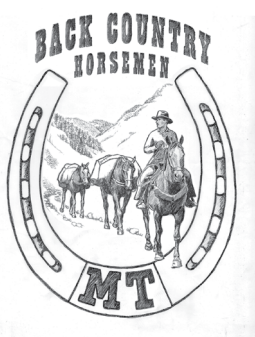


# Decker Dispatch

www.bchmt.org

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

October 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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## Taking a Stand for Wilderness and WSAs

By Kathy Hundley, Selway-Pintler Wilderness Back Country Horsemen



Most BCH chapters have members who explore the back country in many different ways, which can make it difficult to come together as an organization to stand for a cause that can be controversial. Respecting all forms of use on our public lands is important and key to collaboration, but the willingness to stick your neck out and take a stand on what you believe in is the way we make a difference in this crazy world we live in! Aren't we all glad that the writers of the Wilderness Act and all those who supported it never gave up the battle to protect those lands that we cherish as Back Country Horsemen!

From the very beginning of its formation, SPWBCH has been dedicated to promoting and protecting Wilderness. We were part of a "Quiet Use Coalition" that spoke out during the Bitterroot National Forest Travel Planning Process and final Record of Decision. Members attended public meetings, wrote letters and commented to the Forest Service regarding the importance of quiet trails for the protection of the natural resource, wildlife, clean water and the overall experience it gave users who wanted to en-

joy the escape of modern day technology and noise.

On May 11, 2016, following nine years of public input and a record 13,400 comments received, the Bitterroot National Forest Travel Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision was released. Quiet users and individuals who drove full-sized vehicles did not notice much change from the current situation. Those who experienced the most change were the bicyclists, snowmobilers and summer motorized users who rode in the Blue Joint and Sapphire Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). Following a court decision regarding motorized use in those areas, the decision was made to prohibit motorized and mechanical transport (bicycles) in WSAs. They were designated by Congress and created by the Montana Wilderness Study Act of 1977 to be managed, "so as to maintain their existing wilderness character and potential for inclusion in the National Wilderness System". These two areas encompass approximately 102,000 acres.

Unfortunately, these areas had not been managed properly by the Forest

[continued on page 2]

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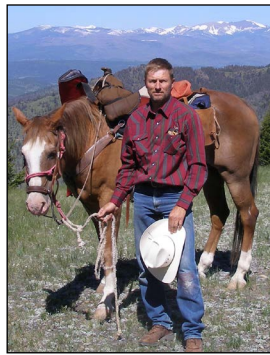
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By Mark Himmel  
National Director, BCH Montana

It's hard to believe summer is over, the last three months have been hectic at the National level. The committee chairs (I chair the Media & Marketing committee) voted to continue working the summer to catch up on the back log items we were working on.

I'll start with Media & Marketing. The other committee chairs think I have the toughest committee, actually I love it. I can make a change on the Web Site and see the results, we can post on Facebook and link back to the web site and watch people visit the page we created.

I was given the task of evaluating a children's book (Liz Hughley) earlier this summer. We have our BCHA logo inside her books now. Liz is on the Media & Marketing committee as a writer if a situation arises.

## Taking a Stand for Wilderness and WSAs [continued from front page]

Service when it came to the exclusion of motorized vehicles and mechanical transport. As a result, a lawsuit was brought against the Bitterroot National Forest by The Bitterroot Backcountry Cyclists, several snowmobile groups and ATV organizations in December 2016.

In support of the Forest Service's decision, seven conservation groups including the Selway-Pintler Wilderness Back Country Horsemen, Missoula Back Country Horsemen, Friends of the Bitterroot, Hellgate Hunters and Anglers, Montana Wilderness Association, WildEarth Guardians and Winter Wildlands, signed on as intervenors in the lawsuit with the assistance of attorneys from Earthjustice located in Bozeman, MT. A brief was filed in March 2018.

