

Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

President's Pen

September 2023



Many of us are hauling and stacking hay and seeing the colors of fall and possibly preparing our pack stock to haul game. It's been a great summer full of miles and memories introducing the Beartooths to a lot of new members. To drive up to the trailhead and see so many trailers has been really heartwarming. Our end of year camp-out was a success as well! We ate great food, shared mountain memories, and had some fun competitions! It was our biggest camp-out so far with 28 people that showed up! It was great, people showed up even if they couldn't bring a horse to just be together! This is a great group of people who are doing amazing things and you should be proud! Be sure to check out a new overnight trail clearing towards the end of September!

Sincerely,

Melissa Codner

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Next Meeting:



2023 Membership dues:

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

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

2023 – WORK PROJECT/ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

Sept 9 or 16 (Sat) Stillwater ride? Put up trailhead sign, if open.

*Request from Emily, the fish tech for CGNF: She is taking the watershed team and planning a trip out to the Buffalo Fork drainage in the AB Wilderness to do some work the week of September 11. She would like to know if anyone would have availability to help pack the crew into the cabin 9/11-9/15. It would be her and 2-3 others. Please contact John Jenkins at john.k.jenkins@gmx.us if you have any availability to help out on this project.

****Please note any unauthorized trail clearings are not covered under Forest Service insurance****

Buffalo Fork Cr Cabin Pack In (Aug 14-17)

The club packed in five MT FWP fish biologists for stream flow surveys on Monday, Aug 14. The project was initially a fish kill in this area to minimize the rainbows downstream in the Park, but that is being held up. This was mostly stream flow surveys.



BBCH PO Box 614, Absarokee, MT 59001



We all met at the Box Canyon parking lot south of Big Timber the evening prior. We had a nice view of the Perseid meteor shower there which supposedly peaked the day before. Six of us were present for the trip - David Edwards, Hannah Orth, Laura Michalak, Jon Shamel, Bob Knutson and yours truly. The next morning, the FWP personnel arrived, absent the key for the cabin – which had been picked up in Billings AND left in Billings. That delayed our start until noon as Ben Bailey graciously picked up another key in Livingston for us that morning. We were told there would be five backpacks and gear, five sets of waders and some limited scientific equipment (stream flow meter), but the team elected to carry in some of their own gear. We took in 10 pack animals for their gear and ours. One poor pony only had two fishing rods in a scabbard. You might be surprised, but we had to slightly adjust that saddle twice in 17 miles. It was one of the first trips I can remember in a couple of years where we were just a little “over horse-powered”. I couldn’t very well send that horse back to Lockwood. The FWP rode ATVs as far as they could up to Independence. The views coming over Boulder Pass were magnificent.



We dropped the gear at the confluence of the E. Fork about 3.5 miles from our final destination. We arrived at the Buffalo Fork Admin Cabin about 7:20. Everyone was pretty tired. Fortunately we had pre-prepared food... red beans and rice courtesy of Jon Shamel. The next two days were spent grazing the horses, hiking, cooking and eating, or riding to Hidden Lake and south down the Buffalo Fork Creek. Meal planning and prep was courtesy of David Edwards. We ate well, let me tell you. The menu included pancakes or eggs with sausage for breakfast; red beans and rice, chicken fajitas and roasted corn, or burgers and pork and beans for dinner. The weather was hot in the afternoons but the nights were cool. We had fresh trout one night too!



Fishing? Yes, we did some. Hidden Lake was only three miles away and was supposed to have large rainbow hybrids. We can confirm that. Grizzlies in the area? Confirmed. I think there were five sightings including ours, FWP and one on the way home on the road. While I didn't fish it, the Buffalo Fork Creek downstream of the cabin looked like it had two miles of meandering rapids/fast water/pool followed by rapids/fast water/pool over and over again as far as I could see. It looked like good fly fishing. I'll have to go back.



We headed out Thursday morning, splitting into two groups. One group picked up the gear and rode out ahead. The rest of us came behind. Thanks to Hannah for packing much of the FWP gear and the stream flow meter. The rides were a little long for my old horses, but they came through fine. I had a little trouble figuring out the order for my five pack animals on the way in. Some of the time I had two ponied, together or individually, by other riders. I have a couple of horses/mules that just won't be pulled behind a certain other horse or mule, and I don't usually have five to pull. I had two days to think about the order. I figured it out after some thought, and tried it out on the way back. On the return trip I pulled my five pack animals out all the way out, more or less, without a hitch. We clocked the distance at 16.8 miles one way by GPS. That may not be a lot to some of you real packers, but it was to me. Fortunately two animals were just about empty, and there weren't many top loads on the way out as you can see from the pictures. I had a good man behind me, David, to help with any adjustments (which weren't many). All in all it was a great trip, beautiful scenery, and good company.

Submitted by John Jenkins



2-MAN CROSSCUT SAW COMPETITION



Results: Two-man Crosscut Saw Competition at the BBCH Summer Rendezvous
~10 inch pine (with somewhat fewer knots than last year)

TEAM	TIME
1. Sean - Mark	36.59 sec
2. John Shamel- John J	43.77 sec
3. Brad – Randy T	59.19 sec
4. Dave H – Roland	61.46 sec
5. Melissa C– Kris H	87.22 sec

CAMP OUT PICTURES





SFS NATIONAL TRAIL PROGRAM UPDATE

"USFS Partners Presentation on National Trail Program Updates"

"As discussed this week during the EC call and with our Directors, attached is the slide deck

([PartnerPresentation_08.23.2023_508c.pdf](#)) used by Brenda Yankoviak during her presentation to partners.

As you will see, the agency continues to take trails very seriously, including its current 10-Year Trail Challenge (we're in Year 3 now).

Best,

Randy Rasmussen, M.S.

*Director, Public Lands & Recreation | [Back Country Horsemen of America](#)
WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org | 541.602.0713 | www.bcha.org"*



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[Trails are Common Ground](#)

RESOURCES

Life Flight Network

Let's talk about the not so fun part of the backcountry. There are definite risks involved about being away from civilization and being self reliant if anything goes awry. If something bad happens and you are unable to exit on foot or horseback, the only option is via helicopter. It is incredibly expensive but there is some insurance for the just in case instance. Following is the link for informative purposes only.



PLEASE NOTE: This is NOT a sales pitch. This is a non-commissioned link.

<https://member.lifeflight.org/#lp-pom-block-370>

Membership is under \$100 and, according to the website, will cover the flight. There is also additional ground insurance.

Online Defensive Horsemen Information

Website - <https://bchmt.org/wp/education/>

Scroll down towards the middle and you will see Horse Safety

This is good information and a great resource for new members that still need some defensive horsemen prior to doing any work activities this year.



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