

Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

PRESIDENT'S PEN

Hay all: I hope you read the Billings Gazette last Sunday June 5th. The Montana Untamed section has a critical, informative, historic, document compiled by Bret French. The first paragraph starts out

“Although a man of few words, Joe Penfold’s opinion helped craft outdoor recreation legislation in 1964 that has benefited numerous communities across Montana and the United States.”

The document goes on to say “So now 56 years later, the Land and Water Conservation Fund he helped create has made great news as the U. S. Senate passed legislation that would provide permanent full funding for the program. The bill now awaits approval in the house of Representatives.” Joe crafted the LWCF idea while working for President Eisenhower’s Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission. Joe latter prepared reports for President Kennedy and President Johnson. President Johnson was the one who signed off on the original legislation. End

My take is that we owe Joe Penfold a vote of thanks plus our current U.S. Senators a similar vote of thanks for finally taking action to make this a permanently funded law. For years Congress has borrowed much of this yearly incoming lease money from offshore oil and gas wells, that belonged to the LWCF, fund. The original fund was set up to provide up to 900 Million dollars each year for outdoor recreation, parks, campgrounds, roads, trails, fishing access sites, boating, shooting ranges, and the like.

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After 56 years this congress which, in my opinion, up to now has accomplished very little for its constituents, finally voted to fully fund this program.

One of Joe Penfold's sons is our friend and club member Mike Penfold. It seems Mike pursued much of his father's ambitions and followed along a good part of his father's pathways. Mike had a career as a US Forest Supervisor and our local Montana BLM Director.

Mike, now retired from the paying jobs, spends many hours working toward preserving our historic sites our wild and scenic rivers and landscapes.

It is a bit late to thank Joe for his work of 56 years ago, but we can still thank Mike for the present accomplishments.

John Simmons



Everyone Brings Something to the Table.

General Meeting ~ July 20th ~ Fishtail Park

Potluck at 6:30, meeting at 7 p.m.



July 11, 2020: Spread Creek Trail

East Rosebud

Dan Kellogg and I headed up trail with aspirations of catching the beautiful “Golden Trout” at Sylvan Lake. It is just a 6-mile ride in, but it is all uphill and a thrill for those that enjoy heights and narrow trails. Elevation rises from 6,230’ to 9,233’ – out total ascent for the day was 3,836’. Dan caught 4, landed 2. Me? Just a single bite – but what a great day!

Please send any submissions for the Newsletter to Robin Morris, junkerette@msn.com, by the 5th of each month. Thanks!

ISLAND LAKE ~ FINAL TRAIL CLEARING JUNE 20TH

Submitted by: Robin Morris

**June 11th, Face of the Mountain/
Meeteetse Spires:** Keith Breighton,
Randy & Nancy Thomsen, and Robin Morris
headed up Face of the Mountain to meet up
with Dale & Carol Olson and a representative
from the BLM to discuss improvements for the
Meeteetse Spires Cabin. They have a fancy
new vaulted potty – check it out!



June 20th, 2020: John Jenkins, Doug Woerner, Ray Lonstreth and I headed back to Island Lake, out of Dean to finish clearing Trail #37. This section of the trail was reconned a month ago - and I promised the guys a good project. They were not disappointed. We cut 31 trees, that ranged from small to very large. The weather was spot-on, and the company was fantastic. We made it to Island Lake, just after 1:00. Riding out we encountered three, very courteous, side-by-side OTVs on the 2 miles we share the trail. Another wonderful day in Nature's gym!



BBCH BOARD MEETING – MAY 14TH, 2020

Meeting called to order at 7:07pm at Fishtail Community Center

In attendance: John Simmons, Randy Thomsen, Nancy Thomsen, John Jenkins, John Chepulis, Mary Sybrant, Cathy Reck, and Jim Anderson.

Allie Wood, Director of Wilderness, Trails, Outfitting and Guiding Beartooth Ranger District, spoke to the Board concerning the following:

1. Volunteer Agreement – Agreement must be signed every year by BBCH representative and the Ranger. Trails to be cleared and dates need to be on the agreement. Dates may be changed as long as notice is given.
2. RTP Grants- Allie needs a signed Volunteer agreement or letter of intent, to apply for grants to show work will be done on those trails.
3. Trail Clearing Standards- Allie reviewed the standards that the Forest Service would like us to adhere to, which include: 8-foot-wide corridor, by 10 foot tall. Trees that are limbed cannot be touched by a person in the trail. Brush to be removed out of 8-foot corridor, as close to trees as possible. Leaners are a safety concern, if BBCH can't get them let Allie know, she will send a crew. Logs need to be moved off trail, 3 to 4 feet. Clean up needs improvement, but kept out of drains.

