4 questions were about the local chapter. Essentially, what makes them strong and what satisfaction do our members get from being a BCH member. The top reasons are: Fellowship, being with like-minded people, providing a public/community service (trails & maintenance), packing, being in the wilderness/backcountry, education, preserve backcountry for future generations and access to public lands. These are not listed in any order.

The second set of questions was directed at how BCHMT (State) is assisting and meeting the needs of the local chapters. The short answer is that overall the chapters are very satisfied with their relationship with State. Only request was to enhance communication on grant opportunities and issues that come up throughout the year. Question 3 was directed at prioritizing the top activities that we do as BCH. The categories were: Trails Advocacy, Training, Backcountry/wilderness ad-

vocacy, Education and Coordination with Land Mgmt. agencies. It was interesting but scoring 1 through 3, it turned out that all the above were essentially equal.

The third section was how the states are associated with and expectations from National (BCHA). As to what the chapters expect from BCHA here is the list: Lobbying at the national level, information exchange on a national level, expansion of BCH membership, shared vision based on our mission, protect public lands, promote our purpose. On the questions that asked about the structural relationship between BCHA and BCHMT there was a strong resounding response that it should always be a bottom up organization. In Montana, it has always been Chapter, then State, then National and not the other way around.

In summary, there is an overall shared vision of what BCH does and should be. It is also clear that Montana is not interested in BCHA taking a top down direction.

A Three Rivers BCH Adventure

By Dan Pence, Three Rivers Back Country Horsemen

We had ignored the trail for all too long. Members of Three Rivers Back Country Horsemen gathered in Dillon early in the morning of July 22, 2017 for the long drive to the East Fork of Blacktail trailhead. The Chapter had adopted the very scenic loop trail up the East Fork and around Lawrence Creek several years ago and then essentially forgot it. No excuses, we just never took the time.

And then the bark beetles had their way with area lodgepole pine. We weren't sure what we would find but packed up extra gas and oil with a chain saw and hit the trail. The area is a favorite with fall hunters. They had mucked things out enough to get stock through the previous fall, although often not on the trail, and there were lots of logs they simply jumped. Winter had not been kind with lots of new deadfall.

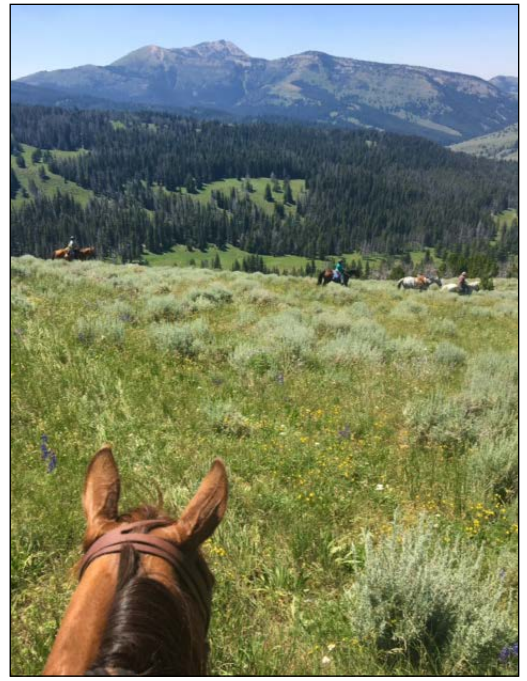
And so we sawed, brushed things out and sawed some more. It wasn't all work. The day was hot with more than enough biting flies to require liberal doses of fly spray on both horses and humans. The heat and bugs pushed most wildlife into cover, but sign as-

sured us they were there. Especially notable was the amount of turned over rocks and torn up logs left behind by foraging bears. The lunch stop occurred in a meadow with very notable elk scent. The sky was so blue with lots of fluffy white clouds. Wildflowers were everywhere.

We only had a bit of gas left in the saw and a very tired saw crew when we completed the loop and hit the trail we had cleared as we rode into that beautiful country. Most of the riders headed down the trail while a couple held back to take pictures. The lead riders hit the willow bottom on the creek and chased out a grizzly bear quite visible to those who lagged behind.

We gathered at the trailhead to compare experiences of the day, then headed down the road. Unfortunately, the day was not finished for all participants. The road has some interesting turns at bridge crossings and one member's trailer managed to get hung up on the bridge railing on one of the turns.

