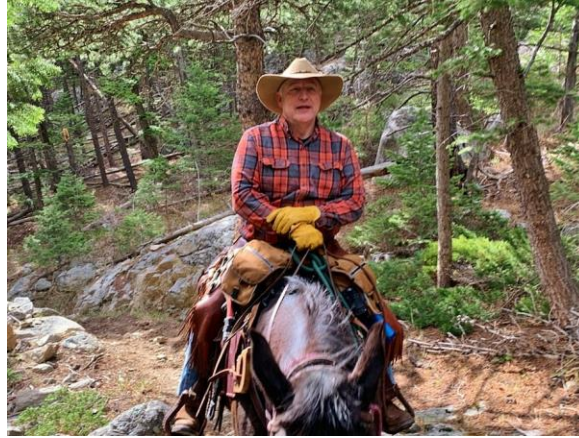


# Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

## President's Pen

September 2022

I hope everyone has enjoyed the summer and done a lot of riding. After a slow start due to factors beyond our control, we have had a busy mid- and late summer providing horse and mule-packing support for the ABW and Montana FWP. I think we all have a little more respect for the phrase "God willin' and the creek don't rise" after this spring's events. We were fortunate to have some potential members as well as regular members ride along with the club on some of these pack trips. Read more about these inside the newsletter.



Closer to home, it's been murderously hot here near Billings. So, it has been nice for me to get out of Yellowstone County and into the mountains to some cooler weather. Even hail and snow! I didn't plan to drive over the Beartooth Pass with a trailer of 5 horses on a layer of late afternoon hail and ice; it just worked out that way. An hour later I was in Red Lodge and it was 85 degrees. Then 95 in Billings. I've racked up a lot of miles going into the mountains every week for the last month, but I'm batting a thousand with respect to equipment. No breakdowns or flats yet. And I didn't get stranded in Cooke City with a trailer load of horses and mules with 3 days of grime on me like last year. I might have just skunked myself.

There's a lot information to share at the meetings coming up, so I hope you can make them.

First off is the Summer Rendezvous at Meyers Cr. The cabin is available to stay in. There'll be a Fun Ride, Crosscut Saw competition and Packing competition. This will be a different type of packing competition than last year. We are encouraging novices and those interested in packing to give it a try.

BBCH PO Box 614, Absarokee, MT 59001

### BBCH DIRECTORS



President- John Jenkins  
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John Chepulis  
322-4823

Just team up with someone. There will be a September General BBCH meeting on Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup> around the evening meal. The club will provide the entrée, but it's Pot Luck otherwise. Bring a friend too.

Regular meetings will resume in October with educational programs. We are also soliciting members to serve on the Board of Directors. Elections in November- nominate yourself or someone else. Step up and serve. It's a lot of fun, and you learn a lot about how our public lands are managed.

John Jenkins

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***Please Note: Our next General Meeting will be on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022 during the BBCH Summer Rendezvous at Myers Creek Cabin, following Dinner at 7:00 p.m. The Club will provide the entrée, bring a side dish or dessert of your choice to share.***

## 2022 SUMMER RENDEZVOUS ACTIVITIES

Join us for the end of summer camp out and rendezvous September 9-11 at Meyers Creek Trailhead and Cabin. The cabin is reserved Friday September 9 through Sunday September 11 for those of you who want to sleep indoors.

ACTIVITES: We'll do a fun ride on Saturday morning/early afternoon and other activities Saturday afternoon and/or Sunday morning. In addition to the packing contest, we are adding a crosscut saw competition!

It's all fun, games, fellowship and everyone is invited. To participate in the competition, you must be a member for liability reasons so come and join that day if you've been curious what it's all about.

I am looking for help with organizing and competition support. Please contact Melissa at [codner.melissa@gmail.com](mailto:codner.melissa@gmail.com) or 308.390.0465.

## 2022 – BBCH PROJECT SCHEDULE



### ***ABW Foundation:***

- August 31<sup>st</sup> pack in – September 5<sup>th</sup> pack out – **ABW** – East Fork of Mill Creek; same campground as 2021. Trail work crew 6 or 7 total at this time. 6 miles. South of Livingston. This is over Labor Day weekend. Again, there is an opportunity to ride in and stay the night before the pack out. Easy trail and very scenic. And other nice easy trails in the area if you want to stay the weekend, as I plan.

