



Back Country Horsemen of Montana

“News”

October 2008

Inside

Military Encounters	4
BCH reps attend listening session	6
Trail closure sends shock waves	7
Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act	8
What is a mule made of?	9
Featured Place to Ride	10
Choose the right hay	11
Right to Ride Protection	12
Firearms, bears & bear spray	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

Chairman's Message

As close as we are to a major election, the outcome of which being certain to affect the interests of Back Country Horsemen, it is extremely difficult for a lame duck Butte politician such as myself to not express numerous opinions, predictions, and political sentiments. But out of respect for the diverse spectrum of thought and word held by our membership and always witnessed at a typical BCH State Board meeting, I will bite my lip and twist the top off another Moose Drool. And let the best man or woman win.

On the Federal front, however, I would like to say this about that. In a recent letter from Abigail Kimbell, Chief of the USFS to all USFS partners including BCHM, she outlined the devastating budget effects of fire suppression for two major California events resulting in the total depletion of the \$1.18 billion 2008 FY allocation. An addi-



tional emergency allocation of \$332 million received late last year has also been expended in fire suppression.

In past years the FS has used “Transfer Authority” to help cover excessive overruns, but in FY 2008 they were unable to tap into the usual trust funds because they too were depleted. This in turn has forced the agency to “reach deep into other accounts” in order to continue fire suppression.

I'm sure you know where this is going. This action casts a wide net over other important USFS ac-

Chairman, continued on Page 2

Chairman, continued from page 1

tivities, from canceling contract awards and grants made to stakeholder groups, researchers, and universities, to delaying data collection, project analyses, and targeted plans for next year, and to discontinuing construction and natural resource improvement projects that include watershed and habitat improvement, forest health, and evaluation of oil, gas, and other energy requests. And of course there is the trail maintenance activity which is always in the collective forefront of the minds of BCHM.

If it were up to me the USFS would be fully funded to do all of its important mandated tasks for the proper management of our precious public lands. Fire suppression would be funded separately under some mega federal account that would cover fires, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, killer bees, and all other natural disasters. But that's not likely to happen soon, so for now we should try to honor Chief Kimbell's request which is to "persevere with them through these challenging times" as partners in a highly valued relationship. The work we do as volunteers becomes more important and more valuable with each passing year.

On a lighter note, I just got back from my first trip to Alaska. Sixteen days. Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula, Seward, Denali, Fairbanks, past the Wrangell, Chugach, and Alaska Ranges. Floated the Kenai River and walked on Matanuska Glacier. Great places. Mt. McKinley at 20,000' is hard to fathom, even while looking straight at it.

Saw lots of animals, griz, dahl sheep, moose, caribou, eagles, salmon, and sled dogs. Ate grilled salmon, whale, grayling, birch syrup, dried salmon, fresh killed moose, trout, and did I mention salmon? We saw the sun a couple of times when the rain stopped and all the locals got real excited. They like beer so we got along just fine.

It was moose season while we were there and it

seemed like most of Anchorage and Fairbanks was out trying to kill one. There are gravel pits everywhere, something to do with the permafrost heaving up the highways. So the gravel pits become moose hunting camps. Trucks, campers, and four wheelers everywhere. Some hunter got shot in the butt while we were there. Lucky for him the bullet passed right through.

Hey, if your butt is big enough to be mistaken for a moose you need to go on a serious salmon diet!

The incident brought forth an editorial in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner entitled "Close Company" which pointed out the cruel irony of hunting in parts of Alaska. While the state is huge, much of it (arctic and sub arctic) does not support large herds of wildlife. Much of the productive habitat falls within Federal Parks and Native corporation lands and can be inaccessible to most hunters. With few roads the access isn't easy, rivers are too low this time of year for motor boats, and the dwarf birch thickets and bogs slow the hunting pace to a mere crawl. Time and gas expense also concentrates hunters to the closest areas.

I couldn't see any place to do horse hunting as we know it and feeding a half dozen equines up there would be beyond most of our budgets. So I came away being pretty happy I was coming back to Montana in time for elk season, where I can see through the timber, picket my horse on a big grassy hillside, and not have to worry about gettin' shot in the keister.

Good luck hunting and we'll see ya out on the trail.

Charlie



Hunter Alert

Be aware that Certified Weed Seed Free Forage is required on public lands and recommended for all private lands in Montana.

Start feeding Certified Forage at least three days before you travel with your stock. Use Certified Forage to prevent the spread of noxious weeds.



Protect Montana



For more information visit: www.agr.mt.gov

The Military Encounters a “Lost Art” in Montana

By: Merlyn Huso and Rich Fitzpatrick,
East Slope Back Country Horsemen

The East Slope Back Country Horsemen (ESBCH) recently had the enlivening opportunity to provide instructional horse and mule packing training to a military team destined for service in Afghanistan.

