

Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

PRESIDENT'S PEN

October 2020

My idea of summer horse care.

Here we are in October and many of us have been out and about with our horses, for



several months now. It seems normal in the Spring, that we make sure we worm and give spring shots for parasites, when our equine are coming off the winter feed. I usually wait until a month or so after the frosts are gone for the spring care. I worm during the summer also. In the fall I worm and inoculate again, just after the freezes start.

In the summer, we tend to think that the good weather, good grass, and the great outdoors are a cure all. So, many folks ride and ride. But my feelings are that we should not forget the importance of the worming and quality feed at that time also. If we want the high activity from our steeds, then and on into the Fall and / or Winter we must make sure our equine are able to have access to high-quality feed in the late summer also. Besides access to good grass and grain, we need to make sure parasites aren't robbing them of their energy. Above and beyond the fly's and internal worms we have concentrations of ticks in some areas of our nearby hills and valleys. Wormer paste will eliminate the ticks.

My experience of hunting in the fall using horses, I feel those animals need a lot of attention leading up to that time to keep them sound. Good feed and exercise are hard to beat. I have seen, at trail heads animals of all sizes and ages. There are always a few of these

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overweight and not ready for the event. Some are the other way, under trained and under fed and there is always some of the group that are stressed. All are being saddled and readied to travel to some high altitude they are not normally used to. At some high camp when we picket them out to graze in what appears to be good feed, many times that good-looking feed has already been culled through and rejected by the very animals that live there those we are hunting. Our equine, no doubt are stressed at night being tied to a highline for hours in some dark, spooky tree grove. I have been there when the moose, lions and bears come to visit. The moose and lions are very unnerving for the stock. The equine become very noisy and reactive, they won't hold still and that is when they leave you, if they can break loose.

A bear causes them to become very tense. I have seen horses move nothing but their head ever so slightly, following a bear in the bush. Any of these abnormal events cause stress and many equine do not seem to feed well at that time. Some won't drink from a creek regularly. This can add up to service animals becoming undependable and difficult to manage.

So all the more reason I go into the Fall with extra care and a good diet.

John Simmons

October General Meeting – October 19th – 7:00 p.m.

ZOOM MEETING

John Chepulis will set up a ZOOM meeting with all our members. There is an important issue for ***ALL to discuss about my motion*** to share our license plate income with the national and state treasuries. I asked for it to be tabled until the general meeting so everyone has an opportunity to speak up about the issue. BBCH has nearly \$30,000 in the bank.

WEST FORK STILLWATER TRAIL CREW PACK PROJECT

In our September Newsletter, I only included the first part of John Jenkin's article, now for the rest of the story....

On Thursday, July 23 we packed in a 9-member trail crew to Breakneck Meadows on the West Fork of the Stillwater. Most of us met at Initial Creek Campground the night before. The crew included Matt Anderson, Melissa Codner, Mary Sybrant, John Simmons, Dan Kellogg and yours truly. This was a fairly easy pack in as we had 8 pack stock. I brought 3 pack stock Dan 2, and Melissa, John and Mary 1 each. This was fairly easy packing as we had plenty of stock and only a couple of top loads. It does make for a long day, however, leaving from the campground about 1 mile from the trailhead. 18-mile total round trip. Fortunately, there was virtually no trail work to be done.



The trail crew headed by Ben Daily, the new project director for the Absarokee Beartooth Wilderness foundation, met in Nye at 8 AM and headed up to the Initial Creek Campground. John Simmons gave the crew a short history of the BBCH and its mission before they headed up the trail. After arriving at the meadows with the gear, we had a late lunch with the crew and headed back. They worked on trail maintenance from the meadows up the West Fork trail for about 2 miles.

The pack in was not without incident. A flat tire at the Initial Creek campground on a horse trailer in the morning was quickly changed. Three pack stock unfamiliar with one another were led by Matt. They took half a day and 5 or 6 breakaways before they got used to one another, and we got the order and pace right. But Matt mastered in the end. One riding



animal just about had enough on the way back and needed a rest, so a couple of riders walked a mile or so on the way back. I actually drove up a mile up to the W Fork Trailhead from the Initial Creek campground with my horse trailer to pick up a couple of stock. I wouldn't recommend it. I almost couldn't turn around. But I eventually did, with 8 cars parked in that small parking lot. Then Matt, Melissa, John and I are sitting around about to leave at 7 PM, and we noticed another flat tire that had to be changed. I think I left Billings at 630 Wednesday and made it home at 1030 Thursday night. A very long but good day.

