



Nag News

Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen
50 Years of Service

August 2026 Issue #8



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, AUGUST 20th, 2026 MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING LAKE COMO THREE SISTERS GROUP SITE

Potluck Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. The general meeting starts at 7:00 pm. To get there from Hamilton take Hwy 93 south for about 13 miles and turn west onto Lake Como Road. Follow the road for 3.5 miles and the site is on the right, across from the Rock Creek Horse Camp.

Our speaker is Christy Schram-Duggan who will review procedures we will use to sell and take tickets at the Ravalli County Fair. Community volunteers to help with this task are welcome and appreciated, so please join us for an informative and enjoyable evening. Fair signup slots are also available on our website.

Guests and new members always are welcome. For more information contact: Diane Duffie: 707-529-8284. Check out our website at: www.bchmt.org/bitterroot or Facebook: Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen.

CONTENTS

P.2 Presidents Message, poem dedicated to Chuck Miller
P.3.Photos from Chuck's memorial service
Pp.4,5. History of Coyote Coulee
P.6. Coyote Coulee work project recap.
Pp.7,8. July Draft General meeting minutes. Legacy Center opening.
P. 9. Horse Sense
P.10. Backcountry Kitchen
P. 11. Officers and Board
P.12. Advertisers

Editor's Note: The August draft Board Meeting minutes have not been submitted for inclusion of this issue.



BCH members, friends and family joined in a celebration of Chuck Miller's life the afternoon of Sunday, August 9, 2026, at the Daly Mansion, located at 251 Eastside Hwy, Hamilton, MT. The celebration began at 1:00 p.m. with remarks from Katie Miller and Mark Himmel as tasty hors d'oeuvres were served. A delicious buffet was followed by an Honor Guard presentation. Great music was provided by Rob Quist and the Mission Mountain Wood Band. Chuck was a beloved member of our Chapter and will be deeply missed.

A message from the President

Hello all! Hope you are finding time to get outside and enjoy this beautiful valley between rain and extreme heat! It has been challenging for projects this month but we got Coyote Coulee done between fire alerts in the Lost Horse area. 11 volunteers cleared 22 water bars and shaved off 12 stubs on downed trunks along the trails as well as scoping out the upper loop for the Forest Service.

Our next project is Crazy Creek Horse camp clean up and Bridge building on the trail to the Two Good Cabin. The current date is for Saturday August 22nd; fingers crossed that the weather behaves.

Then all hands on deck for Ravalli County Fair Sept 2nd-5th! There are still slots available to work the gates. This is our major fundraiser of the year, so please come and help out. There are signup sheets on BRBCH website for

Main/West, South and North Gates. Text Ed Duggan if you are interested in working the East Gate. We look forward to seeing you all there. It is fun and you get a free pass for your time!

On Sunday, August 9th, about 150 of us celebrated Chuck Miller's life and contributions to the Back Country Horsemen at a beautiful event hosted by his daughter Katie at the Daly Mansion. Old and new members, friends and family reconnected and shared their memories of moments with Chuck, a life well lived with much devoted to the Back Country and Public Lands. We will miss him and cherish our memories.

Our last meeting outside will be Thursday August 20th at Lake Como in the Three Sisters Camp site. Potluck begins around 6:30. Hope to see you there! We will meet back at Daly Leach Community room in September.

Welcome back to past member Lori Connor. We now have 98 members and 64 memberships. Thank you all.



Cowboy Constellations by A.W. Erwin

Way up among the Heavens
On a cool clear night,
You'll see them burning gently,
So distant and so bright.

Some folks call them stars,
But I believe so much more;
They're the campfires of cowboys
Who've rode on before.

Where they stop to visit,
Maybe even sing a song,
With ol' pard's and loved ones
They've not seen in so long.

A time for catchin' up,
To recall and to retell,
And a place to await others
As they come up the trail.