In June 2018, a Missoula Court upheld

**Schedule for chapters' news article submissions**  
E-mail to: [deborah.bcha@gmail.com](mailto:deborah.bcha@gmail.com)

### Spring Issue

Articles due May 5th, 2019: Charlie Russell, East Slope, Flathead, Gallatin, and Judith Basin.

### Fall Issue

Articles due September 5th, 2019: Last Chance, Missoula, Northwest Montana, Selway-Pintler Wilderness.

### Winter Issue

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

## National Director's Column

Next was the magazine, "We Ride Sport & Trail", a Midwest publication that asked if BCHA was interested in submitting articles. BCHA now submits monthly articles and has been asked to submit the cover photo for the October issue.

I still have the task of updating the "members home" section of the web site along with creating a National slide show for use on the Web. I sit in on numerous webinars on marketing during each month, I help out on the Donations committee and have offered to help with membership.

To list what each committee is working on at the moment would take up many pages. I plan on doing a detailed briefing at the September board meeting.

Our budget for National is in line and we're slightly ahead for the year, which is good. If I can help or assist any member with something at the National level, let me know.

Thank you, **Mark**

the Travel Plan and rejected all but one of the Plaintiffs' challenges. The Court did order the Forest Service to conduct an additional round of public comment concerning the 110 miles of trails closed to mountain bikes in the Blue Joint and Sapphire WSAs. The Court is not requiring a supplemental EIS, just a public comment period for those who previously commented in the Travel Planning process. Overall this was a significant victory for us. The 45 day comment period ends October 9, 2018.

However, the plot thickens because of Senator Daines' bill "Protect Public Use of Public Lands Act" (S.2206) asking for the release of WSA lands. And, just last week, he wrote a letter to interim Forest Service Chief Victoria Christiansen, asking the agency to open a court-ordered objection period to anyone with an interest in the issue.

Public lands are always open to the "public". It's just the mode of recreation that is managed. With the increase in technology and machines, there is a potential threat to Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. There are those who would like to see bicycles in Wilderness, an issue BCH has been battling for over a year now. We are in challenging times...and maybe it's time for you to "take a stand".

## Letter from the Chair

Summer has come and gone once again. The Back Country Horsemen of Montana membership did another superb job of representing the great state of Montana, which is not a surprise to any of you. From all the trail projects the chapters have done and everyone involved, to the work Kathy Hundley and Greg Schatz have done with the youth camps, BCHMT is a strong organization.

One thing I enjoy about being the chairman is being able to talk to members from around the state. This is something I have not done

enough of. Each of us brings a perspective to the organization and without that we would not be as strong as we are.

I have learned a few lessons in my short time in the position and plan to carry them into the future. One thing you should know, I am not a big writer, so my articles are going to be short.

Thank you all again,

**Rich**



*Rich Carl  
Chairman  
BCH Montana*



*By Mack Long  
National Director, BCH Montana*

## **Mother Nature wanted to make sure BCH Montana had plenty to do this summer**

2018 has turned out to be quite a year. The fires of 2017 in and around the Bob Marshall and many other places in Montana set the stage for lots of rebuilding of trails in the impacted areas. Near record snow fall approaching 200% of normal made spring runoff especially bad for trails. Many trails washed out, numerous creeks changed course, and of course, the burned timber plugged access.

We were fortunate that the Forest Service was staffed up somewhat over recent years to work on the numerous trail problems. The volunteer groups did a great job of pulling workers together to tackle the daunting tasks. Many of

the volunteer organizations relied heavily on BCH to pack them in. It was gratifying that over the summer, we ran into so many BCH volunteers packing to support these efforts in addition to projects that BCH had already committed to. As we traveled the backcountry, it was truly amazing that we ran into so many BCH friends, working on a multitude of projects, all working diligently to lend support toward maintaining our public trails.

Mother Nature threw a lot at us this year, but the challenge was met. Thanks for all your work across Montana. Sure makes me proud to say I am part of BCH Montana!

