

Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

PRESIDENT'S PEN

December 2020

Our Computer failed about two weeks ago that knocked my toes out of the stirrups.



I don't have a cure for this Covid stuff so it seems we are just stumbling along. I don't see much reason to try for a meeting this month. I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

I cancelled the Christmas Party this year.

But I see our other two Johns have the election going along. We will have to figure out how to vote without a meeting. Chepulis seems to have a good idea. I hope everyone will try to vote, We need a Quorum of the membership.

We received a thank you from the Public Lands and Water Association, PLWA For our **"generous donation"** from Carolyn Fox, Helena. She seems to be their treasurer Her notes are hard to read and to reprint. but she indicates they may look into the Lodgepole impassable road situation. They were involved, As we were, in 2007, 2008 at the first time it was attempted to close.

We also got a thank you from Ben Daley of the ABWilderness, for our money donation and packing help. He has replaced Dave Kallenbach, I would call him coordinator of the working field trips. We packed in his crew early last summer up the Westfork of the Stillwater he was then and is now very

BBCH DIRECTORS

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- President- John Simmons
328-4163
- Vice President- Randy Thomsen
328-7355
- Treasurer- John Jenkins
855-0238
- Secretary- Nancy Thomsen
328-7355
- Director- John Chepulis
322-4823
- Director- Bonnie Chepulis
322-4823
- Director- Cathy Reck
690-9066
- Director- Mary Sybrant
328-9112

STATE DIRECTORS

...

- Director- John Simmons
328-4163
- John Jenkins (Alternate)
855-0238

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

...

- John Chepulis
322-4823

appreciative of our help, and he says he is looking forward to “getting back out on trails with you (us) next summer”.

We sent each of these two above \$500, a month ago as you see in the minutes we sent money to our State BCH Education fund and to the Billings food Bank at the last meeting.

Coming up is the yearly quarter that it is our members, plus a few other chapters turns to write a message or article for the State newspaper about our accomplishments relating to the Back Country horsemen.

I hope all is well with you all and your families.

John Simmons

BBCH – BOARD ELECTIONS 2021

It’s time for elections again, as if we weren’t tired enough of the election last month.

The board of directors meets once monthly the first Thursday of the month. We will probably will still be doing Zoom meetings for the next 2 or 3 months until this COVID situation gets better. Winter board meetings are generally spent planning for the activities in the spring and summer. Remaining on the board in 2021 will be John Simmons (senior state delegate), John Chepulis, Cathy Reck, and Nancy Thomsen.

There are three general board positions open (2-year position), one state delegate position (2 year), and one alternate state delegate (1 year).

Four positions need to be filled. Nominations to date are CJ Spencer, Randy Thomsen, Melissa Codner for the 3 general board positions.

Nominations for the State Delegate: John Jenkins

Nominations for the Alternate State Delegate: Louise Jenkins

Additional nominations are welcome and encouraged. You can nominate yourself. Send nominations to John Chepulis or John Jenkins. Barcdiamond@gmail.com or john.k.jenkins@gmx.us. We will add any additional names submitted in the next 7 days to the ballot then send the ballots out. All ballots received within 7 days after that will be counted.

Please reply promptly when that email comes out. Write in candidates are welcome as well.

John Chepulis, John Jenkins
Nominations Committee

BBCH PO Box 614, Absarokee, MT 59001

BBCH – 2021 DUES

Yearly dues for 2021 are:

- Business Membership \$40
- Family Membership \$35
- Individual Membership \$25

Since we will probably not be having meetings for at least a couple of months, or possibly even longer, please send your checks to BBCH, PO Box 614, Absarokee MT 59001. Please send updated email, address if your contact information has changed. This information is only used for the BBCH and BCHMT Newsletters and is not shared.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK SOLVED THEIR PROBLEM BEARS

Submitted by: John Simmons

Many years ago, during the 1970's in the fall/winter, I would walk across the West Fork of the Stillwater River and hunt deer on the west side near and in the meadows at the Iron Creek area, where it emptied into the West Fork, below Initial Creek. I know of some of the old local hunters who hunted Elk there also. The creek drainage is a pathway for the wildlife to come and go from the top and bottom. Some elk will move from Picket Pen to Iron creek, it's a good area to hunt.

