

BOARD MEETINGS:
3rd Thursday, 6:30 PM

GENERAL MEETINGS:
3rd Thursday, 7:00 PM

First Security Bank
2046 Cattail St & 19th St

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.

2025 OFFICERS, 1 YEAR**PRESIDENT**

Sid Boswell ... 595-7197
SID@SIDBOSWELL.COM

VICE PRESIDENT

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

TREASURER

Elizabeth Heppler ... 209-2063

SECRETARY

Kathy VanDyke ... 209-0613

DIRECTORS

TWO YEAR TERM
BOB CRISWELL ... 595-8150
DAN PORTER ... 539-0879
DC STARK ... 307-690-9905

ONE YEAR TERM

LAURIE CONNELLY ... 579-2859
NANCI MARX ... 763-4172
LEW GOODPASTURE ... 575-639-9091

STATE BOARD DIRECTORS

Dan Marsh (1 year) ... 581-3160
Chris Nygren (2 year) ... 546-7550
Sid Boswell, alternate (1 year) ... 595-7197

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BCH WEB MASTER

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

WEDNESDAY TRAIL CREW : SEPTEMBER 3, 10, 17, 24

DAN PORTER, 539-0879

SATURDAY TRAIL CREW : SEPTEMBER 6, 13, 20, 27

LEW GOODPASTURE, 575-639-9091

BOARD MEETING : SEPTEMBER 18, 6:30 PM

FIRST SECURITY BANK

GENERAL MEETING : SEPTEMBER 18, 7:00 PM

First Security Bank

ANNUAL BBQ AT SPANISH CREEK CABIN : SEPTEMBER 5, 6

BBQ : SEPT 6

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Happy Fall GVBCH,

We're reaching the end of another busy summer season. Our trail crews kept at it through the heat, clearing miles of trail and keeping access open for everyone. The Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness trips went well — thanks to all who joined and contributed. Hearing the trail and trip reports at our August meetings was a reminder of how much we accomplish when we work together in the back country.

At our August meeting, we also began laying the groundwork for the 2026 BCHMT State Convention, which our chapter will host in Bozeman next March. That planning will take center stage through the fall and winter, and there will be many opportunities for you to get involved. Thanks to those who have already volunteered, and if you haven't yet, please let Molly, Stacie, or Carmen know what you'd be interested in helping with. There will be plenty to do leading up to and during the convention.

If you're interested in an overnight at the North Fork of Spanish Creek on August 29–30, please contact Dan Porter. Looking ahead, be sure to mark your calendar for our Annual BBQ at Spanish Creek Cabin on Saturday, September 6. Members are welcome to camp Friday and Saturday nights with opportunities to ride Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. The main dish on Saturday evening will be provided, but please bring a side or dessert of your choosing.

Fall trail work is also on the horizon, and as always, we'll need butts in the saddle and boots on the ground to keep things moving. Watch for announcements from Lew or one of the Dans for Wednesday and Saturday crews, as well as additional opportunities to pack.

—continued on page 2...



BOARD MEETING MINUTES**AUGUST 21****GENERAL MEETING MINUTES****AUGUST 21**

Roll Call: Sid Boswell, Henry Glenn, Elizabeth Heppler, Kathy VanDyke (self and as proxy for Laurie Connelly), Dan Porter, Lew Goodpasture, Nanci Marx, Dan Marsh, Chris Nygren, John Mutter (proxy for Bob Criswell)

Called to order by Sid Boswell.

Minutes of July 2025 meeting

Henry moved to approve the minutes as written; Elizabeth seconded; the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Elizabeth reported the chapter's savings and checking, and two CDs that are accruing interest. She also reported on receipt of additional Poker Ride income and an online donation. Dan P. moved to approve the report; Henry seconded; the motion passed.

New Business

Safety Issues: Janice raised several safety and liability issues relative to the Sweet Pea parade and member comportment at trailheads and in public. Chris described the limits of our insurance coverage for special events.

Guest column in Chronicle: Sid wrote an excellent guest column, published in the Chronicle, regarding the Greater Yellowstone Conservation and Recreation Act. The Montana congressional members are supportive of the Act, and to that end, Chris will go on a hike with staffers from all four members' offices in the Hyalite area.

Equipment costs: Lew reported that a chair belonging to FS personnel (Kayla) was lost on the pack-out from Spanish Lakes. Chris made a motion to reimburse Kayla for the chair; Lew seconded; the motion passed.

