

Minutes - Last Chance BCH MEMBERSHIP MEETING

7 pm August 5, 2020 MONTANA WILD

Debbie and Dennis Milburn, Katy Donnelly, Terry Hutton, Sue Mohr, Howard Reid, Darlene and Neil Horne, Nicole Anderson, Bud Criner, Joann Chambers, Fred Benson, Tom Weiss, Jim Darfler, Clif Caughron, Tony and Lyndsay Smith

- Introduce Guests: Adam Hein, MCC
Bev Rankin: equestrian representative for the Scratchgravel Adhoc Committee
Lauren and Ryan Knutsen, friends of Hank Flatow and Darlene and Neil
- Approve Minutes: Neil moves approval; Tony 2nd,
Unanimous.
- Treasurer's report –Jim Darfler
 - Checking \$4974.39; Savings: \$1689.37
 - Three CD's of \$10,000 each. One comes due Aug 28 and need to renew them for another year.
 - Bills: Darlene: Cookies, Gatorade, meetings: \$45.54
 - Motion to pay: Unanimous approval.
- Alternate state board member. Sherri vacated the club's state director position so Howard now moves up to permanent board member leaving the alternate director position vacant.
Clif has indicated a willingness to be an alternate director.
Anyone else? Unanimous acclamation. Clif is appointed. Congratulations Clif!
Darlene will notify the state board.
- Adam Hein: MCC report.
Adam is Regional director for MCC in Helena, one of four regional offices operating crew based operations. Most of BCH is familiar with MCC and the work they do, primarily trail work but also fencing, weeds, campgrounds and maintenance work. 2018 MCC worked on 18% of trails in the state! MCC is comprised of older and youth crews (under 18). Community based programming is based on youth based activities.
In 2020, all youth programs were cancelled due to COVID. But all adult programming (18 to 25) is still going on.
Adam is on a mission to reach out to related groups to figure out how to better serve partners.
One question: is this chapter interested in engaging youth? Adam's mission is to identify youth and engage them in public land service. What else can we do with them to serve on public lands? Or how can we better teach them to learn as part of a team?
Ex: Fred brought members out to his place last year to demonstrate safety around a packstring.
MCC had a classroom in East Helena to teach kids about various aspects of conservation work.
Neil: good to educate the leaders and the kids if possible. BCH has packed MCC members to the job. In the course of that work, BCH members teach MCC students how to weigh everything and get ready to go the next day.
Adam: we train our leaders so the leaders can train MCC students.
With kids show them how an animal packs; show them how a camp would be set up.
Targetted middle school kids: 6, 7, and 8 grade.

Neil: are kids interested? Adam: yes, our high school age program attracts a lot of kids. Bring them in on Sunday, assign leaders and they are gone for a month to do activities. For many of these kids, it's their first time doing something like this. Popular with kids and parents.

There is more interest than the MCC has resources. They do a lot of trail clearance, stream and flood plain restoration. They can't run chain saws or spray herbicide.

But they can use handsaws, or crosscuts with right certifications onsite.

Adam is a year round employee.

The program ramps up starting in January and then by May up to 100 participants.

Katy: we should stay in contact with MCC and then be ready when things come up. We can get periodic reports from MCC through Fred who can remain as a contact.

Tony: has worked with YCC and MCC and they do great work. Last year MCC did a range tour. An area rancher showed up with horses and the kids got to be around the horses, a first time for many of them. There is a lot to be done re: educating these kids regarding the value of using horses and what can be accomplished in the backcountry.

Fred: BCH can coordinate together when it comes time to trail work. Can we send kids out with a group on a day trip? For example have them come to Eagle Guard station and walk the trails. MCC can certify for saw instructors.

Having kids along for swamping when members are cutting deadfall on the trails.

Ryan: I did not grow up around horses but, since moving here, I am excited about working with horses. It's good for kids to get this exposure. There are less people who do packing and not really anyone my age into it. So getting that spark early makes sense.

