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**Back Country Horsemen
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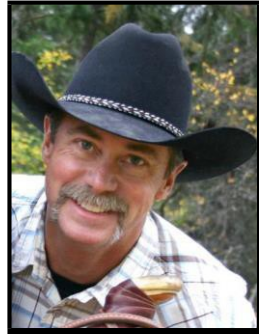
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The Feedbag

June 2015



President's Message...

It's already June and so much has happened, but there is still so much to do. It's amazing we find time for everything. I guess we don't.

I am proud of our Chapter and all it does to facilitate the mission of the Back Country Horsemen. Most of all I am proud of the volunteers and the hours they put in to make this all happen. However, this is what volunteers do.

We all have busy lives, but what makes this so rewarding is when folks say "We will help" or "I can be there" or "What do you need to get that done"? Already this year we have had many educational opportunities for our members put on by other members. These include, but of course are not limited to, the Saddle Cleaning Clinic, First Aid/CPR Certification, Cross Cut and Chain Saw Safety, Spring Tune Up, Defensive Horse Safety and the Membership Potluck. In addition we have had excellent programs at our general membership meetings including veterinarians, nutritional experts, and information on how to contain stock in the back country. All this was planned, organized, and done with volunteer work. We also can't forget all the work that is done at the state level along with the "behind the scenes" stuff like our website, our Facebook, the calling committee and many more.

Coming up this summer there are many great opportunities for folks to get involved. There are many trail projects, cabin spring cleaning, packing projects, and National Trails Day. There are many ways people can help even if they are still learning skills.

One of our chapter's premier summer events is our "Steak Ride". This year the Steak Ride has a new Chairman (Mike Moore), a new day (Sat. June 27th), and an exciting new route. We will continue to have a wonderful steak dinner put on by all our volunteers. The ride was moved to Saturday to make it easier for people to spend the night if they choose. The location is at the beautiful Blackfoot Clearwater Game Range / Boyd Ranch. Please come and enjoy and help if you want. By the way this is the site where our chapter has contributed hundreds of volunteer hours by participating in the annual wire roll up. August will bring our Summer Potluck where again there will be a need for help.

You probably have figured out by now my "President's Message". Please be involved, it is truly rewarding. Thank you for all that you do.

.....*Mark Wright, President*



2015 Calendar

June 3 Board Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

June 6 National Trails Day, Rattlesnake Recreation Area, Richard Tamcke, 258-6621

June 13 Pre-Steak Ride, Clearwater Game Range, Mike Moore, 370-7549

June 24 – 26 2015 Burnt Cabin Project, Richard Tamcke, 258-6621

June 27 2015 Steak Ride, Clearwater Game Range, Mike Moore, 370-7549

July 1 Board Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

July 11 Fred Burr Canyon Ride, Richard Tamcke, 258-6621

July 15 Membership Meeting 7:00 p.m., Missoula Equestrian Park., 3500 North Ave. behind Big Sky High School

Aug. 15 Calf Creek Ride, 10:00 AM, Gary Salisbury, 529-7242

August 19 Membership Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

Aug. 21 Annual Summer Picnic (Pot-Luck), Holt Heritage Museum, 6:00 PM

September 2 Board Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

Sept. 12 Primm Meadows Ride, Richard Tamcke, 258-6621

September 16 Membership Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

Ice Cream Social Before September General Meeting, 6:30 PM

October 7 Board Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

Oct. 11 Wire Rollup, Clearwater Game Range, 9:00 AM, Richard Tamcke, 258-6621

Oct. 19 Rattlesnake Ride, 11:00 AM, Rattlesnake Trailhead, Ken Brown, 207-6067

October 21 Membership Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

November 4 Board Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

November 18 Membership Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

December 2 Membership Meeting 7:00 p.m., Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA

Dec. 5 Christmas Party, 6:00 PM, State Board Meeting, 10:00 AM

Club Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. General Membership meetings are on the third Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. Both are held at ORI, Opportunity Resources Inc., 2821 So. Russell, across from YMCA. Board and Membership meeting locations are subject to change – always check your email for the most up to date meeting location.

