



BCH of MT

“News”

“staying connected”

February 2012

Complimentary

Inside

Wintering horses in the Plains Valley	2
BCH ladies packing project	5
Windy Pass pack-in	6
2012 Convention	7-13
Recreational Trails Program	14



Back Country Horsemen of Montana

Mission Statement

- ◇ perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness.
- ◇ work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
- ◇ assist various agencies responsible for the maintenance and management of public lands
- ◇ educate, encourage, and solicit active participation in the wise and sustained use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public, commensurate with our heritage.
- ◇ foster and encourage formation of new Back Country Horsemen organizations

The pack string pauses at Head Creek for a cool drink.....see page 5 for the rest of the story!

Wintering horses in the Plains Valley

By: Ron Rude (submitted by Rena Johnson)
Wild Horse Plains Chapter

About the Author: Ron is an accomplished writer having written several books and various articles. He is the past president and current member of the Wild Horse Plains Chapter.

The following article was published in the Clark Fork Valley Press in November 2011.

Thanks to our "banana belt" weather, horses winter nicely on the most basic care in the Plains valley. Unfortunately, some scrape by with less than what they really need, and occasionally there's a case of real neglect. Since horses can't tweet up a protest-rally every time they're slighted, maybe a review of the basics is useful.

Preparing for winter

Experts advocate worming from four to six times a year, but whatever the plan, a late fall worming is essential. A load of parasites will drag a horse down over the winter as much as will cold weather or low-quality feed.

Shoes should be pulled and hooves trimmed, too. Overgrown hooves, with or without steel hanging from them, make for poor traction on ice and snow, in addition to straining ligaments and setting up problems for the next summer. Trim in late fall and again in early spring.

Horses with dental problems have trouble both ingesting and digesting their food. Especially for older horses, get those teeth checked and, if necessary, floated.

Fall is also the time for the tough decision on aged horses. It isn't kindness to let an old horse suffer all winter long just to prolong the inevitable. If he looked bad after the previous winter, now's the time.

Water

If you don't like your horse and do want him to die painfully, go ahead and believe that old myth which says horses can survive by eating snow. Horses need fresh water daily in winter.

Lack of it will bring on dehydration and possibly colic. Figure out the water situation well in advance of the first freeze-up, and check it religiously.

Hay or pasture

It's pretty well established that while alfalfa hay is tops in nutritional value, sedentary horses don't need it. Grass hay or grass/alfalfa mix will do nicely. *Clean and green* are the most important qualities. Sun- or rain-bleached hay may still be useable (though of lesser quality), so you can even get by without the *green* for a while, but *clean* is non-negotiable. Dusty or moldy hay will cause lifetime respiratory problems and absolutely must not be fed.

Quantity depends. A rule of thumb is 18 to 25 pounds per day for a 1,000 to 1,200 pound animal, divided into two or three feedings. Second-cutting, top-quality alfalfa would be fed at the low end of this scale, with common grasses at the upper end. Since horses get their body warmth through digestion as much as through stored fat, in cold weather they want more quantity. Thus, while a lighter ration of pure alfalfa might keep the horse in good flesh, it might not keep him warm as well as would more pounds of lesser quality.

Feeding free choice from the big rounds is common and convenient. However, left to eat 24/7, horses will overeat, put on excess weight, and certainly waste hay. It's best to figure a way to control intake.

There are some great feed bunks on the market which unfortunately violate the fact that horses need to eat at ground level. That's where their sinuses flow best to keep dust and debris out of their lungs. Also, eating at eye level or higher, they'll pull chaff into their ears or eyes.

That said, just dumping hay on the ground can be wasteful and unsanitary. Horses will stomp it into the muck, urinate and defecate on it, then ingest all kinds of filth including the worms you

Please see Winter on page 3

Winter continued from page 2

paid money to eliminate. They might be beautiful animals, but they aren't known for their personal hygiene.

So, move the feed ground frequently, or use bunks which hold hay near ground level.

Horses do just fine wintering "out", but only if pasture was thick when winter started, and if there's several acres per animal. That's just common sense, but sometimes it gets ignored. In mid-winter we often have a month of thick ice or compacted snow which makes pawing for grass nearly impossible regardless of pasture growth. Horses need some hay during this time. If they eat it, they're hungry. If they leave it, they're still preferring the pasture grass.

