



# Nag News

Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen  
50 Years of Service

May 2026 Issue #5

In Partnership With



## BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN MISSION STATEMENT

- To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's backcountry and wilderness areas.
- To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
- To assist the various government, state and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
- To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.
- To foster and encourage the formation of new back country horsemen's organizations.
- To cooperate with other BCHA organizations.

**THURSDAY, May 21st, 2026 MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING**  
**DALY- LEACH COMMUNITY ROOM**  
**1010 Main Street, Hamilton**

**Potluck Dinner** is served at 6:30 p.m. The general meeting starts at 7:00 pm. Our guest speaker is veterinarian Dr. Rollett Pruyn, from Blue Mountain Veterinary Hospital in Missoula, who will describe spring equine issues. Guests are welcome. For more information contact: Diane Duffie: 707-529-8284. Check out our website at: [www.bchmt.org/bitterroot](http://www.bchmt.org/bitterroot) or Facebook: Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen.

### ***THIS ISSUE***

- P. 2. President's message, training, projects.
- P.3. Monture Rendezvous, work project overview.
- P.4. Monture Rendezvous flyer
- Pp. 5-6 Draft General Meeting Minutes
- P. 7. Horse Sense (sponsor)
- P. 8. Back Country Kitchen (sponsor)
- P. 9. Officers and Board
- P.10. Advertisers

## High Line at Monture Guard Station

Photo by Mark Wright



## DEADLINE FOR NAG NEWS

Thursday, June 11th, 2026  
 SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES & ADS  
 TO:  
[djmaiyo@gmail.com](mailto:djmaiyo@gmail.com)

## A message from the President

Hello all,

I can't believe it is already May! Time flies doesn't it? As I write this, club members are on our way to Lake Como for our first Horse Camp Out with all the bells and whistles of the Kitchen trailer and a small project to stain tables for the forest service while we get our horses and selves back in shape for what hopes to be a busy season of projects and trail riding.

We tried to schedule a Fun Ride a few weeks back but the weather wouldn't let us, so this will be our first fun ride and tune up. We have our projects scheduled with most of them offering many different ways to help out. Our bottom line is to support the forest service and they need all the support they can get in these trying times. Sadly the Forest Service reorganization plan moving headquarters from Washington DC to Salt Lake City and closing offices everywhere else looks like an effort to dismantle the entire Service and sell off public lands. The best we can do individually and as a local, State and National club,

is to support our local forest service staff and the community of groups fighting the end of the Roadless rule and other protections to Public Lands with our voices and support. It is a daunting fight but worth every bit of the effort.

Our first Legacy project is at Larry Creek on June 6 and we hope to have the Fun rides going by then on opposite weeks other than projects. The State Rendezvous at Monture with the fence project kicking off the weekend is looking to be tons of fun and a way to connect with the other chapters around the state and other groups supporting the Forest Service. If you have never been to a State Rendezvous this would be a good one to experience the fun. You don't need to have a horse or bring a horse with you to enjoy the camaraderie and spirit of Back Country Horsemen.

Hope to see you all at one project or another as we work our way thru the summer.

Cheers, Diane Duffie, Your President

### Training - Contact Bonnie Morgan

#### Chainsaw/crosscut Certification

Chainsaw and crosscut saw certification dates TBD.

#### Projects - Contact Ed Duggan

- Two Good Cabin: we open it May 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>
- June 6<sup>th</sup> Larry Creek.
- June 18-21 Monture Creek Rendezvous: It is a work project combined with fun rides, and we can start showing up on Wednesday. Julie will bring the cook trailer to Monture on Wednesday.
- June 27<sup>th</sup> Coyote Coulee.

### Wade Murphy Horsemanship demo at Monture



## 2026 Monture Guard Station Rendezvous, Fun Ride and Pasture Fencing Project June 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>

**Note:** *This fencing project is completely voluntary; and not a requirement for participation in the Rendezvous.*

The Monture campground will open Wednesday the 17th. Work is to begin Thursday morning. Folks may choose to arrive on Wednesday to get set up, relax or saddle up and ride. High line trees are available throughout the site as are a few stock pens. A water supply and stock troughs are available but it is recommended that you use bio security for your stock. Weed free hay is required 2 days before and during your stay.

Wade Murphy's horsemanship clinic is scheduled for Friday June 19th 1-4pm. There is no charge for this clinic and is limited to 10 participants. Please refer to the flyer and QR code on the next page of this newsletter.