Otherwise it was a great day.



Judith Basin Back Country Horsemen

By Billie Ayers, Judith Basin Back Country Horsemen

Members of the Judith Basin Back Country Horsemen Dick Bucsis, Henry Gottardi and Steve Reesor, installed a new access gate in the Little Belt Mountains allowing non-motorized access to the Judith Game Range. The gate was designed by Bucsis and Gottardi and displayed at the recent state convention of the Back Country Horsemen of Montana as a solution to allow easier access for hikers and horseback riders to cross boundary lines where access is denied to motorized vehicles.



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 - Bitter Root BCH
PO Box 1083, Hamilton, MT 59840
 - Cabinet BCH
PO Box 949, Libby, MT 59923
 - Charlie Russell BCH
PO Box 3563, Great Falls, MT 59403
 - East Slope BCH
PO Box 967, Conrad, MT 59425
 - BCH of the Flathead
PO Box 1192, Columbia Falls, MT 59912
 - Gallatin Valley BCH
PO Box 3232, Bozeman, MT 59772
 - Judith Basin BCH
PO Box 93, Lewistown, MT 59457
 - Last Chance BCH
PO Box 4008, Helena, MT 59604
 - Mile High BCH
PO Box 4434, Butte, MT 59702
 - Mission Valley BCH
PO Box 604, Ronan, MT 59864
 - BCH of Missoula
PO Box 2121, Missoula, MT 59806
 - NorthWest Montana BCH
PO Box 9242, Kalispell, MT 59904
 - Selway-Pintler Wilderness BCH
PO Box 88, Hamilton, MT 59840
 - Three Rivers BCH
PO Box 251, Dillon, MT 59725
 - Trout Creek BCH
PO Box 1435, Trout Creek, MT 59874
 - Upper Clark Fork BCH
PO Box 725, Deerlodge, MT 59722
 - Wild Horse Plains BCH
PO Box 640, Plains, MT 59859
- If you would like to join us, please contact a chapter in your area. More information is available on our website:

www.bchmt.org

Schedule for chapters' news article submissions
E-mail to: deborah.bcha@gmail.com

Spring Issue

Articles due May 5th, 2018: Charlie Russell, East Slope, Flathead, Gallatin, and Judith Basin

Fall issue

Articles due September 5th, 2018: Last Chance, Mission Valley, Missoula, Northwest Montana, Selway-Pintler Wilderness

Winter Issue

Articles due January 5th, 2019: Beartooth, Bitter Root, Cabinet, Three Rivers, Upper Clark Fork, Wild Horse Plains, and convention hosting chapter

Back Country Horse Travel

By Stacie Boswell, DVM, DACVS, Hardaway Veterinary Hospital, Belgrade, MT. Submitted by the Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen

As members of the Back Country Horsemen, we travel with our horses down long highways and up two-track dirt Forest Service roads in our quests to maintain public access trails. This extensive travel for our horses is not without risk. Common travel-related problems are injuries, colic, and respiratory problems, and the severity of these problems can range from mild to extreme. In this article, we'll talk in detail about the causes of these problems, and how to avoid them. We'll also discuss treatment.

Trailer Inspection and Safety

Loose or weak floorboards, a malfunctioning braking system, or a tire blowout can result in a disaster while shipping horses. Before every trip, you should double-check that your trailer coupler is properly engaged, that your lights and brakes are plugged in, and that your trailer's emergency brake battery is charged and connected properly. The truck and trailer ball or coupler should be properly size matched.

Each year you should have your trailer inspected. This inspection should include evaluating the floor, the wheel bearings (and packing them, if needed), the brakes and emergency brake box, and all hardware and latches. Unexpected mechanical problems can occur, but regular inspection and caution will prevent many problems.

Transporting Horses

Driver safety

You should be confident with the truck and trailer in your charge. A contingency plan should be in place with a secondary driver. A smooth, confident ride will help prevent the horses from slipping and falling.

You should be well rested and alert; driving drowsy is just not worth the risk. This goes without saying, but drivers absolutely should not have cell phones out while shipping horses. At least pull over to use the phone or have a passenger assist with necessary calls, texts, or maps.

Rest Your Horses

Long trips are especially difficult

for horses. The horse will experience adverse changes in muscle metabolism, elevations in stress indices, dehydration, and decreased immunity. Even just stopping the trailer for a break for an hour or two on a long journey (more than 12 hours) will allow his physiologic stress parameters to normalize, and his tired muscles to get some relief. Providing food and water during the rest stop is ideal.