DETAILS FOR BOTH TRIPS WILL BE IN EMAILS TO COME. Contact John Jenkins [john.k.jenkins@gmx.us](mailto:john.k.jenkins@gmx.us) for the ABW trips and Dave Heinle [brokenfiddleranch@gmail.com](mailto:brokenfiddleranch@gmail.com) for the MT Fish & Game trips.

### ***Other:***

- September 9<sup>th</sup>-11th, End of Year Campout, Meyers Creek

## ABSAROKA BEARTOOTH WILDERNESS FOUNDATION TRAIL PROJECTS

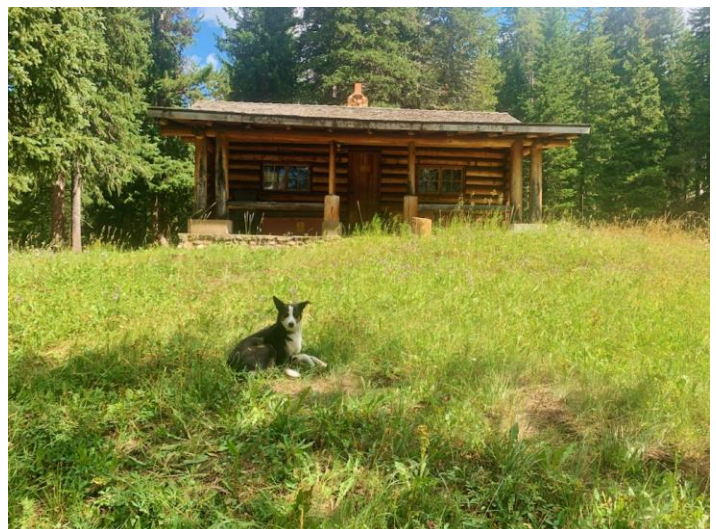
In August (and September) the club packed in the ABW to Fox Lake near Cooke City and Crystal Springs south of Livingston.

The first trip was to Fox Lake near Cooke City. This is the southern end of The Beaten Path. Audra Bintz and I packed the crew in, and I, Matt Anderson, Laura Connor and Mary Beth Gajda helped on the return. A crew of 8 was packed in. They made camp with a USFS trail maintenance crew from the Gardiner district. We were a little short of horsepower. The crew carried a little of their gear; and a local outfitter, Skyline, helped too. They had wrangler take one mule with manteed loads in. Kudos to Skyline Outfitters. On the ride out from the initial pack in I got my fill of huckleberries!



cabin at the Administrative Site for the FW near Cooke City for our return to pack the crew

The project was removal/replacement of wooden bridges over marshy areas. Three of these were replaced on the southern end of The Beaten Path trail. One of these, which we rode over, was shortened a bit. There was a lot of heavy and rusty old hard ware to pack out. On the way out I spoke with Jeremy Zimmerman, Forestry Technician, from the Gardiner district. He graciously offered the use of a





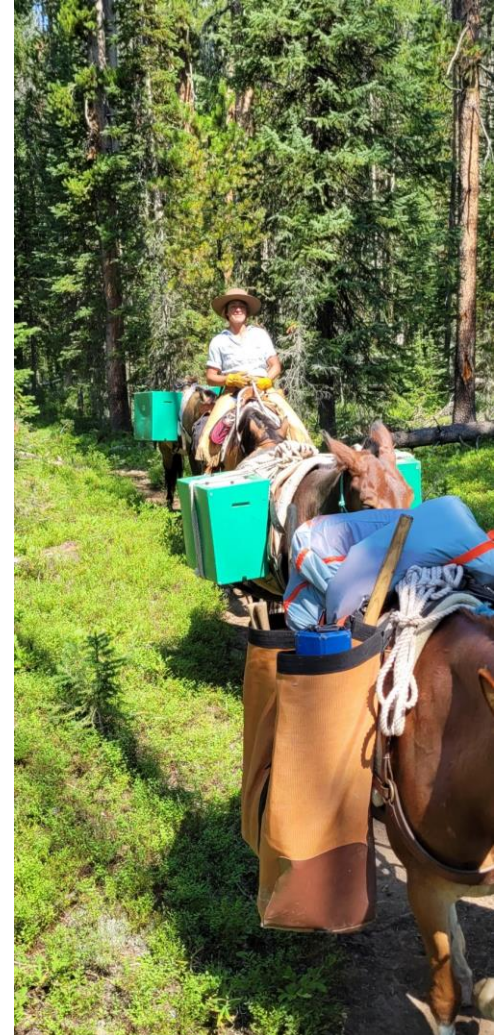
out. We jumped at that. Brett French with the Billings Gazette was there doing an article on the damage from the floods to the public lands.