Perhaps it goes without saying that in the rare winter such as '96 -'97, when the valley disappeared under 6' or more of snow, horses simply cannot survive on pasture.

Supplemental feed

This is a book-length subject, and often an argumentative one. At the basic level, mature horses getting plenty of clean hay or pasture, fresh water, and salt, should need little or no grain or other supplements. Weanlings, aged horses, and pregnant mares need at least a grain ration – barley/oats/corn mix being one popular choice. Ask the local vet for advice on quantity and type. It's easy to overdo the supplemental feed. Skinny horses are a crime, but overly fat ones aren't proof of perfect care either.

Shelter

A good number of horses in the Plains valley don't have winter shelter, and of those which do, a majority don't need it most days. Horses are wired for tougher winters than ours – with a couple of qualifiers:

-- wormy horses and those on a marginal diet suffer seriously even with shelter.

-- stretches of wind and freezing rain (Portland weather), since the horse cannot get dry for at least part of the day, are more dangerous than colder, drier weather.

A solid windbreak helps a great deal. A winter blanket makes a big difference for those confined or having no shelter. A shed with free access is better yet; this arrangement lets the horse decide when he wants shelter. A full-blown stall barn is the ideal but rare in these parts and much more work for the owner.

A sidebar to the shelter question is simply the question of space. Horses roaming large pastures can move to keep warm. Even without shelter, they're better off than horses kept up in small spaces. (They also stay in better muscular condition.) And, confined horses need a dry spot to stand on. Standing in ankle-deep, freezing muck is misery for them.

Spring

The seriously-neglected horse will become visible as early as December or January, the moderately-neglected in February or March. Ribs and hipbones protrude. Hair coat is excessively long, and shedding doesn't begin as it should by late March. Attitude is listless.

In late March or early April the local hills will begin to turn a faint green, but that doesn't mean horses should be turned out on pasture. The earliest grass is watery and sparse; some is just cheat grass. Horses in good shape from their winter feed regimen can still go downhill fast on early pasture. It's best to figure on feeding well out into May.

Grass only grows rapidly from late May through early July. During these few weeks horses left to free-choice pasture often get so fat they founder. Their intake should still be controlled. It doesn't make much sense to treat them right all winter and then let them kill themselves eating through the summer.

A spring worming or two, say February and April, will help horses shed out clean and on time.

Horse health is owners' responsibility, but as law-enforcement officials know, sometimes those owners need educating – or even a poke with a cattle prod -- from others. The issue shouldn't require continual spying within a community, but sometimes it's more important to speak up than it is to avoid controversy.

Upper Clark Fork Back Country Horsemen



FAMILY FUN RIDE

FEATURED IN THE NOV/DEC 2010 TRAIL RIDER
MAGAZINE

Date: July 14, 2012

Registration: 8:00 am to 10:00 am

Place: Gold Creek, MT

(Exit 166 of I-90, follow the signs, 5 ½ miles)

Approximately 4 hour Ride. You can ride through a Historic Ghost Town and past a Gold Dredge

Ride & BBQ \$20.00/rider
 BBQ only \$10.00/person
 Ride & BBQ.....\$ 7.00/Children under 12
 BBQ only.....\$ 5.00/Children under 12

Poker Hands (18 yrs & over)..... \$5.00 each
 50/50 Tickets..... \$1.00 each
 or 6 for \$5.00

RIDE A WELL MARKED TRAIL WITH
 YOUR OWN GROUP AT YOUR OWN
 PACE!

BBQ starts at 3:00 pm and Drawings for Door Prizes to follow.

Everyone Bring Your Horse or Mule and Have Fun!
 FREE Camping Available. Campers are welcome
 To ride other days to explore on their own!

Absolutely NO Dogs on Ride!
Dogs in Camp must be on leash!

For More Information Please Contact:

Dayna & Charlie Gilman – 846-2464 Pat & Wendy George- 846-3499
 Wade and Lonnie Murphy – 431-1717

BCH ladies packing project 2011

By: Deborah Schatz
BCH of the Flathead



The ladies of the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead held our work project on Saturday, August 20, at the South Creek trailhead on the Spotted Bear Ranger District. This year we volunteered to pack out a Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation trail crew who were camped ten miles up the trail at the junction of Twin Creek and Head Creek.

