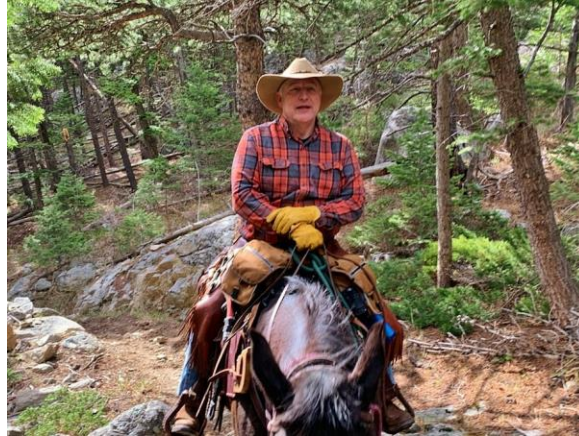


Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

President's Pen

April

Finally, some warmer days. I hope everyone is getting in a little saddle time. I think we've had a good start to the year. A couple of recertifications have been completed, and a couple of trail clearings



too. We had some good work crews. As Goldilocks would say, not too small and not too big. Medium size, just right. By my count, though I missed one of them, we've cleared a couple of trails of about a hundred trees.

We have a little slack time this month. Hopefully we'll get the crosscut saw recertification rescheduled quickly since it was too muddy up Bad Canyon the weekend of April 2. We had a good turnout at both the First Aid and the Defensive Horsemanship classes.

Make a note that the General Meeting this month will be in Columbus (at the FIREHALL), not Fishtail, in an effort to try to accommodate the growing numbers of members who do not reside in the immediate Fishtail/Absarokee area. Pot Luck as usual.

We'll be pretty busy beginning next month with trail clearings, so let's get those ponies legged up.

See you on the 18th

John Jenkins

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- Vice President- Dave Heinle
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- Treasurer- Melissa Codner
308-390-0465
- Director- Keith Brighton
425-1122
- Director – Ray Longstreth
406 224 5185
- Director- Bob Knutson
698-0290

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- Randy Thomsen
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- John Simmons
328-4163
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425-1122

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...

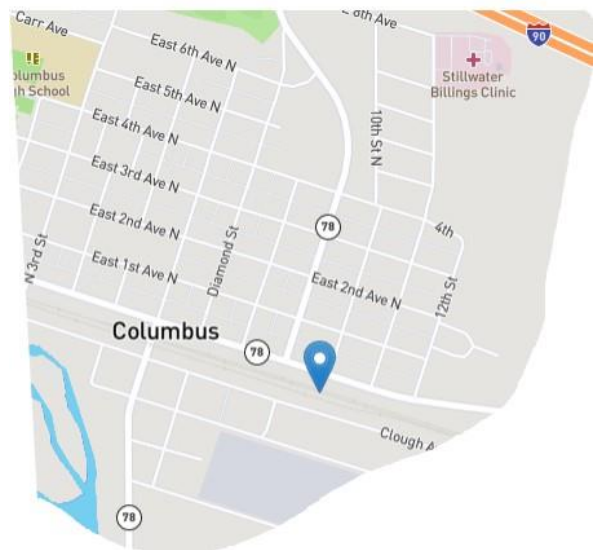
- John Chepulis
322-4823

Potluck

Everyone Brings Something to the Table.

April 18th – 6:30 p.m. Potluck
Meeting @ 7:00

Columbus Fire Station
944 E Pike Columbus



Education Program: Annette Smelts from the USFS will cover Trail Maintenance guidelines and specs.

So, what's the buzz with Montana-based Back Country Horsemen Chapters?

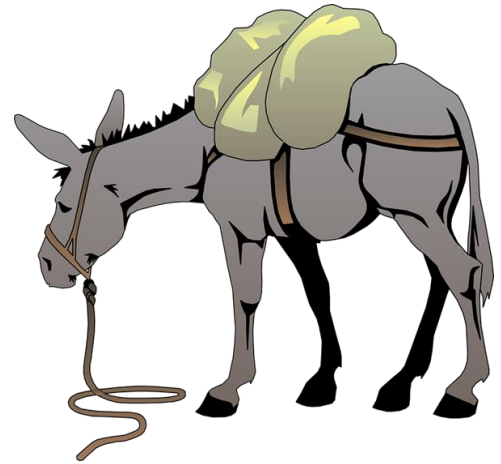
Check out the SPRING ISSUE of the DECKER DISPATCH:

<https://www.bcha.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/BCHASpringNewsletter2022.pdf>

2022 – BBCH PROPOSED PROJECT SCHEDULE

All dates are subject to change and depending on weather

- **TO BE RESCHEDULED!** Bad Canyon - Crosscut Saw Certification with Forest Service
- May 14th-15th – Stillwater River – Trail clearing, 11 miles, possible camp at meadows
- May 21st-22nd – Line Creek/Face of the Mountain – Trail clearing
- May 28th, 29th, 30th – West Fork of the Stillwater/Initial Creek – Trail clearing, possible camp out
- **COMPLETED!** Deer Creek – Trail clearing from West Fork of Bridger to the cabin
- June 18th-19th – Ernie Strum Trail, possibly locate old trail from Lilly Pad to Island Lake
- June 23rd – pack in; June 29th – pack out - ABW Main Stillwater, 11 miles
- July 6th-12th – **ABW** - Meat Rack, Main Boulder, 5-6 miles; camp out; possible rendezvous and pack clinic
- August 18th pack in; August 23rd pack out – **ABW** - Fox Lake, near Cooke City, 5 miles
- August 31st pack in – September 6th pack out – **ABW** – East Fork of Mill Creek; same campground as 2021; mileage unknown
- September, End of Year Campout, Meyers Cr, Date to be determined
- Fun Rides, New Member Rides, June, July or August, Dates to be determined



August 7th for approximately 18 days – Buffalo Fork – **FWP fishing/tagging trip. Needing people to move camps during full 18 days. Moving approximately 3 miles at a time. More details to follow.

Please contact Dave Heinle with any questions or concerns at brokenfiddleranch@gmail.com

Save the Dates . . .



Back Country Horsemen of Montana invite you
to the 2022 Rendezvous at Monture Ranger Station

June 24-26, 2022

We are looking forward to another good time of comradery , trail riding and helpful presentations. If you have any skills or presentations you would like to share, or see, please let us know.

More information to come.

Contact: Randy Velin, 406-544-4582, rhvelin@gmailcom or
Wade Murphy, 406-431-1717, wadeandlonnie@hotmail.com

Looking forward to a great time!!

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BCHMT STATE CONVENTION – MARCH 11TH – 13TH

Submitted By: Robin Morris

This year's BCHMT Convention was held in Dillon, Montana – after a two-year hiatus. BBCH had a great showing with eight members, and one youth. Convention speakers updated the membership on state and national issues, held elections, provided breakout sessions on "Grazing management on Small Acreage" and "Bear Aware," and hosted the popular Chainsaw and Photo Contests.

Local members competing in the Chainsaw Competition included Tara Smith and Robin in the women's competition, and John Jenkins and Randy Thomsen in the men's division. There was some fierce competition – especially in the men's division! John and Randy put in a great effort, but didn't finish in the top three. Tara and Robin landed 2nd place in the women's competition.



Tara Smith & Robin Morris



John Jenkins and Randy Thomsen

BBCH had a great showing in the photo contest! I think we contributed a dozen photos out of the 80+ entries in five categories. Tara Smith took first in "Kids Old and Young, John Jenkins took 1st in Back Country Horsemen at Work, and Robin Morris took 1st in Montana Landscape and also received People's Choice for the same picture.

Entertainment during the banquet was provided by a local group of fiddlers that ranged in age from 5-adulthood – they were fabulous. Of course, the silent auction, live auction and 50/50 raffle emptied many of our pockets. Some came home with something, some more than others, and one member with cash – John Jenkins won one of the 50/50 drawings! While it was enough to require issuance of a 1099 – he was smiling. It was an enjoyable evening and great opportunity to relax – no work involved - and to visit with members from other chapters.

We also learned that BCHMT will be revitalizing a program from the early 80s – *Light on the Land*. This does not replace *Leave no Trace*, but is directed toward stock users. *Leave no Trace* will continue to focus on hikers.

Educational modules are being developed and should be finalized sometime in the next year. I was asked to be part of the committee and am looking forward to it. I believe strongly that riders and stock use in the backcountry can do better, and have a responsibility to do so. As more folks head to the backcountry to recreate;

we have to be prepared for the additional scrutiny that will be placed on how we treat the land. Do we allow our stock to dig holes pawing? Leave large piles of manure at the trailhead? Scar trees near the trails? Sharing the land requires all of us to do our part. We will be sharing information as it becomes available and please, if you have thoughts on this topic, feel free to share them with me or any member of the board.

