

# Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

## *President's Pen*

February 2023

The weather has my spring fever flaring! The snow is melting in my neck of the woods just to level out the ice overnight; studded shoes would still be warranted if riding. There's a lot of things we are gearing up for this year that are in the planning stages.

Mark your calendars for state convention. It's going to be a great time in Kalispell! We still have raffle tickets available for many awesome prizes, including a Commemorative Henry 45-70 lever action rifle, a Garmin mini gps, a quilt, and a pack saddle! Let me know how many you need.

Another important topic that is affecting public lands in HB 261. This bill would confuse the public as to what trails are open for motorized use, increasing encounters of e-bikes in the wilderness, and take away the management of those trails. I have written a letter on behalf of the board and the club letting our legislators know we oppose this house bill. Their contact information will be available in this newsletter for you to relay your opinion to them as well if you wish.

We hope to see you at our next meeting on February 20th in Columbus. Our educational program is Equine nutrition by Lee Schmelzer.

Melissa Codner

### **BBCH DIRECTORS**

...

Melissa Codner, President  
308-390-0465  
Dave Heinle, Vice President  
406-321-4326  
Laura O'Connor, Treasurer  
248-672-9518  
Randy Thomsen, Secretar  
406-328-7355  
Keith Brighton, Director  
406-425-1122  
Bob Knutson, Director  
406-698-0290

### **STATE DIRECTORS**

...

Randy Thomsen, Sr. Director  
406-425-0204  
John Jenkins, Jr. Director  
406-855-0238  
Melissa Codner, Alternate  
308-390-0465  
Keith Brighton, Alternate  
406-425-1122

### **NATIONAL DIRECTOR**

...

John Chepulis  
406-322-4823



## **Next Meeting:**

**February 20, 2023**

**Potluck @ 6:30**

**Meeting @ 7:00**

**Columbus Fire Station**

**944 E Pike**

**Columbus, MT**

**Education Program: Equine Nutrition with Lee Schmelzer**

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## ***2023 Membership dues:***

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

Not a member yet? Application available for download [here](#).

**2023 — BBCH PROPOSED PROJECT SCHEDULE**

***\*To be announced***

**NOTICES**

Each year the Beartooth Back Country Horsemen send 1 to 2 people to a multi day pack clinic. Last year the members were sent to Royal Tine Pack Clinic. We are taking names for interested parties to go to one of the pack clinics listed below. Please contact any one of the board members to get your name on the list so we can discuss it at the next board meeting. Please let them know which one would work with your schedule.

Royal Tine Pack School 3-Day Packing Course – \$750

**2023 Dates:** June 16-18 or June 23-25

How many times have you wanted to ride into the backcountry for several days to hunt or simply enjoy mother nature, but didn't know how to undertake this "monumental" task? This short class will give you the skills to do just that. This class is for both beginner or intermediate packers. The class will include lots of hands on packing with gentle mules as well as lecture type sessions where you'll learn important tips on how to have a fun, safe and successful pack trip. Classes are small so you'll have lots of personal time with us, your instructors. Special requests and questions are welcome. Whether you have packed a lot and are just looking to improve or whether you have never packed at all, this class would be beneficial to anyone looking to learn or improve their skills.

Classes are held outside of Philipsburg, MT in the foothills of the Anaconda Pintlar Wilderness. Lodging and meals are included. Students stay in wall tents with a wood stove and comfy cots and foam mattresses. All meals are hearty homestyle, just like in the backcountry. At the end of the class we will put some short mule strings together with various loads and go for a ride (\*250 pound rider limit for Sunday ride.)

3-Day Packing Course topics

- Gear list
- Saddling and parts identification
- Fitting the packsaddle
- Mantying loads for the Decker, and more!