In the early to mid-1970's the Yellowstone National Park decided to close the dumps and the park employees used to bring problem Black Bears, (*hungry ones that didn't have a dump to eat in*). up to the Picket Pin drainage and release them, just onto the forest service land above the Private ranch lands there. I would see the pickup drivers, out of my front window of my shop with a bear in the culvert trap many times on Mondays or Tuesday, sometimes even 2 or 3 times a week. He or they would stop at the cafe across the street for a Brunch about 10:30 AM. I talked to one of the Park employee drivers one day and told him "those ranchers raised Cattle and Sheep up there at the Picket pen area",

I knew one Sheep herder well, he told me "sometimes we can kill them the first day or on the second morning, the dumb ones would come to the houses and tear up the garbage cans. The wise ones could make it up to a week before we got them". The Bears would kill the ewes and eat the milk bags, 6 to 12 a night. The YNP employee said, he was doing what he was told. After my visit he never stopped in town again.

At the same time frame the YSP would fly in problem Grizzlies to the top of Iron Mountain and drop them off. The tough ones would make it back to YNP park, or Sunlight Basin in a few days.

Many of the older or crippled ones would drift into the Boulder drainage and end up being killed, after getting into trouble at people's homes and cabins. It seems that the Black bears were more abundant on the top and the east slopes, of that area. Most people did not want the Grizzlies up there or here in our back yards. There was a lot of core drilling up there for the mining companies.

The bears gave the man camps and drill sites problems. I was at the Brass Monkey Man Camp one fall, a black bear was visiting the kitchen area. Our daughter was cooking there. We chased it off for a short while, it came back and went into the pool hall room where the door was left open. He jumped up on the pool table and when the balls started rolling around, he slapped one off the table and into the wall. He then ran outside and jumped up on top of a 100 pound propane tank and balanced on top as he took several long whiffs of the smelly fuel, he soon jumped down and ran away at full speed until he was out of site, *probably out of gas I actually thought*. The propane smell would make most anyone want to run away. At one time maybe still now, it is illegal in some states, like Colorado, and California, to have a leaking propane bottle in your camp during hunting season.

It attracts bears!

MESSAGE TO THE BILLINGS FIELD OFFICE – DECEMBER, 2020

Bureau of Land Management

Response to the November 2020 Draft Pryor Mountain TMP.

In my limited research of your document, I see in one place your author states.

"The proposed Action provides a balanced recreation system for the long-term sustainable management of recreation trails and other resources. Recreation opportunities would be improved for all types of users."

The words above balanced & for all types of users, are hard to accept by me or, I am sure anyone else that owns one of Mr. Webster's Dictionaries. Although many of the folks who support our backcountry public land areas to be set aside totally for motorized would not want to agree with my above assertion. They would like to agree that it is OK to stretch the truth occasionally. Sure, this is probably balanced if we say it is enough times. That's what we are learning from the top Echelons of our Federal Government isn't it?

The 134 miles of motorized routes versus 11 miles of motorized free routes must be considered anything but balanced. Over 92% of your travel ways are designated to be used for mechanical contraptions, of some kind. This Pryor Mountain region is a unique, and historical area. It needs to have much more space preserved for quiet and secluded use. It would be nice to see some more natural wildlife and quiet environment. If this landscape were 150 miles to the west it would fit in nicely with Yellowstone Park. I am sure even now where it is located it would make a stand-alone

Federal Park, or National Monument. Yet your department feels it should be preserved for a Motorized Playground.

When reading your Balanced Public Use Plan, any Horseman or hiker will not have any trouble knowing how it is to be oppressed as a minority.