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Photo courtesy of MWA website.

Montana Wilderness Association & Back Country Horsemen

By Dan Harper

The Back Country Horsemen of Montana is one of the many communities that the Montana Wilderness Association joins with to protect Montana's wilderness heritage, quiet beauty, and outdoor traditions. The BCH shares a dedication to preserving our backcountry road-less and wilderness areas.

In addition to the focus on conservation, the BCH provides education on the wise and safe use of horses and mules in the backcountry. The BCH works with various government agencies to assist in management and maintenance of public lands. The organization is a strong advocate for ensuring that public lands remain open for recreation and stock use.

Many of the BCH members are also members of the MWA. The BCH is represented on the Shining Mountain chapter board and also represented on the MWA State Council. This allows for a coordinated effort in evaluating and supporting optimal management and travel plans for public road-less and wild lands.

The BCH of Montana is also a service organization providing thousands of hours of labor maintaining, and reconstructing hundreds of miles of trail each year. In addition, BCH offers pack animal support to various volunteer trail crews including those sponsored by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and the Continental Divide Trail program.

The MWA and the BCH have a lot in common: boots and hoofs on the ground and eyes on the future of Montana's wild and Wilderness lands.



Trail Riding with Bees

Horse Sense for the Trail Rider
Melinda Codling



- In a group, it's usually the 3rd or 4th horse that starts getting stung.
- If your horse starts to hop or buck, move down the trail as fast as possible. Bees are territorial and will not chase you beyond their territory boundaries.
- Wear half chaps, full chaps or tuck your pants inside your jeans during bee season. Jeans over the tops of boots invite bees-up-the-pant-legs. Likewise with loose-fitting shirts.
- Check yourself and your horse for bees caught in clothing, mane or tail.
- Take an antihistamine such as Benadryl immediately to minimize allergic reactions.

Saddle Storage in the Backcountry

By Daniel Harper



Every time a packer spends the night in a backcountry camp there needs to be a strategy for storing saddles, keeping them clean, dry and protected from chewing animals looking for salt. Over the years I have tried a number of approaches for saddle storage.

A popular plan has been to cut a large pole and tie it between two trees. The saddles are then placed to straddle the pole and covered with a tarp or many canvas. The underside of saddles are not well protected from nibbling animals. All too often this approach resulted in the saddles rolling off the pole, always in the middle of the night. In addition, cutting a pole and finding trees the correct distance apart involves a lot of work and in some cases would not be legal. A similar approach using sling ropes strung between trees does not work well for me. One problem is that often properly sized and spaced trees are not available near the camp site.

Canvas manties are often used to cover saddles but are too small to provide complete watertight coverage. This approach also allows easy access for small nibblers of leather. Indeed, the salt present on the many canvas may invite critters looking to add salt to their diet. For a time, I even packed a small tent for saddle storage. This was not practical due to the work involved in setting up the tent and the weight of the tent.

I have found a quick, easy solution for safe saddle storage using a plastic tarp. A lightweight plastic tarp 12' x 16' (good for up to six saddles) or a 16 x 20' (good for 12 to 15 saddles), hopefully in a brown or green color, works just fine. First spread the tarp out then in the center place the saddles in piles with the pad on top of the saddle and riding saddles on top of the pack saddles. Next, pick up each corner of the short side of the tarp and folded over toward the middle. Make the corner square. Next fold the long sides over the saddles using wood or rock to hold the last flap down.

With this approach, the saddles never touch the ground. Rain and snow cannot penetrate the wrap. The plastic is not inviting to chewing animals and with square corners small animals find it difficult to penetrate. When breaking camp, the lightweight tarp can be easily packed last in a top pack. You can count on clean, dry and intact saddles as you ride out of camp.