**HB261 INFORMATION**

House Bill 261 was introduced by Steve Gunderson and a large number of backcountry non-profits, much like the Beartooth Back Country Horsemen, and public land managers are firmly against it. This bill's wording is incredibly confusing as to where the eBikes are allowed to go, and if passed we will definitely see an increase of eBikes on our trails. Under this bill the eBikes would be allowed in local and state jurisdictions but illegal on forest service land. Many of these trails start on local/state trails and end on the forest service. Here are some beneficial links to help you understand said bill to hear the facts about the bill and form your own opinion:

Video of the actual reading - The gentlemen from Wild Montana state the facts perfectly.

<http://sg001-harmony.sliq.net/00309/Harmony/en/PowerBrowser/PowerBrowserV2/20170221/-1/46892?agendaId=248244#info>

<https://fastdemocracy.com/bill-search/mt/2023/bills/MTB00011935/>

Follow it in almost real time and read the bill in its entirety.

[https://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0210W\\$BSIV.ActionQuery?P\\_BILL\\_NO1=261&P\\_BLTP\\_BILL\\_TYP\\_CD=HB&Z\\_ACTION=Find&P\\_SESS=20231](https://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0210W$BSIV.ActionQuery?P_BILL_NO1=261&P_BLTP_BILL_TYP_CD=HB&Z_ACTION=Find&P_SESS=20231)

<https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2023/billpdf/HB0261.pdf>

Find your senator here, I encourage you to form your own opinion and let them know as soon as possible:

<https://leg.mt.gov/map/>

## 2023 BCHMT Convention: April 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>, Kalispell, Montana

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2023, marks the 50th anniversary of the Back Country Horsemen, which started in the Flathead Valley of Montana and has since spread to 210 chapters in 32 states throughout the U.S. The anniversary event will be held at Majestic Valley Arena in Kalispell on April 14-16. The event will draw horsemen from the valley, as well as from all over the state of Montana and across the country.

We will have many seminars regarding horses and wild country.

There will be something for everyone:

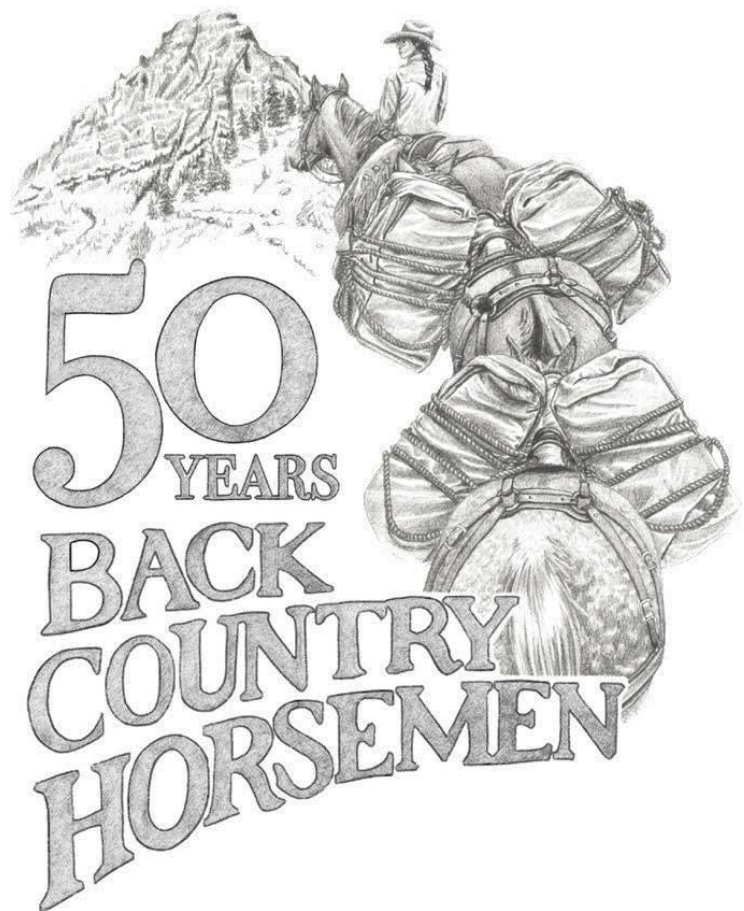
- Seminars regarding stock use and wild country
- Dinner and entertainment
- Vendor booths
- Food trucks
- 50th Anniversary keepsakes including belt buckles
- Raffle items to win/ live auction/ silent auction