## **National Director's Column**

### **Back Country Horsemen of Montana State Chapters**

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Gallatin Valley BCH  
PO Box 3232, Bozeman, MT 59772

NorthWest Montana BCH  
PO Box 9242, Kalispell, MT 59904

Bitter Root BCH  
PO Box 1083, Hamilton, MT 59840

Judith Basin BCH  
PO Box 93, Lewistown, MT 59457

Selway-Pintler Wilderness BCH  
PO Box 88, Hamilton, MT 59840

Cabinet BCH  
PO Box 949, Libby, MT 59923

Last Chance BCH  
PO Box 4008, Helena, MT 59604

Three Rivers BCH  
PO Box 251, Dillon, MT 59725

Charlie Russell BCH  
PO Box 3563, Great Falls, MT 59403

Mile High BCH  
PO Box 4434, Butte, MT 59702

Trout Creek BCH  
PO Box 1435, Trout Creek, MT 59874

East Slope BCH  
PO Box 967, Conrad, MT 59425

Mission Valley BCH  
PO Box 604, Ronan, MT 59864

Upper Clark Fork BCH  
PO Box 725, Deerlodge, MT 59722

BCH of the Flathead  
PO Box 1192, Columbia Falls, MT 59912

BCH of Missoula  
PO Box 2121, Missoula, MT 59806

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](http://www.bchmt.org)

# Back Country Horsemen participate in youth summer camps



Bob Hermance explains the riding saddle. Photos by Linda Huso and Deb Schatz.

## Boone and Crockett Ranch, Dupuyer

**Date: August 9, 2018**

**Students: 15**

BCHMT participants:

June Burgau, Flathead  
 Bob Hermance, East Slope  
 Mark Himmell, Charlie Russell  
 Merlyn Huso, East Slope  
 Linda Huso, East Slope  
 Abbey Hutton, East Slope  
 Greg Schatz, Flathead  
 Lisa Schmidt, East Slope

The Boone and Crockett Club holds a 5-day Outdoor Skills Camp each summer on the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch west of Dupuyer. The two goals of this camp are to develop an understanding, awareness and appreciation for the great outdoors; and provide an opportunity for youth to gain a variety of outdoors skills.

This year, BCHMT was given an entire day to teach the art of horse packing, safe horse handling skills, and the principles of leave no trace camping and stock handling.

Boone & Crockett: [https://www.boone-crockett.org/educationPrograms/education\\_fieldtrips\\_public.asp?area=educationPrograms](https://www.boone-crockett.org/educationPrograms/education_fieldtrips_public.asp?area=educationPrograms)

Howdy, y'all!

Thank you for letting me be a part of your youth group weekend. It was a wonderful thing to experience! So many great memories, the sound of children's laughter ringing through the air in the Wilderness was particularly delightful.

Happy trails! See you soon I hope.

Jessica Shaw  
 BCH Flathead  
 (Awesome cook and all-around helper at the BCHMT youth summer camp)



Jessica Shaw and Kathy Hundley love the principles of Leave No Trace. Photos by Jessica Shaw.

## BCHMT Youth Summer Camp Indian Meadows, Scapegoat Wilderness, Lincoln Ranger District

**Dates: August 2-5, 2018**

**Students: 8**

BCHMT participants:

June Burgau, Flathead  
 Smoke Elser, Missoula  
 Jessica Shaw, Flathead  
 Heather Hamilton, Upper Clark Fk.  
 Kathy Hundley, Selway-Pintler W.  
 Merlyn Huse, East Slope  
 Sherri Lionberger, Last Chance  
 Joe Meek, Last Chance  
 Greg Schatz, Flathead  
 Richard Tamke, Missoula

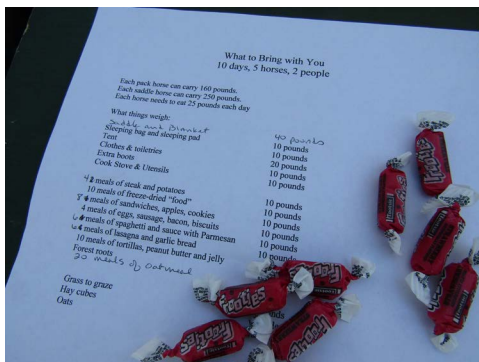
Hands on learning, horses and hard work brought smiles to the faces of all of the students at BCHMT's first youth packing summer camp near Lincoln.