We packed the crew out on Monday July 27th. Randy and

Nancy Thomsen, Mary Sybrant, Dan Kellogg, Bob Knutson, Ray Longstreth, Louise Jenkins helped. We got an early start, and had only 6 pack stock. Some of us went up a day or two early (Ray, Bob and Louise and I) and rode the trail partway and cooked out. Ray brought some awesome backstrap and grilled vegetables. He gets a standing invitation to any trailhead cookout from me. Likewise, to Bob for his morning cowboy coffee. He kept it coming and I like to drink a lot of coffee.

When we reached the meadows, the crew headed back to the trailhead. Bob has gaited horses. Boy do they move out! With less stock we had some pretty big top loads on the way out. One of those gave us a bit of a problem but we got it worked out within 2 miles. Par for the course. It did make me appreciate the trip in where we more or less through everything in panniers and rolled out. Did I mention another flat at Initial Cr? Mine this time.



West Boulder River Pack Project – cancelled at the last minute

The next pack project was scheduled to be the West Boulder. Pack in on July 31 and pack out on Monday Aug 3. Some of us planned to stay over the weekend and ride other trails since the pack in and out was a Friday to Monday and we were so far away. Bob Knutson and Ray Longstreth who were to help on this pack project. I spent much of that Thursday in contact with Ben Daily from the ABWF and with John Chepulis, from whom I was to borrow two additional pack animals. In the early afternoon Ben called me, and was concerned the project might be cancelled. Ray was already at the trailhead by this time. Ben was in contact with the USFS and Board of directors for the ABWF and finally me. It was late in the day, just before 6 PM that it was confirmed the project was cancelled ultimately due to the concern over potential Covid exposure. I reached the campground



about 11 PM with such a late start. And another flat on the way. Bob and his wife met us the next day. He had a flat too headed over. We did some rides, had great fellowship, but fairly poor fishing. At least poor fishing until Ray pulled out his worms. He called it his backup plan, but I call it a secret weapon. More of Bob's cowboy coffee and elk and venison sausage courtesy of Ray. My mules and John Chepulis' mules got the weekend off. The pictures are from the West Boulder Meadows.

This viral pandemic has wreaked havoc with our plans this summer. All the rest of the ABWF projects were cancelled, not just those with pack support. I'm sure next year will be different. Maybe fewer flats? Stay tuned.

John Jenkins

BBCH BOARD MEETING - JULY 2, 2020

Meeting called to order at 7:15pm at Simmons home outside around firepit.

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

John Chepulis moved to accept the May board meeting minutes. Randy Thomsen second, motion passed
Mary Sybrant moved to accept the June board meeting minutes. John Chepulis second, motion passed

Discussion on Red Lodge logging. Forest Service is now taking comments via website.

Board has received responses from emails sent about the condition of the Lodge Pole road. A meeting with the county commissioners should be accomplished this fall.

A supply list with plans was sent to BLM, Jenny Alexander, along with suggestions from board members, for the Meeteetse Spires cabin corals. Discussion on work plans.

Treasurer's Report- Report in Minutes. 6 more members have sent in dues. This is attributed to the recent letters sent by mail. Membership is down 50%. \$500 approved by board not yet sent to Billings Food Bank, only \$250 sent, the rest of the donation will be sent. Mary Sybrant moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Randy Thomsen second, motion passed.

An InReach Mini was purchased. A debit/credit card is necessary to subscribe for service. John Chepulis moved to get a debit card from Yellowstone Bank with a purchase limit of \$500. Bonnie Chepulis second, motion passed. Discussions on limits and who will have access to the card.

Activities- Most of the trail clearings have been completed.

July 18, will be Chain Saw recertification at Trout Creek trail.

July 23-27 ABW pack in to Breakneck meadow, West Fork of the Stillwater.

July 31-Aug 3 ABW pack in to Davis Creek, West Fork of the Boulder

Aug20-25 ABW pack in to 4-mile, Boulder

Discussion on certifications for chain saw for later in the year.

Discussion on Spring Clinic in the Fall. An invitation will be sent out to Membership for a Campout at the Breakneck Meadow pack in on July 23-27.

Audit Committee met and found 4 transaction that were not on the ledger. They were corrected and resolved.

Jess Peterson will be speaking at the General meeting on July 20th about the Crazy Mountain land exchange.

John Chepulis moved to adjourn the meeting at 9pm. John Jenkins second, motion passed

GENERAL BOARD MEETING – JULY 20TH, 2020

Call to order at 7:12pm at Fishtail Community Park

Minutes from the June General Meeting were read. John Jenkins moved to accept minutes, Marilyn Simmons second. Motion passed.