Making sure your horses have free choice access to food and water prior to the journey is important. This has been proven to prevent muscle problems and will help prevent colic.

Halter and Tie Horses Properly

You should not allow horses to stick their heads out of your trailer in any way while the vehicle is moving. This can result in injuries to their head or eyes. A breakaway halter or tie is an absolute necessity at all times in the trailer.

With few exceptions (e.g. horses that fight with their neighbors) the horse should be tied so that he can get his head down below the point of his shoulder to cough. This helps clear the airway and is key to preventing pneumonia.

Pay Attention to the Environment

During warmer months, closed horse trailers quickly become 20 degrees warmer than the outdoor ambient temperature, and horses can overheat, sweating and becoming dehydrated. Horses in enclosed trailers generally do not need blankets as they are more likely to sweat. Sweating leads to dehydration and loss of electrolytes. Those losses are the primary contributing factors to colic associated with travel.

If you are hauling your horse in a livestock-type of trailer or one with an open design where your horses are exposed to wind, other considerations apply. Your horse should wear a fly mask to prevent particles from injuring his eyes or face. Cold wind may justify using a blanket.

Travel-Related Illness

Most of the time, horses that travel do just fine. The three most common travel-related illnesses are wounds, colic, and respiratory diseases.

Wounds in Traveling Horses

Lacerations and injuries can occur when horses have rough rides during shipments. Taking your time to load nervous horses and driving conservatively helps prevent injuries.

Reasons Wounds Occur When Traveling

Horses' high flight drive results in panic when they are afraid. Specialized equine anatomy means that there is little to no excess skin, particularly on limbs. The horse also has to learn how to balance while standing when traveling. If your horse is inexperienced or of a flighty nature, he is more likely to sustain an injury.

Wound Evaluation

Wound depth is a critical factor for recovery. It will help your veterinarian if you can evaluate and describe a few things:

- Pull the skin apart a little bit. A full-thickness skin wound will have a gap. A superficial wound will not gap when you manipulate it.
- Walk the horse several strides and determine if he is lame.
- Look closely and see if flap is present or skin seems to be missing, rather than just cut into.
- Determine if the wound is near a joint.
- As you inspect the wound, if you can see muscle, bone, tendon, or other underlying structures, that is a deep wound that will need extensive treatment.

Wound Treatment

Start by providing first aid. Move your horse to the most clean, dry, and safe area you have, and thoroughly rinse it, if possible. In veterinary medicine, we have a saying for this: "the solution to pollution is dilution."

If there is a lot of blood running out of the wound, try to apply some ab-

sorbent material, and apply a bandage tight enough to stop the hemorrhage. This may be all you can do until a veterinarian sees your horse. Cleaning or re-cleaning the fresh wound may cause the hemorrhage to resume.

Many antiseptic and topical medications are toxic to the healthy, healing tissue and will damage cells and slow down the healing process. If you are considering a topical medication, a rule of thumb is: if you wouldn't put it in your eye, don't put it on a wound. Talk to your veterinarian before you give your horse any medication or apply topical substances.

Wounds that are sutured and treated properly from the beginning heal faster and are more likely to result in full return to function.

Extensive or Deep Wounds

Deep and complicated wounds are those that did not heal with sutures, a wound that invades a joint, or is down to the bone. Deep wounds may invade chest cavity, damaging the lungs. These horses can be difficult and expensive to treat. If the deep wound enters the digestive tract, the horse's odds of survival due to the contamination are low.

If a joint is infected, there are a variety of treatment options. Essentially, the earlier the infection is noted and which treatment option selected are the two factors that influence outcome.

Colic in Traveling Horses

Colic is a general term for abdominal pain, and there are a multitude of specific disease processes that result in colic. Risk factors for development of colic include long hours of travel with consequent dehydration, change in feed, change in housing or daily exercise levels, electrolyte deficiencies or imbalances, and stress. About 10% of horses colic each year, and traveling horses have an extra high risk.

Signs of Colic

The way each horse exhibits abdominal pain will vary. Some horses are more sensitive than others and will display a more overt pain response. Horses that do this may be young, a sensitive breed (Arabians and Thor-



Top: Hip wound before and after treatment. Bottom: Stacie and her husband enjoying a trail ride.

oughbreds, for example), or a flighty, nervous individual.