Students started by learning how to many loads and load stock. After a campfire chat by Smoke we got up early the next morning, mantied up loads, loaded stock and headed into the Scapegoat Wilderness for three days of fun. After we arrived in camp we learned about Leave No Trace, the next day we hiked to Heart Lake where the students tried their hand at trail maintenance by cleaning out water bars and a few brave souls went swimming. The final day we mantied up our gear, loaded the stock and headed back to the trailhead where the parents were waiting to pick up the campers.

Mark Himmell walks the students through each step of mantying a load, and then helps the students sling their loads.



Left: Lisa Schmidt entertains the youth with two games: one helped the kids understand campsites, grazing, and gear; the other helped them understand the difference between a horse carrying a human and a horse carrying the dead weight of the packs.



# throughout the state of Montana this summer - 2018



Greg Schatz and June Burgau teach students how to load the horses. Photos by Jessica Shaw.



Stu Sorensen teaches mantying. Photos and story by Ralph Hopkins.



Students at the Montana Matters River of No Return Youth Camp display their mantied loads. Photos and story by Kathy Hundley.



Merlyn Huso demonstrates the art of packing loose duffel.

## Glacier Institute at Big Creek Pack Station, North Fork of the Flathead River

**Date: June 20, 2018**  
**Students: 25**

BCHMT participants:  
Ralph Hopkins, Flathead  
Rick Maedje, Flathead  
Stu Sorenson, Flathead  
Jim Thramer, Flathead

In July four members of BCH of the Flathead traveled to Big Creek on the North Fork of the Flathead River. There they gave a demonstration on packing with stock, leave no trace, noxious weeds and safety around stock.

The students were from all over the United States and some were international. Some had never seen or been around stock before.

There were about 25 students in two groups and all had a chance to manty and load them on stock. We had a lot of fun and answered many questions about packing.

Glacier Institute: <https://www.glacierinstitute.org/index.cfm/category/3/big-creek-youth-camp>

Rick Maedje teaches mantying.



## Montana Matters River of No Return Youth Camp

**Magruder Ranger Station**  
**Selway Bitterroot & Frank Church Wilderness**  
**Dates: July 17-18, 2018**  
**Students: 19**

BCHMT participants:  
Joe Meek, Last Chance  
Terry Reed, Selway-Pintler W.  
Kathy Hundley, Selway-Pintler W.

This was the third annual summer youth camp held at Magruder Ranger Station in Idaho, which sits between the 1.3 million-acre Selway Bitterroot Wilderness and the 2.3 million-acre Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Students draw for the camp at the Teller Youth Conservation and Education Expo held in Corvallis in May. The event is sponsored by over 40 organizations. Other conservation groups teaching at the camp included the MT Bow Hunters Assoc., Mule Deer Foundation, Wild Sheep Foundation, MT Fish Wildlife & Parks, and the Boone & Crockett Scoring Clinic. The Bitterroot National Forest also played a key role as instructors of Leave No Trace (Light on the Land).

*[continued back page]*

Students are slinging their loads.



Above: Smoke Elser made a cameo appearance Friday night for a fireside chat.

Below: One mantied load, done right!



## Kading Campground Improvements

By Darlene Horne, Last Chance Back Country Horsemen

This year, the Last Chance Backcountry Horseman constructed two feed bunks in Kading Campground on the Helena National Forest. The LC-BCH took this project on in addition to their regular projects which include maintaining trails in the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness, opening up trails in the Elkhorn Mountains near Eagle Guard Station, and packing Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation crews into the Bob.