On the return 5 days later, five of us stayed in the cabin and got an early start. We rode in early and packed out the crew. Everyone appreciated the use of the cabin. Running water, electricity, toilets and bunk beds. I have never really stayed in rental cabins, or

even trailheads with corrals, but it was much appreciated. Matt drove over the Beartooth Pass getting to Cooke City the day before in a hail and ice storm. I had that experience pulling a horse trailer with 5 horses on the drive back after the pack out. My knuckles are still white to this day. I know the Beaten Path is popular for hikers and backpackers, but I tend to shy away

from popular or crowded areas. This is an area I have hiked just a little and ridden even less, and usually from the northern end. There are lots of marshy

areas and numerous lakes. All the fishermen I spoke to said the fishing was great. Maybe someday I'll ride the entire Beaten Path from end to end and fish the lakes.





Here is a link to information in the local news media on the forest damage assessment. Millions of dollars of damage to our trails and public land access have occurred, excluding the

external road and bridge damage and personal property damage.

[https://www.news-journal.com/flood-caused-trail-damage-in-custer-gallatin-forest-estimated-at-3-2m/article\\_98c45794-c75a-5508-983d-3fa465559a51.html](https://www.news-journal.com/flood-caused-trail-damage-in-custer-gallatin-forest-estimated-at-3-2m/article_98c45794-c75a-5508-983d-3fa465559a51.html)

Sometimes I think the volunteer service we do goes



unnoticed. But that's really not the case. See the comments we get from the USFS, from the ABW, from folks we meet on the trail and the occasional new article. And sometimes you are rewarded unexpectedly like a stay in a cabin with amenities and horse corrals. That's a first for me.

**East Fork Mill Cr Pack In and Out:** Dave and Chris Heinle and I packed in a smaller ABW crew (5) On Wednesday August 31<sup>st</sup>. They'll be coming out on Monday Sept 5. Again, this isn't an area I've ridden a lot but I hope to explore it a bit more.



## SUMMER TRAIL CONDITIONS

Provided by Sylvan Peak Mountain Shop – Red Lodge

### Friday September 2<sup>nd</sup> Update and Changes:

Slight changes, updates and notices. People are getting out there and enjoying what we have. Get creative, alter your plans a bit, and see someplace new!

Summary of Recent Changes:

**Face of the Mountain:** Forest Service Trail crews have made it to Gold Creek, clearing trails and adding signage. Beyond Gold Creek the trail has been destroyed by a landslide. Probably passable by an experienced hiker, but not passable by bike or horse.

Forest Service trail crews are at work this week on the Lake Abundance area, clearing a major slide and downfall area.

**Cooke City/ East Rosebud trail** has been cleared from Chief Joseph trailhead to Rimrock Lake. A major wind event this spring caused hundreds of trees to be down along the trail between Lake at the Falls and Rimrock. The bridge at Rimrock is still out, so access further towards East Rosebud is very very highly not recommended. There is no trailhead access at East Rosebud Lake.

**West Rosebud Lake campgrounds** - Now have water available at the campgrounds.

**East Side Road - North End** - Temporary Bridge installed, providing public access to Maurice Creek and Corral Creek trails.

**Meeteetse Trail Road:** Temporary Bridge installed, providing public access to Face of the Mountain trails.

#### NOTICES:

1) Please, be aware of public vs private lands and access. There are many reports of trespassing on private land, especially in the East Rosebud Lake area. Reports of camping on cabin lawns, walking through private areas, etc. Please be knowledgeable and respectful during this time of reconstruction.