A tribute was presented that chronicled members of Montana BCH that had passed in the last two years. It is always humbling and a reminder of our mortality to see a display of so many vital humans gone. The first slide included Dale Olson, a long-time member of our chapter. The tribute shared is on the next page.



The convention closed with a video presented by next year's convention host - Northwest Montana BCH of Montana, in Kalispell, Montana.



DALE OLSON May 17, 1946 – May 29, 2021

Born in Minnesota, Dale grew up on the family farm near Walnut Grove. Dale moved to Montana as a young man. An avid outdoorsman, he was kind, empathetic, humorous, and caring. Dale had a servant's heart and would help anyone out on a trail ride or any other time. Dale resided near Belfry, Montana, close to the Wyoming border. He was active in two BCH chapters, the Beartooth in Montana and the Shoshone in Wyoming. Dale spent much of his time in retirement, splitting duties between these two chapters. Dale served on the Board of Directors of the Beartooth Chapter. When the pandemic took Dale, he was both a past president and current president of the Shoshone Chapter. Dale will be sorely missed in southern Montana and northern Wyoming.

BBCH PO Box 614, Absarokee, MT 59001

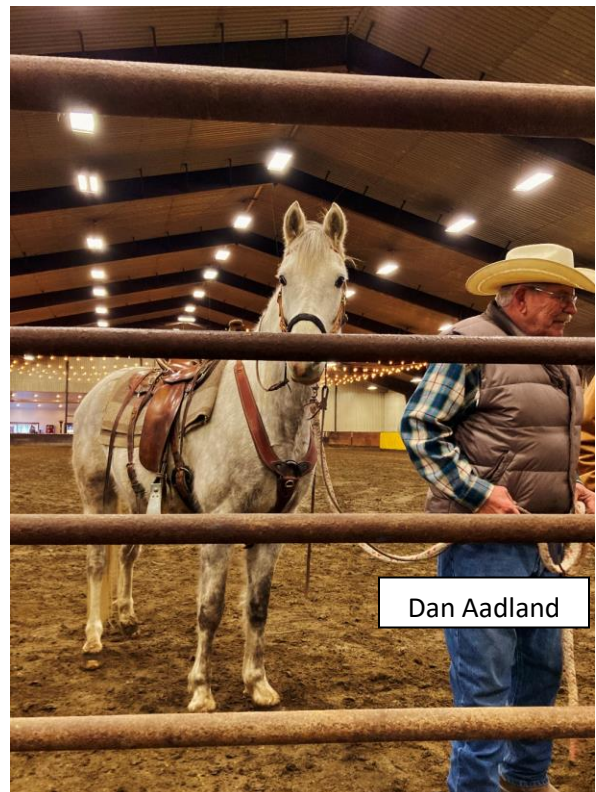
DEFENSIVE HORSEMANSHIP – MARCH 19, 2020

Submitted By: John Jenkins



The Defensive Horsemanship Spring Clinic was held Saturday, March 19, at the Cottonwood Equestrian Center in Silesia, MT. The purpose is to educate members on basic safety with stock, for obvious reasons, and to satisfy the requirements for every 3-year training/refresher required for our Volunteer Agreement with the Forest Service. The Back Country Horsemen of Montana developed the outline of this program.

Dan Aadland and John Simmons reviewed general horsemanship, horse behavior and horse care and handling. Melissa Codner reviewed tack and equipment and Trailer Safety by Sean Chepulis. After lunch, courtesy of Marilyn Simmons, excellent as always, Dave Heinle talked about basic first aid for horses. Following that session, Wendy Galvin shared her insight on Ride Preparation, Safety, and conditioning. So that's a reminder, get your horses legged up; we'll be busy in the coming months. The afternoon ended with Randy Thomsen on Trail Safety and John Jenkins on Human First Aid.





John Simmons

About 35 members attended. We did recruit a half dozen or so new members. The most informative things I glean from sessions like these are from the Q&A times with the experienced horsemen and horsewomen, packers, etc. Much of the information shared in the Q&A sessions can't be found in printed materials. I suppose it comes from the school of hard knocks.

All the information presented is available in more detail on the BCHMT Website. You can locate the Education Page at the upper right of the main page. Additional links provide information on packing, gear, and trip planning.



Wendy Galvin

This link is the basic course outline and information.