John noted that he has a hard pannier that he'd sell to the club for \$40. Henry made a motion to purchase the pannier; Elizabeth seconded; the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Trail Crew: Crews have been going out regularly and have gone to some new areas; they have also been doing a lot of packing for the Forest Service.

Wilderness trips: The first trip is in the books and went well. Henry noted that food costs per trip are approximately \$300 which is not reimbursed by the Forest Service. Dan P. made a motion to reimburse Henry for food costs for all three trips; Elizabeth seconded; the motion passed.

Sweet Pea Parade: Mark Deopsomer gave \$100 to the "pooper scoopers" after the parade. Dan P. made a motion to reimburse Mark; Chris seconded; the motion passed.

Adjournment: Sid adjourned the meeting.

—Submitted by Kathy VanDyke

Stacie Boswell presented the program at this meeting and answered numerous veterinary-related questions.

Call to Order: Sid Boswell called the meeting to order.

Minutes of July 2025 meeting: Janice moved to approve the minutes as printed; Christine seconded; the motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Elizabeth reported the chapter's savings and checking, and two CDs that are accruing interest. She also reported on receipt of additional Poker Ride income and an online donation. Mariann moved to approve the report; Dan P. seconded; the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Trail Crew: Crews have been very active with trail clearing and packing for the Forest Service. There's always room for more workers, especially for the Wednesday trips.

Wilderness trips: The first trip went well; the next trips will begin on Aug. 24 and Sept. 7. There is still room for riders on the Sept. 7 trip at Slough Creek.

BCHMT Annual meeting: Molly discussed planning for the state convention on March 27-29, 2026. She talked about volunteer positions and tasks and passed around a sign-up sheet.

BBQ: The BBQ will be on Sat., Sept. 6 at Spanish Creek. Beginning Friday night, Sept. 5. you can park at the cabin.

NEW BUSINESS

Overnight trip: Dan P. is planning a North Fork/Cherry Creek overnight trail clearing trip on Aug. 29-31. He'll send out an email to gauge interest in the event.

Guest column in Chronicle: Sid wrote an excellent guest column, published in the Chronicle today, regarding the Greater Yellowstone Conservation and Recreation Act. Staff members from all four of the Montana congressional members' offices will go on a hike in the Hyalite area, and Chris will be part of the group.

Programs: Janice has scheduled programs for Sept. (horse scent tracking) and Oct. (hemp products).

Adjournment: John made a motion to adjourn; Janice seconded; the meeting adjourned.

—Submitted by Kathy VanDyke

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, continued:

As a reminder, our September meeting will be back at the First Security Bank, 2046 Cattail on September 18th. The Board will meet at 6:30 PM, followed by the General Meeting at 7:00 PM. We have some great programs lined up for the fall meetings.

Thank you all for your hard work this summer — in the saddle, in meetings, and behind the scenes. The strength of our chapter is in the commitment of our members.

— Sid Boswell, President, GVBCH

SWEET PEA PARADE — AUGUST 2

The Gallatin Valley Backcountry Horsemen Sweet Pea Riders were the following: Solo Riders: Clint, Marianne, Carmen, DC, Ruth, Dan P, and Janice. Riders ponying a pack horse were Dan M, Lew, Dangy, and Mark. That's 11 riders and 4 pack horses. Total 15 horses.

The two practice sessions paid off as they parade came off without a hitch. We were placed well again in the parade, next to something quiet, so there wasn't anything nearby to irritate or spook the horses. Last year the only entry that got the horses a little nervous was the Stilt Woman. We didn't see her this year, but there were other Stilt walkers, but they didn't get close enough to be an issue.

As usual, there were plenty of people in the parade audience clapping and verbally thanking us for the trail work. And the kids along the street always love the horses, as their mothers are holding them back from charging to pet the horses.

Then we once again had the same (theatrical) poop scoopers. They are friends of mine through an old neighbor. Their names are Lynda, Stacy and Jamie. They got more clapping and cheers than all of us. This year they wore shirts that said, "PRETEND I'M A DUNG BEETLE". I'm not sure what it is, but the crowd just loves to see poop scooped up!!