2) Both Absaroka Beartooth wilderness Foundation, and Beartooth Recreational Trails Association have been working hard with the Forest Service on trail clearing and reconstruction. These two local non-profit organizations can accept donations through the Red Lodge Fun Run for their work, and future work! Please donate during the RLACF Fun Run and your donation will be matched!

3) Both Red Lodge Fire and Rescue and Park County Search and Rescue have had a recent upswing in intense rescue situations. Please be prepared, tell someone where you are going, carry a personal location device as there is no cell coverage, and carry needed supplies. Pre plan, pack your 10 essentials, and be aware of your adventure and what you might be risking to have a SAR team come and help you.

4) Bears are active. There have been multiple sightings of both black bear and grizzly bears in most areas, so carry bear spray and know how to use it. Keep a clean camp, don't leave any food in your car at the trailhead.

The Beartooth District area around Red Lodge has a lot of closures, until bridge work and road work can get completed. Some will be quicker than others, so be aware before planning a backcountry trip. Stop in, or call us at [406-446-1770](tel:406-446-1770) for specific details, or call the Beartooth Ranger district at [406-446-2103](tel:406-446-2103)

**Highway 212** is open as of 5PM on Friday July 22. There is still road construction around Beartooth lake (closure 7pm-7am Monday thru Thursday). Mountain Goat families are out, and campgrounds are open.

**Beartooth Lake/Island Lake:** The first creek crossing at Island Lake is fine, and hikers are able to hop the rocks. This area is fairly popular and busy this summer, so expect more people than normal. High Grizzly bear use area, so carry bear spray and keep a super clean camp.

**Cooke City Area Hiking:** Hiking/ Biking along the park entrance road has been shortened to two miles, due to the start of construction and repair of the road. They hope to have this road open by October thru the park.

**Lady of the Lake Trailhead, Daisy Pass, Crazy Creek, etc.** All beautiful hiking.

Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Foundation has been at work this summer, clearing trails etc. with their volunteer crews! Great new work on Kersey Lake area, Lady of the Lake trail to Companion Lake, Beartooth Lake to Beauty Lake, and new trail work around Lake Abundance.

**Line Creek Plateau:** With the Beartooth Highway open, and East Side Bridge Access open, Line Creek plateau is now fully accessible for hiking and mountain biking. Line Lake is busier than normal, so be aware of fellow hikers and mountain bikes

**MT. Maurice Creek Trail:** With the opening of a temporary bridge on the north end of East Side Road,



the Maurice Creek trail, and Corral Creek trails are accessible. Trail crews are working on clearing some of the downfall.

**WEST FORK ROAD:** The road is closed to vehicles at basin campground. You can park, and walk up the road if you wish. Please do not walk on any bridges, as all are continuing to fall apart. Basin campground is open, but with no water. Silver Run trails, Nichols Creek, Willow, Palisades trails are all open for hiking and biking. Hikers have been up to timberline lake, and to the West Fork trailhead. The West Fork trail itself has lots of trees down, and water running down the trail. High level of bear activity, both black and grizzly, in the west fork drainage - please carry bear spray, and be aware that SAR/EMS can't easily get to you for a rescue.

**LAKE FORK AREA:** Lots of bridge, road and trail damage. The trail is now accessible by taking the bridge to the left as soon as are f the highway, parking in the large meadow below the Lions Camp (Richel Lodge area) and hiking through the Lions Camp and up the "winter" trail to the main trail head. Trail is washed out in a few places, but washouts are easy to navigate up to lost lake and beyond. Bridge above lost lake is intact, lots of bear activity. Carry bear spray and keep a super clean camp.

**BEARTRACK TRAIL:** The trail is open and hikeable, very little to no snow on the plateau. With a shuttle, it is now possible to hike the Beartrack/Silver Run area up and over.

**GLACIER LAKE ROAD:** road and bridge damage. Area is closed to vehicles. Parkside campground is mostly open. It is possible to walk into Greenough Lake by parking at Parkside Campground. Glacier Lake Road and Hellroaring Road are walkable, but expect fast moving creek crossings with no bridges and rubble stretches where roads have washed out.

Sheridan, Rattin, M-L and Limberpine Campgrounds closed for season. Greenough Campground may open later in the season, after repairs from where Wyoming Creek ran through the campground.