A Saturday evening dinner will be provided at 6:00 pm for \$15 per person. You may send cash or check to: BCH Missoula, PO Box 2121, Missoula, MT 59806. Meal fee must be in before June 5th. The Bitter Root BCH will provide a cook trailer on Wednesday.

**Fencing Project Objective:** Opportunity to support the Forest Service Packing Program by assisting Seeley Lake Ranger District in fencing a new proposed pasture. Please see project site map in this newsletter and on the BCHMT website.

**History:** The area was evaluated and a report done in 2020 by Rachel Fiegley, former Seeley Lake Ranger.

The project of clearing the acreage was started in 2024 by Keith Guschausky, a Forest Service Packer and former BCH member. Keith used a Skid steer with a timber grabber to start the process of making burn piles. At that time materials for the fencing project were purchased by Seeley Lake Ranger district and stockpiled

until the project could be started. Since then the Forest Service has had major layoffs with seasonal employees. The project was projected as a three year project to fence, remove slash, treat weeds and non-native grasses. Keith Guswchausky passed away April 28, 2025 of cancer.

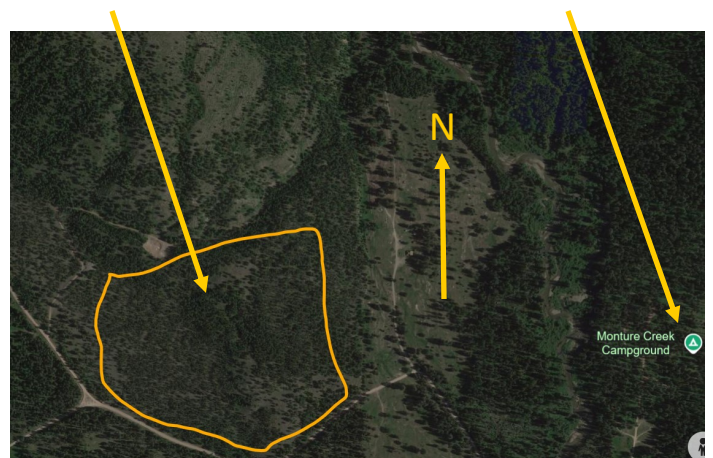
**Scope:** The Back Country Horseman proposed Volunteer work project would involve putting up barbless fence wire and "T" posts. The Forest Service is going to put in "H" braces at corners and specified distances along the fence line.

**Tools:** Tools that volunteers could bring if they have them (but not required) are; fencing pliers, "T" post pounders, tape measure, wire puller and any other tools you may have that would be helpful.

**Personal protection equipment and clothing recommended:** Boots, long sleeve shirts, and work gloves along with eye and ear protection, electrolyte, insect repellent and first aid kit.

If you need more information please contact Mark Wright (Bitter Root BCH): (406) 531-2455 (cell/text). Email: [saberhorse76@gmail.com](mailto:saberhorse76@gmail.com). Also, check out the QR Codes on the Rendezvous announcement flyer in this newsletter.

Fencing project site    Monture Campground



Scan the QR Code to obtain detailed information



# State Back Country Horsemen Rendezvous

## Monture Ranger Station from June 18-21

**Volunteer Opportunity:**  
U.S.F.S Fence-Building  
Project

**Horsemanship  
Clinic with Wade  
Murphy on Friday!**

**Saturday Community Supper 6:00 p.m.**  
**(\$15 per meal)**

**Pulled pork, baked beans, and coleslaw provided.**

**Horses  
welcome,  
but not  
required.**

**Mail meal payment (Checks only) to:**  
**BCH of Missoula**  
**P.O. 2121, Missoula, MT, 59806**

**Questions? Contact Mark  
Wright at  
saberhorse76@gmail.com**

**Wade Murphy  
Clinic**



**More info on  
rendevous**



**BITTER ROOT BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN**  
**DRAFT GENERAL MEETING MINUTES, APRIL 16th, 2026**

The April 16, 2026 general meeting of the Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen (BRBCH) was called to order by President Diane Duffie at 7:02 p.m. The meeting was held at the Daly-Leach Community Room. Approximately 28 members were present. There was a board quorum. All members led the Pledge to start the meeting. Guests: None.