The Special Forces unit, traveling from West Virginia, desired to expand its capabilities to access remote areas that made vehicular practical. They had previously trained in SCUBA and aerial descent methods from as high as 35,000 ft, as well as other disciplines, and now needed to obtain knowledge of stock use, a practice that continues today on the rugged, single track trails of the mountainous area bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The team consisted of intelligent, dedicated young men possessing unique strengths, obtained either militarily or in civilian life, necessary to their mission. The rule within the team provided that when confrontations occurred, a deferral was made to the individual having the best background on the issue to assist resolution, regardless of military rank. The unit worked diligently and supportively to fulfill its training requirement and solidify the cohesion of the team. There was no question that a mutual admiration had also begun to develop between the Special Forces team and the members of ESBCH who had also developed a team approach to accomplish the training requirements.

The training began with an introduction to



Learning to pack some of their gear and armaments of their gear and armamaments

use im-



Receiving more packing instructions

the livestock being used for the session. Safety was paramount for these individuals that had no or limited experience with stock. Still, the types of encounters that could possibly occur to this group would create challenges in preparedness and rapid access to their equipment. Limited information was available about the livestock being used at their eventual destination although it was thought to be a combination of stock transported from the U.S. and the thin, hardy, native stock used by tribesmen of the area. The training included methods of restraining stock and providing for their care, feeding and health.

Pack equipment demonstrated included both Decker and Sawbuck type pack methods with the awareness that other types may be encountered. Familiarity with these types would prepare them to adapt and use the equipment that would be provided. Slinging

loads varied from pack bag

applications to manted loads or simply using either the basket hitch or barrel hitch to mount their individual packs along with their armaments. Again, challenges occurring stability of the load, but enabling rapid access should the need arise. They needed an ability to make adjustments where necessary to accommodate their cargo, whether it would be their own personal equipment, supporting firearms or even light artillery applications. Weight could become an issue.

A trial run with loaded stock up the south fork trail along Swift Dam Reservoir provided the

Military continued from page 4

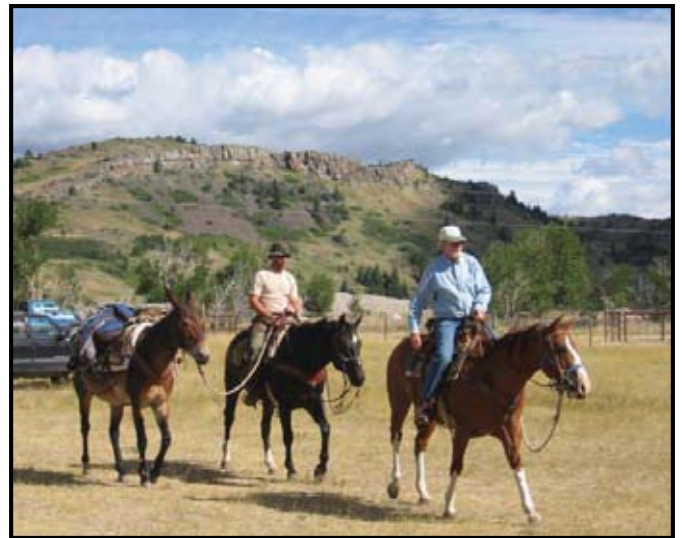
assurance that with a little time and more experience the team could assemble, load and transport their cargo and themselves to accomplish their mission.

As the training progressed and the personality of the individuals began to be displayed it became apparent that this was a proficient military team, imminently qualified to fulfill whatever mission assigned and certainly qualified to wear the green berets designating their experience. Too, they learned of Montana and its men of the mountains who willingly shared their time and experience necessary to enable them to carry out their missions. They also got a little spoiled, being fed well using traditional dutch oven methods.

As Saturday evening approached it became apparent that it was time to say our goodbyes to these fine young men that we had been teaching our packing skills. In turn, they too had provided us with substantial instruction on what it means to honorably serve one's country. We presented each of them with a Back Country Horsemen of Montana tee shirt. Proudly we received a framed certificate and a commemorative green beret for our extended efforts. As we said our goodbyes to these special soldiers and new friends a few misty eyes were evident, reflecting the honor of their trust bestowed on us. Perhaps we'll never know what the results of their Montana experience will bring, but just maybe, some of them will be back, as they stated, and we'll meet them on the trail once again. We wish them well and God's speed.



