

LAST CHANCE BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN
March 5, 2019 7:00 P.M.
Montana Wild, Helena, MT

Members present: Nicole Anderson, Kerry Bartlett, Fred Benson, Ed Darfler, Jim Darfler, Neil and Darlene Horne, Linda Huso, Merlyn Huso, Sherri Lionberger, Dennis and Debbie Milburn, Josh Olson, Howard Reid, Lyndsay and Tony Smith, Tom Weiss, Gary and Lynda Wiles, Sue Mohr

Tony opened the meeting.

Introduce guests and new members.

Josh Olsen: Josh is our newest member! Welcome!

Tony introduced our speaker, Sterling Campbell from Sting Saddlery (2121 Euclid Avenue; stingsaddlery.com; 406 422 0672 or 406 899 3029) and his spouse, Adilene.

Gullets should always be 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ wide; 8 inch gullet means it is 8" high not width.

Leather is important re: quality.

Rigging position: plays a big role in saddle fit.

Most factory saddles with full rigging usually put the saddle too far back.

If 3/4 rigged, the saddle is usually too far forward causing pinching on shoulders.

So halfway between is about right.

Quality trees (out of Utah) seem to fit uniformly.

Wood Kevlar trees are tougher and heavier but hold up very well.

Question on flexible trees: the only part that flexes is the bar. OK for pleasure riding but not good for performance, eg dallying and pulling. Can sore a horse if you do a lot of heavy riding.

Mule trees are flatter than horse trees.

Trees to stay away from: Ralide trees which are poured plastic. They have a 5 year warranty. Any tree with 10 years or less warranty is not enough time.

Wood fiberglass trees have a 20 year warranty.

Rawhide or wood Kevlar lasts 200 years.

How to check the tree: look up under the fenders. You can feel the rawhide lacing or can see it. Rawhide is grey plastic.

Kevlar is black.

Two different types of angles.

90 degree bar and 93 degree bar.

90 degree is a semi-quarter horse tree

93 degree is a full quarter horse

Most horses other than drafts are a 90 degree bone structure.

Mules and drafts are 93 degree.

To get the saddle to fit, don't change the bar...just widen the gullet.

Stirrups: need to have stirrup freedom so the stirrup can move forward easily.

When the horse goes downhill, make sure that the stirrup will move forward freely.

Squeak: key isn't in oiling; its in what is in the leather and on the tree: Sting uses saddle butter by putting it underneath a brand new saddle where the tree is and where the leather rubs together.

Ground seats: saddlemaker is responsible for making sure the saddle is comfortable. Should be able to get off a saddle after 10 hours and feel great.

Saddle fitting: put the saddle on with nothing else on and not cinched. Slide your hand under the tree and look for consistent pressure.

Lead the horse around without cinching up and see if the saddle moves around.

If saddle is sitting up too high in the back, the rocker is too high. Look at the gullet. Is it too high?

A saddle with perfect rock should not rock when it is on the horse with no cinching.

If the saddle rolls, it is too wide. Pad up to fix it.

If the saddle is too tight, put on as thin a pad as you can get away with.

Sheepskin: it was used for padding back in the day.

Nowadays it is used to keep the pad on. Don't worry about wear on the sheepskin as long as the pad stays on underneath. It costs a lot to replace the sheepskin. If it is thin or matted down, and the pad stays on, don't worry about it. A lot of saddlemakers are going to rug instead of sheepskin. English saddles use leather with foam padding.

Saddles that ride crooked have crooked rigging, an easy fix. Rigging can be off ¼ inch and it will cause it to corkscrew when you are riding.

Thanks so much for such a great presentation and bringing in different saddles to also try out. This was a really good session.

Tony brought the group to order.

February Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes was made by Sherri and seconded by Merlin . The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report.

Jim Darfler

Checking: \$16642.71
Savings: \$1688.11
New CD: \$10,000 matures 8/20/2020.
CD: \$10,000 matures 6/9/2019

Bills: Two submitted; one to Fred Benson for mileage for those who drove to the convention. 91 miles, 50cents one way. Three drivers; Katy, Jim and Kerry for \$45.50 each.

Motion to approve, Sherri: Nicole second. Unanimously approved.

Old Business.

State Convention: Katy, Sherri, Kerry, Jim, Fred, Tony, Sue, Howard

Kerry: facilities were great.

BCHMT resolutions: Sherri/Joe/Kerry/Howard

Two resolutions.