All stayed in formation, we rounded the turn at Church St and the parade is in the history book for the year. That's two years in a row, Great PR for the club. Maybe we can get 20 riders next year!—Mark



Four GVBCH members agreed to extend the “parade” on Saturday by heading up to Spanish Creek after the Sweet Pea Parade. Arriving there first I found an array of parking styles but was able to park my rig in our normal position. I then contacted the owners of a large equine /living quarters trailer that was parked (camped) perpendicular to me. I learned that they had been there a few days riding and planned to leave in the morning. We were able to park DC’s, Dagny’s, and Lew’s outfits alongside their “camp”, effectively blocking them in for the afternoon. They were fine with that, and it allowed us to stage and load 3 mules. Lew has become quite good at tying up logs for loading but not sure any of us had seen a mule as big as the one DC brought. We loaded 3 mules with DC and Dagny being invaluable for steadying the 80 lbs+_ bundles and then “paraded” in the 401 with little trouble. Unfortunately, there was no one present to photograph our progress or cheer us on like there was in the morning. The dams were dropped off at 3 locations in preparation for the “Wild Montana” crew to install in September.

We plan on having more dams ready to be packed in farther up the 401 soon, so there will be additional opportunities for members to experience, learn and take part in this aspect of our GVBCH service to the resource.

Thank you, Janice, and Mark for organizing the participation in the Sweet Pea Parade. The only thing that would have made it better is if we had all members riding in it instead of the ten or so that did.

Thank you, Lew, DC, and Dagny, for making another successful packing project a success. —*Happy Trails, Dan Porter*



That's a 17 hand grey mule

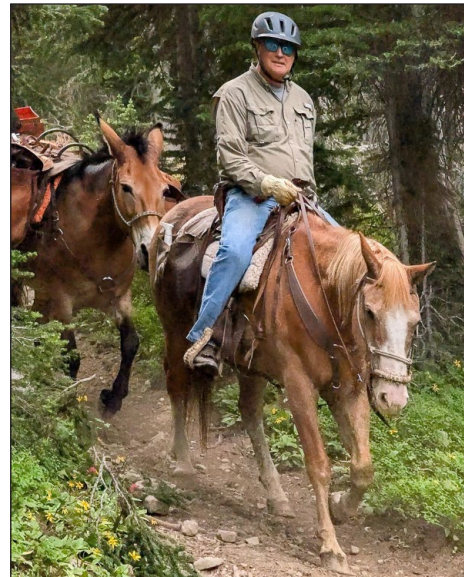


SPANISH LAKES — AUGUST 4

Three members of GVBCH, Mark DeOpsomer, Rick Ramler and Lew Goodpasture, showed up at Spanish Creek Trailhead with 3 saddle horses/mule and 4 mules and 1 horse saddled up for packing. We were there to head up to Spanish Lakes to retrieve all the gear and tools the Forest Service crew needed for some trail maintenance. We had packed them into that location a week ago. It was a beautiful day in the mountains. We departed the trailhead at about 9:30, arriving at their campsite around 12:15, travelling about 8 miles with about 2700' elevation gain. After a quick lunch we packed all the gear that the crew hadn't already packed, loaded it on the five pack animals and away we went, arriving back at the trailhead about 5:30 where the crew met us and transferred their stuff into their vehicles. A light rain fell for the last couple of miles which cooled the air and felt great!

Thanks to the members that helped make it happen. —*Lew*

BTW - A Crazy Creek Chair was lost on the trail somewhere on the trip down. If anyone found it or has any knowledge of where it might be please contact Lew at 575-639-9091



NORTH FORK OF BEAR CREEK — AUGUST 9

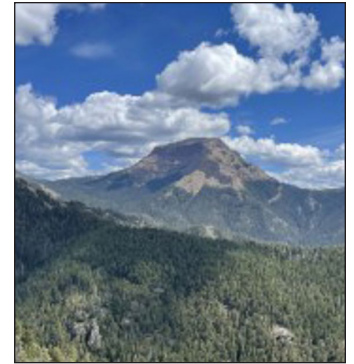
I met Dean Vine and Eugenia Razzano at Eagle Fence in Belgrade at 8am to carpool over to Bear Creek, just east of Cameron, Mt. We had planned to ride in No Man Creek but after consulting with Chris Hericks/Madison Ranger District I had learned that the bridge over Indian Creek is just now being replaced. Chris recommended the North Fork of Bear Creek as a trail in need of maintenance.

He was correct!

