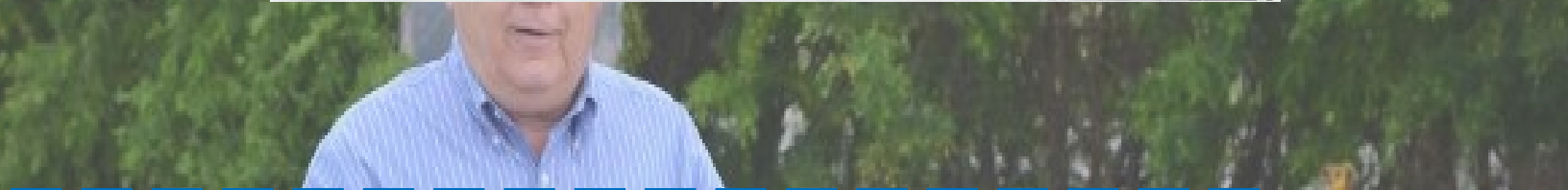
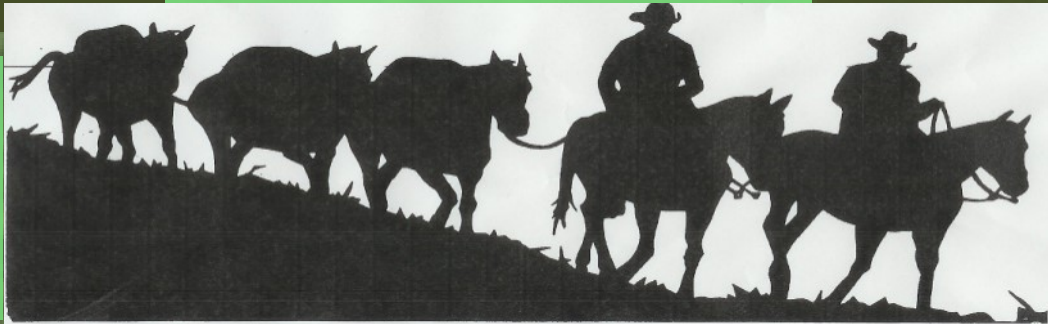


MAY-2024

# Last Chance Back Country Horsemen

# HORSE TRACKS



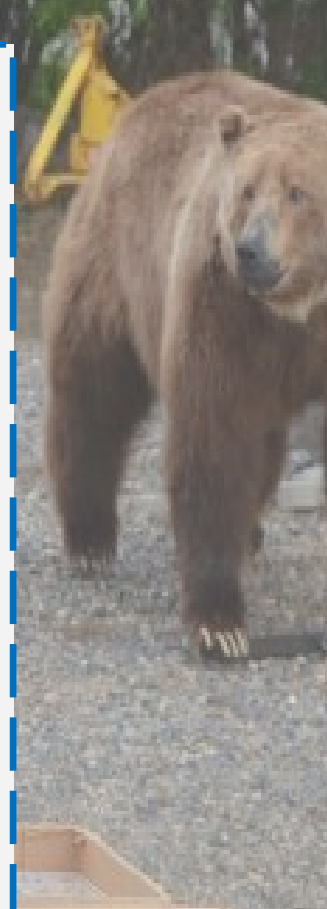
## LCBCH MEETING

**\*\* at the freeze branding \*\* ~May 18 ~**

### LCBCH Spring Event – Freeze Branding

- Date – Saturday, May 18
- Location – Neil and Darlene Horne Residence – 419 Mill Road
- Time – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Activities
  - Freeze branding
  - Packing demonstration and practice for Mann Gulch project
  - Dutch oven cook-off

**Come join the Last Chance Back Country Horsemen for a great family event! Looking forward to seeing those we have been missing and those planning to join.**



#### Black Bear

**Black Bear**

Front track: No prominent shoulder hump

Side track: Not pointed ears, straight line profile

Back track: Most claws

#### Grizzly Bear

**Grizzly Bear**

Front track: Shoulder hump, Notched ear profile

Side track: Most rounded ears, Notched ear profile

Back track: Long claws

Color and size can be misleading—look for a combination of characteristics.

# Tragedy at Mann Gulch

On August 5, 1949 a tragic wildfire killed 13 firefighters on the hillside opposite you.



**M**issoula Smokejumpers and the Meriwether recreation guard were sent to control a lightning-caused wildfire that started where you now stand. While heading towards the river to attack the fire from below, shifting winds caused the fire to jump across the gulch, trapping the 16 firefighters inside the steep canyon. The turbulent winds exploded the fire into an inferno, engulfing the men and killing all but three.



**3:35-5:00 pm**

Smokejumpers landed here and walked down the gulch.

They continued on, trying to get in a better position to begin fighting the fire: downwind and closer to the river.



