

Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

President's Pen

Hello Everyone,

November is here and that means one important event is upon us....ELECTIONS!

This month at the general meeting we will be holding elections for your board members. This is an important meeting to vote for the board members who will be representing us both here and at the state level. Please make time to attend and let your voice be heard. Our meetings are held in Columbus at the Palladium Draughthouse. 702 E Pike Ave. starting at 6:30 pm.

At our general meeting we will also be continuing our basic pack clinic series. This is a hands-on interactive series to give our members an introduction to packing into the backcountry. The main purpose is to provide a general overview of how to get your gear from the trailer to a camp sight. We welcome all to attend and hopefully provide their input as to how they pack and what works for them.

With the end of the year approaching our club Christmas Party is coming up. We decided to hold it on Saturday December 13th. The change is an attempt to make it more accessible to our membership as Monday nights can interfere with the work week. Keep watching your email for updates as the date approaches.

The Belfry Trailhead Project is still progressing. The BLM and MDOT are working on access and getting supplies gathered up to begin the construction phase. Our club has agreed to help with various tasks as this trailhead takes shape. This will include helping to fence the parking lot once the clearing and gravel have been completed. We hope to have this project completed for a springtime grand opening. There will be a kiosk placed in the parking lot with information and a map of the area. As a partner in this project the kiosk also will have information about the Beartooth Back Country Horsemen. This will give us an opportunity to showcase ourselves to the public. We feel this is a great chance to further our mission to help with access to public lands.

BBCH DIRECTORS

...

Randy Thomsen President

Sean Chepulis, Vice President

Sarah Lewis, Secretary

John Shamel, Treasurer

Clark Linn, Board Member

Scott Fluor, Board Member

Bill Yager, Board Member

STATE DIRECTORS

...

John Jenkins, Sr. Director
406-855-0238

Randy Thomsen, Jr. Director
406-425-0204

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

...

John Chepulis
406-322-4823

Next year is going to be a big year for us as we plan for the 2027 BCHMT State convention here in Billings. The convention gives our club the opportunity to showcase our beautiful area to the rest of the BCHMT clubs. We are asking for members to volunteer in the planning and hosting of our convention. Please reach out to a board member to see what you can do to help.

I hope everyone is having a great year enjoying our wonderful public lands. The snow will soon be here and it will be time to turn our equines out to pasture so get out and ride while the weather permits.

See you on the trails,
Randy Thomsen

NEXT MEETING:



November 17, 2025

Potluck at 6:30 ♦ Meeting at 7:00!

Palladium Draughtaus
702 E Pike Ave, Columbus

Education: BASIC PACKING SERIES CONTINUES

2025 Membership dues:

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

NOTICE: 2026 DUES INCREASE

Business Membership \$45
Family Membership \$40
Individual Membership \$30

Please pay your 2025 dues!

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

5 REASONS TO BE THANKFUL FOR HORSES

December 18, 2024 – Devin Conley

<https://horseandrider.com/western-horse-life/5-reasons-to-be-thankful-for-horses/>

There are so many reasons to be thankful for the horses in our life, that we don't have room to list them all. But, aside from the joy they bring us, here are 5 reasons to be thankful that you have horses in your life.



Horses give us so much, from teaching us lessons, to making us laugh. There are so many reasons to be thankful for them. Tobias/adobe.stock.com

1. They Keep Us Grounded in the Present

Horses have an incredible ability to bring us into the moment. When you're in the saddle or even just working with a horse, there's no time to dwell on the past or worry about the future. Their sensitivity to energy and emotion reminds us to stay calm, centered, and focused. Horses teach mindfulness in a way few other experiences can. It's important to stay focused on the task at hand when you're riding, which allows you to disconnect from the worries of life. [[Mind Full? Try Mindfulness](#)]

2. We Build Resilience

Let's be honest: working with horses isn't always smooth sailing. From mastering a flying lead change to handling a spooky horse, they challenge us to be patient, adaptable, and persistent. Each setback is an opportunity to grow stronger—and for that, we owe them gratitude. You're going to have ups and downs when it comes to training, but patience pays off, and your hard work will be rewarded.

3. They Connect Us to Nature

In today's fast-paced, tech-driven world, horses offer a much-needed escape. They reconnect us to the great outdoors, whether it's through a trail ride with friends under autumn leaves or simply spending time in the barn. Horses give us a reason to unplug and immerse ourselves in the natural world. Spending time with your horse is a great chance to unplug and unwind.

4. Horses Give Us Community

Horses have a way of bringing people together. Whether it's the camaraderie of a barn family, a dose of healthy competition, or simply swapping stories with fellow horse owners, horses create lasting connections. They're at the heart of communities that support, inspire, and celebrate one another. Some of the best friends I have ever made were through the horse industry. We can relate to each other, build each other up, and learn from each other—horses give us this community.

