

BOARD MEETINGS:
3rd Thursday, 6:30 PM

GENERAL MEETINGS:
3rd Thursday, 7:00 PM

Springhill Church
4769 West Babcock, Bozeman

OUR PURPOSE:

Shall be to perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in the back country and assist the various government agencies in their maintenance and management of the resource and to educate, encourage and solicit active participation by various members of the general public in the wise and sustaining use of horses, commensurate with our heritage and the back country resource.

2023 OFFICERS, 1 YEAR

PRESIDENT

Chris Nygren ... 546-7550
chrisnygren1@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Henry Glenn ... 578-2084
sedancowboy@outlook.com

TREASURER

Jim Wing ... 579-3230
wingit_4@msn.com

SECRETARY

Laurie Connelly ... 579-2859

DIRECTORS

ONE YEAR TERM

Sid Boswell ... 595-7197
Carl Blaskovitch ... 388-4640
Tom Lamb ... 908-670-1162

TWO YEAR TERM

BOB CRISWELL ... 595-8150
KELLY JACOBS ... 589-3205
KATHY VAN DYKE ... 586-2440

STATE BOARD MEMBERS

Dan Marsh (1 year) ... 587-7578
Chris Nygren (2 year) ... 546-7550
Kathy VanDyke (Alternate) ... 586-2440

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Brant Robey... 222-5971
pbrantr@gmail.com

BCH WEB MASTER

Dan Marsh ... 587-7578
webmaster@bchmt.org
<https://gvbch.bchmt.org>

UPCOMING EVENTS:

BOARD MEETING : FEBRUARY 16, 6:00 PM

Springhill Church

GENERAL MEETING & WILD GAME FEED

& USFS PRESENTATION : FEBRUARY 16, 6:30 PM

Springhill Church

RALLY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : FEBRUARY 23, NOON-1:00

Montana Capitol Rotunda, Helena [Link](#)

2023 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

ARE DUE

[HTTP://GVBCH.BCHMT.ORG/](http://gvbch.bchmt.org/)



PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

While Winter may not be the best time to engage in outside equestrian activities, it is a great time to build relationships and connections within our horse and stock usage community. In that vein, there are some events coming up soon for everyone to participate in and support including the February 16th GVBCH meeting at the Springhill Church. Starting at 6:30 we will have a wild game feed for everyone and members of the USFS will also eat with us, give a short update about plans for the upcoming year and bring volunteer signup agreements for people to sign for trail crew work. The GVBCH Board will meet at 6:00 followed by the game feed and general meeting. It is a great way to fellowship and start thinking about plans for the warmer weather.

Speaking of fellowship, there is also the 50th Montana State Backcountry Horsemen Convention in Kalispell on April 14-16 for an opportunity to meet and mingle with other backcountry horsemen from around the state. To encourage as many of our people to attend as possible, any signed up 2023 member of the Gallatin Valley Backcountry Horsemen will have their banquet meal paid for by GVBCH and the registration for the convention is free. Not many things in life are free, but the convention and the banquet are if any member signs up to attend before the early registration deadline of March 14th and notifies any GVBCH officer so we can reimburse you with a \$40 check for the banquet cost. Please check out the State BCH convention link at the bchmt.org website.

Soon we will be setting dates for the trail crew training this Spring, putting out news on a packing clinic and other events before the trail clearing starts in earnest toward the end of May. Take care, stay warm and hope to see you soon.

—Chris

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 19

Roll Call: Chris Nygren, Henry Glenn, Jim Wing, Dan Marsh, Dan Porter, Sid Boswell, John Mutter, Laurie Connelly, Kelly Jacobs, Marianne Meyer and Bob Criswell

Chris called the meeting to order at 6:32pm

MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 2022

Kathy moved to approve the minutes as published; Sid seconded the motion; the motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Jim reported on the checking and savings accounts balances. He paid out \$74.10 for postage. Laurie motioned to approve the report; Kathy seconded the motion; the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Marianne has been our unofficial membership coordinator for close to 10 years and she would like to resign this position this year. Everyone please consider whether you would like to take on this role.

Back Country Horseman of Montana convention is April 14-16. We can have up to 8 delegates. It's the 50 year anniversary so it should be a great convention. All are welcome. After a brief discussion it is agreed that our chapter will pay the dinner fee for any members that want to go. There is no registration fee. You can go to the BCHMT website to register for the event. If you do so by March 1, our chapter will pay for your dinner.