Dean hauled the three of us and our mounts over and knew exactly where the trailhead was located. It's not plainly marked. We were in the saddle right at 10:30, riding towards Cameron Lake, with two Belgrade ladies riding along as well. They rode on to the lake while we stopped at the "Roemer Cutoff". The main North Fork trail has been washed out for many years due to landslides, however, by heading up the Lake Cameron Trail about 8/10s of a mile you can take the cutoff trail. Here we found the trail sign leaning against a fir tree and the rock cairn scattered. Having no digging tools with us, we decided to improve the "purchase" in the tree for the sign and then headed across a small meadow where the trail seemed to lead. At timber's edge we found the trail as well as our first customer, a downed tree of the 10" caliber. While Eugenia hiked back to repair the cairn, Dean and I prepared to "make the cut". Dean noticed Eugenia's mule was locked in on something in the timber. Following his gaze we soon spotted a fair sized black bear on the trail ahead 80 yards. It stood up to check us out and then dropped down to go on feeding on berries. We didn't see it again.

We proceeded on until 4pm, clearing a total of 25 deadfall with a combined diameter of an estimated 161 inches. At 4pm we finally reached the junction of the main North Fork of Bear Creek trail. At this point we were only 4.15 miles from the trailhead, but it had taken us 5.5 hours to clear the deadfall in order to get that far. We pointed our willing mounts towards home, taking in the incredible views of the Sphinx, huge rocky outcroppings, tasting numerous huckleberries and Utah Honeysuckle berries (AKA Red Twinberry), and delighting in seeing a midsize grizzly bear just off the trail. His attention was focused on the berries as well and he paid us little attention. "Good bear! Good Bear!"

We did see one China berry growing along the trail (deadly poisonous) and there is a stretch of trail switchbacks that are akin to a goat trail. We also noted numerous water bars and dams of which many are in need of being "reset" in order to function properly. It was a beautiful day to ride with perfect temperatures, a slight, welcome breeze, and two of the toughest trail crew members that I know. Thank you, Dean and Eugenia, for a great day! — Dan Porter



AB WILDERNESS — AUGUST 10

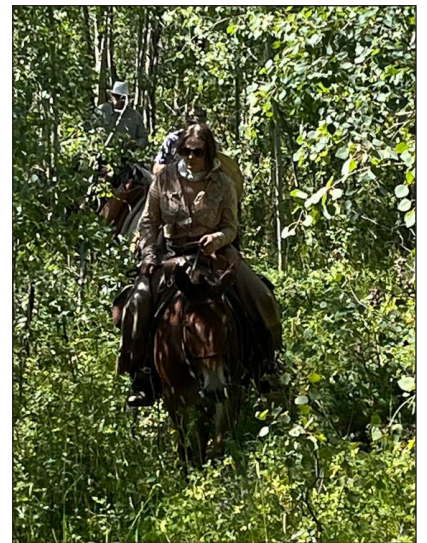
Carmen, Marianne and I rode the Cherry Creek Trail over to the North Fork under mostly clear skies and perfect riding weather. Along the way we noted the 12 water dams lying along the trail in preparation for installation by the Wild Montana crew on September 6. We also noted many other locations along the trail where dams are needed. After a quick lunch at "the camp site" I discovered that my horse had lost a shoe but with mostly soft trails we proceeded on. The efforts of Tim Butler at clearing trail through the next aspen grove were apparent and the trail became much encroached by tree growth shortly after. We reached the junction of the Placer Creek Trail and at that point it was 1pm so we decided to work back towards the trailhead while leading our horses as we trimmed saplings of spruce, fir, pine and alder up to 3" caliper out of the trail. In several locations the alders had nearly blocked the approach to puncheons over bog areas. At 4pm we mounted up and headed for the trailhead, arriving at 6:30 pm. A group from Driggs, Idaho rode in, returning from the Falls Creek-Hermit Creek Loop and we visited with them before loading up and heading for home. We had cut one deadfall in the 8" caliper from the trail using a silky and one previously cut 10" deadfall that was left protruding in to the trail at stirrup height was removed by Stihl power. We had also removed many saplings from 10" to 10 feet in height.. estimated at 600 in number.