1. Submitted from Oregon and Washington BCH. MRA (Minimum Requirements Analysis) approval process.
MRA process provides for modern tools to be used in wilderness areas under extraordinary circumstances. Forest Service has used this process rarely.
Resolution asks Forest Service to consider using MRA process more frequently as the wilderness fires are getting more prevalent.
Oregon and Washington argued that they have much bigger trees to clear. Discussion made it clear that this resolution will be viewed as opening the door to support of using chainsaws and other modern equipment in wilderness including wheeled vehicles. The group agreed that it is incumbent on all of us to support wilderness designation no matter how difficult it is as that is the point of wilderness.
Our state delegation will not be in favor of this.
2. From BCH Washington.
There are 31 states in BCHA (Backcountry Horseman of America).
Resolution proposes to amend constitution to have one voting member to attend the annual meeting rather than two voting members as they have now.
Issue is a matter of expense and finding room for these many directors.
Sherri: it is expensive but you don't have to send two.
Kerry pointed out that States have always had the option to send only one.
Our state delegation will not support this resolution.

Good breakout sessions: one on technology especially using Facebook to recruit and retain members.

A veterinarian did a great job on cold weather horse care.

Couldn't do the crosscut saw competition this year due to severe weather.

Auction: Tony's knife sold for \$210. Will get a receipt to Tony.

Good auctioneer for the auction: brought in \$3100.

Also raised money for the youth education session.

Next year's convention will be in Hamilton March 20-22, 2020 by the Bitterroot.

2021 will be in Dillon, sponsored by Three Rivers.

Had less vendors than usual and not much presence. Six cancellations. A lot of people couldn't come because of the extreme weather.

2019 BCHMT Youth Program schedule has been set up.

Fred: we need to recognize Joe's contribution to the club and especially the youth programs at the May Freeze Branding. Can LC BCH donate a scholarship to a youth in Joe's name or donate funds to help out on expenses in these events?

This requires more discussion.

High Divide Group and travel planning: Dennis

We have expanded our influence with the High Divide group. So Sherri will be representing the state board with our High Divide group.

This is a coalition of non-motorized trail users.

MT WL federation has joined; local Audubon society may join. So the group is growing.

Our new trail project out of Kading: we need to set a date for this.

Looking at the last weekend of June: 29 and 30

Plan to come up Friday night and camp out to get an early start on the day.

Limited to no more than 50 people. Lot of planning needed for logistics.

Other groups have access to lots of people but we have a lot of sawyers. So our contribution will be to have 6 to 8 people from our club, all sawyers if possible. Swampers could come too. If you want to volunteer, let Dennis know. May need pack animals to pack gear.

Website update: Lyndsay got hold of Dan Marsh and was able to get good information on how to go forward. She will continue to work on this and lean on Dan for technical assistance.

Rick Yearry can help also.

New Business

Forest Service Projects: Neil

Spoke with Marcus.

Only activity confirmed is the High Divide project.

They don't have a budget but we will hear from him once he has specific information. However it sounds like the budget is the same as last year and should have about the same amount as last year.

First aid/CPR/Saw training

Wait to see when it gets scheduled so we can get signed up.

State board meeting is May 18.

Freeze branding will be May 11, tentative.

Jim Darfler will be backup in case of flooding.

Challenge at Challenge: we have been invited to come to this by Rick Maedje and Roland Cheek from the Flathead. August 22 to 25.

Lots of room to park at the cabin. 15 to 20 places to ride. Close to Badger-Two Medicine. A way for the various clubs to get together and visit about common issues and have fun!

Don't forget the Mountain Film Festival at the Myrna Loy on March 11 at 6 pm sponsored by Bob Marshall Foundation. There are booths and raffle tickets. \$15 apiece.

Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation project list looking for pack support not out until mid-March.

Other business:

Neil is a member of Spotted Dog working group representing LCBCCH and Prickly Pear Sportsmen Association.

One topic they are working on is grazing. Some members don't see a role for grazing on the WMA (Wildlife Management Area). FWP (Fish, Wildlife and Parks) has set up a format for the group to go through. Last winter 600 elk spent the winter on one big landowner's land.

Another issue is access to the WMA: there are four access points.

Neil will be putting a letter together before the meeting to represent LCBCCH. Neil will email the letter out and see if the letter can represent the LCBCCH membership. Please respond when you get Neil's letter with whether you are in support or not.

See the FWP website for more detailed information on this.

Darlene moved to adjourn; : Jim 2nd. Unanimous .
Adjourned.

Next meeting: April 3: Linda will bring treats.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sue Mohr, Secretary.