**PROGRAM**

**Program: Fun Ride & Trail Etiquette with Pam Ristad & Dennis Hardman.** Pam and Dennis discussed riding guidelines for safe group trail rides:

If your horse is a kicker, tie a red ribbon on its tail. Keep 1-2 lengths between horses. Check in if you want to ride away or go faster and give a heads up before passing. Leave gates as you find them. When crossing water wait for everyone to get across before leaving the crossing. Front rider warns of upcoming obstacles, back rider warns of bicycle riders coming from behind. Talk with people as they step off the trail so your horse knows they aren't a scary monster. On narrow trails, riders should head up trails before noon. When possible, riders should head down in the afternoon. Before summer check all tack and acclimatize horses to obstacles they may see on trails. Ticks are out. In designated recreation areas stay on trails.

**Tentative Dates for future rides:**

Saturday April 25, Larry Creek; saddled and ready by 11:00am. Social Hour after the ride. **Post meeting update:** Ride cancelled due to heavy rain and snow.

June, Lost Horse: Date TBD.

**BUSINESS**

**Minutes:** The March 19 minutes were printed in the Nag News. There were no corrections. **Travise Grinnell motioned and Kathy Stroppe-Hall seconded to accept the March general meeting minutes as printed. Motion carried.**

**Treasurer's Report:** Elaine presented the April treasurer's report. There were no questions. **Christy Schram-Duggan motioned and Travise Grinnell seconded to accept the April treasurers report. Motion carried**

**CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Announcements:** Dan and Leslie Maiyo have been with BRBCH for 10 years this month!  
Coffee and hot water sign up went around for the few remaining spots for 2026.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**State Directors:** Ed/Julie/Brad: State representatives for 2026:

**President:** Sandy Himmel, **Vice-President:** Chris Nygren, **Treasurer:** Kathy Hundley, **Secretary:** Christy Schram-Duggan (Congrats, Christy!)

Travise and Dan took 2<sup>nd</sup> in the crosscut competition at the state convention. There were no resolutions. Our fire pit sold

for \$350! Those working on the Monture Project can claim it under our cost share agreement.

**Education & Training:** Bonnie Morgan reported the following:

Crosscut and saw training sign up went around.

Lake Como campout 5/15-5/17. Please RSVP for parking space availability and carpool where possible. Saturday 1:00 pm, staining tables. Highline set up demonstration and horse camp set up ideas. Please leave your dogs at home. April 27<sup>th</sup> ditch is turned on so we can walk horses down to water. Please let Bonnie know if you need to cancel so others may attend.

**Membership:** There are currently 60 memberships and 93 members.

**Outreach:** Karen said the Bitterroot Star has a new editor for future news reports. A bicyclist told her that someone has cut out a LOT of trees at Coyote Coulee.

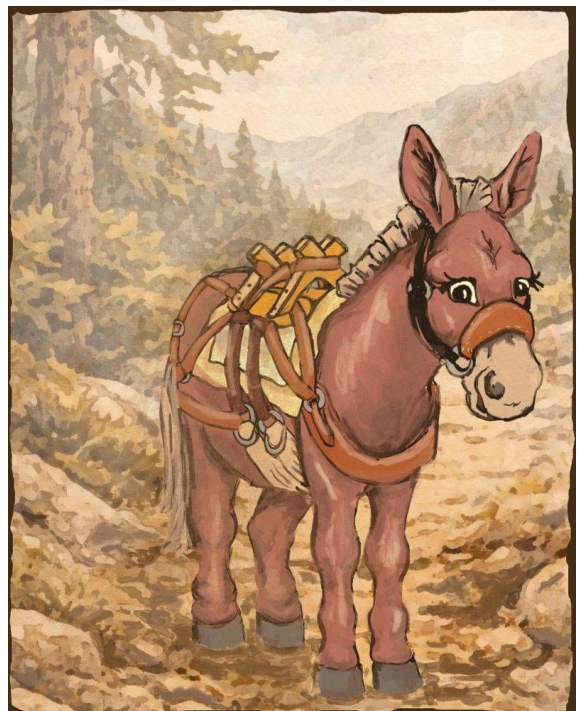
**Projects:** Ed reported that Mill Creek Trail has about 20 trees down in the first 3 miles; none are broken off, just up-rooted. Projects could be challenging this year.

Next Project Committee meeting is at Etna Fire Hall, April 26, at 1 pm. Our club's Garmin will be turned back on May 1<sup>st</sup> and mileage can be claimed for those on the work project reports through Bitterroot Chapter.