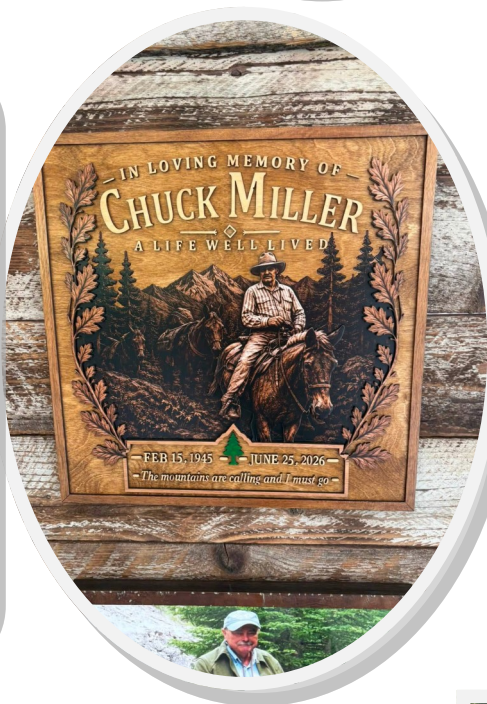
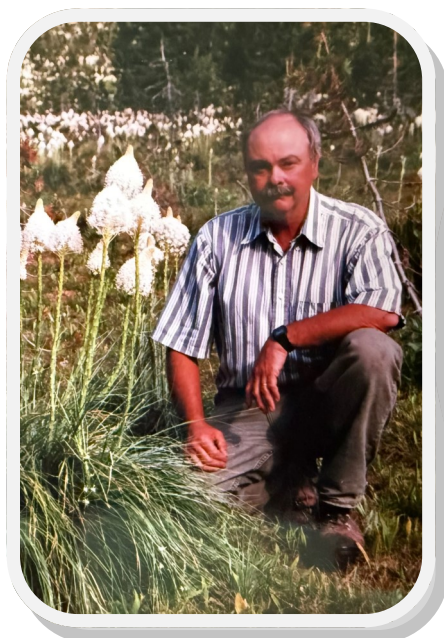
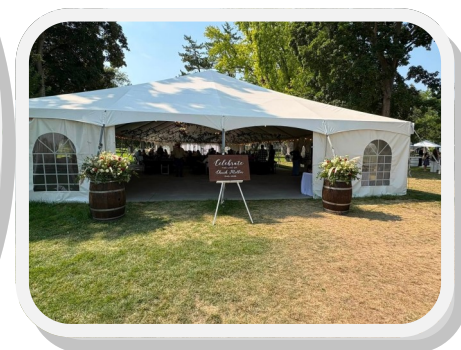
So now you know, when a star
Flickers sort of strange,
It's a cowboy passin' a campfire,
Ridin' on to God's Heavenly Range.

Dedicated to the life and legacy of Chuck Miller

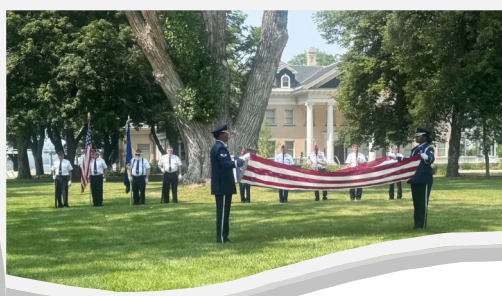
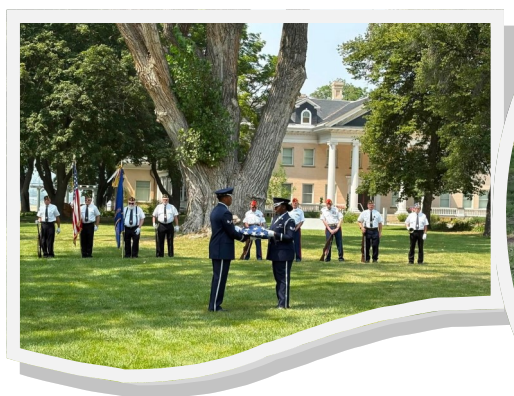
Katie Miller and her sister Heather



Tent set up for Guests at the
Daly Mansion



Honor Guard Flag presentation



HISTORY OF THE COYOTEE COULEE TRAIL COMPILED BY HELEN ENGLE

The history of the Coyote Coulee Trail goes back a long way.

In 1961 after my older sister and I graduated, from high school, and left home, our mother, Belle McGregor realized she missed having an adult to chat with as she rode.

So in September of that year, she called the radio station and had them announce that if any women wanted to ride be at the ranch at 1:30. Also that if someone wanted to borrow a horse she had plenty, just call.

So began the Happy Saddle Tramps. A gal named Gene McDoull had moved to the valley and rode a mule, she joined the group, and after a few years married and moved to Roaring Lion. So her and mom began exploring riding opportunities close by.

