

Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

President's Pen

What a busy few months! We hosted an amazing youth clinic, chainsaw certification, first aid, and started our trail clearings!

Hosting a youth clinic was rewarding and very well received. First aid knowledge is always important, and starting trail clearings is a great way to give back to the community and help maintain the natural beauty of the area. The weather didn't cooperate for April, as always, the updated work schedule is included.

Despite the unpredictable April weather, it's fantastic that you're continuing with your important work. Remember, every effort you put in contributes to making a positive impact on the environment and the people around you.

See you on the trail!

Melissa



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NEXT MEETING:



Monday, May 20 at 6:30 pm
Columbus Fire Hall
Education: TBD

2024 Membership dues:

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

Please pay your 2024 dues! You can deliver them to Jon S. at our next meeting or mail them to PO Box 614, Absarokee, MT 59001. We are not raising our dues as we want to encourage new and existing members to stay active.

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

YOUTH TRAIL CLINIC HIGHLIGHTS





CHAINSAW CERTIFICATION





TRAIL WORK/OTHER PROJECT PACK PROJECTS

APRIL

- 13 - Saturday - Defensive Horsemanship, Red Lodge**
- 20 - Saturday - Trail Clearing - Island Lake**
- 26 - Friday Evening - Youth Trail Clinic Set-up, Columbus**
- 27 - Saturday Youth Trail Clinic – Trail Work**

MAY

- 3 - Friday - Recon Meyers Creek Gravel Project**
- 4 - Saturday - Meyers Creek Trail clear or gravel packing**
- 10 - Friday - Recon Stillwater**
- 11 - Saturday – Main Stillwater & Island Lake Chain Saw Crew, a lot of large downfall**
- 18 - Saturday - Make up or finish Stillwater**
- 25-27 Saturday – Mon W Fork Stillwater, Camp out**
- 31 - Optional Camp out at Trailhead**

JUNE

- 1 - Saturday Trout Creek Trail Clearing and Camp out & Mentorship**
- 8 - Saturday - Meyer's Cr gravel packing or trail clearing**
- 15 - Saturday – Clear Earnie Strum**
- 22 - Saturday - Fishtail Days - Ride in Parade and host a booth**
- 27 - Thursday - ABWF Pack In - East Rosebud**

JULY

- 2 - Tuesday - ABWF Pack Out - East Rosebud**
- 6 - Saturday - ABWF Pack In - Meatrack, will need to overnight**
- 11 - Thursday - ABWF Pack Out - Meatrack, will need to overnight**
- 13 - Saturday - Nye Goes Nuts**
- 18 - Thursday - ABWF Pack In - Clarks Fork, probably overnight due to the drive**
- 22 - Monday - ABWF Pack Out - Clarks Fork, probably overnight due to the drive**
- 27 - Saturday - Absarokee Days Parade and Booth**

September 13th - Camp out at Meyers Creek

BBCH PO Box 614, Absarokee, MT 59001

MY FAVORITE BACKCOUNTRY AND CAMP FOOD PART 2

REAL FOOD, TRADITIONAL OPTIONS AND SOME OF MY TRICKS AND TIPS

What do you like to take into the backcountry to eat? What are your favorite meals for both long and short trips? Over the years beginning with backpacking in the Appalachians and Ozarks in the 1970-1980s then the Rocky Mountains after that in CO, WY and MT I have experimented with a lot of different styles and cooking types. But here are a few of my thoughts on different camp food, a few of my favorite things, and a few tips I have picked up along the way. Maybe these are just things that work for me. Different camp food styles have their advantages and disadvantages, and I still use them *all* depending on what kind of trip I am going on. I combine different food types in a single trip, and I'll try not to offend any bonafide gourmet chefs, nutritionists or Dutch oven bakers. I am none of those things.

Last month I wrote about keeping a large storage container of dry goods, suppliers, condiments and dehydrated/freeze dried food items. Pull things from that for various summer trips. And I wrote about some canned goods, prepackaged and prepared items. Now on to real food and traditional/survival style foods.

“REAL” FOOD

There's nothing like a real 2-3 course backcountry or trailhead meal at breakfast or at the end of a long hard day of riding, hunting or trail clearing. Cooked in the outdoors, everything tastes better! Even if it's on the back porch.