**RED LODGE CREEK TRAIL:** The trail is open up to the plateau, creek crossings are very fast. Trail access to East Rosebud, or Senia Creek on West Fork is closed due to no access to those trail heads, so be prepared for an out/back trip.

**EAST ROSEBUD:** Please be aware of private lands vs forest service lands! There have been multiple reports of trespassing, camping on cabin lawns and porches, and walking through the east rosebud cabins. This area, and access to the lake, is private property and under tight security due to the flooding of the valley. Please respect the homeowners....

Lots of road, bridge, trail and home damage in the valley. The road is now open to Jimmy Joe campground, and the campground is open (with a closed section in the center). The road to East Rosebud is not accessible by vehicle, 4-wheeler or bicycle due to extreme damage. Hiking this section

from Jimmy Joe to the East Rosebud trailhead is extremely dangerous, with deep and fast river crossings and 5 miles of rubble and boulders. The "Beaten Path" trail can be done as an out and back trip from the Clarks Fork trailhead, with a turnaround place of rainbow lake. The bridge at rimrock is out, and trail washed out to east rosebud from there.

**"BEATEN PATH":** Access from Cooke City side has some water crossings, but all major bridges are intact. Fossil Lake area has large snowbanks. East Rosebud side: large wind event this spring caused major blow down between lake at the falls and rainbow. But forest service trail crews have recently cleared the trail to Rimrock from Lake at the Falls. Trail is impassable beyond Rimrock, so make it a plan to turn around and head back before rimrock.

**WEST ROSEBUD:** The Fishtail bridge is fixed, so access to Fishtail and West Rosebud Road has been restored. West Rosebud Road (#2072) is opening to West Rosebud Lake. Pine Grove and Emerald Lake campgrounds are open and water in the campground has been restored.

**MYSTIC LAKE TRAIL:** The Mystic Lake trail head is accessible by parking at Emerald Lake, and walking the last mile to the Mystic Lake trail head. The trail is in good shape, with a bit of water washouts, to the lake. Trail crews have recently cut out the down trees from major blowdown event earlier this spring. Around the lake, the Huckleberry Creek bridge is out, but still navigable on logs to cross. The log jam at Island Lake has washed out, but the outlet of the lake is easy to wade across (knee or so deep) to keep hiking to Island and Silver Lakes above Mystic.

**GRANITE PEAK APPROACH FROM MYSTIC:** The Mystic Lake trail is in good condition, with a stretch of washout and water on the trail. The switchbacks up to the plateau are in good shape - a few trees down and a couple of washout spots and avalanche debris, but all easy to navigate on foot. Granite peak conditions are good. Not much snow left. The southwest couloir is still full of ice.

Plan for multiple other groups, as it is becoming busy.

Granite Peak approach via the ramp, or SW side, shows recent large ice areas. Be prepared for ice travel.

**STILLWATER VALLEY** - This area is closed, due to road and bridge damage. Stillwater Road (#2400) including Woodbine campground and the Stillwater trail head will remain closed. Please make sure to obey all closure signage in this area. West Fork Stillwater Road (#2846) is closed. Woodbine campground, trail head and parking lot are intact but not accessible. Woodbine trail bridge was destroyed along with Stillwater trail parking lot. On the Cooke City side - there has been a major slide in the avalanche lake area, so access to the Stillwater drainage from Cooke City is very challenging.

**BOULDER RIVER** – There is some road work being cleaned up, but road is open to the end and trails are open. Natural bridge area is open. Lake Plateau area, accessed from Upside Down Creek from the Boulder, is opening up and will be beautiful hiking and fishing for those looking for a longer trip, or a "Beaten Path" alternative trip. Always very buggy, and this year is no exception. The road has some washouts, and is very rough travel.

**PARADISE VALLEY** - All trails and forest areas open, except Mill Creek area. Main Mill Creek at mile marker 14.4 (Passage Creek) and West Mill Creek on national forest system roads only.

Snowbank campground - closed all season, bridge washout and six miles above Gold Prize closed.

**PRYORS:** Beartooth Ranger District also includes the Pryor Mountains for those looking for an alternative place to explore. The Big Ice Cave has recently had a new observation deck and stairway built.