Bob Facklam with some of the team members leaving the parking lot



Merlyn Huso with a team member offering instruction on leading a pack animal



ESBCH President, Ronald Ries receiving the awards presented to the chapter



Bob Hermance offers suggestions on holding the reins

BCHM License Proposal

Submitted by John Chepulis
BCHM Vice Chairman

The Board of Directors of the Montana Back Country Horsemen are looking into the possibility of having a Back Country Horsemen of Montana license plate. If you would like to help, we are looking for artwork to use on a possible license plate.

The artwork will be reviewed by the committee and presented to the directors at the December Board Meeting. If they decide to proceed with the project, it will be decided on at the State Convention by the membership.

Please submit your artwork to one of the following committee members:

John Chepulis
2 Dovetail Ln
Columbus, MT 59019
322-4823
bonnietirejohn@hughes.net

Paul Roccoforte
PO Box 114
Red Lodge, MT 59068
446-2605
roccoforte@msn.com

Kathy Hundley
3448 Wright Way
Darby, MT 59829
821-0921
montanakath@yahoo.com

Rich Fitzpatrick
PO Box 126
Valier, MT 59486
279-3232
richfitz@3rivers.net

All artwork submitted will not be returned. If your artwork is selected, it will become the property of Back Country Horsemen of Montana.

You can go to <http://www.doj.mt.gov/driving/licenseplates.asp#sponsoredplates> for examples of existing license plates.

BCH Reps attend Listening Session

Submitted by: Charlie O'Leary

A USFS sponsored listening session on the National Trail Classification System was held in Missoula in early October. The event was open to various trail users including hikers, cyclists, horsemen and motorized, quiet use and conservation advocates. Those in attendance for Back Country Horsemen were BCHA Chairman, Mike Reedy (WA), BCHA Vice Chairman, Terry Morrison (UT), Wilderness Consultant, Dennis Daily (WY), Montana National Board Director, Ken Ausk and Montana Chairman, Charlie O'Leary.

The presentations and field sessions covered trail fundamentals and trail management objective. The key presenters were Jamie Schmidt (Chugach NF), Trails Program Lead and National Trails Information Coordinator and Jonathan Kempff (Gallatin NF) Forest Engineer.

Follow-up information will be delivered to the State Board of Directors Meeting in December.



L to R: Kempff, Dailey, Ausk, Bob Hoverson (S), Morrison, O'Leary and Reedy on the Rattlesnake Trail



Attendees give trail classification comments to Jonathan Kempff

Trail closure sends shock waves to CRBCH members

Submitted by: Mark Himmel
Charlie Russell Chapter

The closing of a trail for horse use was enough to send shock waves through our club, why? For what reason did the members ask? The biologist answer was simple; the stream was also home to West Slope Cutthroat Trout and with seven crossings to the mile the risk was too great. If it had been any other trail we might have accepted the outcome, but this was also our largest trailhead capable of accommodating many trailers. The Forest Service biologists were aware of our concerns and willing to work with our club to mitigate the problems. Stream sedimentation, rock weirs, and armoring approaches were something we hadn't done before, but we had little choice. After a year in the planning and meetings with engineers and rangers, a plan was developed and a date was set to begin.



At first we installed rock weirs to help influence stream flow. As kids we all built dams across streams. This was different, by making a U shape pointing up stream with higher rock (actually boulders) on the outside and smaller rock in the middle, the stream flow returned to the middle where it belonged. Armoring the approaches was a little easier. Flat rock was laid where the trail entered the stream; smaller rock was placed in the middle of the stream making a solid rock crossing. This prevented the horses from disturbing the bottom and creating silt that would harm trout eggs in the stream. Stepping out of the stream

and onto the bank required installing steps with gravel behind them to help prevent dirt from entering the stream. With 12 of 36 crossings completed and 7 tons of gravel hauled I guess we are looking at a multi-year project. This project enabled our members to work directly with the Forest Service, biologists and once again play in the stream. There was a lot of hard but fulfilling work.

Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2008 Reported

The following is a memorandum issued by the American Horse Council that was dated September 24, 2008. A copy was submitted by Chuck Miller.

Yesterday, the House Judiciary Committee approved the Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2008 (H.R.6598). The bill was introduced in July by Representative John Conyers (D-MI). Mr. Conyers is chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

There were a number of amendments offered during the Committee's consideration of the bill, but only one was adopted. Under the legislation, the Attorney General would take custody of any horses seized and provide for their placement or disposition. The amendment adopted was offered by Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and would require that the Attorney General consult with the Secretary of Agriculture regarding the disposition of any such horses.

Mr. Goodlatte also indicated during the markup that the House Agriculture Committee had requested sequential referral of the bill since it dealt with the slaughter of livestock, an activity generally under the jurisdiction of the Agriculture Committee. It will be up to the House Parliamentarian to decide if the legislation is also within the jurisdiction of the Agriculture Committee. If it is, the bill will go to that committee for consideration. If not, it will be available to be placed on the House calendar for a vote by the full House.