Legacy Projects:

- *Two Good Cabin:* May 30-31 clean cabin & get bridge measurements. Mid July (TBD): build bridges. October 17-18<sup>th</sup> close cabin
- *Larry Creek:* June 6<sup>th</sup> Mary Odell project leader
- *Coyote Coulee:* June 27<sup>th</sup> Julie Schram project leader

**Continued next page**



Ad Hoc projects:

*Project eligibility guidelines:*

1. Minimum of 2 BRBCH members to do a project (this applies to Ad-Hoc Projects).
2. No one rides or hikes alone.
3. If there are 4 people or less, must all come back to the trailhead if one or 2 folks need to leave for the day.
4. To be eligible for the Mileage Reimbursement, the project must be on the FS list and the Project Committee must approve the project.
5. One member is certified sawyer (Chainsaw or Crosscut, depending on what is needed), 2 members are First Aid certified, anyone being within 15 feet of stock must have Defensive Horsemen class.
6. BRBCH members must email the Project Committee with the date, start time, and location, so project committee can notify appropriate District Rangers.
7. SAW First Aid Kit must go on the project if chainsaws are being used.
8. A communication device such as a Garmin or Spot must be taken and used, and it must have an outside Point of Contact person.
9. Safety Talk must take place before the project starts.
10. Complete the Project Report once project is finished and email it to [synbarranch@msn.com](mailto:synbarranch@msn.com).
11. When taking photos, please keep in mind that proper PPE must be worn. Do not post any photos on social media. Please text pictures to 406-360-5947.

**Program:** Pam is open to ideas for future programs.

**Fair:** Christy is working with the software program company and 4H. They are trying to get the software system to trial BEFORE fair. We are redoing entrances for North and South Gates and making them bigger.

**Public Lands:** Brad: Roadless Rule, FS reorganization Press release link: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/reorganization>

**Long Range Planning:** Brad and Bonnie: The last meeting was postponed. Goal is to come up with a survey and a public meeting for all trail users in the Bitterroot, including ideas such as transition trails for arena riders. A wish list for what we want on trails was circulated for members to provide input. The goal is to have our ducks in a row by end of summer so we can have a public meeting.

**Constitution:** Dan said the committee met April 12, and they have one more section to review in the bylaws. Next meeting may produce a draft of bylaws and a draft constitution to present to the board in June. Next meeting: Sun May 10<sup>th</sup> at Etna Fire Hall @ 2:30.

**Sunshine:** If a member needs a get well, congratulations, or condolence card, let Jenna Wright know. John Banks had shoulder surgery.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Monture Rendezvous and Fence Project (June 18-21):

Mark Wright reported:

1<sup>st</sup> day of rendezvous is scheduled on our regular June meeting date; board will discuss this date conflict at the May 7 meeting. Trails may be tricky this year with downed trees.

April 27<sup>th</sup> Julie and Mark are going to Monture to check out the fences and campsite. Coffee and donuts will be available for the project on Thursday. Scotty is doing pulled pork, beans and coleslaw for the main meal on Saturday night, plus potluck items provided by attendees. For all other meals, participants will bring their own food. Julie is taking our cook trailer for anyone who would like to use it for personal meals. **Prepayment for Saturday's dinner is required:** send cash or check, \$15 per person, to: BCH Missoula, PO Box 2121, Missoula MT 59806; payment must be in before June 8<sup>th</sup>

### Summer Meeting Locations:

- June 18 Larry Creek- Conflict with Monture Rendezvous. Board will discuss at May 7 meeting.
- July 16 Coyote Coulee
- Aug 20 Lake Como (Three Sisters Group Site)

**Next Meeting:** Coffee: Barb Walker and Hot Water: Cheyenne

**Brad Pollman and Christy Schram-Duggan seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.** The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Cheyenne Raisor-Grinnell, Secretary BRBCH

**Editors Note:** The May 2026 Board minutes are not available at time of publication of this newsletter. Barb will email the minutes to the membership asap.