Colic signs include changing position from standing to lying down repeatedly, or he may lay down and be unwilling to get up. He may also be rolling, kicking at his belly, watching or looking at his flank, stretching out (which sometimes can look like he is trying to urinate, but can't), or just not acting right. Some horses will exhibit a wrinkled lip and nostril flair that is characteristic of pain. Your horse may also have a decreased appetite. Signs that your horse has a more severe problem include a lack of response to Banamine, and violent rolling, especially if he has damaged the skin of his eyelids or head while trying to rid him-

self of pain.

It is important for you to monitor fecal output closely. A decrease in fecal output or change in consistency may forewarn of an impending colic.

Impaction Colic

A common type of colic is impaction, also known as high constipation. An impaction occurs when the material in your horse's gastrointestinal tract moves more slowly than usual leading to a "backup" of ingesta. Dehydration and loss of electrolytes are major contributing factors that lead to this type of colic.

[continued next page]

Prevention of Colic

Keeping your horse hydrated is the most important thing you can do to prevent colic. Offer water during longer trips, if feasible. Make sure your horse has access to water before setting out, and immediately upon arrival.

Avoid sudden feeding changes. Acclimate your horse to the pellets or cubes he will be eating on the trail while at home. Access to salt or electrolytes is important. If the horse has refused to drink, or has a reduced fecal output, feeding him soaked roughage can help.

Veterinary Evaluation and Treatment of Colic

Standard of care is to administer Banamine (flunixin meglumine), which can be given either in the vein or orally. Your veterinarian should do an examination per rectum to try to palpate the reachable portions of the gastrointestinal organs. If we identify abnormalities, then the problem can be more specifically addressed.

The majority of time, your veterinarian will also give your horse water through a stomach tube. A cathartic such as epsom salts, electrolytes, or mineral oil may be administered with the water.

Veterinarians will then advise you how to modify your feeding and exercise routine to help resolve the colic. Most colicking horses will normalize in just a day or two with this treatment.

Respiratory Disease in Traveling Horses

Horses that travel are at high risk of developing respiratory diseases. Make sure your horses are vaccinated to prevent Influenza and Rhinopneumonitis (caused by a Herpes virus).

There is a variation in the severity of respiratory illnesses. It can be as simple as a virus, where your horse has a runny nose for a few days, a fever for less than 24 hours, and recovers quickly. The worst case scenario is that a horse develops "shipping fever" or pleuropneumonia, a serious infection that may threaten your horse's life. Recovery can take months, and may leave long-term airway deficits.

Air Quality is Key

Traveling with vents open is important for controlling both air quality and temperature. Fresh air flow is critical to reduce ammonia. Ammonia build-up from urine results in damage to the cells that line the respiratory tract, thus increasing the risk of pneumonia.

Shavings on the floor are not a good idea, especially in open trailers – the dust and particles harm the respiratory tract. On the subject of particles, if a hay bag is hung, wetting it down will drastically reduce the dust that it emits.

Treating Respiratory Illness

The most important factor in successful treatment is early recognition - watch for coughing, nasal discharge, or general malaise.

Treatment will be specific to your horse's problem. It is likely to include anti-inflammatories and antibiotics. The good news is that with early intervention, the majority of horses make a full recovery.

Summary

Trailer horses means we are able to explore all corners of Montana, and occasionally other states. Drivers should be confident, and the trailer should be in good working order. Maintaining good hydration and air quality are critical for preventing illness. Long-distance travel can be especially hard for horses to endure. Stopping for breaks is important to you as the driver, as well as to your horse's health. Happy Trails!

Stacie G. Boswell, DVM, DACVS is an equine veterinarian now based at Hardaway Veterinary Hospital in Belgrade, Montana. She and her husband, Sid, recently moved here from New Mexico. They have been active members of Back Country Horsemen of America for the past four years. She can be reached at stacieboswell@gmail.com

SBFC Volunteer Projects 2018

The Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation has the following volunteer opportunities available this field season. Please contact Sue Webster for more information at 208-861-2010 or swebster@selwaybitterroot.org.