The bill would criminalize the possession, transport, sale, deliver, or receiving in interstate or foreign commerce of a horse or horse meat with the intent that it be used for human consumption. It would apply to the transport and sale of horses for slaughter in the U.S. or into a foreign country.

Penalties would include fines and/or one year imprisonment for a first offense or one involving five or fewer horses. Offenses involving more than five horses or repeat offenders would face increased fines and/or up to three years imprisonment.

If you have questions, please contact the AHC at 202-296-4031 or AHC@horsecouncil.org. The Web address is 222.horsecouncil.org.

You can also read your newsletter on-line at www.bchmt.org.

Tips for hunting on horseback

By: Steve Thompson

Published November 7, 2007

If you love to hunt and you have your own horse, you might consider hunting on horseback this season. It can be an exhilarating experience, and it's certainly easier on the legs if you're going to be traveling a great distance in search of the perfect trophy. When hunting on horseback, however, there are additional safety precautions that must be observed, both for your safety and that of your mount.

Don't Take an Untested Horse

It is never a good idea to assume that, just because your horse doesn't spook at flying insects or strangely shaped plants, he won't spook at gunfire. Loud, sudden noises are terrifying for most animals, but especially horses, so make sure to shoot off of him before you go hunting on horseback. If you haven't done this before, have a trusted and experienced horse trainer do it for you---preferably several times.

Build Stamina

You might not be walking ten miles over uneven terrain, but your horse certainly will. Before you go hunting on horseback, spend at least two months building stamina with endurance exercises. Work your horse in a field for long stretches at a time, and remember that trotting is more effective than any other gait. You should also make sure he's been introduced to the various aspects of wild-life, such as tall grass and thickets.

Find a Water Source

You can't carry a sufficient supply of water when you go hunting on horseback, so find out where the water sources will be on your hunting trip. Your horse should be watered every two to three hours, on average, and should never go more than four hours without a drink. If you'll be spending the night in the country, you'll need to bring grain, as well, so his gastrointestinal system isn't upset by going off his feed.

Shoot from the Ground

It might look cool when actors in movies shoot coyotes from the backs of their horses, but this isn't something you should attempt. Even if you've had someone shoot

Tips continued on page 9

Tips continued from page 8

off your horse before, you can't guarantee that something else---such as your target---won't set him off. Before you go hunting on horseback, practice dismounting slowly and quietly so you'll be able to do this in the field.

Keep Your Gun on Safety

How you hold your gun while hunting on horseback isn't quite as important as whether or not the safety is engaged. Shooting your own horse out from underneath you would be a terribly traumatic experience, so don't give yourself the opportunity. Be aware of the position of your gun no matter where you are, and don't take the safety off until you've dismounted and are ready to aim.

Bring a Hoof Pick

When hunting on horseback, it is safe to assume that you'll be crossing some fairly rocky terrain. Bring a hoof pick with you to clean out your horse's hooves every time you dismount. This will decrease the chances of your horse suffering from a bruised frog, and will clear out any loose stones or gravel that might have gotten wedged near the shoe. It is also a good idea to bring fly spray to keep the insects off your horse's coat.



What is a mule made of?

By: Theresa A. Fuess, PhD
Information Specialist
University of Illinois
College of Veterinary Medicine

A mule is a cross between a mare (a female horse) and a jackass (a male donkey). A hinny is a cross between a jennet (a female donkey) and a stallion (a male horse). Hinnies are less common than mules because jennets and stallions have a lower conception rate than mares and jackasses. In general, hinnies tend to be smaller and more horse-like than mules, but the similarities between hinnies and mules far out number the differences. A mule and a hinny can only be distinguished by parentage, not by appearances. Hinnies and mules have the same sexual characteristics and drive as their parents but they are sterile due to an uneven number of chromosomes. Like horses, male mules should always be gelded.

Mules draw different anatomic, physiologic, and temperamental characteristics from each of their parents. A mule resembles a horse in its height, the length and shape of its neck, and the length of its coat and tail bone. It resembles a donkey in its short thick head, long ears, short mane, coarse coat texture, thin limbs, and small hooves. The hair on the first half of the tail is short like a donkey's and it is long on the second half, but not as long as a horse's. Mules come in all horse colors, including leopard, appaloosa, and pinto, but their belly hair is usually lighter and finer like a donkey's. Mules can bray like donkeys or whinny like horses.