Chris and Julie Nygren, Henry and Molly Glenn, Dan and Alice Marsh, John Mutter, Kathy and Lawrence VanDyke, Sid and Stacie Boswell and Laurie Connelly have all committed to attending.

Director position: After Connie LeHocky moved out of town we now are one director short. Chris reported that Carl Blaskovich has volunteered if we would like to appoint him. This is a Board appointed position. Kathy moved to fill Connie's now vacant director position with Carl; Laurie seconded the motion; the motion passed.

The Forest Service is updating their Trail Construction Manual this year and is looking to have input from volunteers. They need to know who is interested in volunteering for this by the end of Feb. You would not be responsible for creating or editing the manual just offering input and suggestions. If anyone is interested please let Chris, Dan Porter or Kathy VanDyke know.

Kelly has volunteered to approach the MSU marketing department to see if anyone in the program would be interested in volunteering with our chapter to help us with marketing our organization to the public. This was one of the ideas brought forward at our strategy/planning meeting earlier this month. For the student to function as an intern earning credit they would need a "professional in the marketing field" overseeing their work. If anyone in the chapter has skills in this area and would like to volunteer for this please let Chris know.

Chapter finance audit: Our chapter is in need of doing a financial audit. This is a routine requirement in our constitution. We will need three people to volunteer to conduct the audit together. Let Chris know if you would be willing to help in this effort.

Henry will be presenting a Packing Clinic with Andi Shockley at MSU. May 15-19 from 5:30-8:30pm with a food break in the middle. MSU will be providing the horses. Henry will be organizing and may be seeking volunteers to help with the presentation.

Henry has dates for the Slough Creek work trips. Our volunteers will be packing in supplies for the Forest Service work crew. They are going deep into the AB where trail hasn't been worked on for many years. Volunteers will be needed for pack animals and members who would like to help with meal prep. We would be camping at the Slough Creek Ranger cabin and packing in farther to supply the crew as they work several miles into the wilderness. The dates are August 15-22, packing things in, and August 29- Sept 5 packing out. Let Henry know if you would be interested in this trip.

Kathy moved to adjourn the meeting; Henry seconded the motion; the motion passed.

Chris adjourned the meeting at 7:07

—Respectfully submitted by Laurie Connelly

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 19

Chris called the meeting to order at 7:10pm

This is the Calendar Planning Meeting for our chapter. Please go to our [website](#) to access the calendar and see all our chapter events.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Jim reported on the checking and savings accounts balances. Henry moved to approve the report; Chris seconded the motion; the motion passed.

MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 2022

Janice moved to approve the minutes as published; Marianne seconded the motion; the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

BCHMT Annual Convention: April 14-16. In Kalispell. It is the 50th Anniversary so it will be a great convention with lots of speakers, dinner, music and an auction. Our own Stacie Boswell DVM will be a presenter. Dan Marsh has auction raffle tickets. 1 for \$5, 5 for \$20. There is no registration fee this year. You only have to pay for the dinner, \$40. And your accommodations of course. Our chapter sends up to 8 delegates and we pay their registration. All other members pay their own way. Since there is no fee this year our chapter will cover all members' dinner fee if you register by March 1. All members are encouraged to go, the more the merrier. Go to <https://BCHMT.org/>. You can register and find the hotel/motel/ camping sites that are offering event rates.

The National BCH convention (April 16-19) is also in the same location and follows the state convention. That registration is at the same site. You must register for them separately if you are interested.

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Marianne has been our membership coordinator for close to 10 years and would like to resign this year. If anyone is interested in volunteering for this position please let Chris or Marianne know. Membership Engagement is another position we are looking to fill. Both positions are meant to help potential and new members learn about the organization and feel more welcome. Please let Chris know if you would be willing to volunteer for either of these.

FOREST SERVICE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE NOTEBOOK

This Forest service handbook is going to be updated. The Forest Service is looking for the input of volunteers who work on the trails. If you might be interested in sitting on a committee to discuss the updates please let Chris, Kathy VanDyke or Dan Porter know. The current notebook can be accessed on the website under education.

