

Beartooth Back Country Horsemen Trail Tales

President's Pen

Greetings,

September was a busy month, and I appreciate everyone who stepped up and helped keep things moving in my absence.

Our spring and summer projects have wrapped up:

- Youth Clinic
- 11 trail clearing days
- Crosscut saw and chainsaw certifications
- Bearcreek Trailhead development in Belfry
- Participation in two parades
- Two ABWF pack-ins

Thank you to everyone for your outstanding leadership and participation in making these projects a success.

Looking ahead, our officer elections are coming up. We will be electing three new Directors and one new State Director. If you are interested in serving on the board, please reach out to me or Sarah Lewis, and be sure to attend our next general meeting on October 19th at 6:30 PM.

Finally, please mark your calendars for our Christmas Party on December 5th at Hannah Hall in Fishtail.

Best regards,

Sean Chepulis

BBCH DIRECTORS

...

Sean Chepulis, President

Jeff Guckenberger, Vice President

Sarah Lewis, Secretary

Clark Linn, Treasurer

Scott Fluor, 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:



October 19, 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](#).

SAVE THE DATE!



Christmas Party
December 5th
Hannah Hall ~ Fishtail

BBCH PO Box 614, Absarokee, MT 59001

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

Certified Weed Free Hay - \$18.00

- 3rd cutting Alfalfa/Orchard grass mix (50/50)
- 70# bales
- Stored under cover
- Location - Bridger

Call, text or email Scott Fluer: [307-349-9753](tel:307-349-9753) / fluers@outlook.com



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

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

[New Bear Creek Trailhead Parking Lot Opens, Expanding Safe Access to Public Lands](#)

Montana-Dakotas

Media Contact

Chelsea Lair

chelsea_lair@ios.doi.gov

BLM Office:

[Billings Field Office](#)

June 12, 2026

Billings, Mont. — The Bureau of Land Management’s Billings Field Office celebrated the grand opening of the new Bear Creek Trailhead parking lot, marking an important step toward safer, more reliable access to public lands. Designed to improve traffic flow, the project adds a large primitive parking area, trail signage, and access to 6400 acres for hiking, hunting and horseback riding.

“This is about making it easier — and safer — for people to step onto their public lands,” said Outdoor Recreation Planner Jennifer Alexander, noting that the trailhead often serves horseback riders, hikers, birders, hunters, and families. “The parking area is a project completed through a partnership with the Beartooth Backcountry Horsemen Chapter, the new lot reduces roadside congestion, improves visibility, and provides a more welcoming first impression of the area.”

"We put a plan together, and I just want to say, in the spirit of cooperation, it really all fell into place really nicely," said Scott Fluor with Back Country Horseman. "Through true cooperation among our partners, from BLM to the Backcountry Horsemen and the Montana Highway Department, everything came together to create a safer, well-planned space for everyone to enjoy."

Why it matters

- **Safety first:** Dedicated parking reduces roadside pull-offs and conflicts with local traffic, while better sightlines help drivers and trail users navigate safely.
- **Access:** The parking area is designed so more visitors can safely access the area including enough space to pull a trailer through
- **Trail etiquette & education:** Refreshed signage will highlight local partnership with the Backcountry Horsemen, trail information, local regulations, and Leave No Trace principles, supporting responsible recreation.

- Community connection: The Bear Creek trailhead sits near the town of Belfry and provides a starting point to explore nearby landscapes. Local partners Back Country Horseman provided volunteers for the fence installation.



Beartooth Back Country Horseman take the first ride out from the newly opened parking lot.



IN OUR BACKYARD: PRYOR MOUNTAIN WILD HORSE UPDATE

[BLM Announces Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range Gather](#)

The Bureau of Land Management plans to gather and remove about 40 wild horses from the [Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range](#) in fall 2026. Read more on the August press release [here](#).



A wild horse on the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range taken in May 2026. (Photo by Tim West Photography)

SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Board Meeting

September 3rd, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm at the Joliet Community Center.

In attendance: Jeff Guckenberger, Clark Linn, Scott Fluor, and Sarah Lewis.

Absent: Sean Chepulis, Bill Yager, and John Jenkins.

Motion to approve the August board meeting minutes made by Clark L. The motion was seconded by Scott F. No discussion. Motion carried.

President's Report: None Sean C. was unable to attend.

Vice President's Report: Nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report: Discussion of August report, income & expenses, YTD, MTD, profit and loss statement. License plate revenue is down YTD from 2025. Discussion of working on a preliminary 2027 budget starting in November. Will be discussed at future general and board meetings. Looking for input on budget usage from members. Motion to approve the August Treasurer's Report made by Scott F. The motion was seconded by Sarah L. No discussion. Motion carried.

State Director's Report: No new updates. Report was shared at general meeting as well.

Committee Reports

2027 Convention: Melissa Codner (chair). Sponsorship fundraising in process.

Activities: Sarah Lewis (chair). 2026 Rendezvous recap. Went well and had great attendance.

Education: John Jenkins (chair). Education for September meeting TBD. No updates.