A mule's foot is more elastic, upright, and boxlike than a horse's. A healthy mule foot on a horse would appear to be a very contracted foot. A mule's hoof is more supple and less likely to chop than a horse's. Some mule hooves grow continuously, without wearing down or chipping, which can be crippling if not trimmed.

Mules require the same vaccinations and parasite control as horses. Regular dental care, as well as hoof care, is needed to maintain health and soundness.

The difference between horses and mules is in their care and feeding. The most common problem is overfeeding. Mules need less protein than horses and show ill side effects if fed too much. Grass hay with a small ration of complete vitamin and mineral feed is the best diet. Mules are less likely than horses to over-consume water when overheated but they can, so they should be cooled down like a horse.

Mules are very hardy animals. They can withstand hardship and severe conditions, dry climate, heat, and irregular meals. Mules usually won't overeat or thrash around when tangled up or in cramped quarters. They are typically resistant to most problems encountered in horses, such as wounds, chronic lameness, infectious diseases, and digestive disorders. However, it is myth that mules will not founder or colic, even though they are less susceptible than horses.

Mules are more susceptible than horses to habronemiasis (a parasitic skin infection known as Jack sores) and to lungworms. They can have heavy lungworm infestations without showing any symptoms and can be silent carriers of the parasite. Mules pastured with horses should be tested and treated for lungworm regularly.

Mule continued on page 13

Featured Place to Ride

Article and photos by Charlie O'Leary



Situated conveniently for several BCH chapters is a nice day ride or overnight camping destination in the Tobacco Root Mountains. Hollowtop Lake and its sister lakes Deep and Skytop are a short ride in from a trail head west of Pony, MT. Pony is south of I-90 between Three Forks and Ennis and is tucked up against the mountains just west of Harrison.

There are numerous places to camp with horses away from the lakes with good grass and plenty of firewood. The scenery is great and all three lakes can be fished for rainbow trout. For the more adventurous mountain climbers you can climb three peaks over 10,000 feet in one day. Start with Hollowtop by hiking past Skytop Lake. This is rugged and steep and is a several thousand foot non-technical climb, but well

worth it when you hit the "big hollow" near the apex. On top you can sign the register and enjoy a spectacular view before continuing on to Mt. Jefferson.

This part is a relatively easy hike. You descend about 500 feet and then re-climb it for a whole new view. The last leg is similar, a short descent and back up to the elongated top of Horse Mountain. On your way back to camp you can bound through long scree fields or glissade down a few snowbanks. If you're lucky you will come across some well hidden water falls on one of the tributaries to Hollowtop Lake.

For an artist's view of this area search the web for acclaimed Montana Artist Larry Zabel's print "Trails of the Tobacco Roots". You'll see exactly the country I'm talking about.



Choose the right hay for your horses

By: Dennis Cash

MSU Extension Forage Specialist, Bozeman

Reprint from: Yellowstone County News

October 26, 2007

You invest a lot of care and appreciation on your horses, so it is wise to spend some time considering their primary diet — forages.

The horse evolved over time to be efficient as a grazing animal thriving on forages. As we adapted the horse for colder climates, the horse was well-suited to thrive on hay and other conserved forages. Currently in Montana, we have many pleasure horses on small acreages that subsist on hay 365 days a year, and their only involvement with “pasture” is a place to exercise.

What are the principles of feeding hay to horses? Compared to other non-ruminant animals, the horse has a relatively small stomach, normal-sized small intestine and a large hind gut. This digestive arrangement makes the horse better suited to grazing continuously than to having one or two large meals a day. Entire textbooks are written on this topic, but the basics are:

- ◆ Hay and other roughages provide nutrients and satiety for your horse.
- ◆ On average, a horse must consume about two percent of its bodyweight per day.
- ◆ Different ages, classes and workloads of horses require different levels of nutrients from the hay.
- ◆ All hay is not the same.

How should you choose hay? The nutrient needs for your horse can be met in a number of ways. For example, if you have late-

maturity grass hay no matter if it is timothy, orchard grass, or brome, it will be deficient in protein. You can supply protein and energy in the form of concentrate, which can be grain or a processed feed.

Problems with this diet include low forage intake — the late maturity grass hay is consumed at a low level, and horses may develop colic or other disorders from consuming high levels of high-starch grains.

At the other extreme, full access to early bloom alfalfa hay can lead to weight problems in lightly used pleasure horses, due to the high intake potential of the alfalfa.

In both of these examples, it may be difficult to meet the horses’ daily nutrient demands consistently, and behavioral problems associated with boredom can occur. The compromise for most U.S. horses is a good quality grass-alfalfa mix hay.