TONIGHT'S VISITOR

Holly Hunts, from SouthWest Montana Community Organizations Active In Disaster, came to introduce herself and the organization. It covers Madison, Park and Gallatin Counties. She has developed a roster of organizations in these counties and their contact information that can be available to help in a disaster situation. As a chapter we already belong and, when needed, will be contacted for help with trailering live stock, pulling vehicles, animals or people out of harms way as possible and searching for lost live stock. Some of our members have already done these sort of things but this organization is trying to put together formal rosters of those who can be contacted for help. Thank you Holly.

MOSS AND 4-H

Janice has been connecting with leaders at MOSS (Montana Outdoor Science School) to help facilitate their volunteer leaders getting needed hours working with other outdoor related volunteer groups. They are seeking our help in this regard. Janice will keep us posted. 4-H is also hoping we can do some equine/trail maintenance education for the 4-H kids. Janice is graciously heading up these efforts. She would welcome any volunteers from our chapter.

Our Next Meeting...February 16. This will be our annual WILD-GAME FEED/ Forest Service Volunteer Agreement signing meeting. We start a little earlier, at 6:00p for the Board meeting 6:30p for the General. At the general meeting, we enjoy our Wild-GAME FEED POTLUCK while having the meeting. The Forest Service representatives come to this meeting so they can enjoy the potluck but also so they can explain any changes and have our chapter volunteers sign the FS Volunteer agreement for the year. Hopefully they will also have the dates for First Aid, Chain-Saw and Sawyer training/certification. These are trainings the FS requires of us if we will be working on the trails.

So this is definitely a meeting you want to attend. And as with any potluck, please bring something to share. If you don't have wild-game it can be anything you want.

Janice moved to adjourn the meeting; Molly seconded the motion; the motion passed.

Chris adjourned the meeting at 8:19pm

—Respectfully submitted by Laurie Connelly

It's time to stand up for Montana's public lands



**Thursday, February 23
Noon–1 p.m.
Montana Capitol Rotunda, Helena**

Montana state lawmakers are at it again, threatening public land access, funding for conservation programs, and our constitutional right to clean air, clean water, and healthy public lands.

It's time for Montanans to unite and show our elected officials that we won't tolerate ANY attacks on the lands, waters, wildlife, and outdoor way of life we love.

Join folks from across the state at the State Capitol in Helena to say, loud and clear, that we WILL hold elected officials accountable if they try to sell out public lands, waters, and wildlife to corporations and wealthy landowners at the expense of everyday Montanans.

We'll be providing transportation to Helena from across the state.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO RSVP [HERE](#)

HORSE PERSONALITY PRESENTER, JENNY TRAINOR



Horse Personality Presenter, Jenny Trainor, at the "snippet" from Wednesday evening. The event was well attended and I counted at least a dozen GVBCCH Chapter members present. I think everyone found the presentation very interesting and helpful in understanding their own equestrian partners. I was able to peg my own two very quickly as "left brain extrovert" and "right brain introvert". Go Figure! Its the Appy in them I guess.

It was also great to see the BCH presence at the event. Our own future demonstration on packing was announced as well as other upcoming topics like wilderness equestrian first aid. —Dan Porter

GVBCB Annual Planning Meeting 2023

Thank you to all who attended only our “second “annual planning meeting on Saturday morning 01-07-2023. I felt there was some great discussion, and we are all looking forward to the 2023 season of spending time in the back country with our trusty (most of the time) steeds.

A big shout out to Stacy for sending along her written thoughts on promoting membership. They are much appreciated and very insightful. Hopefully we can put them to good use in 2023.

There were several questions/comments that came up regarding the trail maintenance program that I thought might deserve some further clarification and discussion. One question seemed to center around how a member could be a “Trail Boss” and what the requirements are to be one.

Trail Boss is not (to my knowledge) an official position. Any member can be one, however there are some things a trail boss should know. Most seem fairly straight forward and obvious but are still very important if he/she and the trail crew are going to have an enjoyable, safe, and productive day on the trail. The following is a partial list, not intended to be all encompassing, of things one should have some degree of knowledge...not in any particular order.