**5:30 pm**

Before they reached the river, the fire had jumped the canyon and blocked their route.

They turned around and tried to outrun the fire as it raced them back uphill. Realizing the fire was gaining on them, the foreman Dodge ordered the men to drop their equipment and go faster.

The MCC Crew Lead Fun Day – Training Day is behind me.

Now the next project, Mann Gulch.

Friday May 17, I am planning to explore Mann Gulch and do some trail clearing so the cross packers have a straight shot to Mann Gulch. I plan to leave Helena about 8 a.m. from the Grub Stake.

Riders who are accompanying me May 17 are Mike Layng, Nolan Wanner, Jason Funkhouser. If you would like to come along, let me know so I don't leave you behind. Fred Benson 507-360-7172.

The second part of Mann Gulch is Tuesday May 21.

May 22 is a backup date in case of rain.

I need about 9 pack animals. Some who said they were coming have had life events and are unable to help. This is a ride and pack in, drop the gear and head out and home. The FS and Smokejumpers will take the tools out the bottom of the Gulch. LCBCH won't be helping with setting the crosses.

I estimate we need two mules for 4 crosses, three mules for 6 bags of Quikcrete approximately 50# bags, two to three mules 20 to 30 gallons of water for the Quikcrete (5 gallons on each side) and one mule for tools. These aren't big loads with enough mules other than the crosses.

Club members who have responded and haven't had changes to their schedules include:

Bob Tomaskie with X number of mules

Jason Funkhouser with 1 mule

Mark Turner with 2 mules

Fred Benson with 1 mule

Mike Layng as an outrider.

Anyone else who would like to help pack in gear or be an outrider, please let me know. I could use another mule or two.

I am working with Lucas Perriman, (FS) to have the crosses available for our freeze-branding day, May 18th. This is for demonstration and informational purposes not for telling the cross packer how to pack them.

Last item is planning for National Trails Day June 1. The plan is to gather early Saturday morning between 7:30 and 8 a.m. at the parking area where Nelson Road and Beaver Creek Road intersect then divide into two groups and leave the parking area shortly after 8. One group going up Hunter's Gulch, working towards Bear Prairie with the second group starting at Refrigerator Canyon working towards Bear Prairie. Within each group, smaller groups can leapfrog downed logs, hoping to make better time. I doubt we will finish on Saturday but one can hope.

Today is a Good Day to have a Good Day

Fred Benson

507-360-7172

250 Norris Rd

Helena, MT 59602

fcb.brokenspurranch@gmail.com



The Last Chance Back Country Horsemen hosted the MCC Crew Leaders for a Fun Day – Training Day, Tuesday May 7.

With help and assistance from the LCBCH members, the MCC Crew Leads got hands on experience with horses and mules, learning about basic horse safety, trail etiquette, packing gear into manties, bags and boxes. They learned several knots, some useful ones and one for show.

Once the manties and bags were built and filled, they moved those loads to the pack animals, tying the gear onto the animals using different hitches and knots.

The day ended with the crew leaders building and packing several items that hadn't been part of the training from the back of their trucks. They did a great job working together to build two great looking manties, then tying them to the wood practice horse.

It was a cold windy day but everyone had fun.

I am looking forward to meeting them on the trail and being a part of a trail crew I am packing for.



## 2024 Project Updates •

- ◆ Eagle Guard Station/Elkhorns/Crow Creek –
  - ◆ Jordan H, Taylor and Nick P Trail Boss . Eagle Guard Station will be available to use August 8 through August 12 (Thur -Mon) •
- ◆ Townsend trails – Cathy L Trail Boss
  - ◆ 1. Cathy L and Terry H checked out Pole Creek for the primary trail project as requested by Lucas, but road is not ready for travel to the trailhead: mud, ice, snow.
- ◆ Tizer Guard Station – secondary project; MCC crew will be doing some clearing in the area in July/August; they will need pack support to haul tools, chain saws and gas •
- ◆ Mann Gulch Project – Monuments; Fred Benson, Trail Boss Fred indicated project date of May 21st; estimates the need for: 9 mules total, 4 to 5 packers, 2 to 3 outriders, 1 to help with each string unless packer wants more (4 monuments, 4-6 bags Quikrete, 10-20 gals water, tools and supplies); potential packers and outriders identified at meeting; contact Fred B to confirm your availability. Road to Willow Creek has been improved.
- ◆ Gates of the Mountain – Trail Clearing, Fred Benson, Trail Boss
  - ◆ 1. LCBCH to clear from Refrigerator to Upper Kennedy Springs and/or from Hunters Gulch
  - ◆ 2. Propose begin clearing National Trails day, June 1st; brief discussion about possibly having a BBQ gathering in the evening; to be determined
  - ◆ 3. Propose setting up a common use drop camp (near water) for multiple trail clearing dates