Treasurer's report- The balance in the checking account is \$25,425.53. The Club has gotten a debit card. Marilyn Simmons moved to accept the treasurer's report. Randy Thomsen second. Motion passed

Guest speaker was Jess Peterson, speaking about the Crazy Mountain Land Exchange/Trail Proposal. Proposal pamphlet filed in minutes.

Stillwater Weed Board is looking for bids on weed control in the Trout Creek/Bad Canyon area.

Activities- ABWF pack in on Thursday to Breakneck meadow, and pack out on Monday. Discussion on livestock, equipment and crew available. Volunteers will be needed to help pack ABWF into Meatrack in August.

In Reach GPS activation was postponed, there were questions about insurance and coverage for club members.

Meeting adjourned 8:40pm

BOARD/GENERAL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2020

DRAFT

Meeting called to order outside at the Simmons home at 7:10pm

Board members in attendance were John Simmons, Randy Thomsen, John Jenkins, Nancy Thomsen, Mary Sybrant, Bonnie Chepulis, and John Chepulis.

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes- John Chepulis moved to accept July 20, general meeting minutes without reading. Second Randy Thomsen. Motion passed. July 2, Board meeting minutes were read. John Chepulis moved to approve minutes as read. Mary Sybrant second. Motion passed.

BCHMT meeting was held via Zoom on September 12. The new Forest Service fire arms policy was discussed and reviewed. Jess Pederson did a presentation on the Crazy Mountain Land Swap. Discussions followed. Gallatin BCH and Beartooth BCH are to spearhead a recommendation for the BCHMT. BBCH state board members attended a presentation via Zoom with the Friends of the Crazy Mountains that was held August 25. John Simmons also read, at BBCH meeting, his personal letter to Mary Ericson of the Forest Service about the land swap, and their response.

A review of the BLM response to John Simmons' email to see about the progress of the Meeteetse Spires corral, that included the downsizing of posts.

In Reach GPS device – Randy Thomsen called Garmin and emailed BCHMT members for information on the insurance coverage for club members. The InReach does not offer insurance coverage for clubs. Workers Comp will cover emergency medical air evacuation if the injured is part of a work crew with the Forest Service. Medicare and Medicaid also cover air evacuation. In Reach will be activated in the Spring.

Treasurer's Report is in the minutes. Carol Olson moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Dale Olson second. Motion passed.

Activities- All ABW pack trips were cancelled after the trip to Break Neck Meadows due to Covid-19 positive test.

John Chepulis moved to one time pay for John Simmons/Dan Kellog/Sean Chepulis livestock for Coggins testing for Slough Creek, Yellowstone park FWP pack trip. John Jenkins second. Motion passed

Dale and Carol Olson, and John and Louise Jenkins, cleared a spur of the Line Creek trail.

Dale Olson had a presentation on what the Shoshone BCH is doing for public relations. They have t-shirts and hoodie sweatshirts with their club logo, a cat hole garden shovel with club information on the handle, and Shoshone newsletters. Dale Olson also described their efforts to write a book

about the trails in their area. John Chepulis, John Jenkins, and Wes Dingman volunteered to be on a committee to start a book of trails in the Beartooth area.

John Simmons moved that the chapter of the Beartooth Back Country Horsemen contribute 15% of each month's Special Montana license plate income to our National organization of Back Country Horsemen of America. Also we will contribute 10% of the same income each month to our Montana State Back Country Horsemen. We should do this unless for any reason our general funds, including checkbook, savings or Certificate of Deposits fall below the total of \$15,000.00. This will be calculated and paid monthly, after the receipt of the Montana State income payment.

John Chepulis moved to table the motion until the next meeting. John Jenkins second. Motion passed.

Discussion on allocation of donations to PLWA (Public Land/Water Access Association) and ABWF (Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Foundation).

Elections- Four seats on the board are coming up for election in November. John Chepulis and John Jenkins will head up a nomination committee.

John Jenkins will send a current membership list to Robin Morris for the newsletter. Only members current on dues will receive newsletter.

Next meeting will be a general meeting in Fishtail in October.

Meeting adjourned at 9pm



September 23, 2020: Phantom Creek

East Rosebud

I was joined by three friends from Montana, I met on the trail a couple of years ago. We spent two days riding from the East Rosebud. My girlfriend captured this picture of me and Beau, with the Fishtail Plateau in the background. From the Phantom Creek Trail Head, we rode over Froze to Death Plateau to enjoy lunch overlooking Mystic Lake. It's a great trail – and the views are magnificent. The elevation rises from 6,150' to 10,165' – our total ascent for the day was 4,175'. It is one of my favorite trails to ride. I would only recommend this trail for horses or mules that are “legged up.” For steeds less conditioned, there are many beautiful spots to stop before hitting the extreme climb.

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

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