Our focus this year was to improve our skills by packing the crew's various items including two bear-proof boxes, soft duffel, shovels, Pulaskis, small saws, a crosscut saw and a propane tank. After a nice ride and break for lunch, we sorted the gear until we had loads of similar size and weight. We made two mantied loads, one soft pannier load, and the fourth load was the mantied bear-proof boxes.

The trail has over twenty creek crossing – one way – and a couple steep spots which gave us some nice challenges. As evidenced in the photo, our packs looked and rode great all the way home.

Sunday we took a fun ride up toward Big Bill looking for berries, but the afternoon wind brought in heavy smoke from the Salmon Lake fire, so we headed for home.

Windy Pass pack-in

By: Henry Glenn
Gallatin Valley BCH



On Wednesday August 17th, GVBCH packed-in a work crew and their tools and materials to refurbish the Windy Pass Cabin.

If the packing was not hard enough, we had to endure seven miles of the “road from hell” for one hour and twenty minutes no less.

Larry Thomas led a team of Walter Becker, Michael Harney, Jan Elpel, Rich Inman, Steve Thienes and Henry Glenn with five pack horses and Mandy the pack mule. We packed in supplies to restore the Cabin including enough 6' boards to re-floor the porch. While there, we laid out the new corrals that we plan on building next August, so plan on being there and having fun. What a beautiful day we had and any day horseback is better than one working.

On Wednesday August 24th we packed the crew out and all their tools and leftover stuff.

Note: the stove destruction crew were Steve, Wally and Michael and I've never seen three men have more fun trying to fit a rusted-out wood stove into two pack bags. I think the plan was to save the door and legs but “OOPS”, that never happened.

On the pack out we decided to name the crew the BCHTH that is the Back Country Horsemen Trash Haulers.



"Back Country Horsemen in the 21st Century"

Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Proudly Hosts

Back Country Horsemen of Montana State Convention

March 30-April 1, 2012

Billings Hotel & Convention Center

1223 Mallowney Lane

Exit 446 Off Interstate 90

Billings: Montana's Trailhead

Name _____

Chapter _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Registration fee includes all convention activities. Registration: Received by March 15, \$85.00;
 (Late registration *after March 15, \$90.00*)

Name _____ \$85.00 *(\$90.00)* \$ _____
For Name Tag

+

Name _____ \$85.00 *(\$90.00)* \$ _____
For Name Tag

+

Guest ticket, Saturday banquet

Name _____ \$30.00 \$ 30.00
For Name Tag =

Make check payable to Beartooth Back Country Horsemen for\$ _____

Mail to BEARTOOTH BCH
 c/o Eucker
 P O Box 1247
 Columbus, MT 59019

Please indicate banquet entree choice: Prime Rib or Shrimp Scampi

Billings Hotel & Convention Center,
 Hotel Accommodations (406) 248-7151 or (800) 537-7286
 \$75.00/night, King or Two Queen Beds

*Rooms blocked under Back Country Horsemen until March 15
 Use Group Code Bear 12*

Questions: Carolyn Eucker, (406) 322-4752 or horseqtrsranh@aol.com

Back Country Horsemen of Montana State Convention

March 30-April 1, 2012
Billings Hotel & Convention Center
1223 Muldowney Lane
Exit 446 Off Interstate 90
Billings: "Montana's Trailhead"

Keynote Speaker

Tom Schmidt, Deputy Regional Forester, in keeping with the convention theme, will speak to the challenges ahead for "Back Country Horsemen in the 21st Century."

Breakout Sessions

Varied, entertaining and informative: Dan Aadland, local rancher, writer, horse and mule breeder, will present "Backcountry Horses in Iceland," the history and state of the Icelandic horse breed in its home country. Jeff DeBenedetto, an Ecologist for the Custer National Forest, will give an overview of Whitebark Pine Ecosystem in the Beartooth Mountains. Renee Richards, CPA, will speak about accounting practices for Back Country Horsemen chapters. Shawn Stewart, Fish, Wildlife and Parks Biologist, will discuss "Being Bear Aware," with information on the biology of grizzlies, grizzlies in general and those in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Ernie Strum, Beartooth BCH charter member and Certified Casting Instructor for the Federation of Flyfishers, will give tips and techniques for "Fishing the High Country."