FEEDBAG CORNER

MYTHS About Feeding Your Horse

By Mistie Dillree, Axemen Feed

Article via Nutrena.com

1.) GOOD GRASS OR HAY IS GOOD ENOUGH

Most idle horses can look pretty good simply pasture fed. BUT that doesn't ensure things like hoof quality, muscle development, maintenance or bone strength. Most forages are unbalanced diets and overgrazed pastures can lack plenty of nutrients. Which is why you should strongly consider a feed that guarantees everything they need. (or at least choose a good quality LOOSE mineral that ensures they are getting what they need mineral wise.)

2.) HULLS AND MIDDS ARE ALL A BUNCH OF HOOEY

By-products are things like soy hulls from making soy oil/meal, or wheat midds- the portion of the grain that remains after the starch is removed when making flour. These by-products contain readily available, very valuable nutrients. Why not use 'em? Reputable companies test all by-products to ensure quality nutrient levels. Just ask if you're curious.

3.) CORN AND HORSES DO NOT MIX

When sourced, tested, processed and managed correctly, corn in a balanced diet has lots of benefits. Eating a lot of whole corn, which is about 65% starch, could lead to colic but when formulated into a overall diet, corn can be a great source of energy in a feed ration.

4.) PROTEIN MAKES HORSES GO BONKERS

Many are surprised to learn protein does NOT make horses "hot". In fact, horses don't even need crude protein- instead, they need the amino acids such as lysine, methionine and threonine. Fiber, starch and fat make much better energy sources.





Trail Riding in Burn Areas



John Favro

- Be alert for potential hazards including: falling trees & limbs, especially during periods of wind.
- Look for unstable slopes and rolling material like logs and rocks, burned out stump holes, areas that may still be smoldering or burning and bridges or other trail structures that may be damaged. Avoid off-trail use in these areas.
- Before you leave, check with your local ranger station or administrator to find out which trails may be closed because of fires.
- Take a small crosscut saw and axe with you.
- Look for and avoid hazard trees that may still be burning or have burned partially through.
- Look up, down and all around as you travel through burned areas.
- Check the weather before you leave and avoid burned areas if high winds or storms are predicted.

Trainer's Corner: How to Stop a Bolting Horse

By Etta Sepp

Having your horse bolt is a scary thing. Coming from the race track I know the difference between a horse running off and running for you. It may be the same speed, but feels totally different. It doesn't matter how long you have been riding, it's a very scary feeling to have a horse run off with you.

A rider's first instinct may be to pull straight back with both hands; usually leaning forward. The instinct to lean forward is not a wise choice. Instead you want to sit deep and back in the saddle, making sure your weight is in the stirrups with your feet a bit forward putting your center of gravity back. Then you breathe and relax; you've got this.

Now instead of pulling at the same time with both hands, you are going to try to use a pulley rein system. This means one rein at a time. If you pull back with both hands at the same time, you will only exhaust yourself as horses are fight or flight animals. This is why you need to relax; horses can sense your feelings of stress and anxiety. If you relax, hopefully they realize they aren't in trouble or in danger. We also need to remember to talk to our animals. They listen to us more than we realize.

If the pulley system doesn't work and space allows, use one rein to move the horse into a circle. Remember: stay deep seated. It may be hard to get the horse to turn at first, but once the horse does bend, the light is in sight as you're gaining control. Once they bend their body, you have disengaged their power, also known as their hind end. Just like a NASCAR racetrack, a car on a straightaway has more power and speed than a car on the curve of the track. Keep working your horse in smaller and smaller circles until they stop.

Horses bolt for all kinds of reasons. Some do it out of fear, or they have a bad attitude that day. Be consistent with your horse and don't give up. Practice bending your horse's head in so they become familiar with the exercise.



Etta is a trainer out of Hot Springs, MT. Etta has made a career out of her love for horses being a former jockey and now trainer.

