

# Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

## *President's Pen*

Greetings Beartooth Backcountry Horsemen & Women!

Well, we are off to a great start for the trail clearing season! The first four trail clearings were a success, clearing nearly 40 miles of trail and approximately 100 trees. We rode in sunshine, rain, hail and snow. Big THANKS to all the volunteers who came out and showed their support. Each trip was a lot of fun and very rewarding!

- Coming up - Main Stillwater on May 9th
- Earnie Strum on May 13th
- West Fork of the Stillwater on May 22-25

Make sure you make it to this campout on Memorial Day weekend, it will be a fun filled weekend of trail clearing, campfires and comradery.

Another thing to look forward to is building fence and being part of the Belfry trailhead project. This is something to be very proud of.

Please make it to our next General Meeting on May 18th to learn about all the details!

Sean Chepulis



### BBCH DIRECTORS

...

Sean Chepulis, President

Jeff Guckenberger, Vice President

Sarah Lewis, Secretary

Clark Linn, Treasurer

Scott Fluer, Board Member

Bill Yager, Board Member

### STATE DIRECTORS

...

John Jenkins, Sr. Director  
406-855-0238

Clark Linn, State Director

Jon Shamel, State Alternate

### NATIONAL DIRECTOR

...

John Chepulis  
406-322-4823

**NEXT MEETING:**



Creator: xavierarnau | Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto  
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**May 18, 2026**

**Palladium Draughthaus at 6:30 pm**

702 E Pike Ave, Columbus

***2026 DUES***

Business Membership \$45

Family Membership \$40

Individual Membership \$30

**Please pay your 2026 dues!**

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

## WEBSITE ARCHIVES



shutterstock.com - 240309135

**Members!!**

**We need you to send photos and short descriptions of pack or trail trips (particularly 2023 to 2025) for the archives on the website.**

**Email: [jessi.sparkman@gmail.com](mailto:jessi.sparkman@gmail.com)**

## 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](mailto:codner.melissa@gmail.com) or text 308-390-0465.



FOUNDATIONAL HORSEMANSHIP CLINIC



**Roberts Montana**

**Foundational Horsemanship Clinic July 10,11,12**

**Hosted by Beartooth Back Country Horseman**

**100 Cherry Springs Road, Roberts MT**

**Become the leader that your horse needs you to be.**

**Contact Wade Murphy 406-431-1717, [murphydw813@gmail.com](mailto:murphydw813@gmail.com)**

**Clinic is limited to 8 riders. Both horses and mules are welcome.**

**9:00-12:00 fundamental groundwork sessions.**

**1:00-4:00 essentials under saddle sessions.**

**\*Discount for Back Country Horsemen. They work hard on our trails!**

**\$500 for all 6 sessions (BCH member \$450)**

**\$300 for all three sessions of either class (BCH \$250)**

**Spectators \$10 per day or \$20 for the entire event**

**50% nonrefundable deposit to hold your spot.**



**BBCH PO Box 614, Absarokee, MT 59001**

## 2025 BBCH AND BCHMT WORK HOURS REPORT

2025 work hours report and calculated dollar value for our volunteer work:

	<b>BBCH</b>		<b>BCHMT</b>	
<b>WORK TYPE</b>		<b>Total Value</b>		<b>Total Value</b>
Total Basic Hours	30	\$1,043.70	2536	\$88,227.44
Total Skilled Hours	369	\$19,232.02	3415	\$178,228.85
Total Trail Recon Hours	24	\$834.96	359	\$12,489.61
Total LNT - Education	36	\$1,252.44	1399	\$48,671.21
Total Public Meetings	0	\$0.00	616	\$21,430.64
Total Administrative Service	15	\$521.85	595	\$20,700.05
Total Travel Time	269	\$9,358.51	2222	\$77,303.38
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>743</b>		<b>11142</b>	
Wilderness Trail Miles	16		687	
National Scenic Trail Miles	0		372	
Other Trail Miles	24		920	
<b>Total Trail Miles</b>	<b>40</b>		<b>1979</b>	
Personal Vehicle	2175	\$1,457.25	31163	\$20,879.21
Stock Hauling	3059	\$4,129.65	42800	\$57,780.00
<b>Total Travel Miles</b>	<b>5234</b>		<b>73963</b>	
Power Equipment	43	\$1,505.00	672	\$23,520.00
Heavy Equipment	0	\$0.00	145	\$20,300.00
<b>Total Equipment Hours</b>	<b>43</b>		<b>817</b>	
Total Stock (Pack/Saddle)	63		856	
<b>Total Stock Days</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>\$8,750.00</b>	<b>1168</b>	<b>\$146,000.00</b>
<b>Total Donations</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>		<b>\$45,574.00</b>
<b>Total Value</b>		<b>\$48,085.38</b>		<b>\$761,107.40</b>

**Table Calculations:** Standard work hours are calculated \$34.79/ hr; skilled work at \$52.19/hr; power equipment at \$5/hr; heavy equipment at \$140/hr. Mileage is calculated at \$0.67/mi and stock hauling at \$1.35/mi. Stock days are calculated at \$125/hr.