Trails included in this years Volunteer Agreement are the Main Stillwater, West Fork of the Stillwater, Island Lake, Trout Creek, Ernie Strum, and Face of the Mountain.

Cross Cut and Chain Saw Certifications are due but will be postponed until Fall because of COVID.

John Jenkins and John Chepulis will write COVID safety procedure to accompany the Volunteer Agreement.

April Board Meeting Minutes were read. Mary Sybrant moved to accept the Minutes. Randy Thomsen second. Motion passed.

Presidents report- BBCH received thank you cards from the food banks and community center that were donated to last month.

Treasurer's Report- Copy of report in Minutes. BBCH will be under budget this year due to COVID. License plate recertification will be completed in late April. Membership numbers are low this year. John Jenkins spoke with Brad Pollman for suggestions. John Chepulis moved to accept Treasurer's report. Jim Anderson second. Motion passed

BCHMT report- Meeting via video conference. \$5000 was added to the cost share fund for training, to pay for CPR and other certifications. Clarification was given by the Forest Service that chapters do not need a certified trainer to teach Defensive Horsemanship. BCHMT now has a trademark. State Board recommends eliminating non-paying members from email lists. Mark Himmel elected as National Representative, Brad Pollman elected as Alternate. Sherri Lionberger elected BCHMT President. Wade Murphy elected BCHMT Vice President. Matt Peterson elected BCHMT

Treasurer. Keni Hopkins elected BCHMT Secretary. Comment period on Ebikes will be open for 60 days. BCHMT will be sending a letter.

Issues- Discussions on repairing/maintenance on Lodge Pole road. Conditions of road are dangerous. John Chepulis moved for the club to pursue the reopening of the Lodge Pole road. Mary Sybrant second. Motion passed.

Education- Ken Coffin would like to address the membership as soon as another general meeting is scheduled.

Mary Sybrant gave a presentation on her research into an emergency satellite GPS messenger for the Chapter. John Chepulis moved to get a Mini In-Reach with the \$14.95 plan. Randy Thomsen second. Motion passed.

An Audit committee will meet in approximately 2 weeks.

Defensive Horsemanship training can be done online at the BCHMT website.

Meeteetse Spires/Grove Creek Cabin- John Simmons asked for ideas for corals at cabin. Board will recon and make plans to turn into BLM.

John Chepulis moved to adjourn meeting 10:18pm. Nancy Thomsen second. Motion passed.

BBCH BOARD MEETING – JUNE 4TH, 2020

Meeting was called to order by President John Simmons with 5 members in attendance (John Simmons, John Jenkins, John Chepulis, Mary Sybrant, Bonnie Chepulis).

No secretary's report.

TREASURER'S REPORT by John Jenkins – see attached report. Balance - \$25,709.86

Paper work for license plates has been completed & submitted.

Current membership list was handed out. At present our membership is down 40 to 45%.

John Chepulis moved & Bonnie Chepulis seconded that the treasurer's report be accepted as read. Motion passed.

UPDATE ON TRAIL PROJECTS by John Chepulis

Reviewed tentative schedule that was sent to membership. Due to COVID-19 it appears that there may be some cancellations (ABW packing trips).

- 1) June 6 Clear Ernie Strum trail. Wiener roast to follow.
- 2) June 11 Meeteetse Spires BLM Cabin – ride in to assess building horse corrals.
- 3) June 12 – 14 We had planned to clear the West Fork of the Stillwater starting at Initial Creek trailhead, but received word that this has already been cleared to Breakneck by FS. Instead we will do a campout at the mouth of Bear Canyon in the Pryors. We will hike to the Valley of the Shields & Pictograph Canyon. Horses are optional.
- 4) June 20 Finish clearing the Upper Loop of the Island Lake trail.
- 5) July 11 Tentative date for chainsaw certification. Trout Creek.

Discussion about the use of 2 – way radios.

John Simmons said that he would like us to consider a time for a clinic to be held as we were unable to conduct our Spring Clinic. Discussion took place.

AUDIT COMMITTEE has not met as of yet. John Jenkins will get info to them & they will meet before next board meeting.

E-Bike Issue John Simmons sent out a letter to the general membership reminding them of the need to send in comments to BLM (June 6), National Park Service & Fish & Wildlife (June 8) & the date for the Bureau of Reclamation a bit later. If a first letter is not sent, you are unable to submit a second.

John Simmons stated we had received a thank you letter from a private individual regarding our work on the Stillwater Trail. It was decided that it would be nice to have Robin include these thank yous that we received from the Food Bank donations we made, as well as this recent thank you in our newsletter.