Give us a call at (406) 446-1770 if you're looking for a more current or specific trail report, or view or subscribe to updates on their website: [SYLVAN PEAK MOUNTAIN SHOP - Home!](#)

Also open, but not included in the Sylvan Peak Mountain Shop report:

**Myers Creek/Pass creek.** Pass creek has 13 trees across the trail, but you can make it to Picket Pin Creek by riding over and/or around.

**Island Lake, Benbow Road**

**Jim's Gulch to Deer Creek Cabin**

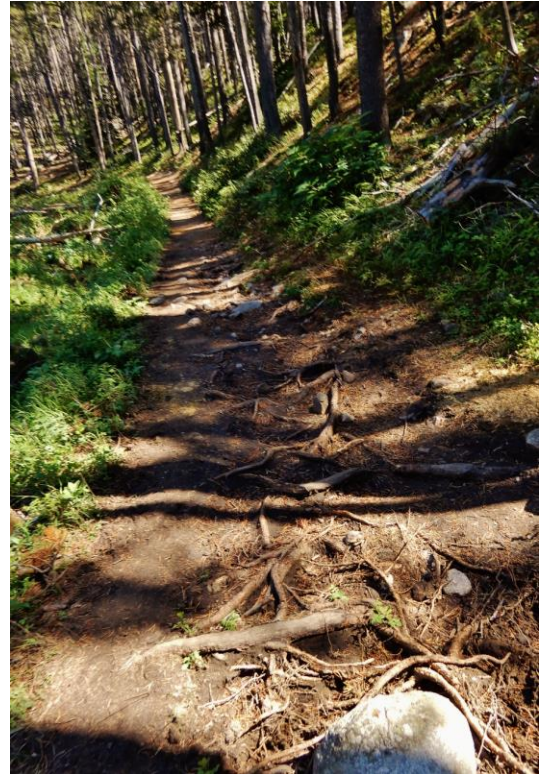
## TRAILS TO EXPLORE LAKE FORK TO SEPTEMBER MORN LAKE

Submitted By: Robin Morris

8/18/2022: It has been almost a year since I have ridden to September Morn, a beautiful alpine lake in the Absaroka-Beartooth Mountains. I parked at Richel Lodge, the campground that borders Lake Fork Road and the Beartooth highway, as the bridge at the trailhead is washed out. But now, Lake Fork Creek is low enough you can easily cross it just a little below where the bridge was located at the trailhead.

The last time I rode this trail, Lake Fork Creek was still running on part of the trail, and I had to cut one tree to continue. That spot is now dry, and the tree has been completely removed. But the holes in the trail are something else! Beau skirted around the edge to miss the deep pockets, gnarly roots, and rocks. It looked like a great place to have a wreck.

The next obstacle was the deep, run-off channel from Silver Falls. Thank goodness – the trail is now leveled out, branches and exposed roots on the far side are gone, and passage is not a big deal. Beau and I ride to Lost Lake – a lot. So, his brain tells him – to head