Commercial Vendors

Vendors will be on hand for your shopping fun. Billings and the surrounding area have the best Montana can offer in the way of diverse commercial vendors.

Federal and State Agency Displays

Federal and state agencies who partner with back country horsemen will have displays of interest to all who wish to protect our nation's back country.

Live & Silent Auctions & Door Prizes

Each chapter is requested to donate an item for the live auction. A minimum value of \$50.00 is suggested. Proceeds benefit Back Country Horsemen of Montana. Assorted silent auction items and door prizes will please every taste.

Mile High Award

The Mile High Award is named for the Mile High Back Country Horsemen Chapter which sponsored a saw competition in 2011. A crosscut saw competition will be held during the convention, and the traveling Mile High Award will be presented to the competition winner. Get your teams into training now!

Entertainment

Do you have a great singing voice or perhaps a unique style? Then you will want to take part in Friday night's Karaoke. Saturday evening you'll enjoy Val Geissler, "The best darn cowboy singer and entertainer you've ever seen!"

Photo contest

The always-popular photo contest categories: Animals in the Back Country, Back Country Horsemen, and Back Country Scenic Views. Check the web site for full details and rules.

Billings Hotel & Convention Center
1223 Mallowney Lane
Exit 446 Off Interstate 90
Billings: "Montana's Trailhead"

Hotel Accommodations
(406) 248-7151
(800) 537-7286

billingshotel@bresnan.net

\$75.00/night, King or Two Queen Beds

Rooms blocked under Back Country Horsemen until March 15
Use Group Code **Bear 12**

Back Country Horsemen of Montana State Convention

Photo Contest Categories and Rules

Sponsored by:
Stillwater Veterinary Clinic
Stillwater Mining Company

We hope you will enter in the Photo Contest to share pictures of our Big Sky country, wildlife, people, and activities. The Photo Contest will be judged by convention members.

Register your photo Friday evening, March 30, or Saturday morning March 31, by 9:00 am at the Registration Desk.

Members are limited to two entries in each category. The photo contest consists of three categories:

- * **Animals in the Backcountry**—wildlife, horses, mules, etc.
- * **Backcountry Horsemen**—at work, at play, etc.
- * **Backcountry Scenic Views**

Photos are to be taken by BCH amateur photographers

No previous pictures that have won a prize are eligible

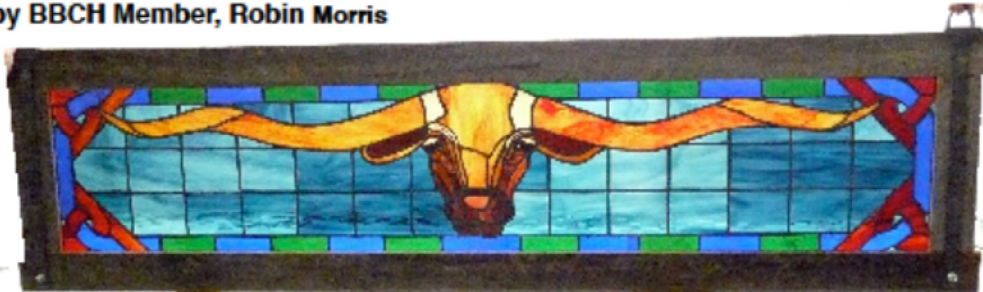
Photos must be no larger than 8" X 10". All photos need to be mounted or matted (no frames, please).

Attach your name, address, club name, and category to the back of the photo.

For more information contact Christy Brantley at travgundc2011@gmail.com or at the convention.

"Back Country Horsemen in the 21st Century"

2012 BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF MONTANA STATE CONVENTION

RAFFLE ITEMS**Steer Head Stained Glass****Value \$1000****Donated by BBCH Member, Robin Morris**

Designed and hand-crafted by Robin, this original, one-of-a-kind work of art is framed in 100-year old barn wood with rustic gate hardware serving as hangers. It measures approximately 66" x 18".

\$500 Certificate Toward the Purchase of 4 New Tires**Donated by Tire World****(406) 556-0488 or (406) 586-0488**

Tire World is owned and operated by John Chepulis with two convenient locations in Bozeman, Montana. Tire World provides services including tires, brakes and more.