It was a wonderful day spent on the trail. Thank you, Carmen and Marianne. A day to remember for sure. —*Dan Porter*



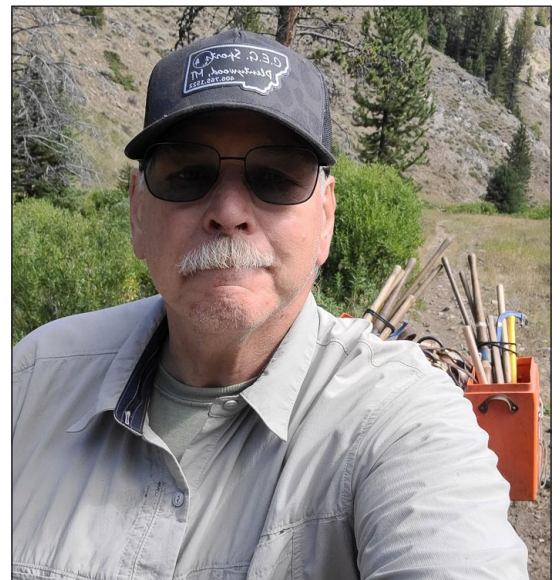
SWEDEN CREEK VIA CHERRY CREEK — AUGUST 13

Dan Marsh packing in loppers and an electric and gas chainsaw along with Tim Butler packing another gas chainsaw and loppers along with Euginia Razzano, Elizabeth Heppler, and Curt and Mia Settergren headed to Sweden Creek via Cherry Creek trail #401. The trail to Sweden Creek has not been cleared for several years so we were not sure if we were going to be able to get all the way through it on the first round. The Cherry Creek trail after Placer Creek was not well marked and had become overgrown with brush for a good portion of the trail. We could find rock cairns every now and then, but they had been overgrown with brush. We stopped for lunch where the trail crossed an old logging road and needed a lot of brushing. Curt and Mia needed to return earlier as they had guests at their house. They turned around after lunch and cleared the brush we had just gone through while we pressed on clearing the trail ahead using a chainsaw and loppers. We finally broke into the open again and found the turnoff to Sweden Creek which was on an old road that was overgrown. The trail departs from the old road a few miles in and all that remained of the trail was a rock cairn covered by new trees from a prior timber sale. We followed the faint trail and rock cairns until we got to the Forest Service boundary and since it was getting late, we decided to cut a swath back to the road so people could see the trail. We had two chainsaws going while Elizabeth and Euginia led the horses and cleared behind us. We got on the road and headed back home arriving at the TH around 6PM. We traveled around 19.5 miles round trip cleared hundreds of small trees and a lot of brushing. Everyone was ready to go home but we had a very productive day and a trail that is now easier to find and ride on.



BUFFALO HORN TO RAMSHORN — AUGUST 18

Dan Marsh with one pack horse and Curt Settergren with 2 pack horses and 2 pack mules packed a Forest Service Crew into Buffalo Horn to the Junction of the Ramshorn trail. The crew had a couple of bridges that were in bad need of repair. We were told that we should bring 2 to 3 pack animals, but it was obvious that we really needed 4 to get everything there safely. Curt just lives a couple miles down the road so he said he would pick up his 2 mules because they get owly if they are not together. We got a late start but only had 4.2 miles of trail to get to their camp spot. We loaded up a pair of food boxes, a set of hard panniers for the tools, two soft panniers, and a set of saddle panniers. There was over 160 pounds of tools along with two chain saws, two cans of gas, two bags of spikes, a portable sawmill, and gear. We got the menagerie lined out and things went well for a while until the pack horses in Curt's string kept stepping on the lead ropes, so we needed to stop and string them out again. We also had one pack pad slip which required taking it off and loading it again. On the way into camp there was a large tree that had fallen across one of the bridges we needed to step over. Once at camp we unpacked the gear and had lunch. While we had lunch the crew cleared the tree from the bridge. We headed back and just as we were about to get to the meadow, the rear pack horse got his foot caught in the lead rope and got dragged a bit before coming to a stop. Curt had gotten off to fix the problem, but his trail horse tied to the mules instead of grazing decided he would head down the trail to get back to the trailhead. While Curt was nursing his pack horse I headed down the trail with my pack horse in tow trying to head them off. The horse and mules had stopped to graze in the meadow but when they saw me, they took off again. Luckily there was a slit in the trail where one crossed the creek, and the other goes over a bridge, and they went toward the creek. I gave my 17.1 hand horse a nudge and headed them off just before the end of the meadow and gathered them up. I headed back to where I left Curt, and he was walking back with both his pack horses in tow and the little horse had recovered well from his adventure. We lined up again and headed back to the trailers with no more excitement. We were glad Curt was able to get those pack animals together at the last minute and learned that leading 4 pack animals that are not used to doing that is a challenge!