A neighbor gave them permission to go south thru their property, so Coyote Coulee was discovered. Mom brought the Saddle Tramps several times in the 1970's and 80's.

By the late 80's she was bringing Back Country Horsemen and riding from the current location of the Trail Head.

In 1992, a new Ranger came to Darby, his name was Tom Wagner. Mother went to several meetings where he should have been before she finally met him. After that meeting she told me he was very nice, had curly hair and beautiful eyes, and she thought she could show him her Trail.

She called and told him she would bring a horse for him and that she wanted to show him something. After mother died he told me that when they returned to her horse trailer, she looked at him with those blue eyes and dimples and said "Isn't this a nice place for a trail" and he agreed.

Dan Ritter had just transferred to the Bitterroot National Forest, from Idaho, and was the recreation specialist. Tom gave him the job of overseeing the trail completion.

There were very few changes made to Mom's original trail. The first creek crossing on the upper trail was

moved. The trail on the North Loop was moved from a meadow, this was due to a homestead with artifacts found there. Also some trail was moved off of the railroad bed.

What a lot of people don't know is that in 1900, Marcus Daly logged most of the West Side. He constructed a narrow gauge railroad and brought the logs to Main Street. Where he had a sawmill. They cut timbers used in the Butte mines.

The trail was on this railroad bed in several locations so it was moved except for one small area where you still ride on the railroad bed.

On August 30, 1994, Mother went to the barn to feed her cats laid down on a bale of hay and passed away. Most of the trail work was done at that time.

The remaining issue was the trailhead. Mother had her idea, and the neighbor at the time did not like it.

Since the fair began on the 31st of August, Mom's funeral was the following Wednesday. After the service when I went to the parking lot, I was met by 6 Forest Service employees and told, "We have received a directive from Washington DC and the trailhead will go where your Mom wanted it, also the trail will be dedicated to her.

So the process of NEPA and work began. The club built the trailhead.

Continued next page



Helen and Diane get a laugh out of Dan using a car window sun shade as a raincoat during a downpour at the BRBCH general meeting at Coyote Coulee.

History of Coyote Coulee continued

In 1999 congress passed a Rural Schools Bill, which gave counties with National Forest land the option of setting up a Resource Advisory Committee. This committee was given a portion of the money received from the government for the forest. The Committee could approve grants for projects that contributed to forest health.

I was appointed to that committee, and at our first meeting in January of 2000, when nobody had any ideas for projects, I spoke up and said we need to fund a toilet for the Coyote Coulee Trailhead.

Our toilet was the first project approved by the Ravalli County RAC and the first project completed nationwide. As we were waiting for the arrival of the toilet, the Forest Service realized there was one in Missoula, not being used. Because of this we saved enough money to pay for 3 years of supplies.

I was elected president of Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen in 1999 and 2000. After the toilet was installed I was able to preside over the dedication of the trail.

It is a wonderful trail, and being involved has been one of the greatest honors of my life.



Julie, Helen, Diane wait out the downpour at the Coyote Coulee General meeting.

Saturday, July 25th Julie Schram lead a Level 1 trail maintenance project at Coyote Coulee beginning at 8:00 a.m. with the safety meeting, coffee, and donuts. All necessary tools, equipment and lunch were provided!



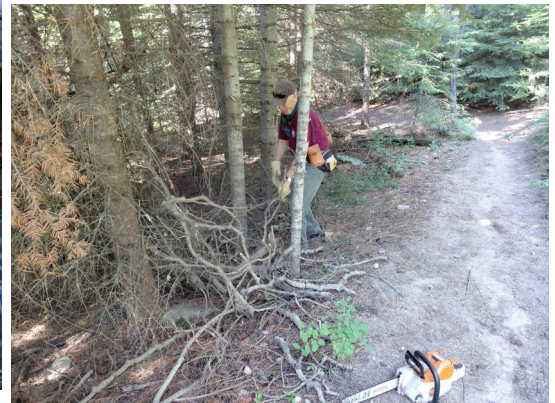
Top: Julie conduct safety meeting.
Below: Water bartenders discuss strategy,



Top: Kathy and crew survey survey improved water bar. **Below:** Mark trims out rat's nest of brush alongside trail



Mark applies hazard mitigation



Above: Water drainage work. **Below:** Dan swamps rat's nest cut by Mark.