The Kading Campground is located on the Little Blackfoot River in the west side of the Helena Forest. It is a well used campground by hikers, bicyclists and horsemen. The feed bunks are new to the campground and are being added to make the facilities more horse-friendly. The LC-BCH, under the leadership of project leader Neil Horne, worked with the Helena National Forest to construct the feed bunks. First a design was presented and approved along with a proposed budget. After receiving approval, the chapter worked with welding students

in the Helena College of Technology to create the metal frames for the feed bunks.

On the morning of June 22, nineteen chapter members rendezvoused at Kading Campground to begin the work of constructing the forms for the feed bunks' concrete pads. This

had to be precisely timed as the cement trucks arrived at 2 pm to begin pouring the cement into the forms.

After making sure that the cement was properly in place, chapter members returned to Kading the next week to install the metal inserts and concrete feed bunks on the now cured cement pads.

Today, the feed bunks are in use in Kading campground and will serve horsemen and their horses for many



years to come. Over 220 hours were volunteered for this project as well as 50 hours of travel time involving 1,120 miles of travel. Our chapter is lucky to have members who have expertise and equipment available for use...special thanks to Hank Flatow who donated use of his skid steer and trailer, Steve Ernst's son Josh who was instrumental in the concrete finishing, and to a host of skilled members that made this a success.

## Why youth education?

By Greg Schatz, BCH Flathead

I wasn't born into horses. One of my grandpas was a teamster, but by the time I came along he was down to one tall black horse. When I was fourteen I saw burros being packed for the first time and learned a little about it then. I remembered.

When I was nineteen I got a job where there was no road access, and I had to pack food into our cabin once a week. It was those dang burros again, with sawbucks and panniers no less. An old Mexican cowboy, Boss Sanchez, taught me how to pack. You put one can of peaches on one side, you put one can of peaches on the other side. Cans go on the bottom, bread and eggs go on the top.

After college I married Deborah, who had horses her entire life. A few months later we moved to Montana and joined the Back Country Horsemen. Since that time I have ridden many thousands of miles and spent many hundreds of days in the Bob

Marshall Wilderness. I have had an absolutely outstanding time!!

Had I not learned about packing when I was fourteen, I wouldn't have known packing stock was even an option, I certainly wouldn't have got a job packing at nineteen, and Deborah probably wouldn't have given me a second look if I hadn't been able to tie a Windsor knot.

When people ask me why I drive around Montana introducing teens to packing that is why—so they know it can be done. In a year or two they may not remember how to mantly or how to sling a load, but they may just remember enough to get that job, so that they can spend the rest of their life packing horses.



Black Mountain, New Mexico

*"The following article was written by 2 of our 4-H members of the NorthWest Montana BCH 4-H Trail and Packing Club. This was the kids' first major project for those kids reaching level III or IV of the program. Their task was to peel and assemble the posts for a jack leg fence for the new corrals at Pentagon Cabin."*

## **4-H Packing Project at Pentagon Cabin**

*By Kaj Haagerup (15) and Kobi Mathies (16), NorthWest Montana Back Country Horsemen*

The Pentagon Cabin trip was the first 4-H packing project in correlation with the NorthWest Montana Back Country Horsemen and the U.S. Forest Service in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. It was a good experience for all of the teens involved, as it gave all of us strong packing experience in the backcountry. Over the course of four days, we successfully packed stock nearly 11 miles into the wilderness, peeled and assembled jackleg corral posts, and packed out safely.

After arriving at the trailhead on Thursday night and sleeping in hammocks in the back of a six-horse trailer, we moved to the Silvertip Trailhead the next morning and began to pack our loads and tack up our stock. The ride in was pretty uneventful other than having to cut a few logs out of the trail and a pack horse breaking loose a few times. It was a phenomenal trail, with 4-H member Sean Struble calling it a "beautiful ride, and worth every second." We left at 1:30 p.m. and crossed through the Great Bear Wilderness and into the Bob Marshall Wilderness before arriving at the cabin at roughly 6:00 p.m. Upon arrival, we realized that we had foolishly left our highline hanging in the horse trailer at the trailhead.