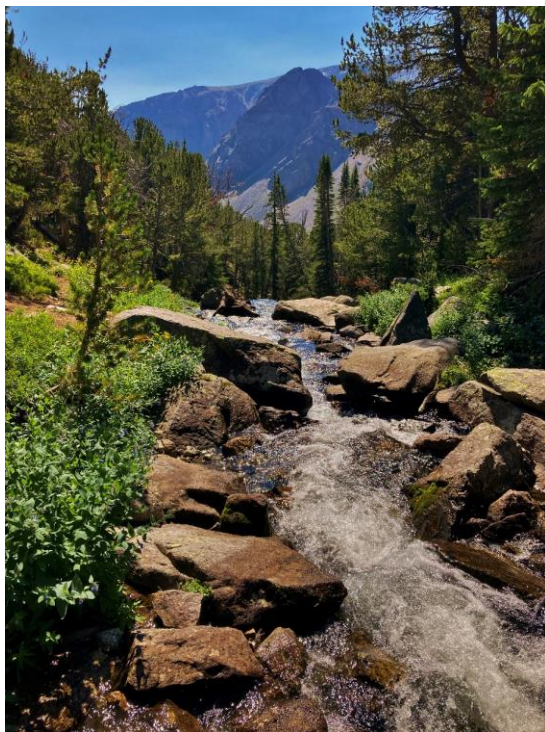
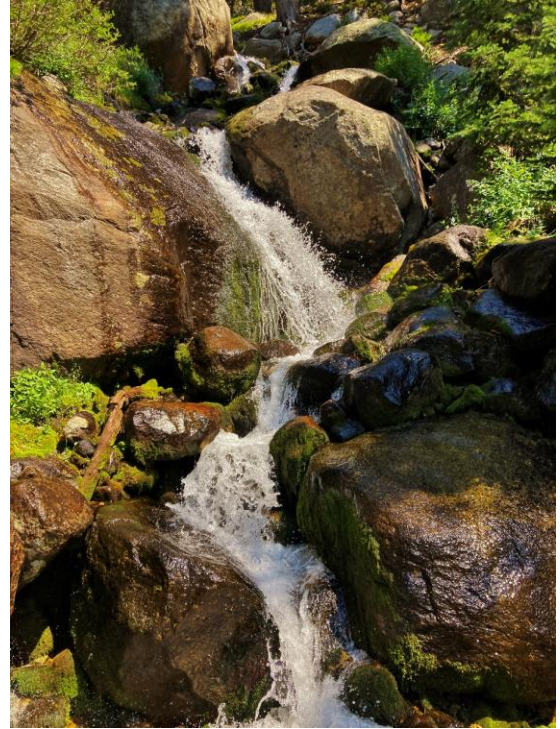
to Lost Lake. If I am not paying attention, he will make the turn to the Lake and, if questioned, pitch a little mule “hissy-fit.” Today, I had a plan – called distraction! A tenth of a mile from the turn, I clicked him up into a fast trot while talking to him and telling him, “You are such a good boy.”

After the junction with Keyser Brown, you climb steadily. First, you see Keyser Brown Lake, then First Rock Lake, Second Rock Lake, and Whitetail Peak – the view is

stunning. There are also several glaciers. The trail is narrow in spots, with steep drop-offs.

You cross a stream right before a waterfall at a 90° bend in the trail. It's one of my favorite parts of the ride. I was expecting "some" snow as I reached the water crossing to the Lake, but it was gone! Everything was green and quiet. We had the Lake to ourselves. I tied Beau to a large tree, removed his bridle, and gathered my lunch. A log close to the Lake was perfect for relaxing and gazing at my surroundings. I explored a bit, looking for signs of bears – grizzly bears are known to frequent this area – I have seen many signs in the past. Finding none, I untied Beau and let him graze.

Time to head to the trailer. I got into the rhythm of Beau's footfall and enjoyed letting my mind wander as we cascaded downhill. Beau did try to turn at Lost Lake – one last ditch effort to get his way. Funny mule. We stopped at Broadwater Lake, which is a wide spot along a bend in the



Several smiled and waved at me; it looked like they were having a great time. It was a great obstacle course for Beau. Another great day in the Wilderness.

creek. The footing is excellent – sandbars and small gravel. I pointed Beau to the water, and we rode around the bend. It's fun.