Hazardous stubs before mitigation

Hazard nullified after mitigation



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

The July 2026 general meeting of the Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen (BRBCH) was called to order by President Diane Duffie at 7:06 p.m. The meeting was held at Coyote Coulee Trailhead. Approximately 16 members were present. There was no board quorum. All members led the Pledge to start the meeting.

PROGRAM

Program: Helen Engle - History of the Coyote Coulee Trail. Barb introduced Helen, who spoke about the trail system developed by her mom, Belle McGregor. In 1961, Belle put out a radio announcement about riding, and the Saddle Tramps began. The riders explored riding opportunities near Roaring Lion, and south thru a ranch to Coyote Coulee. The Tramps rode the area several times during the 1970's and 80's, and in the late 1980's, Belle brought BRBCH riders in at the current trailhead. She introduced the Darby Ranger, Tom Wagner, to the trail in 1992. Dan Ritter, FS Recreation Specialist, was given the job of trail completion. Few changes were made to Belle's original trail. As an aside, Marcus Daly logged most of the west side and had a narrow gauge railroad built, the bed of which was used by Belle on her original trail route. Only a small portion of the trail still uses the railroad bed. Belle passed away on August 30, 1994, after most of the trail work was done. Following her funeral, the FS approved her idea for the trailhead location, the NEPA process was conducted, and BRBCH built the trailhead. In 2000, the Resource Advisory Committee was set up, Helen was appointed to the RAC, and funding was provided for projects to improve the forest. Helen suggested a toilet for the Coyote Coulee trailhead be funded. This project was the first one approved by the RAC, and the first project completed nationwide. After the toilet was installed, the trail was dedicated in Belle's memory.

BUSINESS

Karen Philips motioned and Bonnie Morgan seconded to suspend the quorum requirements to conduct and approve business for the meeting. Motion carried.

Minutes: The June minutes were provided to the members via email. The following corrections were made: Lori Roy was added as a Program presenter, the Constitution Committee meeting date was corrected to July 26th, the bullet for Lost Horse ride was deleted under Projects (it's under Fun Rides),

and punctuation was added where needed. **Karen Philips motioned and Mary Odell seconded to accept the June general meeting minutes as corrected. Motion carried.**

Treasurer's Report: Elaine provided a summary of chapter funds. Karen noted that with Chuck Miller's passing, the chapter sends a \$50 donation to the Bitter Root Humane Association and adds Chuck's name to the plaque at the shelter. Julie Schram suggested that Chuck's name also be added to the fair-ground's memorial bench by the BRBCH office. **Dennis Hardman motioned and Helen Engle seconded to accept the treasurer's report. Motion carried.**

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements: Karen thanked Dan Maiyo for the excellent work on the tribute to Chuck and the Monture project write up/photos in the July newsletter. Dan passed around a June newsletter copy for folks to sign. He will give it to Katie Miller. Send Dan stories about Chuck for the August newsletter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership: There are currently 63 memberships and 97 members.

State Directors: No report.

Training: Bonnie brought CDs and info for folks at the meeting. Chainsaw trainers need their certifications. Crosscut recertification can be done on projects. New certifications will need classroom time or online training if it's available – Mark will check. Further discussion on training.

Long-Range Planning: Bonnie noted that Brad needs to meet with the FS.

Projects: Diane noted the following updates:

- The Crazy Creek bridge project is now on August 15.
- The Coyote Coulee project is now July 25. Julie said to meet at 8am, safety briefing at 8:30, will focus on cleaning water bars on the first loop.
- Monture Fencing Project: Mark Wright provided a recap of the project (more info in the newsletter). He thanked Julie and Helen for their great work with meal prep. This project should be submitted to BCH MT and BCHA for their newsletters. Helen noted that many stopped at Trixie's on the way home – Trixie was Helen's aunt, a trick rider, and past BRBCH member.

Continued next page

General meeting minutes continued

Programs: The August program will be by Christy on Fair gate activities.

Fair: Diane noted that folks can go online to sign up. Ticket takers will check as tickets are scanned and will stamp folks. The North gate has been reconfigured for better access and flow.

Constitution: Dan said the next meeting is July 26th at 2:30; at the fire hall on Willoughby.

OTHER BUSINESS

Celebration of Life for Chuck Miller: August 9th at 1pm at the Daly Mansion.