First a comment on eggs. I like fresh eggs. I like fresh eggs a lot! But not store-bought eggs, even the free-range organic non-soy non-GMO etc. aren't as good as our hens' eggs. I know some folks like to figure out ways to pack egg cartons so they don't break. If you have to have fried eggs, I guess you *have* to do it that way. I have had eggs still break in the hard plastic containers if you use one of those because ... they don't handle the larger eggs. I didn't realize that when I put them in. I like moist scrambled eggs. I once heard someone say it takes a half hour to make scrambled eggs *correctly*. While I'm not sure it takes that long, it does take much longer than the 90 seconds needed for a fried egg. Maybe several minutes. I scramble a bunch of fresh eggs at home from our hens, shred cheese in them and pour in a Nalgene bottle and freeze. Take on a trip and thaw 15-20 mins and spoon out however much you want. The key to moist scrambled eggs is very low heat and don't stir them to death – that's what everyone does. Let them cook a little (slowly) and fold them over, and don't overcook them so they are crumbly and dry. Keep them moist and remember they keep cooking some once you take the skillet off the fire. Eggs combined with heating up the precooked Jimmy Dean sausages gets you going quickly in the morning with a good breakfast and not much preparation or time in camp.

For those mornings where you have to get going quickly, I'm fine with (REAL) coffee and instant oatmeal. Just not instant coffee- I don't like the taste. A small supply of granola or raisins added to the oatmeal really adds to it. And on really cold mornings my campmates have added leftover hot chocolate mix and Pendletons to the oatmeal/granola/raisins and said it was even better.

For horse packing, pancake mix and pre-prepared dried hash browns are also quick. I prefer the dried rather than frozen hashbrowns in the large package. For obvious reasons: no refrigeration. They require about 15 mins soaking in hot water first.



Lunch. Some folks take prepackaged lunches like Lunchables and prepared sandwiches, like you might put in a kid's lunch box when you don't have time to make it from scratch. I absolutely despise those things! I generally opt for real food. REAL food for REAL horsemen and horsewomen. A real sandwich and chips fits easily enough in a saddle bag. And if you are camped and riding from the trailhead every day, then make it fresh from your truck every morning, whether it's PB and J or a ham on rye with all the fixin's. I often just prefer chips/energy bar/jerky or some combination thereof and eat while I ride. I don't mind drinking a lot of water, but sometimes I break it up with those little packets of Kool-Aid type flavoring. I like double strength. Two packets to a large Nalgene bottle, not one.

The most important meal however is the end of the day meal. I suspect most folks don't need my input here, so I'll keep it short. Grilled meat is always great. I always pack a small grill to throw over a fire, large enough for 2 chicken breasts or steaks. Or these can be pan fried. For these meals I like a can of veggies. Baked potatoes are great, but take time I often don't have. I keep aluminum foil and butter for trout. Just gut, rinse, add a little butter and salt, roll in 2 layers of foil and slow cook on the edge of the fire. I often carry cornmeal/fish fry and a small bottle of oil to fry fresh fish, but I usually end up using the foil method. I suppose I should stop carrying oil and fish fry mix.

Some of the best meals we have in hunting camp are made at home, double bagged in freezer bags, frozen, packed in and then heated in camp... More time for hunting and camp chores. Spaghetti sauce is made at home, and the pasta cooked in camp. Stews (thick) with garlic bread are made in camp. Fajitas with the meat and veggies are prepared at home. Just heat up the tortillas in a skillet or on top of the wood stove in hunting camp and heat the canned beans in a pot. All the mess is made at home. Just one pot to clean. Chili is another similar meal.

TRADITIONAL (Survival style)

I've done all of these at one time or another, and not just for horse- packing trips.

Jerky. Who hasn't made jerky? I usually carry this in my saddlebags for a snack. I usually keep it cold/refrigerated at home when I have made it. My favorite is pheasant jerky with Cajun seasoning that my brother and I used to make from hunting trips in Nebraska. I'll keep it refrigerated and use as needed for half a year. The store-bought beef jerky has a short storage life once opened – just a couple of days. I have purchased one of those big bags of jerky for a 2-3 day trip, eaten half, and not refrigerated it for a couple of weeks. When I pulled it out of the pantry for another weekend trip it had a science experiment growing on it. That's \$10 wasted.