\$400 Certificate Toward the Purchase of Custom-Made Hat**Donated by****Rand's Custom Hats****1-800-346-9815 or www.RandHats.com**

Rand's Custom Hats, located in downtown Billings, is owned and operated by Ritch Rand, Master Hatter. Ritch and his committed crew have a trade that is all but forgotten in these modern days of mass production.



Raffle Tickets
\$3.00 each
\$5.00 for two
\$10.00 for five

For additional raffle tickets contact Audrey Harrison at harrisonaudrey48@gmail.com

All raffle ticket stubs and proceeds must be turned in by March 31, 2012.
 Drawing will be held at the BCHMT State Convention Banquet in Billings on March 31, 2012

Saw Competition Order of Events and Official Rules

Back Country Horsemen of Montana State Convention

Sponsored by Beartooth Back Country Horsemen

March 31, 2012, Billings Hotel & Convention Center

Registration

- All contestants must be **PRE-REGISTERED**, including fees paid, with the Beartooth Back Country Horsemen by 9:30 a.m. March 31. Mandatory competitor meeting 9:30 a.m. at the competition site.
- Fees \$25.00 per team
- Winning team will receive the traveling trophy.

Required Forms

- All competitors must complete and submit the following forms to be eligible for competition:
 1. Release, Waiver, Indemnity Agreement and Covenant Not to Sue
 2. Insurance Responsibility

Insurance

- Competitors are responsible for having their own medical and other applicable insurance. **No such insurance is provided by Beartooth Back Country Horsemen**

Dress Code

- Competitors must wear long pants, shirt, and shoes.

Head Judge

- The Head Judge's job is to enforce the rules. All calls by the Head Judge will be final.

Appeals Process

- Appeals will only be allowed for rule interpretation issues or for issues not covered in the rules.
- No appeals can be made on judgment calls. For example: jumping the gun, blocks not severed, or incomplete disks.

Timers & Officials

- There will be two timers on each contestant.
- The timer's cadence will be: "Timer's ready, Contestants ready, 1, 2, 'GO'."
- The commencement of timing of the Underhand, Standing, and Crosscut occurs when the Head Judge or Starter's cadence reaches the word "GO", and ends when the block hits the ground.
- It is under the discretion of the Head Judge if a contestant is to be disqualified for "Jumping the Gun".

Disqualification

- Indication of disqualification for any infraction will be made to the competitor concerned at the conclusion of the heat by the Head Judge.
- There will be no monetary reward if a contestant is disqualified.

Please contact your Senator's and let them know how important the RTP Program is and that it needs dedicated funding.

Allison Schottenhaml
BCHA, Public Lands Chair

Recreational Trails Program Continues to be Threatened

January 13, 2012

WASHINGTON, (American Horse Council) – The Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which provides funding for recreational trails throughout the country, including those used by equestrians, continues to be threatened.

In November, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee marked up its version of a multi-year national highway transportation bill, called MAP-21. MAP-21 would reauthorize the RTP program; however it would make a major change to the RTP program by removing dedicated funding for the program and consolidating it with several others.



“As currently written this bill would preserve RTP in name only and would effectively end the program that has funded thousands of successful trail projects all over the country,” said AHC Legislative Director Ben Pendergrass. “RTP would be thrown in with a bunch of other programs and states could choose not to spend any money on RTP projects. This defeats the original idea of RTP, which was to return some of the gas taxes paid by recreational off-highway vehicle users to the trail community.”

The current national highway bill SAFETEA-LU that authorizes the RTP program was set to expire in September of 2009. However, because Congress has yet to pass a new highway bill it has been forced to extend the current law several times, most recently until March 2012. MAP-21 must still be debated and approved by the full Senate. The House has yet to introduce its version of a highway bill.

“Every recreational rider needs to be calling and emailing their Senators to let them know how important the RTP program is to them. They need to make sure their Senators understand that RTP must have dedicated funding,” said Pendergrass.

Currently, funding for RTP is provided by taxes on fuel paid into the Highway Trust Fund by users of off-highway recreational vehicles. RTP projects consist of construction, maintenance and restoration of trails and trail related facilities as well as the acquisition of easements or property for trails. Although each state manages its own program, 30% of RTP funds must be spent on non-motorized projects like equestrian trails, 30% on motorized, and 40% percent on multiuse projects. RTP is one of the few sources for federal funding of trail projects that are not on federal land available to equestrians. The program has been a great resource for equestrians to fund projects in their state and local parks.