A discussion regarding donations took place. John Chepulis moved & Mary Sybrant seconded that

BBCH donate \$1,000 to BCHMT Youth Camp. Motion passed.

DUES

John Jenkins presented a letter that he had written to be sent out to the membership as a reminder that our chapter dues need to be paid. The board felt it was well written & should be sent to the entire membership, whether they had paid their dues already or not.

A discussion regarding the Lodge Pole Road took place. John Simmons has been in touch with the County Commissioners by phone, as well as sending a letter requesting that the condition of this road be put on their agenda. Also has corresponded with FS & PLWA regarding this situation.

John Chepulis explained the FS Firearm Policy as it applies to individuals carrying a firearm while working as a volunteer on a FS work project.

Discussion regarding plans for the horse corrals at the BLM Meeteetse Cabin. Size 24 x 24 with divide down the middle, treated posts, are we expected to just provide labor or also materials.

We will plan a general meeting on June 15 at 7p.m. It will be held outdoors at Itch-Kep-Pe Park in Columbus. No potluck, bring your own chair & drink.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie Chepulis, acting Secretary

BBCH GENERAL MEETING – JUNE 15TH, 2020

Call to order at 7:10pm at Itch-Kep-Pe Park

John Chepulis moved not to read February general meeting minutes. Robin Morris second, motion passed.

Fiddler Ridge Restoration has been postponed until the BLM can refigure the road into the area.

Letters have been sent to parties involved with the Lodge Pole Road in hopes of calling attention to its condition. Some responses have been received.

Discussion on the new Gun Carry application for the Forest Service. John Chepulis has applications. Carrier must be approved by Forest Service to carry on work projects.

BBCH is waiting for confirmation from ABWF for packing trips.

BBCH PO Box 614, Absarokee, MT 59001

BBCH donated money to local Food Banks

BBCH also sent a money donation to the youth packing group put on by Greg Schatz of the FlatheadBCH.

The Board along with Dale Olson have traveled to the Meeteetse Spires Cabin in an effort to establish corals. A plan, along with a supply list will be sent to Jenny Alexander of the BLM, for consideration and scheduling plan.

Face of the Mountain trail has been cleared. The Forest Service will be notified of a mud bog. Keith Brighton worked hard on brush back of the trail.

Dale Olson has cleared Robinson to Ruby and spent the night in the new Meeteetse Spires cabin.

Forest Service has been advised there is a soft culvert out on the Main Stillwater trail, about 3 ¼ mile in on trail.

Treasurer's Report- Checking account balance is approximately \$25,700. Audit committee has all the information to start audit. Keith Brighton moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Robin Morris second, motion passed.

Thank you to the work crews. Island Lake trail is done, a crew will be going back to do the Upper loop on Saturday. Ernie Strum trail is done to the meadows. Face of the Mountain trail is done to the cabin. Pictures will be posted onto Facebook.

Initial Creek was done by Allie Wood and her crew. Stillwater County and the mine have been working on the road up to the campground. Graders have been seen on the road.

Chain Saw recertification will be on July 18th. Contact John Chepulis for recertification.

John Chepulis gave an overview on JHA (Job Hazard Analysis). Discussion on safety procedures and plans, equipment, Certifications, and PPE. Also plan review on COVID-19.

BBCH will be purchasing a In Reach mini. This is a GPS locator used in case of emergency.

ABWF books can still be purchased. Contact John Simmons.

Randy Thomsen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35. John Jenkins second, motion passed.

BBCH 2020 – WORK PROJECTS/SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Any changes or additions will be emailed to all members and updated in the Newsletter monthly.

July 23-27, Thursday-Monday Trail: W. Fork Stillwater Trail #90/Breakneck Meadows

- **Location:** West of Nye, Montana (Stillwater Mine/Absarokee area)—Beartooth District
- **Work:** A lot of Brushing (lopping/sawing brush growing over the trail; Sawing out trees across the trail as needed. Plus, tread work (widening and grading the trail)
- **Description:** We'll be hiking up the beautiful and reclusive West Stillwater Valley 8.5 easy miles along the W. Fork of the Stillwater River to Breakneck Meadows where we'll set up camp for four nights. Each day we'll be working within roughly 2-miles of camp. We'll be doing a lot of brushing and trail grading. There will be horse-packing support to carry in our heavy food, tools and camping equipment. Breakneck Meadows is a gorgeous destination!
- **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous. Hike in is moderate. **BBCH Horse Support.** **Elevation:** 7500'
- **Group size:** 10; this project takes place in Wilderness;
- **Meeting time & location:** 8:00 a.m. We will gather together at the Old Nye Picnic Area just before you get to the Stillwater Mine. Then we'll carpool/caravan to the Trailhead, which is a very rough road for passenger cars as it winds up and above the Mine to Initial Creek Campground and the W. Stillwater TH.