<https://bchmt.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/HorseSafety.pdf>

This link is a PowerPoint presentation of similar material.

https://www.bchmt.org/Defensive%20Horse%20Safety/pubs/ppt_html/htm07672W02/documents/pdf/horseman.pdf

BBCH TRAIL CLEARING

Submitted By: Robin Morris

ISLAND LAKE - March 26th, 2022. Tara Smith, Dave Heinle, Mary Crable, Stacy Ingram, Randy Thomsen, and I answered the call for help; mounted with two pack mules carrying chainsaws and sorted supplies. It was slightly overcast at 32° and chilly as we headed out. Tara took the lead on Macky, and Beau and I fell into the drag position. There's a first for everything. I wanted to take pictures of the group from behind.



While we still had portions of deep snow, with the tracks that Beau



and Tara's horse, Walker, made during recon, the "going" was much more manageable. We came across downfall less than a mile up Trail #37. Some of the downfalls were from last year. Most horses or mules could easily step over or locate a go-around. Still, the Forest

Service standard is to clear downed trees over 8" in diameter. So, we took all of them out. A little further down, after the switchbacks, was a large "widow-maker" hanging over the trail at a 45° angle. It's been there for quite some time. Beau is 15.1 hands and we can ride under if we stick to the high side. Those on taller horses have to dismount and walk under or go around. Before attempting to cut a widow-maker, the sawyer must evaluate all potential dangers. Look for snags, possible throwbacks, and assess if there are tension points. Also, you have to size up where the tree will land. Before cutting, it's time for everyone, including your riding and pack stock, to get out of the way. It's also good to call out "timber" to alert everyone that the tree is coming down.

Today's focus, Trail #37, hadn't been cleared for two years. In 2020, the forest service canceled all work because of Covid, and the following year the creek crossing was too high and dangerous. I joined Tara at the front to help cut out the smaller downed trees using



our hand saws. We figured there was no sense in firing up a chainsaw for a two-minute job. Plus, Tara and I welcome work – that's why we show up.

One of our members realized he had "lost" his cellphone as we rode into the meadows. We figured it happened while wrestling with his pack mule, so he headed back. For the next hour and a half, the remaining five members "cut on." I



knew there was spotty cell service, but I took my phone off of airplane mode and called our missing member. He answered – so obviously, he found his phone and said he was coming our way. Having traveled almost the whole loop, his horse was sweaty and breathing hard when he rejoined the work crew. We cleared a few more downfalls and then came across a large, tall widow-maker. I asked Dave what he thought. He immediately said, "That is beyond our



expertise; we will let the forest service know." The last large tree was on the service road to the Lake. With several of us on the ground, we had it cleared in a few moments. We tied up at Island Lake for lunch. It was nice to relax, visit and get to know our two newest members. While the other horses and mules rested, Beau spent his break harassing Tara for treats. I think he has a contract with her. After 10.8 miles and 7.25 hours, we collectively cut and cleared 42 downed trees and took out seven widow makers. It feels good to have a trail system clear and ready for the public to enjoy. As soon as the lake thaws, those with "fishing" in their veins will undoubtedly appreciate our efforts.



April 2nd, 2020: Jim's Gulch to Deer Creek Cabin.

Horse trailers started pulling in to the trailhead just after 8:00 a.m. There were six trailers, two pack stock, one riding mule (Beau), and six riding horses. Today's crew included Dave Heinle, Mary Crable, Randy Thomsen, John Jenkins, Eric and Kaylie Grotjohn, Howard Butler and me. Several of us carried hand saws, and BBCH provided two gas chainsaws and one battery-powered chainsaw. The first 3/4s of a mile was great. Just a lot of cleared downfalls from years past. Jim's Gulch was prey to the Derby Fire that burned through this area in 2007.



A couple of years after the fire, the dead-standing started to come down. I can recall getting covered in soot while wrangling the cut trees off the trail. I also remember Rosi's Fjord horse rubbing on a tree and getting covered in soot. She wasn't happy with him 😊.