The Beartooth Chapter of BCHMT produces about 5-7 % of the state's work effort (you can do the math yourself). Our chapter currently ranks 5<sup>th</sup> overall in size with a little under 10% of the state membership, so our relative % effort could be a little higher. In the last 4-6 years the total dollar effort has fallen from approximately \$60-70K for our chapter and just under \$1 M for the state to \$48k and \$761k, respectively. **BUT...we are off to a great start this year.** Remember, if you don't document it, it was never done.

**KEEP TRACK OF THOSE MILES AND SUBMIT THEM!** It allows us to justify to the USFS needed maintenance of our equine accessible trails. Call it leverage if you want!



**Main Stillwater, ~2023**



**W Fk Stillwater ~2018**

Questions on the numbers and what can be reported can be directed to John Chepulis.

Submitted by John Jenkins and John Chepulis

## SAVE THE DATE(S)

~~March 14: Tack Sale - Columbus, MT~~

~~April 12: Member clinic~~

June 27: Fishtail Family Fun Days

This is just the beginning... more to come!

## TRAIL CLEARING

### April 2026

22: Trout Creek

25: Island Lake Trail and the East/West Fork trails (these are chainsaw trails)

22 or 29: Jim Gulch Deer creek?

\*\*May have to move one to May 6 Wednesday

### May 2026

2/3: Lodgepole (intersection Lower Deer Creek)

9-10: Main Stillwater

13 (Wednesday): Ernie Strum Trail

16-17: Catch up weekend

23-24-25: West Fork of Stillwater (camping weekend)

\*\*This will include Castle Creek Trail

Allie also asked if we would be interested in doing Rabbit Gulch (8 miles) - part is chain saw, last part is wilderness.

## ABWF-USFS/BBCH PACK PROJECTS

**Dates and locations are firm. Details may change.** Details will almost certainly change. Stay tuned s those changes will be posted in this newsletter when available. Weed free hay required at the trailheads.

**July 9-12: Face of the Mountain** starting from So Grove Cr. Clearing the Meeteetse side. Probably 3 mi ride up and back, possibly several times daily. Packing up and down daily to support ABWF Trail crew. Mainly packing saws, tools chainsaw fuel, water. Only enough room for 2-3 rigs at So Grove Cr. Details may be modified due to the recent fire.

**July 15-21: Main Stillwater to Wounded Man trail.** Packing camp, tools and food to the Wounded Man trail turnoff for the yearly Schriener's College trip. They will be working on the Wounded Man trail. This will likely require staying overnight on both the in and out. May require 2 nights going in as

the crew may take 2 days hiking in, possibly staying near Tripod the first night. Return trip will require riding up to the camp (11 mi) on the 20<sup>th</sup>, staying overnight, then packing them out on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Specifics may change on the trip in.

**Aug 19-25. Bull Cr.** (Most likely) starting from Daisy Pass near Cooke City. ABWF crew clearing So Bull Cr or thereabouts. This will be a full day from Daisy Pass. Will need to stay overnight on both the in and out. Will load up at the pass on the morning of 19<sup>th</sup> early at Daisy. We have camped on the pass the night prior to packing in so we didn't have to start driving at 3 AM. The crew will likely hike from Lake Abundance. The possibility has been discussed of just staying in for the duration due to distance to the trailhead. TBD. Specifics may change.

## FOR SALE

Have a saddle or piece of packing equipment? Please email the information to Rochelle - [ebenezerquine@gmail.com](mailto:ebenezerquine@gmail.com). The listing will be removed after 3 months unless you request otherwise.

## APRIL MEETING MINUTES

Board Meeting April 02, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm at the Joliet Community Center.

In attendance: Randy Thompson, Sean Chepulis, John Jenkins, Clark Linn, Scott Fluer, Jeff Guckenberger, and Sarah Lewis. Member in attendance: Dave Heinle.