- 1.) A trail boss (TB) needs to be able to contact the trail crew members effectively.
- 2.) A TB needs to have knowledge about the condition, location, potential obstacles that may be encountered on the trail being ridden that day, whether it's a fun ride or a work ride.
- 3.) A TB needs to know the status of current maintenance on the trail chosen that day
And what type of work if any is planned so that the necessary tools can be rounded up
And brought to the trailhead. This includes a pack animal if needed and who is supplying that animal.
- 4.) A TB ideally should know which members are participating that day and be prepared for others to show, as well as some to not show. The TB should know the physical abilities/limitations of participants as well so that the work load can be adjusted accordingly.
- 5.) The TB needs to keep one eye on the weather forecast.
- 6.) The TB needs to know trail etiquette, protocol, and horse safety. Things like “yielding the right of way to a pack string, not tying horses to or under dead /leaning trees, keeping one horse length between horses on the trail, not stopping on steep narrow side hill locations, etc. are all easy for members to forget on the trail and the trail boss needs to be on the lookout for them at all times.
- 7.) The TB needs to know trail maintenance specifications, the dos and don'ts, the whys and the why nots and the How tos.
- 8.) The TB needs to always be on the lookout for potential problems before they cause a “wreck”. Having all members return to the trailhead safely is always the main objective over everything else.
- 9.) The TB needs to be able to advise and lead without being a disciplinarian..ie boss without being bossy.

10.)A TB must make sure the first aid kit is available.

It would be wonderful if our Chapter could field 4 or 5 trail crews at one time on any given day. Anyone interested in leading a trail crew or a fun ride should feel free to ask questions and Seek help/advice on becoming a "Trail Boss.

Another discussion that deserves some clarification is regarding Trail "clearing" versus Trail "maintenance". Trail clearing of downed trees blocking the trail is an ongoing and never ending job as trees are constantly yielding to wind and time. When trees block the trail they can prevent users from riding further unless a new route around can be found. Often this causes temporary use trails until the tree is removed.

Trail "Maintenance" in my mind means getting "down and dirty". Definitely not as glamorous as chain sawing a dead log,... removing sediment from clogged water bars, digging new tread, and trimming back shrubs and tree branches that are forcing users off the established tread can at times be hard work.

The real difference between clearing and maintenance is that clearing benefits the trail USER, while trail maintenance benefits the user as well as the environment. "Dirtwork" reduces erosion of the trail which reduces sediment pollution flowing into nearby streams. It also creates a more pleasant riding experience and safer trail for all users. No one likes to walk or ride up a narrow gullied out ugly scar that once was a smooth tread.

Trails can become unusable overnight due to falling trees. It takes more time, seasons and sometimes years, but loss of tread due to lack of maintenance will render a trail unsafe for equestrian use and the repair of tread can sometimes be a much more difficult and time consuming job than sawing a tree from the trail.

Trail crew members work long and hard at both clearing deadfall and completing tread and water bar maintenance. To me they are equally important and both must be an integral part of our trail maintenance program if we are to maintain a trail system that we can enjoy and be proud of and ultimately pass on to those who ride after us.

See you on the trail.

"Happy Trails to you" in 2023

Dan Porter



Gallatin Valley Backcountry Horsemen 1/7/2023

The Value of Volunteer Retention and Engagement

The subject of community outreach in an effort to gain additional volunteers to join the Gallatin Valley Backcountry Horsemen has been brought up at several general meetings. An important component of such an effort is not only to welcome potential new members, but to also retain and engage volunteers we already have.



The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected group participation in community and leisure activities. Many organizations have struggled in the last 2 years and “...given social distancing measures and the combination of postponements or cancellations of organizational or event operations, the traditional form of in-person volunteering is threatened.”¹ A survey in early 2020² reflected that people weren’t able to attend events - a problem that carried through the next two years and perhaps into the present.

Additional challenges that BCH faces is the narrow and specific population that can volunteer with us. Though there is an active influx of people moving into our area seeking the Montana lifestyle, understand that many horse owners have had horses less than 5 years. Accepting people who are working to develop their skill set will increase membership and participation in GVBCH. The number one use of horses is for recreation,^{3,4} and the number one concern of horse owners is land use issues.⁵ These statistics fit perfectly with BCH, and indicate that membership should be growing as the population in the Gallatin Valley grows.

BCHA has information on logging volunteer hours and a “Double Diamond” award given to a chapter with an outstanding project. Giving awards to individual volunteers would be a way for our chapter to show appreciation.⁶

Potential Action Items for Helping New Members feel welcome

- An educational topic that could be covered for current members at a regular GVBCH Meeting is communication and welcoming of new members and volunteers.