The AHC, in conjunction with a broad coalition of recreational trail users, is requesting Congress re-authorize the RTP program in its current form in the next highway bill as a separate distinct program with dedicated funding. The AHC urges its member organizations and their membership to contact Congress and voice support for this program and let them know this program is important to the horse community.

About Your Newsletter

Back Country Horsemen of Montana News is published three times a year by BCH of MT, PO Box 4864, Butte, MT 59701.

Publication dates are June 1, October 1, February 1. Deadline for submission of advertising and articles is the 10th of the preceding month (May 10, September 10, January 10).

The newsletter has three main emphasis areas: (1) issues (2) chapter activities/volunteer projects (3) light material (i.e. Humor, history, etc.). Please submit a copy that is typewritten, legible handwritten copy or you can submit copy via e-mail. Photos should be prints (no negatives or proofs) or digital photos attached to e-mails. Black & white or color is acceptable.

Submit articles, photos, and advertising to Linda Brewer, 2167 N 4th Rd., Huntley, MT 59037. Phone: (406) 698-5880 e-mail: lbrewer@tctwest.net



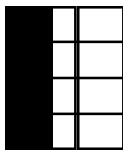
BCH Chapters are once again responsible for submitting articles for publication in this newsletter. Chapter divisions and deadline date for articles is as follows:

May 10/13	Beartooth, Bitterroot, Cabinet
September 10/13	CMR, East Slope, Kootenai
January 10/12	Flathead, Gallatin, Hi-Line
May 10/12	Judith Basin, Last Chance, Mile High
September 10/12	Mission Valley, Missoula, Selway/Pintler
January 10/13	Three Rivers, Upper Clark Fork, Wild Horse Plains

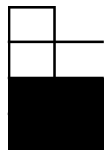
BCH of MT Contacts

- Chairman** John Chepulis
(406) 322-4823
bonnietirejohn@aol.com
- Vice-Chairman** Mark Himmel
(406) 771-0809
markhimmel@bridgemail.com
- Treasurer** Rich Fitzpatrick
(406) 279-3232
richfitz@3rivers.net
- Secretary** Nancy Pollman
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circlemr@cybernet1.com
- (Alternate) Ken Ausk
(406) 892-4673
khaos1@centurytel.net
- State Newsletter Editor**
Linda Brewer
(406) 698-5880
lbrewer@tctwest.net

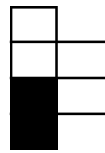
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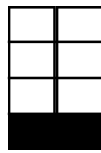
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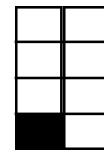
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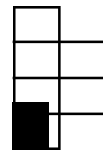
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Submissions can be received from individuals, chapters, or directly from the advertisers.

A 25% commission will be paid to individuals or chapters.

Cost By Number of Insertions

	<u>Once</u>	<u>Twice</u>	<u>Three Times</u>
Full page	\$100	\$200	\$200
1/2 page	\$ 75	\$150	\$150
1/4 page	\$ 40	\$ 80	\$ 80
1/8 page	\$ 25	\$ 50	\$ 50

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**East Slope
307 N Main
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**Flathead
PO Box 1192
Columbia Falls, MT 59912**

**Gallatin Valley
PO Box 3232
Bozeman, MT 59772**

**Hi-Line
PO Box 1379
Cut Bank, MT 59427**

**Judith Basin
PO Box 93
Lewistown, MT 59457**

**Kootenai Wilderness
437 Sherman Dr
Eureka, MT 59917**

**Last Chance
PO Box 4008
Helena, MT 59601**

**Mile High
PO Box 4434
Butte, MT 59702**

**Mission Valley
PO Box 604
Ronan, MT 59864**

**Missoula
PO Box 2121
Missoula, MT 59806**

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

**Three Rivers
PO Box 251
Dillon, MT 59725**

**Upper Clark Fork
PO Box 725
Deer Lodge, MT 59722**

**Wild Horse Plains
PO Box 398
Plains, MT 59859**

If you would like to join, please contact a chapter in your area.