The convention is an annual meeting which provides the opportunity for all chapters in the state to meet and hold a business meeting. According to BCH MT's constitution, certain business requires the vote of delegates, which provides chapters with up to 8 votes, rather than the standard 2 votes per chapter by their State Directors.

The State Chairman runs the convention itself. After elections are held Sunday morning for the State Officers, the newly elected Chairman runs the remainder of the meeting.

The BCHA national board meeting is taking place Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday following the State Convention. The current BCHA Chair will conduct the National Board of Directors meeting.

The agenda and registration information are detailed on the following pages.



Friday, April 14

- 11:00 AM-12:00 PM **State Board Meeting** - Location: Center Main Floor  
**Speaker: Wade Murphy:** State Board Meeting for all Chapters State Directors
- 12:00 PM-12:30 PM **Lunch trucks will be available at the South end**
- 12:30 PM-1:00 PM **Nominating Committee Meeting**  
 Location: TBD  
**Speaker: Wade Murphy:** To be attended by the Senior Director of each chapter
- 1:00 PM-1:50 PM **USFS Packing Demonstration**  
 Location: TBD
- 1:00 PM-1:50 PM **Long Riding**  
 Location: TBD  
**Speaker: Gillian Larsen**
- 2:00 PM-2:50 PM **TrailMeister - Navigation**  
 Location: TBD  
**Speaker: Robert Eversole:** TrailMeister is your horse trails and camp guide to horse riding trails and horse camps. From trailheads in the high country to state parks, county parks, campgrounds, bridle trails, and wilderness areas, we've got your trail ride listed. Need a trail map? We've got the...[Read More](#)
- 2:00 PM-2:55 PM **Back Country Horse Care**  
 Location: TBD  
 A review of backcountry horse care by a Veterinarian
- 3:00 PM-3:50 PM **Brand Inspections -State of Montana**  
 Location: TBD  
 A review of the State of Montana brand inspection requirements and needs.
- 3:00 PM-3:50 PM **Montana Wildflowers**  
 Location: TBD  
**Speaker: Jennifer Hinta Guse**  
 A slide presentation of Montana's Wildflowers
- 4:00 PM-4:50 PM **Book Review of Heroes of the Bob Marshall Wilderness**  
 Location: TBD  
**Speaker: John Fraley:** A review of **Heroes of the Bob Marshall Wilderness**.
- 4:00 PM-4:50 PM **Mule Training**  
 Location: TBD  
**Speaker: Wade Murphy:** Mule Training techniques
- 5:00 PM-5:50 PM **Dinner - Food Trucks available onsite**  
 Location: Main Rm  
 Buy your own dinner and mingle with the other attendees
- 6:00 PM-6:50 PM **Slide show and presentation of "A Hundred Days of Solitude."**  
 Location: Main Rm  
**Speaker: Amy Pearson:** Slide show and presentation of "A Hundred Days of Solitude."
- 7:00 PM-8:30 PM **Chainsaw Competition**  
 Location: Main Rm  
 Team competition with meet and greet mingle