Upper Middle Fork Trail Wild & Scenic Rivers Act 50th Anniversary Celebration

Dates: June 26-July 1

Trailhead: Boundary Creek; Salmon-Challis National Forest

Annual St. Mary's Peak Trail

Dates: July 6-8

Trailhead: St. Mary's Peak; Bitterroot National Forest

ICT Marble Creek Part 1

Dates: July 25-31

Trailhead: TBA

ICT Marble Creek Part 2

Dates: August 22-28

Trailhead: Thunder Mountain; Payette National Forest

East Moose Creek Trail

Dates: August 21-26

Trailhead: Twin Lakes; Bitterroot National Forest (Trail #421 is technically on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest)

Harrington Ridge Trail

Dates: September 3-10

Trailhead: Salmon Mountain; Bitterroot National Forest

Annual Stanley Hot Springs

Dates: September 5-9

Trailhead: Boulder Creek Trail; Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest



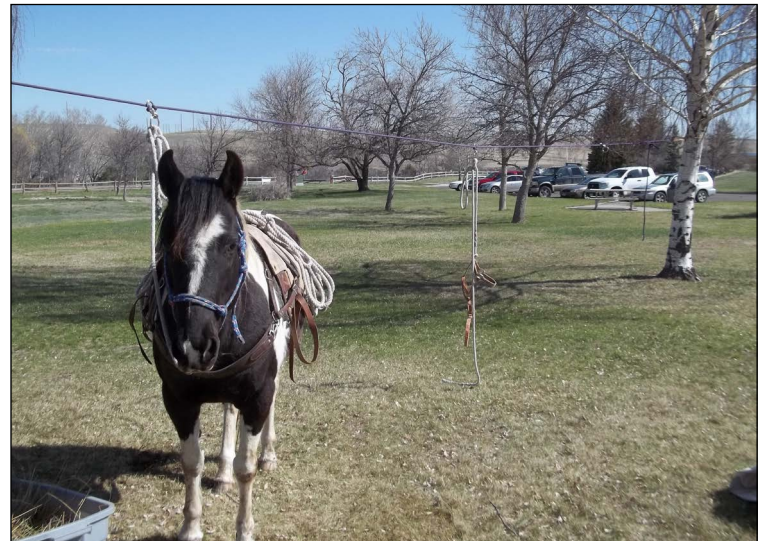
Charlie Russell Back Country Horsemen Meet & Greet Picnic

By Kelli Rohloff, Charlie Russell Back Country Horsemen

On Saturday, April 28th, the Charlie Russell chapter hosted a Meet & Greet picnic in Giant Springs State Park in Great Falls. The idea to do a picnic in the park came up this winter as we discussed new ideas for our yearly membership drive. The goal of our event was to offer educational stations, a BBQ lunch and a chance for potential members to visit with members and learn about Back Country Horsemen. We provided demonstrations on camp set up, saddle bag necessities, packing techniques, dutch oven cooking and cross cut saw use. We invited the Forest Service to join us and they sent a representative to speak on bear awareness and bear safety.

We had a beautiful sunny day with temperatures reaching 80 degrees! It was the perfect day to spend outside visiting with fellow horsemen. A steady flow of guests stopped by and everyone enjoyed each of our demonstrations. Guests really enjoyed the ability to practice some hands-on skills with the crosscut saw and tying mantie loads. A great day was had by all and everyone left with handfuls of informative handouts.

This picnic gave our chapter a lot of exposure and we gained a few more members by the end of the day! A common phrase we heard was that locals had heard of Back Country Horsemen, but were not exactly sure what we did or how to get involved. This is a great reminder of how we need to be active in our communities and continue to strive to reach potential members.



BCH Flathead puts on a packing clinic with Smoke Elser and the North Valley Eagles

By Greg and Deborah Schatz, Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead. Thank you to Annette Geyer-Leverington for the great photos.

In the first part of March a friend of ours who bartends at the North Valley Eagles in Columbia Falls called and said the bartenders were having a competition to see who could raise the most money for a local non-profit. Allisha asked if the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead could be her non-profit.

We had already invited Smoke to come up and put on a packing clinic for us. With his decades of packing experience and good stories, he always draws a good crowd. So we decided to have our packing clinic in the parking lot of the North Valley Eagles. They are located on Highway 2 coming in to Columbia Falls, so we had great visibility for the event.

The packing clinic was free to anyone who wanted to attend. After Smoke gave his packing presentation, we had hands-on mantying and loading stock for anyone who wanted to participate.