Projects: John Jenkins & Jeff Guckenberger (co-chairs). Report on ABW- Bull Creek Project. Successful trip. Note- clearer communication w/ ABW about meet up plans and food would be beneficial for future projects success.

Public Land Issues: Scott Fluor (chair). Roadless Rule Committee has been meeting actively. Scott-BBCH is drafting a letter in support of alternative #1-no change to existing rule. Members are encouraged to give their personal opinions in comment on the Roadless Rule. Travel Management for the Forest Service is in the "scoping" process. This affects Travel Land Access on Forest Service. The process will be upcoming once scoping is completed.

Belfry Trailhead Update- gate will be installed but BLM. Boundary markers have been placed to clarify access.

BLM will meet with BBCH Sept 10th to begin talks about the Ernie Strum Trailhead Improvement project.

Unfinished Business: BBCH was reimbursed for group meal from the horsemanship clinic.

New Business: Discussion of 2026 MTBCH Cost Share Mileage Reimbursement. John Chepulis reports

this. In process of being compiled for 2026. Discussion of clarifying reimbursement plans moving forward.

Discussion of broadening trail clearing efforts & packing support areas.

Discussion of Darcy Stern's youth packing program- she is looking for volunteers. Jeff G. will get more information from Darcy to discuss at a later date.

Discussion of creating a "Nomination Committee" for the upcoming BBCH elections.

3 Board Positions will be up for election. Will be discussed at general meeting.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Sarah L., seconded by Scott F. Meeting adjourned at 7:27pm.

Next meeting October 1st at the Joliet Community Center at 6:30pm.

AUGUST MEETING MINUTES

Board Meeting

August 6th, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm at the Joliet Community Center.

In attendance: Sean Chepulis, John Jenkins, Scott Fluor, Jeff Guckenberger, and Sarah Lewis.

Absent: Clark Linn, Bill Yager, and Randy Thompson.

Motion to approve the July board meeting minutes made by Jeff G. The motion was seconded by Scott F. No discussion. Motion carried.

President's Report: Sean reported about the REI grant suggestion by BCHA and the grant restrictions. Only trails classified as "Scenic Trails" qualify. We do not have any projects eligible currently. Low attendance at the last General Meeting and as a result no meeting was conducted. Members will be updated at September's general meeting. The BBCH Rendezvous will count as the August general meeting.

Vice President's Report: Nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report: Discussion of July 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 John J. No discussion. Motion carried.

State Director's Report: John J. reported that he met up with other MT Back Country Horsemen members on his Bob Marshall trip. Great to see other members out enjoying Montana's backcountry.

Committee Reports

2027 Convention: Melissa Codner (chair). Convention planning meeting will be held Friday evening of the Rendezvous August 14th. Discussion of trying to gain sponsors for 2027 Convention to help lower ticket prices.

Activities: Recap of Wade Murphy Horsemanship Clinic. Instruction was great. Many members attended and learned a lot.

Recap of Absarokee Days Parade. It went okay, horse presence was greatly appreciated by parade organizers.

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

Idea discussed of keeping a notebook about different activities: successes, failures, and templates of how they run.

Education: Sean Chepulis (chair). Education for BBCH Rendezvous/ General meeting will be bear related.

Projects: John Jenkins & Jeff Guckenberger (co-chairs). John J. gave recap of Wounded Man Project. Members packed in support and stayed the night. It was very hot. ABW greatly appreciated the pack support. There was good pack support from members. John J. encountered a camper fire at the trailhead and had to call Emergency Services. Thankfully fire was contained quickly and the pack trip continued. ABW had lots of gear, and 6 pack animals were needed. They were able to brush back 1.5 miles up Wounded Man.

Bull Creek- upcoming ABW pack support project. ABW estimates pack support needed for gear and food for 7 volunteers. John J. will coordinate efforts.

Public Land Issues: Scott Fluor (chair). Discussion of Ernie Strum trailhead and further development with BLM. Discussion of financial and physical volunteer support. Scott F. will be meeting with Jenny Alexander or the BLM soon to discuss ideas. This will be brought to the general meeting for discussion.

Unfinished Business: Discussion of plans for 2026 Rendezvous. Guest speaks, pack race, and crosscut competition are planned. Sarah will send out emails with details to the members.

Belfry Trailhead Improvement Project- identified area where gate is needed. BLM is planning on installing gate. BLM put boundary markers up to clarify BLM vs Private Land.

New Business: None.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by John J., seconded by Jeff G. Meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Next meeting August 6th 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!



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— CONTINUE THE LEGACY —

Brent D. Turner

✉ Bturner@brentturner.net
🌐 agrigerational.com
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Stillwater Veterinary Clinic

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Absarokee, MT 59001
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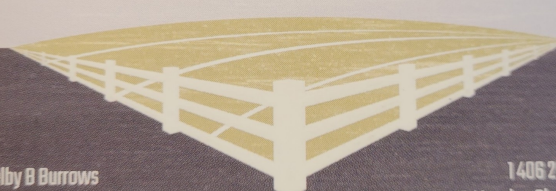
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