Saturday, April 15

- 8:00 AM-8:30 AM **Opening/Flag Ceremony and BCH 50 years of History**  
 Location: Main Rm Opening/Flag Ceremony and BCH 50 years of History review with slides, readings, and pictures
- 8:30 AM-10:00 AM **BCHMT State Board Meeting**  
 Location: Main Rm **Speaker: Wade Murphy:** State Board Business Meeting for BCH of Montana
- 10:00 AM-10:15 AM **Break**  
 Location: Main Rm
- 10:15 AM-11:00 AM **US Forest Service Review**  
 Location: Main Rm A discussion of current Forest Service issues and news
- 11:00 AM-12:00 PM **Dr. Eva Maggie**  
 Location: Main Rm **Speaker: Dr. Eva Maggie:** University of Montana Policy and Packing class
- 12:00 PM-1:00 PM **Lunch - onsite Food Trucks are available**
- 1:00 PM-1:50 PM **Wayne Chaberlin - Book Reading**
- 1:00 PM-1:50 PM **USFS Packing Demonstration**  
 Location: TBD
- 1:00 PM-1:50 PM **Brand Inspector**  
 Location: TBD
- 2:00 PM-2:50 PM **When The Sh@t Hits The Fan**  
 Location: TBD **Speaker: Robert Eversole**
- 2:00 PM-2:50 PM **USFS Packing Demonstration**  
 Location: TBD
- 2:00 PM-2:50 PM **Vet - Backcountry Horse Care**  
 Location: TBD
- 3:00 PM-3:50 PM **Book Reading**  
 Location: TBD **Speaker: John Fraley**
- 3:00 PM-3:50 PM **Mule Training**  
 Location: TBD **Speaker: Wade Murphy**
- 3:00 PM-3:50 PM **Long Riding**  
 Location: TBD **Speaker: Gillian Larsen**
- 4:00 PM-4:50 PM **ABC's of Horse Camping**  
 Location: TBD **Speaker: Robert Eversole**
- 4:00 PM-4:50 PM **Montana Wildflowers**  
 Location: TBD **Speaker: Jennifer Hinta Guse**
- 4:00 PM-4:50 PM **Vet - Backcountry Horse Care- vital signs**  
 Location: TBD
- 5:00 PM-5:50 PM **Happy Hour**  
 Location: TBD

- 6:00 PM-7:30 PM **Banquet Dinner**  
Location: Ctr Main Flr
- 7:00 PM-7:20 PM **Keynote Speaker**  
Location: Main Rm **Speaker: Bill Hodge**
- 7:15 PM-8:00 PM **Live Auction**  
Location: Cer Main Flr
- 8:00 PM-8:30 PM **Raffle, etc., Close Silent Auction**
- 8:30 PM-11:30 PM **Music & Dancing**

## Sunday, April 16

- 8:00 AM-10:00 AM **BCH of Montana Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Speaker: Wade Murphy**
- 10:00 AM-10:15 AM **Break**
- 10:15 AM-11:15 AM **BCH of Montana past chairs discussion**  
**Speaker: Wade Murphy**

Main Room

- 11:15 AM-12:00 PM **The Future of BCH**  
Location: Main Rm **Speakers: Wade Murphy, Mark Himmel:** A discussion of where BCH is headed and how to get there.

**REGISTRATION OPENS DECEMBER 17, 2022 ON THE FOLLOWING LINK:**

[HTTPS://WHOVA.COM/PORTAL/REGISTRATION/BCHAC\\_202304/](HTTPS://WHOVA.COM/PORTAL/REGISTRATION/BCHAC_202304/)

**ALL ACTIVITIES WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE MAJESTIC VALLEY ARENA**

3630 US Highway 93 N, Kalispell, MT 59901, United States

**CAMPING AND LODGING:**

<https://whova.com/web/HwUjAg6MaPZbN7y9SJ6t9nmOJP0x2ThFJd9QzY6yyg8%3D/Logistics/>



**MINUTES –JANUARY 5, 2023– BBCH BOARD MEETING**

In attendance: Melissa Codner, Dave Heinle, John Jenkins, Bob Knutson, Randy Thomsen. Keith Brighton via phone.

Meeting called to order at 7:15 pm at Columbus Chamber of Commerce

John Jenkins moved to approve December minutes, Bob Knutson second. Motion passed.