After the packing was done, we had a pig roast with

all of the trimmings provided by the Eagles Auxiliary and there was also a silent auction which went on most of the day. The auction items were collected by the North Valley Eagles with all of the proceeds of both fund raisers going to the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead.

After dinner the music was provided by Sonny King.

Of course, Allisha won the contest in a landslide and we would like to thank the North Valley Eagles for their support.

Photos: 1] June Burgau shows how to sling a load. 2] Stu Sorensen explains how to tie the sling rope.

3] Smoke Elser entertains the crowd.

4] June Burgau explains mantying 101. 5] Stu Sorensen's spotted horse was a crowd favorite. 6] What can you pack? Almost anything! 7] Part of the crowd.





Meeting a Horse on the Trail

By Ken Brown, Vice President and Issues Chairman, Back Country Horsemen of Missoula

Below is information we put on a small plastic card, front and back, to give to hiker and bikers. We have our members but also Forest Service, other BCH chapters, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, Montana Wilderness Association and the Tennessee Walker Enthusiast of Montana (TWEAM) giving them out as a way to educate the public. I thought other chapters/states might want to use them.

Meeting a Horse on the Trail

What to do when you meet a horse/rider on the trail

- Horses have the right of way – yield to them.
- Stop, get off your bike and stand still.
- Speak up and let them know you are there, especially if you are coming from behind the horse. It identifies you as a human, not an animal that wants to eat them.
- On a narrow trail, step off on the down side of the trail:
 - Give the horse plenty of room. Horses may kick with their hind or strike with their front legs if they feel threatened.
 - Prey animals attack from above. Horses feel safer with people below them.
 - If the horse becomes frightened it could spook and may run away from you.
 - It is easier/safer for the rider to stay on a horse going uphill.
 - If in a group, all the riders need to be on the same side of the trail.
- Stay in full view of the horse. Don't hide behind a tree or bush. They don't like sneaky.
- Wait for instructions from the rider on what to do.
- Do not try to pet the horse unless you have permission from the rider.
- If on a bridge. Get off the bridge to let the horse/rider pass you safely. Don't get smucked!

Adapted from: an article by Appalachian Mountain Bike Club, a mountain bicyclist club, Blue Ridge Trail Riders, Inc., an equestrian club; and Harvey Broome Group of the Tennessee Chapter of the Sierra Club, conservation and hiking club; by Ginny Fay & Tom Brigham, Missoula, Montana, May 30, 2017. Summarized by Ken Brown, Back Country Horsemen of Missoula.



Volunteer Packing for the BMWF

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation is looking for experienced packers with stock (horses, mules or llamas) to pack food, tools, and gear for volunteer projects. There are still a few projects that need packers for the 2018 field season. Volunteer pack support is an integral part in the work the Foundation does. Packers help us educate our volunteers about the importance of traditional stock use in the Bob while assisting in the maintenance of public lands and ensuring these lands stay open to private stock use. While packing for Foundation trips, volunteer packers are considered USFS volunteers and are covered under USFS workers comp during that time.

Please consider joining us!

See the BMWF schedule at: <http://www.bmwf.org/packers>



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A Busy Summer Ahead at Swift Dam Trailhead

By LeAnn Hermance, East Slope Back Country Horsemen

The Swift Dam Trailhead Campground is where ES BCH refers to as our home base. We have improved the campground with highlines, signage, upgrades to the trail, improved the bridge, and painted the building. We are also looking for a grant to replace the outhouse. Visitors at the campground have mentioned to us that this is one of the best primitive campgrounds they've been to. Comments from one of the campers was the hike around Swift Dam is similar to hiking in Glacier Park, without the people. We also do our annual fundraising Poker Ride out of the campground, this year it will be Sunday, August 5th.