Pemmican is calorie rich. It's made with suet (tallow) which is visceral fat, like around the kidneys. Lean meat is dried, ground and mixed with suet and spices or berries. I get suet from a grocery store with a butcher or at a butcher shop. Once dried, the oil mixed with the meat keeps moisture out so it stores for a long time.

Hardtack. Traditional ship's biscuits. My dad made this for our hunting trips growing up. My dad was in the army, not the navy, but I guess he grew up in the depression eating this or something like it. Flour, salt and water. Baked in a flat pan. And baked some more and more. And then more. As I remember a few of these a day were enough to keep me and my little brother going all day. We generally moistened them to eat them so we didn't break our teeth. My dad tells me when he grew up, he was the designated dog food cook for his dad's (coon) hunting hounds. It was made the same way as hardtack but cornmeal instead of flour and some oil, if you were fortunate to have both. Corn was easily grown in the rocky hills of the Ozarks but wheat flour wasn't. So I think corn was the staple there. Hardtack can get ruined if it gets wet. I haven't had hardtack for years but it's pretty plain as I remember.

Pemmican and hardtack have a long shelf life. You can make these in the spring or summer, then store in the refrigerator and use as needed all year.

Older style Bannock bread and many recipes I find for it are basically hardtack, so the comments below regard a more modern or hybrid bread from the British Isles or Scotland. It's unleavened like hardtack. I think this style of bread preparation has been around a long time. Just ground flour and water, maybe a little oil and salt and fried or baked. I read it has been used for centuries in many different cultures.

Modern Bannock style bread combines some of the good features of the last two options – uses an oil like pemmican does and the long baking process of hardtack. These two things keep moisture out and extend shelf life. One part oil or butter (suet would make it longer lasting and is preferred), one part oatmeal, two parts flour. I prefer suet which you can get at some grocery stores. A little water and flavorings can be added like sugar or allspice, raisins. Melt the fat and make a consistency like those prefab cookie doughs. Pan bake it like hardtack in thinnish cakes about the size of a very large cookie. Low heat 125-200 F for an hour gets them pretty dry and crispy on the outside and a little soft inside. It can be pan-fried in camp; Trailmeister.com has a recipe with a few extras, but I've never tried it. It has baking soda and powder and rises more than mine I suspect. The oatmeal adds fiber to keep you "regular" in the back country – *unlike* the other options for "traditional" survival style foods. Bannock and hardtack are easy to carry and fairly energy dense. Bannock can crumble if not protected somewhat

when packed. If made right with suet it can supposedly last years like pemmican. Many recipes for Bannock bread without oatmeal are basically hardtack with oil. I found this recently "*Crackers crumble, tortillas mold, but Bannock is forever.*" I don't honestly know.

If I really wanted to try a minimalist approach to a trip sometime, say covering a lot of miles in the mountains without layover days, breaking camp every day, riding all day and using limited supplies, I would probably use a combination of jerky/pemmican and Bannock style bread as primary food sources with some extras, and plenty of coffee and some dried meat. That would give you protein, carbs, fat and fiber, and coffee. All five major food groups! And it would get you moving in more ways than one! I just hate to ride constipated.



CLOSING THOUGHTS

Always carry extra. I cannot honestly think of a single time backpacking, camping or horse packing in 40 years that I have not come out with a day or two of extra food left over. I've usually had plenty for visitors and helped a few unprepared sojourners in the back (and even front) country. Usually, my stock grazing time morning and evening is my food prep/cook/eating time. But if you have to set up/break down camp, prepackaged is an option I often use for those days. More than likely, you've tried several of these options. Combine styles depending on what you are doing. Try a different style of food like one of the traditional and survival style foods. Experiment with something different; you might find something you like. And if you haven't baked a little in the back country or at least at the trailhead, I would highly recommend you try it. I'm not an expert baker, and you don't have to be. Remember the butter and honey. Find one easy recipe and try it.

Bon Appetit!

Submitted by John Jenkins (Hee/Haw)

FOR SALE

If you have a saddle or piece of packing equipment, please feel free to email the information to Rochelle at ebenezerequine@gmail.com. The listing will be removed after 3 months unless you request otherwise.

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.



MEMORABLE MAY MOMENTS



PC: <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/bc-northern-lights-horseback-aurora-photos>



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