We quickly improvised and used many ropes both from Pentagon Cabin and our own supply as our highline, and used clips we found in the hay shed as swivels to highline four horses on, and used the corral for the other

three horses. We slept well in the loft of the cabin, spending most of our evening playing Uno with a deck of cards someone had left and reading through the log books that dated back to 1991. We also left our own accounts of our experiences in the new log book.

On Saturday, we woke to the smell of eggs and breakfast burritos and quickly got to work. Just before beginning to peel the posts, an interesting man who claimed that his name was "Taz" arrived in our camp. He was a hiker from Canada who was hoping to arrive in Mexico in November after a 3,100 mile hike. Before long, Taz made his way back into the wild and we began to peel the 28 posts for the jacklegs. We started around 9:00 a.m. and had the posts peeled by 11:00 a.m. After the posts were completely peeled, we sawed and chopped notches in each post and assembled them into jacklegs. By then, it was nearly 2:00 p.m. and we had completed all the work we were able to do.

The pack out went smoothly aside from having to walk out one of our riding stock due to lameness from a highline injury. Luckily, that horse is expected to make a full recovery. We made exceptional time riding out compared to our ride in, making it out in less than 4 hours. We untacked and unpacked with no problems. All ten members of our party agreed that we were satisfied and proud of the work we had done and loved the experience.

Overall, our party hopes that we

have set the foundation for future 4-H members to have similar experiences in the backcountry, and we can't wait for more projects to come. The work we did will hopefully go towards a greater cause in preserving these sites and trails in the wilderness, and we hope that the Forest Service continues to help maintain and work in part with the 4-H Packing Project and the NorthWest Montana Back Country Horsemen.

Special thanks to the 4-H Leaders, who are also members of the NorthWest Montana BCH, for their help, instruction and patience. Those leaders were Alden Totten, Wendy Monfort and Glen Struble.





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## **Back Country Horsemen participate in youth summer camps**

### **Magruder** [from page 5]

The concept of partnering with other conservation groups has turned out to be a successful endeavor which gives the campers a valuable amount of back country skills and information. Campers were boys and girls 11 to 15 years old. A wide array of back country topics, packing skills and horse safety was presented along with the history and purpose of BCH. One of the highlights for the campers was a campfire discussion about Wilderness, led by Smoke Elser of Missoula BCH and Dale Burk of Stoneydale Press. All campers received an autographed copy of Smoke's book, *Packin' In On Mules and Horses*. Tom Henderson of Bitterroot Outfitters provided an overnight pack trip for students where they got to ride stock along the trail to his base camp at Kim Creek Saddle.

### **Scripps Ranch Youth Camp** West Fork Road Darby, MT Dates: July 18, 2018 Students: 20

#### BCHMT Participants:

Joe Meek, Last Chance  
Terry Reed, Selway-Pintler W.  
Kathy Hundley, Selway-Pintler W.

This was the first year for the Scripps Ranch Youth Camp. Just like Magruder, students draw for the camp at the Teller Youth Conservation and Education Expo. The camp's curriculum follows the Magruder format but also added Ethan Becker- Wilderness Survival & knife design and the Whitticar Shooting Range & MT FWP Shooting Event with 20 gauge Shotguns and 22 pistols. Smoke and Dale gave a Wilderness campfire chat again and in lieu of a pack trip the kids spent one day hiking to Nelson Lake. Joe, Kathy and Terry (and the very patient stock) braved the mid-ninety degree weather to do two demonstrations in one day!



Above: Joe Meek teaches knots.

Below: Students and their teachers.



McGruder and Scripps: [www.tellerwildlife.org/teller-education-vision/](http://www.tellerwildlife.org/teller-education-vision/)