An inexpensive hay analysis will tell you the level of crude protein, total digestible nutrients, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and potassium in the hay. Some other characteristics to consider when you view hay are color (horses are colorblind, but bright green hay usually indicates proper curing conditions without nutrient loss), leafiness (particularly of alfalfa — you need to see intact leaves not leaf fragments or dust), and absence of foreign material (mold, dust, weeds, rocks, dirt, wire, rodents, etc.).

Get to know your hay producer and stick with a good one. Most horse hay in Montana is sold as small square bales (60-75 pounds), and many commercial producers provide a hay test and bale weights. Hay in small rectangular bales sells more per ton than large bale packages, because the hay producer goes through the effort of handling, stacking, covering (many do), hauling and dealing with small lots of hay and many diverse customers. Good hay buyer-seller relationships will provide trust, respect, prompt payments and consistent hay supplies. Once the hay is home, place it under a shed or tarp it to preserve its quality.

Horse owners also ask whether first or second-cut hay is better. There is more variation within a cutting than between cuttings. First-cut hay is often discriminated against for several reasons — rain damage or rain delays make hay harvest occur at advanced maturity, and there may be more weeds present. One problem with late first-cut mixed hays in Montana is course steminess of both alfalfa and grasses, and reduced intake of the grass. Second-cutting hay can generally be put up without rain delays. However, overly-mature second-cut hay can still be less palatable and nutritious. The best bet is to view the hay, see its condition and ask for a hay analysis.

Federal and state forests and

Hay continued from page 11

trailheads in Montana now require that "Certified Noxious Weed Seed-Free Forages" be hauled and fed to back country horses. This is an excellent weed prevention program to reduce the spread of noxious weeds in Montana. The Montana program consists of voluntary field inspection prior to hay harvest to assure that standing hay is free of noxious weeds. For many small acreage landowners, buying certified noxious weed seed free forage is a good idea to prevent introducing knapweed, spurge and other weeds into your place.

Why We Need Right to Ride Protection

Reprint: BCH of MT website/BCH of America

When Senator Hubert Humphrey introduced the first wilderness bill in 1956, he assured the American public that "existing uses and privileges are respected in this bill," "this bill will not interfere with, but will perpetuate, the present multiple-purpose administration of these national forest areas." Provisions were made in the law to protect uses not normally considered to be 'wilderness uses' such as grazing, airfields, and motor boats where these uses were already established. Use of pack and saddle stock was a dominant means of access, and it was beyond anyone's comprehension that it would someday be crowded out by increased backpacking or regulated out to provide opportunities for a minority of foot travelers who simply prefer not to share the areas with recreational stock users. We believe 'Right to Ride' legislation is necessary and timely to correct the nationwide trend of federal land managers and federal agencies unnecessarily limiting equestrian access to public lands. We are in the process of cataloging a more comprehensive list of examples of problems we are experiencing, however, we have included a few below to illustrate our point:

-- USDA's National Trail Classification System: this proposed federal rule proposes to change the current three category classification system for NFS trails that evolved over, and has been time tested for, nearly a hundred years. The proposed revision views trails in an entirely different manner -- as a recreational facility rather than a means of transportation-- which will

result in traditional stock users being denied the ability to access huge areas of our National Forest that have historically been available to them. Based on the new classification scheme and erroneous wilderness management principles that assert that wilderness should be managed to provide recreation opportunities only at the primitive end of the spectrum, we expect that much of the wilderness trail system will be identified for minimal management not designed or actively managed for equestrians. As a result, we will be locked out of these areas. This appears to be an accommodation for the anti-stock element that selfishly demand that any other users who they don't like around, such as equestrians, be excluded. While generalized allegations have been made that equestrians damage the environment wherever they go, these blanket allegations have never been justified. These restrictions simply have no basis in any actual safety or environmental need and simply come down to one user group's aesthetic preferences.

-- Ansel Adams, John Muir and Dinkey Lakes Wildernesses; Inyo and Sierra National Forests, California: In a draft of a management plan for the Ansel Adams, John Muir, Dinkey Lakes, and Monarch Wildernesses, Forest Service planners recognized that some users do not like to encounter recreational stock in wilderness. To address the concerns of this small minority, the agency proposed an opportunity class system which "would be allocated to offer the user a variety of wilderness experiences." Opportunity class A would provide a setting where **any** encounters with stock parties would exceed limits of acceptable change and Forest Plan standards; opportunity class B was nearly as restrictive, and together they comprised 85% of the total area. As a result of public outcry and the intervention of California legislators, the agency re-thought their management approach abandoning the opportunity class approach. It persisted, however, in favoring the backpacker segment through a subsequent document that downgraded management standards on much of the trail system. Nearly 60% (485,568 acres) of these wildernesses would be accessed by trails managed to a standard that would either not accommodate, or would not safely permit access with, pack and saddle stock (including a number of trails that cross major trans-Sierra passes).