Please reconsider and close some more of the motorized areas and preserve more secluded, quiet areas.

Thanks John P Simmons, President

Beartooth Back Country Horseman

BBCH – BOARD/GENERAL MEETING ~ NOVEMBER 16, 2020

DRAFT

“Goto meeting” called to order at 7pm

Board Members in attendance were John Simmons, Randy Thomsen, Nancy Thomsen, John Jenkins, John Chepulis, and Bonnie Chepulis.

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes – John Chepulis moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them. Randy Thomsen second. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s report – Report in Minutes. Balance \$28,581.63. \$440 was received from FWP. Randy Thomsen moved to accept Treasurer’s report. Jesse Ericson second. Motion passed.

John Simmons sent a letter to Ken Coffin about the history of the West Fork of the Stillwater, pertaining to bears and the Castle Creek Trail.

Website has been updated thanks to Jesse Ericson. Information prior to 2014 is needed. Randy Thomsen moved to pay for the renewal of Jesse’s 2021 membership. John Jenkins second. Motion passed. John Simmons will send a past membership list for the website.

Discussion on the GAOA monies. A plan will be needed for next year on how to respond and which trails to support.

The “John Simmons Motion” that has been discussed and tabled the last couple meetings was rescinded by John Simmons.

John Chepulis moved to give BCHMT a donation of \$1000 to go to the Educational Committee. Randy Thomsen second. Motion passed

John Chepulis moved to give BCHA a donation of \$1000 to go towards Randy Rasmussen's wages. Motion was tabled for January meeting.

John Simmons will mail out a proposal for advertising in the BBCH newsletter. Discussion at next meeting.

Nominating Committee – Elections are in November. There are no nominations so far. John Chepulis and John Jenkins will come up with a plan for voting and nominations. Email or mail in ballots are being considered.

The Christmas party has been cancelled due to Covid-19.

Randy Thomsen moved to donate \$440 to the Billings Food Bank. John Simmons second. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned 8:47pm



When was the last time you caught up on local, state AND National BCH News? It's only a click away. You can access the 2020 Fall BCHA Newsletter, and BCHMT "Decker Dispatch" from BCHMT's home page: <https://bchmt.org/>

While you're there...check out our Chapter's Webpage. From the BCHMT homepage: click on the "About" tab; then click "Members," locate our Chapter on the map, click and voila! Our own Jessi Erickson took on this task last fall and has contributed a ton of hours. Thank you for your hard work Jessi...it is looking fantastic - GOOD JOB!

Please note the deadline for written comments!

Pryor Mountain Travel Management Plan / Environmental Assessment



The Bureau of Land Management's Billings Field Office announces the public release of the Pryor Mountain Public Draft TMP/EA and invites you to join us for a virtual public meeting.

Public Review Virtual Town Hall Meeting

In light of current events and consistent with DOI interim guidance, the BLM is offering an online opportunity to review highlights of the Draft TMP/EA and how to comment.

Participants will listen to a short presentation and be able to ask questions. However, formal comments will not be taken during the meeting. Meeting materials will be posted online prior to the meeting and will be viewable live during the meeting.

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

Join us from 5:30 pm - 7 pm
(presentation will begin at 5:30 pm)

Please register to receive the call-in information and meeting reminders:

us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BgKXzIHNQnaKiVknKfMpDw

**Review the Draft TMP/EA and comment
online at:**

eplanning.blm.gov

Search: DOI-BLM-MT-C010-2019-0029-EA

Hard copies of the meeting materials may be made available upon request by contacting: BLM_MT_Billings_FO@blm.gov

Comments should be submitted either via ePlanning or by mail to 5001 Southgate Dr, Billings, MT 59101.

**Written comments must be
received by December 14, 2020.**





December 8th, 2020: Bad Canyon/Beehive Rock TH

Dan Kellogg and I had an enjoyable, albeit *windy* ride. While it is a short ride – the views are stunning and well worth the effort!

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

Thank you to these local businesses for their continued support!



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