Motion to approve the January board meeting minutes made by Clark L. The motion was seconded by Jeff G. No discussion. Motion carried.

**President's Report:** Sean reported about the State Convention. State president's meeting highlights- some clubs have removed term limits due to lack of volunteers to serve on the boards. Active online/ social media presence was encouraged. Discussion of updating and being more active on BBCH Facebook and Instagram pages. Sean and Sarah will work on this.

**Vice President's Report:** 5 new members were gained at the last general meeting. Discussion that membership has been slightly down for the year so far. Discussion of total state membership being down as well. 10% down from last year statewide.

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**Treasurer's Report:** Discussion of the transfer of funds to the money market account. 2.7% gain.

Discussion and update of itemized categories in the budget. Categories have been clarified.

Miscellaneous categories removed and clarified.

Discussion of March report, income & expenses, YTD, MTD, and profit and loss statement. Motion to approve the March Treasurer's Report made by Jeff G. The motion was seconded by Scott F. No discussion. Motion carried.

**State Director's Report:** Volunteer Report= 687 miles BBCH logged. Membership is down 10% compared to 2025. BBCH is the 3rd largest chapter with 70 members.

The National Back Country Horsemen meeting will be held in Kansas City, Missouri this year. Connie Long and Mark Himmel will attend.

Issues to be discussed at the National Meeting: 1. Ad hoc membership option. 2. Resolution about how the BHCA Legacy funds are managed and dispersed.

The saw program has been newly restructured.

State treasurer's report shows that the Youth Program has built a surplus for their program.

Discussion of the State Operating Report. Discussion of the Lincoln Prosperity Project- this will be brought to the members at the April general meeting. Land issues discussed- Holland Lake.

Update of new state officers.

## **Committee Reports**

**2027 Convention:** Melissa Codner (chair). Convention planning meeting will be held on April 11th , 2026, at the Civic Center in Columbus, MT.

**Activities:** Discussion of upcoming youth clinic- April 11th , member clinic- April 12th .

Horsemanship clinic by Wade Murphy will be held July 10,11 & 12.

Annual Camp Out August 14-16 th . Meyers Creek Cabin is reserved, and special guest speakers are planned.

**Education:** Sean Chepulis (chair). Education for April general meeting TBD.

**Projects:** John Jenkins & Jeff Guckenberger (co-chairs). Belfry Trailhead Improvement Project is

moving forward. Will need volunteer days, these are TBD. AWB pack assist projects TBD. Current work project schedule is on the website. Discussion of adding some “fun rides” into the schedule.

Public Land Issues: Scott Fluer (chair). Discussion of Roadless Rule meeting being held by Wild Montana in Red Lodge. This is open to the public.

Discussion of adding a Public Lands Column to the BBCH newsletter to keep members informed.

Discussion of trail improvements to the Pygmy Panther Trail.

**Unfinished Business:** Discussion of getting saddle bags and mantys made for parades with BBCH logo. This will be discussed at the general meeting. Discussion of the possibility of holding another chainsaw class with Allie Wood. Time and date TBD at Allie’s availability and interest by members.

New Business: Discussion of a vest and hat order for members. Options will be presented at April’s general meeting to gauge members’ interest.

Discussion of online payment options for dues, orders, and upcoming convention fees. Clark L. will research and report back.

Discussion of items needed to replenish the BBCH main First Aid Kit. Jeff G. is taking inventory and replacing needed supplies.

Roadless Rule informational meeting to be held in Red Lodge on April 6 th , 6-8pm. Members are encouraged to educate themselves about this topic as it affects our public lands.

Discussion of the proper way to run a General Meeting per our BBCH bylaws. Sean explained that he would like to adhere stronger to “Robert’s Rules of Order”. An agenda will be made and emailed to all members before the general meeting.

Discussion of properly adhering to BBCH bylaws. Issues will be discussed and brought to members at the general meetings.

Discussion of encouraging members to be involved in discussions and committees.

Discussion of Designation & Authorization to use Firearms for Stock Euthanasia in the Backcountry. This needs to be researched for forest service projects and clearing. We will discuss and research.

Discussion of State Auction and funds that were raised. Discussion of State Convention plans and rules that need adhered to.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Jeff G., seconded by Clark L. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Next meeting May 7th at the Joliet Community Center at 6:30pm.

## 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!**



**Brent D. Turner**

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**Two Standing Jacks**  
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Arkansas Mtn Man, 15 hand Black, \$500  
Pasture Breeding, Fee + Mare Care

**Bad Canyon Fence LLC.**



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For all your fencing needs