FS National Museum: Opening of the Legacy Center on July 17th at 10.

Next Meeting: Aug 20th at the Three Sisters Site, Lake Como.

Dennis Hardman motioned and Bonnie Morgan seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Kathy Stoppel-Holl for Cheyenne Raisor-Grinnell,
Secretary BRBCH

On Friday, July 17th at 10:00 am, Barb, Pam, Diane, Dennis, Dan and other BRBCH members attended the ribbon cutting and opening of the National Conservation Legacy Center at the National Museum of Forest Service history in Missoula. This event, organized by the USFS, was a fantastic celebration and show of support for the Forest Service and conservation. The Center is located at 6305 US Hwy 10 West, approximately 1/2 mile west of the Missoula Airport, and just west of the Smoke Jumper center. Please visit the center, it is amazing!



Clockwise from top: Legacy Center and restored "L-4" wooden fire lookout tower, retired Neptune Aviation Lockheed P2V air tanker (Tanker 12), 9 Mile Pack String prepares to take a lap around the center, speakers address the audience, Smoke (seated) reads his program.



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Horse Sense will return next month

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Enjoy lunch on us! 11 am–1 pm

10% OFF BUCKET SALE
Buy a bucket and fill it for 10% off all in-store items
See store for details. Certain items excluded. No discount on lumber or building materials.

Saturday, August 22 11 am–3 pm

Event at the Corvallis, MT location only | 1308 Eastside Highway

Rob Quist and the Mission Mountain Wood Band perform at Chuck's memorial.



BACKCOUNTRY KITCHEN

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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!

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!**

"The" Baked Bean Recipe

Chuck Miller - Bitter Root BCH

Ingredients

3 cans of pork and beans....any brand; *OR*
1-28 oz. can of Bush's Baked Beans; and
1-15oz can Van Camps Pork and Beans
1 large sweet yellow onion, chopped
1 1/2 jalapeno pepper, seeded, deveined and chopped...more or less to taste
1/2 pound sausage, bacon or cocktail sausages (Hillshire Farm Beef Lit'l Smokies)
1/3 cup brown sugar...more or less to taste
1 Tbsp. Wrights Liquid Smoke
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire Sauce
2 Tsp. Thai-style chili sauce....more or less to taste (Sriracha)
1 Tbsp. yellow mustard....the hot dog kind

Directions

Cut bacon or cocktail sausages into bite size pieces, sauté

in a cast iron skillet with the chopped onion and chopped jalapenos.

Cook until the meat is slightly brown and the onions and peeper are soft (10-15 minutes on medium heat).

In a baking dish or pan, empty the three cans of pork and beans including the liquid. Combine with the brown sugar, liquid smoke, Worcestershire sauce, chili sauce and mustard. Stir with a wooden spoon until thoroughly mixed. Add the cooked meat, onions and peppers to the beans and stir again.

Pre-heat oven to 300 degrees and place beans in center of oven, cook 1 to 1 1/2 hrs. and check to see if they are done. Beans are done when the top starts to dry slightly and when the liquid is absorbed, but don't get to dry. Check often after one hour.



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
 Karen Philips
 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

Board Members	Term
Dennis Hardman	2026-27
Joan Scheffer	2026-27
Pam Ristad	2026-27
Ed Duggan	2026-27
Chris Carrera	2025-26
Mary Odell	2025-26
Julie Schram	2025-26
Christy Schram –Duggan	2025-26
Travise Grinnell	2025-26

State Directors

State Directors	Term
Brad Pollman	2026-27
Ed Duggan	2025-26
Alt. State Director	
Julie Schram	2026

BCHMT National Directors

Mark Himmel
 Connie Long

BRBCH Past President

Brad Pollman

BCHMT State Chairman

Sandy Himmel

BCHMT Vice State Chairman

Chris Nygren

Alt. National Director

John Chepulis

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**DEADLINE FOR
NAG NEWS**
Thursday, September 10th, 2026
SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES & AD
TO: djmaiyo@gmail.com

Chuck's Horse Izzy and
Mule Francis



Kathy shelters in place during the downpour at
the Coyote Coulee general meeting.



Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen

50 Years of Service



NEXT BRBCH MEETING

Thursday, August 20th, 2026

Lake Como Three Sisters Group Site

Dinner at 6:30pm Meeting at 7:00pm

Visit our Website:

bchmt.org/bitterroot

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