5. They Keep Us Humble

Let's face it: horses have a knack for ego-busting when you need it. Whether he's unceremoniously dumping you into a puddle or trotting away from you in the pasture when you're trying to catch him, until you're sweating buckets, your horse has his own way of keeping you humble. Plus, between cleaning stalls, hauling hay, and posting a long trot, they're better than any gym membership!

2027 CONVENTION OPPORTUNITIES

WE ARE HOSTING CONVENTION IN 2027!

If you'd like to join the committee for opportunities to serve in the following areas: Communications, Meals, Education, Fundraising, Entertainment, Volunteers, Vendors, Sponsorships, & Decorations. please reach out to Melissa C. via email codner.melissa@gmail.com or text 308-390-0465.



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.

OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

Board Meeting October 2nd, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:38pm at the Stillwater County Chamber of Commerce.

In attendance: Randy Thomsen, Clark Linn, Scott Fluor, Bill Yager, Jon Shamel and Sarah Lewis.

Motion to approve the July board meeting minutes made by Jon Shamel. The motion was seconded by Bill Yager. No discussion. Motion carried.

President's Report: Randy reported that he mailed the BLM letters to MT & WY. He sent the out check for the museum donation to the State Board. Back Country Horsemen have raised approximately \$22,000 throughout the state for the back country horsemen museum.

Vice President's Report: Nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report: Report delayed due to technical issues with Yellowstone Bank. Jon will bring report to November board meeting for approval.

Committee Reports

2027 Convention: Melissa Codner (chair). Randy received the BCHMT timeline for convention. He will get to Melissa to confirm with her current timeline. Convention preview slide show needs to be made for BCHMT convention spring of 2026.

Activities: Sarah Lewis (chair). Christmas party to be held Saturday, December 13 th , 2025, at Hannah Hall in Fishtail, MT. CPR certification tentatively to be held February 2026, Clark Linn looking in to scheduling a class. There is now a Defensive Horsemanship Class online. We will start using it for new members. BBCH will hold an in-person class in 2027. Discussion of moving board meetings to Joliet community center for a more central meeting location for board members. Cost is \$20.00 per usage. Clark Linn read the rental agreement. Motion to move the board meetings to the Joliet Community Center beginning January 2026 made by Clark Linn. Seconded by Scott Fluor. No discussion. Motion carried. Discussion of Youth Packing Clinic and need for planning meeting. Sarah will organize planning meeting for December.

Education: BBCH began a series of packing education classes at our general meetings. Going well so far. Discussion of how to increase general meeting attendance including the day, time, and location of meetings. Randy is planning to bring this up for discussion at our next general meeting to get the members' input. Discussion of creating a poll for members' opinions to give out at the Christmas Party and put out as a poll Facebook. Scott Fluer and Sarah Lewis will draft a questionnaire and poll

Projects: Jon Shamel (chair). No updates.

Communications: Randy Thomsen (chair). Nothing to report.

Election Committee: Reported that there is enough interest to fill all open positions. 3 Local Board positions, 1 State alternate, and 1 State Board. Elections will be held at November's general meeting.

Unfinished Business:

Belfry Access- BLM is still working on getting the trailhead project funded. They are currently working on a clearance form for a Sage Grouse Impact Study. Scott Fluer is working on and "Approach Permit" with the BLM. 1500 tons of gravel is secured by Jenny Alexander (BLM). Jenny is hoping to use BLM maintenance operator to spread this gravel. Volunteer work may be needed to fence the perimeter. Currently working with a 60–90-day project estimate. They are hoping to have a Grand

Opening in the spring of 2026. Clark Linn requested Scott Fluer to speak to BLM to see if there are any new grants available. Discussion of fundraising ideas to help complete this project.

New Business:

Discussion about raising our membership dues to match Montana State's (BCHMT) dues. This would raise our chapters' dues by \$5.00 per tier. Motion to increase our Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Chapter's membership dues to \$30.00 (individual), \$40.00 (family), and \$45.00 (business) made by Clark Linn. Discussion of state's dues for 2026 and our \$500.00 state donation per year to make up for our current lower dues. Discussion of needing to budget funds for trail projects each year instead of making up for lower dues. The motion was seconded by Bill Yager. Motion carried.

Discussion of which trailheads need work. This will help us to plan our projects for 2026 season.

Discussion of creating a Trailhead Access Map. This would include location, directions, trailer access, and in-depth trail information. An example was shared from the Shoshone Club. Discussion of how to communicate better for our 2026 projects to get more participants. Goal of utilizing the information in the newsletter better.

State Update: Nothing to report.

Motion to adjourn made by Randy Thomsen. Motion seconded by Clark Linn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:52pm. Next meeting October 10th at 6:30pm in Columbus.

SAVE THE DATE!



CHRISTMAS PARTY!

December 13, 2025

Hannah Hall, Fishtail

More information to follow...

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.

THANK YOU TO THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT!



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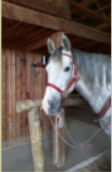
Two Standing Jacks

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