BEAR CREEK — AUGUST 20

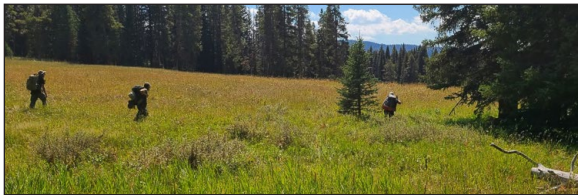
While one group headed into Bear Creek, another group with Dan Marsh, Rick Ramler, and Tim Butler went into Buffalo Horn to help the Forest Service Crew work on the bridges. While one crew finished up on the main bridge project they split off a couple folks to work with us on the other bridge that had large holes in the decking making it a real hazard to take horse across it. We ripped up the old rotten decking with the holes, cut down timber and used the mill to make three-inch-thick planks to replace the bad decking. The stringers along the side were bad so we replaced them also. Rick said he needed to be back by 4:30 "or else" so he headed back, and Tim and I stayed until 4:00 and headed back. The two bridges are now crossable for stock and made the trail safe to ride again.



Clint and Evan Schwalm, along with Euginia Razzano and Elizabeth Heppler, headed to Bear Creek to finish clearing the trail that Dean, Euginia, and Dan Porter had cleared the first 4 miles of earlier. In all they covered around 13 miles of trail round trip and cleared 11 trees. The trailer pool, with Clint being the driver this time, going 138 miles round trip. They spent eight hours on the trail and helped the Madison District who is very short handed this year.

BUFFALO HORN PACK OUT — AUGUST 22

We headed back to Buffalo Horn to pack the Forest crew back out. Curt was not available so this time it was Dan Marsh with a pack horse along with Clint and Evan Schwalm each with a pack horse. The load was a little lighter going out since they had gone through a lot of food and gas, not to mention a bunch of spikes. We loaded the hard panniers with tools with a little more weight, the food boxes were a little heavier, and with two soft panniers we were able to get everything loaded. With everyone only leading one pack horse we didn't have as much excitement this time around. We got back in time for supper this time and had an enjoyable ride.



NORTH FORK SPANISH CREEK — AUGUST 30

A group of Back Country Horseman rode to Buffalo Fork cabin in the AB wilderness. We did some work at the cabin for the Gardiner ranger district. We rebuilt the corrals at the cabin. A big shout out to the Salee outfitting camp, who packed the posts up to the cabin. We brought along our trusty driving mule, Clyde, to get our rails to the site. After finishing the corrals, we did some trail clearing east, west and north of the cabin. Thanks to Chris Nygren, Clint Schwalm, Lew Goodpasture, Kevin Voller, Henry Glenn, Molly Glenn and Cathy Huntley (Selway BCH). [Sorry, no photos—Editor.]

By: Jane McDonald, KBZK TV

"We're the best-kept secret in Gallatin Valley," Dan Marsh said. "Most people don't realize that there's a volunteer group out there clearing the trails."

Every week, multiple times a week, the Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen are out in the backcountry, clearing trails so everyone else can enjoy the nature and beauty of Montana without having to summit logs and downed limbs.

"We've come across a couple of trails — we've done Porcupine, Elkhorn — and there were some trees, good-sized trees — 24 inches or better — that were figured on a slope, and there was just no way around them," Dan Marsh said.

Loaded with handsaws, chainsaws, first aid, and more, all the equipment is carefully loaded up and balanced on a string of pack horses and the occasional mule. This brings us to one of the most important tools used by the horsemen: the horses.

"(Merlin the Horse) saved my bacon a lot. He's really good on the trail!" Marsh said.

But packing and trail skills don't come overnight. Marsh says that it takes time in and outside of the arena to train these horses to respond to aids and to get desensitized to what they may see on the trail, as well as to the equipment they use.

While the horsemen are one of many groups that help care for the backcountry, the next time you're out enjoying the bountiful nature of Montana, you may have the Gallatin Valley Back Country Horsemen to thank.



**GVBCB IS INDEBTED TO THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES & MEMBERS
WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR 2025 POKER RIDE**

Carter's Boots
City Brew (Cattail St)
Double Diamond
Four Corners Saddlery
Kenetrek Boots
Madison River Propane
Montana Canvas
Montana Horse Sense
Montana Silversmiths

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