President's report – Received a thank you note from the Nussbaum family for the card.

Vice Pres. Report – Commend John Chepulis on his work with the volunteer hours report. Our chapter is still in the top 25% of chapters in Montana for volunteer hours from last year. This year Dave Heinle volunteered to take charge of compiling our chapter hours, mileage, and people for our projects.

Education – Melissa provided a chart to document speakers for meetings and projects for the year. Ben Daley will be contacted to see if he will speak at the January meeting. Lee Schmelzer will be asked to speak in February or March on equine nutrition. Other people for upcoming meetings included Stewart to speak on bears and Stovall about brand inspections.

Dave Heinle moved to book the Columbus Fire Hall for the next 12 months. Bob Knutson second. Motion passed

Communication – The board hasn't found anyone to take over the newsletter. Melissa Codner has the jump drive from Robin with the newsletter format on it.

John Jenkins moved to provide Jessi Erickson a complimentary family membership for her continued work on our website. Keith Brighton second. Motion passed

Discussion about using Gagle Email to distribute the newsletter, having different people do the newsletter each month, and password protection for newsletter.

Activities – Renting the Meyers CK cabin for a mid to late August rendezvous. Discussion about holding it on the West Fork of the Boulder. Board members will ask at the next general meeting for input. State Board members will ask at next State meeting about holding an outreach meeting to recruit new members in Big Timber area.

Discussion about Spring Clinic as a get together because we do not plan to have a formal Defensive Horseman program this year. Defensive horseman can be done online and a brief discussion with skills check can be performed at a trail head by a competent instructor.

Issues – The State board had discussion about the Crazy Mountain land swaps that are proposed. Discussion about the Loop Trail and Rock Ck Trail.

Old Business – The board discussed some issues with the Christmas party.

New Business – Open Board seat. Dave Edwards is not interested in filling it due to other commitments. John Jenkins moved to appoint Sean Chepulis to the open board seat to fill the remainder of Ray Longstreath's seat for 1 year. Dave Heinle second. Motion passed.

Discussion on when to meet with the USFS and who would like to attend. Plan to get together with USFS in February or March. Dave Heinle will contact the USFS and set up the meeting to discuss their plans and ours for this year. He volunteered to be the contact person with the USFS for this year.

John Jenkins volunteered to be the contact between our club and the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Foundation (ABW)

Randy Thomsen will update our list of directors with the Back Country of Montana for this year.

Discussion on our club goals for the year to increase membership.

State Board update – Finances are in good standing, a lawyer has been retained to work on the “Light On the Land” program. Dues to the state will be going up in 2024. A new chainsaw and crosscut saw program is being worked on that will be more extensive. Defensive Horseman is also being revised.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:20 pm

**HOW MANY MORE WEEKS OF WINTER?!**



TRAIL OF THE MONTH



PC: <https://www.themandagies.com/boiling-river-yellowstone/>

“Boiling River Trail” Gardiner\*

Itching for a ride in the midst of winter, we loved this option of a short ride and warm dip in the river!

\*Remembering areas affected by the 2022 flooding. This area was significantly impacted and is currently closed.

Please see <https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/montana/winter-horseback-riding-mt/> for more information on this trail and other winter riding spots.

Are there more like this? We would love to know! Feel free to email us your favorite winter riding spots.

**THANK YOU TO THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT!**




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*Dan & Emily Aadland*  
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 Absarokee, MT 59001  
 406-328-4159 <http://my.montana.net/araa/>

**Stillwater Veterinary Clinic**

557 North Montana Avenue  
 Absarokee, MT 59001  
 406-328-4159

**Broken Fiddle Ranch**  
 Dave & Chris Heinle  
 Clyde Park, MT 59018  
 (406) 321-4326  
[brokenfiddleranch@gmail.com](mailto:brokenfiddleranch@gmail.com)



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