# Horse Sense - Sponsored By:



We carry all your equine vaccination and deworming needs, plus a large supply of animal health products. Visit us in Corvallis or Deer Lodge, on Facebook, or [www.cowpokeranchsupply.com](http://www.cowpokeranchsupply.com)  
406-961- 4917 Monday-Friday 8 – 5:30 Saturday–9 – 4:00

## A Bit About Bits

September 26, 2010 by [Martin Black](#)

This article originally appeared in Eclectic Horseman Issue No.55

*People often ask what kind of bit they should use or what kind of bit I would use for a particular situation. The fact is there are more variations of bits available today than most people would ever have horses to ride them on.*

With people's "it's not my fault" attitude, it's easy to find an excessive number of tools to fix any problem your horse may develop. Personally, I have a little different outlook on that. Studying horses and the way they travel and maneuvers they can do before we have any influence on them has taught me that we need to take their best and give them our best. What this means is that we don't need to look for correction devices to fix a horse; we just need to correct our presentation.

I have written before on the differences between signal bits and leverage bits; basically the differences lie in the way they are used. A leverage bit is meant to amplify the pressure or pain from our hands pulling on them whereas a signal bit is meant to amplify a signal from our hands. Here again the biggest difference could be just a different presentation with the same equipment.

If there is a problem, instead of looking in an arsenal of bits for a cure, I like to look for the cause. By eliminating the cause and just giving the horse a job, they can practice the maneuvers we want. They can and will find their natural way of placing their feet, the way God intended them to do.

When we run out of knowledge and resort to strength, there are always side effects, things we need to come back and fix or apologize for later. Like a lot of things, the shortcut in the long run is to take the necessary time to do it right the first time.

With all that said, I have for many years used the basic equipment of the buckaroos or vaqueros of the Great Basin. The plain and simple ring snaffle, California style hackamore, preferably with hair mecate and what most people refer to as a Spanish type bit, the spade, with rawhide reins and a nice silver headstall.

Some people will ask, why that type of reins? Why the silver headstall, what does that do? Is that necessary? In my opinion, yes, the right reins on the right head gear offers a better feel to the horse and in return the horse offers a better feel to us. As for the fancy silver and braid work, most buckaroos that take the effort to look good on the outside

will want their horses feeling good on the inside.

But to understand this equipment we need to understand the philosophy that is meant to be used with it. Not that there is the "Mystery" or a big secret, that some people are led to believe. The unusual thing for some people is that it isn't a quick fix, it's a long, time-consuming process. It's developing an art and like any art it takes practice and precision on our part. There are no shortcuts.

Time is what the old vaqueros had lots of, "mañana." There's a saying in reference to working with stock, "what we don't get done today we can do tomorrow and if tomorrow doesn't come, today doesn't matter anyway."

With this attitude, this philosophy, I enjoy taking the tools of the tradition I grew up around and with each horse I take from the hackamore through the two-rein and into the spade bit, they teach me a little more each time.

If you want to devote the time to become an artist with your horsemanship, try to develop your hands, your presentation and the feel you give your horse.

The difficult thing is the old guys that were really good artists with this process are nearly all in the grave and they took the knowledge with them. Today, the horse training world and the efficiency of ranching doesn't allow enough time for people to make these horses the way they used to. But it can still be done; it just takes desire and dedication. And to me there's not much as satisfying as the feeling of reaping the dividends of the time invested in a true bridle horse.



**BACKCOUNTRY KITCHEN**  
**SPONSORED BY:**



**The Shirt Spot**

1704 N 1<sup>st</sup> St Unit C  
Hamilton MT 59840

The Shirt Spot is new to Montana since April 2023, but has over 20 years' experience in the industry! Services offered include printing, embroidery, sign banners, stickers and business cards. Quality clothing including tee's, tank tops, and ladies crop tops are offered at a reasonable price. Also offered is a huge variety of headwear ready for embroidery!

**Pesto**

Nothing like the flavor of fresh homemade pesto added to your pasta dish or spread on a sandwich. Recipe from Moosewood Cookbook 1977

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 3 packed cups of fresh basil leaves (removed from stems) Dried basil *will not* do!
- 2 large cloves fresh garlic
- 1/2 cup pine nuts (substitute walnuts or almonds or a combination if you prefer)
- 3/4 cup (packed) fresh chopped parsley)
- 3/4 cup fresh grated parmesan
- 1/2 cup olive oil ( you may wish to add more depending on preferred thickness)
- 1/4 cup melted butter (optional)
- Salt to taste (optional)

**DIRECTIONS:**

Combine everything in a blender on low, then medium speed/ Thoroughly work everything into a smooth paste. With a wooden spoon, you may need to toss around the basil paste in the blender to achieve complete texture.