-- The White River National Forest Travel Management Plan, Colorado: This plan will close horse stock use in areas of the WRNF. This is the largest NF in the U.S. and is located in Colorado. This proposal creates new areas where hikers will not run into any

Right continued on page 13

Right continued from page 12

stock (limiting current horse access). Some of the trails are proposed to be closed to horses even though they are very lightly used. The managers have not demonstrated the need (safety, maintenance, etc.) to warrant these proposed changes.

-- In the Sawtooth Wilderness of Idaho, Forest Service planners proposed to limit camping with recreational stock to the most heavily impacted portion of the area and to require them to pack feed for their animals (a provision that would severely limit the length of time stock users could stay in the wilderness). After an extensive effort, including inquiries from Idaho legislators, the restrictions were limited to the eastern half of the wilderness. On a field trip with a Back Country Horsemen representative, the measures were defended by reference to a survey conducted by college students from an eastern university who determined that many visitors preferred not to see stock in the wilderness, and recommendations of a Forest Service researcher who determined that it is more efficient to prevent damage to high areas than to rehabilitate them. The areas covered by the restrictions (the more scenic and attractive portion of the wilderness) had been accessed with, and grazed by, stock since the late 1800s, however, and managers acknowledged that stock use had not increased (and may actually have decreased) since the areas were designated as wilderness. No monitoring data documenting impact trends were provided to justify the measures implemented.

-- Managers of the Bridger Wilderness in Wyoming, have closed some of the more scenic and attractive destination areas to camping with recreational stock. These sites were popular before the wildernesses were designated, and some of the attractive locations even had agency provided toilets to accommodate the impacts. Removal of these facilities did not, however, remove the evidence of use. Recreational use, especially backpacking, has increased considerably since designation; however, stock use is the only segment that has been prohibited from camping in these premier areas.

-- On the Hoosier National Forest in Indiana, in an effort to attract stock users away from the wilderness, a task force recommended a reduction in wilderness horse trails from an estimated 110 miles to 35 miles even though the Dean Wilderness was created over a network of old horse trails and roads serving early homesteads and communities. Horseback riding was recognized as a legitimate use of forest lands, and horsemen were promised an expansion of the trail system outside wilderness. Eventually trail opportunities for

equestrians were created, however, even the 'sweat equity' donated by equestrian groups has not been enough to stop the recurring push to restrict and/or deny pack and saddle stock use even more. Prior to 1995, the Hoosier did not have a designated trail system so there were many miles of trails available for equestrians. Had the "right to ride" been in place those trails would still be available to ride today. The Hoosier National Forest now has a designated trail system that limits your riding experience to high user impact trails and severe ticketing if you ride off the trail to those scenic areas once available to riders. (For more information on trail management in the Hoosier National Forest see the 2007 forest plan revision: http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/project_docs/scoping/cvr_ltr_new%20trail%20plan.htm) 2/2007

Mules continued from page 9

Horses never forget but they usually forgive. Mules never forget and never forgive. Mules are always thinking, and they have a strong sense of self-preservation. Mule continued from page 9

They resent being hurt and when mistreated they become very evasive and uncooperative. While horses usually run from scary stimuli, mules are likely to attack. Mules kick with greater accuracy than horses, and they can kick in any direction and strike anything within their reach. However, a mule is neither vicious or stubborn but will respond as treated.

When well treated, mules are, in general, more sociable, gregarious, and less quarrelsome than horses. They readily bond and work well with people who treat them well. They also enjoy rolling in the dust and like to sun bathe on hot days.

**Charlie O'Leary has a new
e-mail address:
staghornranch@gmail.com**

Firearms, bears, & bear spray

By: Tom S. Smith, PhD

Bear Research Biologist
Plant & Wildlife Sciences Dept.
Brigham Young University

I've been studying bear-human conflict for the past 17 years, and have heard all sides of the 'firearms versus bear spray' debate among big game hunters. The issue is: If you're hunting and you encounter an aggressive bear—is it better to shoot it, or use bear spray to repel it?

Many die-hard hunters say they would never rely on bear spray to do the job of a gun. Others counter that a gun can possibly maim a bear, causing it to ferociously settle the score.

What position do bear biologists take in this debate? I can't speak for others, but after studying more than 600 Alaska bear attacks, I've learned:

- In 72 incidents of people using bear spray to defend themselves against aggressive bears in Alaska, 98% were uninjured, and those that were suffered only minor injuries.
- In 300 incidents where people carried and used firearms for protection against aggressive bears in Alaska, 40% were injured or killed, including 23 fatalities and 16 severely injured persons. Another 48 people suffered lesser injuries.