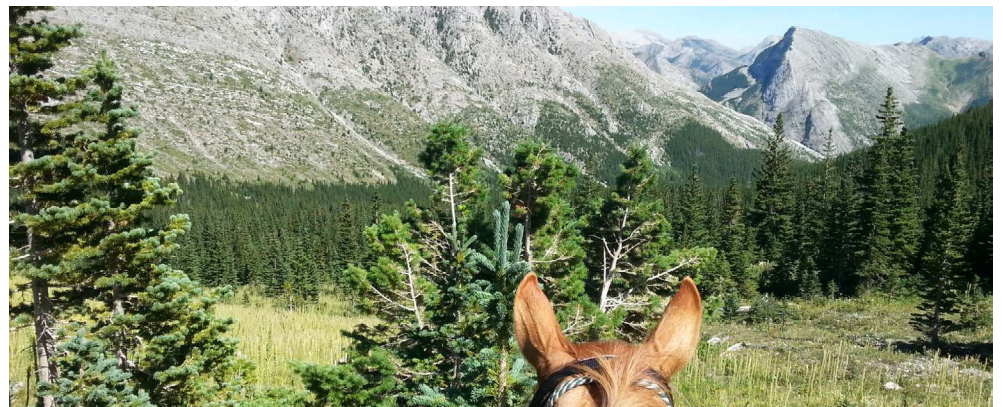
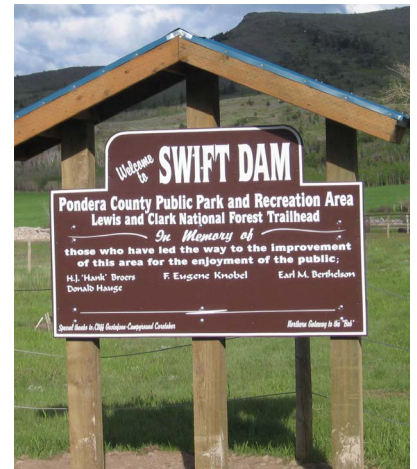
This year, we are looking at reestablishing a historic trail for better access into the back country. The trail was surveyed in 1907 and 1914 and parts of it are still visible today. On the map, the trail will connect trail 105 to trail 121 at Hungry Man Creek. This project is in cooperation with the Forest Service and Fish, Wildlife and Parks. In reestablishing this portion

of the trail, it will cut off miles of having to go around through Tubby Creek and Blind Creek to get into the back country.

Forest fires in 2015 (Family Peak fire), and 2017 (Strawberry Creek fire), burned large portions of vegetation. Runoff from snow melt has taken out parts of various trails and one plastic culvert was burned out. Our main projects will be to repair this damage and to see what damage will be caused by the snow melt this year.

Bears are also out of the dens, so please make sure you have bear spray and know the proper use technique.

We invite everyone to come visit us.



Web Extra Page

Montanans express overwhelming support for public lands in University of Montana survey

ROB CHANEY rchaney@missoulain.com May 10, 2018 Updated May 10, 2018



The University of Montana 2018 Public Lands Survey showed wide, bipartisan appreciation for the state's wild places.

"The takeaway for me is, support for policy to protect public land is going up, not down," said Rick Graetz, director of UM's Crown of the Continent Greater Yellowstone Initiative, which commissioned the survey. "That's true on both sides of the aisle. Democrats, Republicans and Independents all see the value of it. That wasn't true even 10 years ago when we started our program."

The poll found four out of five Montanans considered public lands an economic benefit to the state, while just 3 percent said their presence hurt the economy.

"Montanans use national public lands on a very frequent basis," said David Metz, a Democratic pollster who co-lead the bipartisan survey team. "Al-

most half visit their public lands 10 times or more a year, and one-third do so 20 or more times. That's almost the highest participation of any state in the country."

Three-quarters of Montanans backed creating a new national monument protecting the Badger-Two Medicine area south of the Blackfoot Indian Reservation and Glacier National Park. That included two out of three Republicans and three out of four Democrats and Independents who participated in the poll.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke originally proposed such a monument at the same time he recommended reducing acreage in several other existing monuments such as Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, both in Utah.

Sen. Jon Tester's proposed Blackfoot-Clearwater Stewardship Act designating about 70,000 acres of wilder-

ness and recreation areas northeast of Missoula also got strong support from the poll. It found 68 percent of Republicans, 74 percent of Independents and 78 percent of Democrats favored the bill. That support was virtually unchanged from the same question asked in 2016, when 74 percent of overall voters approved of the legislation from Tester, a Democrat.

Read the entire article at: http://missoulain.com/news/local/montanans-express-overwhelming-support-for-public-lands-in-university-of/article_742150a9-6c8a-53e9-b416-686806744f77.html

The poll surveyed 500 Montana registered voters, with equal numbers of Republicans, Independents and Democrats. It has a margin of error of 4.38 percent. Full results may be found at crown-yellowstone.umd.edu/documents/surveys/UM_State-wide-Survey_2018_Results.pdf.