There were several larger trees across the trail, but the guys breezed right through them with chainsaws. Things looked pretty good headed up from the creek bottom - our BBCH cleared that last year. There is so much dead-standing back in the trees, which we also cleared last year, so we knew there would be more to cut. We cleared half a dozen before cresting the hill. After gaining almost 1,000' in elevation, many of the unconditioned horses were breathing hard and sweating. We stopped on top at the "amphitheater" for a short break. This area has large "casting" of

conglomerate rocks that overlook the mountains. It is a gorgeous spot to stop and take in the 360° view. Dave advised folks to move their saddles back just slightly as we were ready to head downhill. It's a steep grade without any switchbacks, so you learn to take it slow. We "park" our equines horizontally across the trail while cutting and removing the downfall on slopes this extreme. It is tough for them to stand with their front hoofs planted downhill. Plus, they fidget less if parked properly. The amount of downfall was growing! The sound of three chainsaws in the forest makes one smile. I'm always impressed by how little our equines think of the noises we make. After the terrain leveled out – somewhat – several of us were able to get off and help toss cuts to the side, clean up all the kindling from the fallen trees and venture ahead to trim the abundance of young lodgepole pine that now range from 1' to 10' in height. All comebacks after the fire. As we headed down to the meadow above Lower Deer Creek, we directed our horses and mules to the wide creek opening. All of them drank 😊. Then it



was on to the cabin! Just before Tie Cutter (which is motorized), is the junction to Lower Deer Creek which is non-motorized. Last year the Forest Service placed large rocks across the trail to prevent 4-wheelers from using this trail. Someone



moved them out of the way, and you could see motorized tracks. So, the guys put them back in place. Our last obstacle was crossing the creek just past this junction. There is a large curve in the creek, and several years ago, logs started jamming up the crossing during an exceptionally wet year. Every year it has worsened. Folks have been crossing upstream, but it is a steep, eroding drop-off into the creek. We cleared a new path just up from the log jam. It took a lot of cutting and lopping, but we got it done. It will be much safer for everyone. We finished by blocking off the original trail with downfall. At the cabin horses and mules were corralled, tied to the hitchrail or large trees. We cut 53 downed trees, drug/shoved several others off the trail, and got some lopping done. There were two more members from the Clyde Park area – which was fantastic. We settled around the fire ring and took a much-needed break. It was time for lunch! We captured a picture of the group on the cabin porch before heading out. What a great-looking crew. The ride out was fantastic – we just smiled and slapped ourselves on the back as we passed by all the cut trees 😊.

As we headed up Jim's Gulch, the wind picked up, the temperature started to drop, and the clouds were swirling overhead. As the sky turned grey, several members



were pulling out their slickers. Then light sleet and rain started. The pack on John's mule was slipping, so he hopped off to adjust it while everyone looked at the dead standing swaying overhead. You have to pay attention. Several of us were relieved to be out of the forest riddled with dead-standing and on top of the rocks. On the last descent, the rain picked up. The rain was heavier when we got back to the trailhead. All it dampened was the social hour that generally follows trail-clearing.

TRAIL DETAILS

Submitted by: Melissa Codner

Who is ready to hit the trails? I know we are all anxious to get out there! From time to time, we receive inquiries about our local trails. As a club, we decided we need to have detailed information to pass along to those inquiries. Many of our BBCH members are new to the area and/or have only enjoyed a handful of our local trails. Thus, this resource will provide key details for BBCH members as well as the public.

For that to happen, we need your help!

If you have a favorite trail, could you share what you know? We are collecting this information through an online, anonymous survey. Your email address is not collected, and you can fill it out as many times as you'd like. Some of the trails you may be familiar with include:

Ernie Strum
Island Lake
Stillwater/Woodbine
Line Creek/Face of the Mountain
West Fork of the Stillwater/Initial Creek
Deer Creek
Meyers Creek
Fox Lake
Meat Rack
East Fork of Mill Creek

Here's the link: <https://forms.gle/w6i4pmzBQC6VkmXz7>

We would appreciate your contributions. I just submitted my views on the Stillwater Trail (Robin speaking). It was quite easy and took just a few moments. We welcome everyone's thoughts about each of the trails. The more details we can collect, the more details we can share.

Happy Trails!

LAUGHINGSTOCK



BUDDY

A man from the city was taking a country drive when his car went into the ditch.

Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his big sorrel mule, named Buddy.

He hitched Buddy up to the car and said, "Pull Nellie, Pull!" Buddy didn't move.

Then the farmer yelled, "Pull Buster, Pull!" Again Buddy didn't move.

Once more the farmer yelled, "Pull Coco, Pull!" Buddy never moved a muscle.

Finally the farmer calmly says, "Pull Buddy, Pull" and Buddy easily pulled the car from the ditch.

The man from the city was very appreciative, and curious. He asked the farmer why he called his Mule the wrong name three times?

The farmer replied, "Oh Buddy is blind. If he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try."

Western Mule Magazine



April 7th, 2022: Stillwater – up the Stillwater Trail out of Nye!


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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