I frequently hear hunters say: "I'm

unwilling to let a bear within the range necessary for bear spray to be used." Unfortunately, a hunter generally doesn't get that choice.

In my research, hunters were generally unable to fire a shot before the bear slammed into them. Some hunters couldn't get the safety off, others short-stroked the bolt and jammed the cartridge, yet others, out of habit, tried to 'scope' the bear, losing critical seconds while failing to zero in.

With a can of bear spray on one's hip or pack strap, it is simply a matter of pointing and shooting. In areas of poor visibility I always have a can of spray in my hand. It is easily carried over a finger and isn't as clumsy as a firearm is in the field-ready position. All that is required is pointing the nozzle in the general direction and pushing a button. Accuracy is not nearly as critical as it is with a firearm. You can't 'wound' a bear with bear spray. It also eliminates problems with sticking bolt actions, jamming shells, and hard-to-find safety mechanisms.

One thing bear spray and a rifle have in common is that success does depend on practice and learning how to use bear spray for its optimal effects, including being able to adjust for weather and wind direction.

Why not carry a can of bear spray on your hip or pack strap? Unless you are bear hunting, why take on the complications and possible legal ramifications of killing a bear out of season or without a license, especially a grizzly, if it can be convinced to go somewhere else in a non-lethal manner?

My suggestion to my fellow hunters is to pack bear spray and keep it ready for those times when you simply can't bring a gun into service: while hiking, while butchering the meat, while packing it out; times when a gun simply isn't convenient to have in one's hands. Your family will thank you!

For more on hunting safely in bear country, visit FWP's at fwp.mt.gov. Click "Be Bear Aware." Hunters can also pick up a copy of "How to Hunt Safely in Grizzly Country" brochure at any FWP office.

Interesting horse facts

Courtesy: Internet

You've probably seen **horses do this strange thing** with their noses and wondered what it was all about. If you give your horse something different to eat, or if he's checking something out by smelling it, he will often raise his head and wrinkle his nose .

Well it's officially called the **Flehmen Response** and it allows odors to reach special odor sensing receptors further back in the horse's skull. The Flehmen Response is mostly displayed by stallions when they are checking a mare's urine to see if she's ready for breeding.



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) club activities/volunteer projects (3) light material (i.e. Humor, history, etc.). Please submit a copy that is type-written or legible handwritten copy is acceptable. Photos should be prints only (no negatives or proofs). Black & white or color is acceptable. Please do not cut or write directly on the photos.

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 10/08	Beartooth, Bitterroot, Cabinet
September 10/08	CMR, East Slope, Flathead
January 10/09	Gallatin, Hi-Line, Judith Basin
May 10/09	Last Chance, Mile High, Mission Valley
September 10/09	Missoula, Selway/Pintler, Three Rivers
January 10/10	Upper Clark Fork, Wild Horse Plans, Beartooth

BCH of MT Contacts

- Chairman** Charlie O’Leary
(406) 782-6504
staghornranch@gmail.com
- Vice-Chairman** John Chepulis
(406) 322-4823
bonnietirejohn@aol.com
- Treasurer** Mark Himmel
(406) 771-0809
markhimmel@att.net
- Secretary** Kathy Frazier
(406) 777-7269
TomKathy_frazier@msn.com
- National Directors**
- Chuck Miller
(406) 961-5453
circlemr@cybernet1.com
- Ken Ausk
(406) 892-4673
khaos1@centurytel.net
- (Alternate) Dave Crawford
(406) 675-4293
cbardiamond1@ronan.net
- State Newsletter Editor**
Linda Brewer
(406) 698-5880
lbrewer@tctwest.net

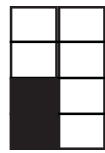
Advertising Rates



1/2 page vertical



1/2 page horizontal



1/4 page vertical



1/4 page horizontal



1/8 page horizontal



1/8 page vertical

Advertisers that choose to run their ad two times get the third time running free.

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

**BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN
OF MONTANA
P.O. BOX 4864
BUTTE, MT 59701**

**NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BILLINGS MT
PERMIT NO 652**

MONTANA BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN STATE CHAPTERS

**Beartooth
PO Box 614
Absarokee, MT 59001**

**Bitter Root
PO Box 1083
Hamilton, MT 59840**

**Cabinet
PO Box 949
Libby, MT 59923**

**Charlie Russell
PO Box 3563
Great Falls, MT 59404**

**East Slope
307 N Main
Conrad, MT 59425**

**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**

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

**Mile High
PO Box 286
Butte, MT 59703**

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

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

**Selway/Pintler Wilderness
2059 Walking Mule Ln
Corvallis, MT 59828**

**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.