Makes about 6 servings

**Exclusively at the Shirt Spot!** Embroidered Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen logo on in-stock vests and jackets or a vest/jacket of your own choice. Personnel Wyoming Traders vest shown. Custom thread color available. Inquire for pricing. Caps offered in a variety of styles and colors! \$25/cap or \$20/each/10 caps. **Tell the Shirt Spot that you saw this notice in this newsletter! Show your support for our BCH Chapter!**



**2026 Committees**

Audit  
 Audio-Visual Equipment  
 Constitution  
 Budget  
 Election & Nominations  
 Fair  
 Grants  
 Historian  
 Public Lands  
 Long-Term Planning  
 Membership  
 Advertising  
 Newsletter  
 Outreach  
 Parliamentary  
 Pleasure Rides  
 Programs  
 Projects  
 Social  
 Sunshine  
 Training  
 Website

**2026 Chairs & Members**

2026: Barb Walker, Elaine Driskell, Nancy Pollman  
 Travise Grinnell  
 Dan Maiyo  
 Earl Phillips, Elaine Driskell  
 (Changes Annually)  
 Christy Schram-Duggan  
 Brandi Ashford  
 Tim Meyer  
 Brad Pollman  
 Bonnie Morgan  
 Barb Walker  
 Virginia DeLeo  
 Dan Maiyo  
 Travise Grinnell  
 Joan Scheffer  
 Pam Ristad, Candice Erickson  
 Pam Ristad  
 Ed Duggan  
 Jenna Wright  
 Bonnie Morgan  
 Nancy Pollman

**Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen Officers and Board**

**Chapter officers**

Position	Name	Term	Contact
President	Diane Duffie	2026	707-529-8284
Vice President	Barb Walker	2026	928-606-0855
Secretary	Cheyenne Raisor-Grinnell	2026	406-214-1108
Treasurer	Elaine Driskell	2026	916-698-8544

Board Members	Term	State Directors	Term	BCHMT State Chairman
Dennis Hardman	2026-27	Brad Pollamn	2026-27	Mack Long
Joan Scheffer	2026-27	Ed Duggan	2025-26	
Pam Ristad	2026-27	<b>Alt. State Director</b>		<b>BCHMT Vice State Chairman</b>
Ed Duggan	2026-27	Julie Schram	2026	Sandy Himmel
Chris Carrera	2025-26			
Mary Odell	2025-26	<b>BCHMT National Directors</b>		<b>Alt. National Director</b>
Julie Schram	2025-26	Brad Pollman		John Chepulis
Christy Schram –Duggan	2025-26	Connie Long		
Travise Grinnell	2025-26			
		<b>BRBCH Past President</b>		
		Brad Pollman		

**COW POKE  
RANCH SUPPLY**



**For All Your Farm & Ranch Needs!**

1308 Eastside Hwy. Ph: 406-961-4917  
 Corvallis, MT 59828 Fx: 406-961-4917  
 www.cowpokesupply.com Email: cowpoke@montana.com

**Turnkey Construction Inc** Stevensville, Montana  
 25+ Years Experience



**RADIANT IN-FLOOR  
HEAT SYSTEMS**

**Brad Pollman** 406-546-6492  
 TurnkeyConstructionInc.com

SCREEN PRINTING & EMBROIDERY



*The  
Shirt Spot  
Montana*

406-389-4096  
 1704 N. 1ST STREET. STE C  
 HAMILTON, MT 59840

**Hale Steel and Saw**

Tree Service  
 Forest Fire Mitigation  
 Firewood  
 Chainsaw Repair/Maintenance  
 Affordable Prices

**LIFELINE  
FARM**



FRESH • LOCAL • ORGANIC

2533 Pleasant View Drive  
 Victor, MT 59875  
 email: lifelinefarm@msn.com  
 www.lifelinefarm.com

**Lifeline Creamery &  
Farm Store**  
 406-642-9717

Organic Milk, Cheese, Butter, Beef, & Pork







**Bitter Root  
Back Country Horsemen  
50 Years of Service**



**NEXT BRBCH MEETING**

**Thursday, May 21st, 2026**

**Daly-Leach Community Room**

**Dinner at 6:00pm Meeting at 5:30pm**

**Visit our Website:**

**[bchmt.org/bitterroot](http://bchmt.org/bitterroot)**

**Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen  
P.O. Box 1083  
Hamilton, MT 59840**