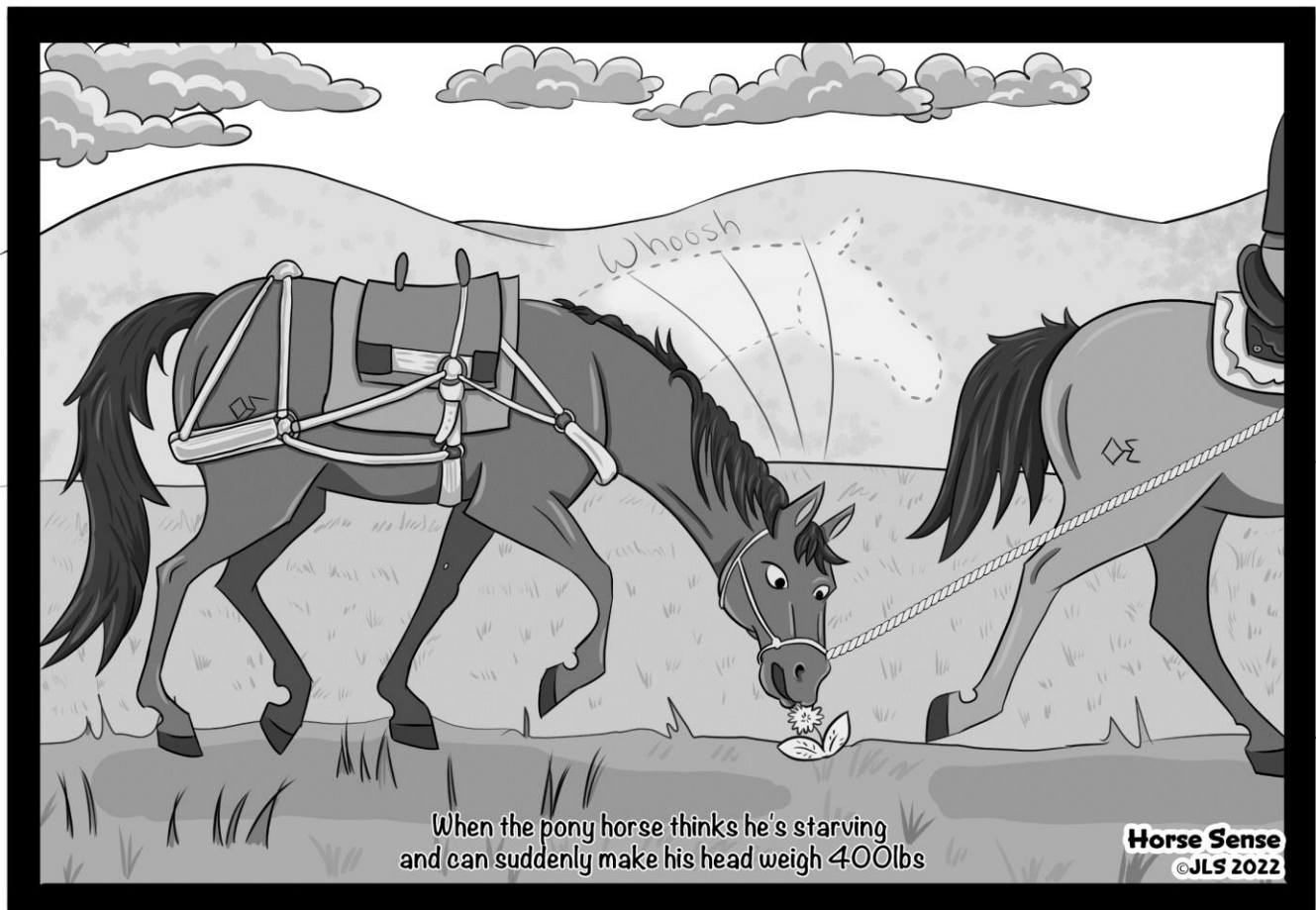
The rest of the ride was quiet – until I got to Lions Campground. There were over 30 BMW motorcycles parked all over the grounds, tents going up, and silver-haired gentlemen walking around with red solo cups.



## HORSE CAMP INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Have you pulled up to a designated horse camping spot or location where the corrals/hitching rails are taken over by RVs and campers? I have! If so, please use the following link to report the incident. It is sad to see how many folks are taking over spots, obviously designated for horse campers and trailers. To be quiet, is to accept. BCHA developed the following form for reporting: [Horse Camp Incident Report From \(jotform.com\)](#)

## LAUGHING STOCK





August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022: Lake Solitude, Battle Park, Wyoming

Beau and I headed to Battle Park Campground, for 4-days of riding. This was my first view of Lake Solitude. The campground area has 15 campsites (but room for many more) with access to corrals, highlines, hitching racks, water troughs and a mounting ramp. There is a donation tube, but no established camping fees.

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**Directions:** From Ten Sleep, WY, take Hwy 16 east for about 17.5 miles to Forest System Road (FSR) 27. Turn left at sign onto FSR 27, cross the bridge and go another 2 miles, then turn left onto FSR 24. Trailhead is at the end of FSR 24. Camping area is across from the trailhead parking area.

Please send any submissions for the Newsletter to Robin Morris, [junkerette@msn.com](mailto:junkerette@msn.com), by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. Thanks!


**Thank you to these local businesses for their continued support!**



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