July 31–Aug 3, Friday-Monday (4 day) Trail: W. Fork Boulder River Trail #41. **High School only!**

- **Location:** Southwest of Big Timber/McLeod; SE of Livingston—Yellowstone Ranger District
- **Work:** Extensive brushing of lodgepole saplings obscuring the trail; Sawing out trees across the trail. Age appropriate work. This area burned a decade or so ago, and the lodgepoles came back with a vengeance!
- **Description:** This trip is for High School kids only! This is the fourth time the ABWF has successfully led a group of high school aged kids into the wilderness backcountry to engage in this type of service-learning work. Our group will be hiking about 6 miles before we set up camp in pretty meadows along the stunning West Boulder River for 3 nights. From camp we'll hike 2-miles or less each to where we'll do our work to make this trail much more passable. We'll also spend time in the evenings talking about conservation issues and the value of our public lands and wilderness. **BBCH Horse Support** to carry in our heavy food, tools and camping equipment.
- **Difficulty:** work is Moderate. Hike in is moderate **Horse Support:** YES **Elevation:** 6300' ft.
- **Group size:** 10; this project takes place in Wilderness
- **Meeting time & location:** 9:00 a.m. at the West Boulder Trailhead/Campground, which is at the end of the W. Boulder Road just past McLeod. Easy to Google Map.

Aug 19-26, (8-days) Trail: Fourmile/Meatrack Trails #22-23 w/ American Hiking Society

- **Location:** South of Big Timber, along the Main Boulder Road at Fourmile Creek. Yellowstone RD.

- **Work:** We will pull non-native hounds' tongue, construct water bars, build check dams and retaining walls out of stone and wood; and finish everything off by brushing the corridor. This is an all-around quite strenuous work project, as we will be working with stone, locally sourced logs, and standard trail tools (shovels, Pulaski's, picks, crosscut saws).
- **Description:** This is our annual project with the members of the American Hiking Society. Our trip starts at the Frosty Freeze in Big Timber, MT. From there we will carpool/caravan up the Main Boulder River to the Fourmile Trailhead. The first and last night of the trip, the crew will camp at the Fourmile Trailhead. On the morning of Day 2, we will hike in the 5 miles and establish a basecamp for the rest of the week. The Beartooth Backcountry Horsemen will pack in our heavy stuff—food, tools, tents, etc.—so volunteers only need to carry a day pack with their clothes and personal items. This is an American Hiking Society trip; you must be registered for through their website: <https://americanhiking.org/volunteer-vacation-trip/absaroka-beartooth-wilderness/>. The road down the Main Boulder River gets quite rough beyond 4-mile; most passenger vehicles can make it to the 4-Mile bridge, but it's slow going.
- **Difficulty:** The work is Strenuous. Hike in is moderate to fairly strenuous. **BBCH Horse Support** **Elevation:** 8000 ft.
- **Group size:** 11; this project takes place in Wilderness.
- **Meeting time & location:** Whether you are driving yourself or catching a ride from the airport, we will convene at 2:30 p.m. at the Frosty Freeze in Big Timber and drive to the trailhead together. **This one we need BBCH to pack us in on August 20th in the morning, and pack us out on August 25th, in the afternoon.**



YOUTH SUMMER PACKING CAMP

AUGUST 6-9

Thurs: Meet us for lunch at Noon at the Indian Meadows Trail Head near Lincoln, MT. Then, VIP guests from the USFS Northern Region Pack String will present a packing clinic followed by dinner and an evening fireside chat with dutch oven dessert.

Friday: Campers continue their packing education by loading up gear, tools, food, and tents on to stock before hiking into Fickler Meadows to set up camp in the Scapegoat Wilderness.

Saturday: Campers hike to Heart Lake to do a rehab project and learn principles of Leave No Trace and stock safety during this trail stewardship day.

Sunday: Campers pack up and return to the trail head by noon. A final lunch will be provided and parents are welcome to join in and hear about the group's adventures before heading home.

TO APPLY: FILL OUT THE YOUTH SUMMER CAMP APPLICATION AT WWW.BCHMT.ORG

Here is the direct to the application:

<http://www.bchmt.org/documents/youth/BCHMT%20Youth%20Summer%20Camp%20Application2020.pdf>

Thank you to these local businesses for their continued support!



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