¹ *COVID-19 and its Impact on Volunteering: Moving Towards Virtual Volunteering*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342829040_COVID-19_and_its_Impact_on_Volunteering_Moving_Towards_Virtual_Volunteering [accessed Jan 06 2023].

²

<https://solutions.volunteermatch.org/hubfs/Ebooks/The%20Impact%20of%20COVID-19%20on%20Volunteering%20-%20A%20Two%20Month%20Comparison.pdf>

³ <https://horsesonly.com/horse-industry/>

⁴ <https://www.ridewiththequo.com/blog/the-horse-industry-by-the-numbers>

⁵ <https://www.americanhorsepubs.org/2021-equine-survey/>

⁶ <https://www.bcha.org/volunteering/>

- Consider that pointing out the new visitor in a loud and targeted manner may be off-putting to shy or introverted people - not everyone enjoys being called out in this way. Instead, we should engage and ask if they wish to be introduced publicly or take time to introduce them to other members individually.
- Follow-up with new/interested individuals with a welcome email or packet - something that outlines what BCH does and how we add value to our community and outdoor recreation. Highlight specific [awesome] projects pertinent to our GV chapter (e.g. week-long cabin projects, weekly work days on a variety of trails). Include contact information of people willing to talk with new members. Include small GV BCH-logo item (such as a sticker or small keychain).
- Be patient and accepting of new members so they continue to return and can grow both their horse and backcountry skills under the guidance of our experienced members.
- Recognize not every person can be a dedicated core member, but do understand that those peripheral volunteers can grow into core members over time and/or that their skills and time available can be utilized for the BCH mission.

Potential Action Items for Engaging Volunteers

- Incorporate a “Volunteer Engagement” position into board membership or officer positions.
- Give token BCH-logo awards for members after 1, 2, 5, 10 (etc.) years of service. This could include mugs, caps, patches, jackets, etc.
- Use year-end awards to show our volunteers how much they are appreciated - (e.g. tenderfoot award for first volunteer trip, most hours worked, most trail miles, most driven miles, etc.). We already log this information,⁷ so using it after it’s compiled should be straightforward. Indeed, awards may help with volunteer hours-reporting compliance.
- Helping volunteers learn new skills is a major way to engage with them - this happens through our horse safety, sawyer, and first-aid classes, but we can step it up with one-on-one packing lessons or other informative sessions.

More volunteer engagement information can be found at:

<https://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/volunteer-engagement-strategy/>

<https://www.aspireresearchgroup.com/6-creative-volunteer-engagement-ideas-for-nonprofits/>

<https://www.galaxydigital.com/blog/volunteer-retention>

⁷ <https://www.bcha.org/volunteering/hours/>

LETTER FROM DAN PORTER TO JOSH KINSEL, MT FWP



Clearing Gallatin Trails since 1985

January 5, 2023

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
State Trails Program Coordinator
1420 East 6th Ave.
PO Box 200701
Helena, Mt. 59620

Dear State Trails Program Coordinator

I am writing this letter today on behalf of the Gallatin Valley Chapter of Backcountry Horsemen of Montana (GVBCH) in support of the Bozeman District, Gallatin National Forest's state grant funding requests.

The Gallatin National Forest provides recreational opportunities for thousands of people throughout the year ... hiking, skiing, mountain biking, and horseback riding as well as many other activities including hunting and fishing. The forest system trails are invaluable for allowing these activities to occur. These trails require consistent maintenance due to heavy recreational use including general clearing of downed timber, clearing of encroaching shrubs, and maintenance of water bars and trail tread. The GVBCH members are committed to continuing their 30+ year legacy of support of trail maintenance and assisting the Bozeman Ranger District in their efforts to provide recreational opportunities throughout the years.

GVBCH strongly supports funding for the Bozeman Ranger District's volunteer coordinator position. This position has assisted us in providing training opportunities for our members including chainsaw certification, first aid, and CPR as well as trail maintenance techniques and tools.

Respectfully,



Daniel H. Porter

GVBCH member

**GVBCH IS INDEBTED TO THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES & MEMBERS
WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR 2022 POKER RIDE**

Stacie Boswell, DVM
Bridger Bowl
Four Corners Saddlery

Kenetrek Boots
Madison River Propane

Montana Canvas
Murdoch's Ranch and Home Supply
Rocky Mountain Hat Company



FRIEND US ON FACEBOOK



Clearing Gallatin Trails since 1985

PO Box 3232
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