Fred: how are we going to handle this coming school year with COVID? Can we do parking lot programs?

Adam: parking lot programs not going to happen until next spring earliest.

March is a good example of a time when we have folks here but the weather doesn't cooperate. May be a time to work with this group.

In March they often tour MT towns and if they could connect to horse groups in these communities, it would be a way to connect when there is time to do so.

Crews get sent to Utah, Wyoming, and they also provide hurricane assistance.

MCC gets cost share agreements with most federal agencies; 2/3 of funding from cost shares.

The rest is from AmericaCorps: people sign up for a term of service and they do a year and volunteer for a year of service. Some donations. Will add Adam to our LC BCH email list.

- 2020 Projects – All Tentative

- BLM Scratchgravel Proposal: Dennis
 - Comments due August 7, 2020.
 - The proposal was surprising in its scope since the increased amount of development was never discussed in planning meetings.
 - Adding 40 miles of new trail construction, mountain bike optimized. Portions open to hikers and equestrians.
 - Some closed to bikers and some closed to hikers and equestrian.
 - 40 existing trails only for hikers and equestrians. Up to 9 miles of trail per square mile. This is quadruple the normal density of trails for wildlife. No funds will be available for this work; expect partners to do the work for free.
 - Inadequate discussion of weeds.
 - Two alternatives are proposed by the BLM: we should encourage they adopt Alternative A (rather than expanded Alternative B) with some modifications. Should not include Ebikes. Ebikes are motorized and should not be allowed just like other motorized vehicles in the area. We share these trails now with mountain bikes and pedestrians and haven't had a lot of trouble. The proposal appears to set up the area to be destination spot for ebikes: Helena as the Moab for ebikes. This would be completely to the detriment of local users with out of state users being

encouraged to come and yet no infrastructure provided. Parking areas and trailheads will be overwhelmed.

- Letters should be personalized.
- July 16 and 22 Q and A sessions at Norris Trailhead from 6 to 8 pm.

- Bev Rankin, ADHOC committee equestrian representative for the BLM Scratchgravel RAMP:
Bev provided an overview of the proposal.
There was discussion of the Copper City trails in BLM north of Three Forks. Mountain bikers worked with the BLM to develop a mountain bike playground. 24 miles of trails for mountain bikers and only 3 miles of jeep trail for horses who share with Offroad vehicles.
In deference to what equestrians gave up in Copper City, there is sentiment for the Scratchgravel plan to be primarily for horses.

Bev lives on Sunny Vista on Head Lane: the homeowners group is also on the Adhoc committee. Homeowners also want to see the plan limited to the 40 miles that is there. Enhance the trailheads and then go through the trails and figure out how to make a real trail system. Allow everyone to have access to it. Bikers use Scratchgravels in the spring because they can't access south hills. Horse people right now have no conflicts. But as Helena grows, can we retain that?

Bev provided a short report on what the Adhoc Committee is doing so far.
Next meeting is August 13.

Dennis:

Most groups are thinking 40 miles is enough. Lets fix what we got.

Katy: This proposal does set us up for conflict. Scratchgravel is all we have for riding.

Dennis suggests that BCH is committed to shared use on trails with a certain amount of education and a good dose of common courtesy. Make Scratchgravels a showcase for multiple use. Build on good points and forget about skills trails.

Dennis and Sherri will work on a letter to BLM for Katy to sign as the club representative, advocating for Alt A with a few improvements.

- Gates of the Mountains still needs attention. Need to do upper Kennedy and Bear Prairie.
- North Fork of the Blackfoot Camping – August 14-16: this has been cancelled.
- Tony and Lyndsay got two First Aid Kits. Neil and Darlene will hold them.
- Contact Darlene to send out any info members think is appropriate.

Next Meeting: Mt Wild Pavilion, September 2, 2020.

Adjourn. Howard moved; Fred 2nd. All approved

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Mohr, Secretary
LCBCH