Trail Safety and Trail Etiquette

Travel with experienced horsemen and horsewomen. Make sure your horse is ready for the trail--physically fit and conditioned to obstacles such as water, bridges, bogs, and gates. Your horse should stand quietly while tied. Condition them to gear such as hobbles, cruppers, britchens, rain slickers, overhead branches and riding alone. Get conditioned for riding yourself. Leave a horse that kicks or a green-broke horse at home until you've worked with a trainer enough to take them out.

Leave stallions and dogs at home, unless the group agrees. A cycling mare can stir up other horses on the ride. Be vigilant if there is a stallion, dog or cycling mare in the riding group.

Wearing a helmet is a personal choice, but recommended, especially with a young horse. Carry an emergency medical information card. When saddling up, be aware of loops hanging from your saddle that could trap you to the horse during a mishap. Always fasten the main cinch first (in increments), then the back cinch, then breast collar and then crupper. Remember to check your cinches after taking a break. When unsaddling, unfasten the main cinch last. Never mount a horse that is still tied up. Horses are always more comfortable and calm if they do not feel trapped.

Don't be shy about using a mounting block or log or rock to get into the saddle. Once mounted don't start down the trail until everyone is in the saddle. A horse left behind can get extremely nervous making it difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to mount. Wait for all other riders at water crossings or obstacles. Wait at water tanks, streams or ponds until all the horses have had a chance to drink. Stay together.

Stay alert! Remember you are the one with the thinking and reasoning ability. Maintain control of your mount at all times and think about what effect your actions might have on others less experienced than you. Maintain the proper distance between your horse and the one in front of you--two to five horse lengths between horses. Always be aware of your own horse in relation to others. Remember there is no such thing as a bombproof horse. If you can, dismount to put on your raincoat, unfold a map or handing an item to another rider. Even if you don't spook your own horse, you could spook another horse in the group. And speaking of dismounting, kick both feet free of the stirrups. That way if your horse moves you won't get the left foot hung up in the stirrup. Watch that loose garments don't catch on the saddle horn.

Walk your horse on mountain trails. Don't gait or trot unless all riders agree. Keep up so you don't find your horse trotting to catch up. If a rider needs to stop, notify the leader. Avoid stopping when going uphill or downhill when there is another rider behind you. The more difficult the terrain, the slower you and your group need to travel and the more room you need to give other horses. Preferably dismount if you must turn your horse around on narrow and/or steep trails. Always turn his head out over the down side so he can see what his feet are doing. Your weight will not be able to throw him off balance this way either. Give your horse his head in a bad spot and don't be too quick to bail off if he stumbles. This applies particularly to stream crossings, bog holes, etc.

Approach any stock with caution. Let others know you are in the area. Yield to uphill users and pack strings. When approaching bikers or hikers, talk with them so they will hopefully respond. That way the horses can see and hear them. Also, have them stand on the downhill side of the trail so they are less threatening to stock. Be courteous and respectful.

Adapted from: June 2001 Feedbag, "Back Country Horsemen of Montana Defensive Horsemanship," Paul Evenson's "Defensive Horse Safety True/False Challenge Quiz" BCH Missoula April 2008 General Meeting, "Horse Safety 4/28/07" by Gary Salisbury and "You and Your Horse"--Wilderness Outfitters, Smoke & Thelma Elser with input from Richard Tamcke.

Missoula County Weed District

by Ashley Juran



A GOOD SUMMER CUT



It is not too late in the season to freshen up the look of your property. Now, before seeds develop, is the ideal time to cut down infestations of spotted knapweed and/or Canada thistle. These weeds have multiple factors working in their favor which allow them to persist: abundant seed production, chemicals released from their roots which inhibit the growth of other plants, or the ability to reproduce from seed and root fragments, as well as many other characteristics. To effectively control these noxious weeds seed development must be prevented and root system energy reserves depleted. Targeted mowing can achieve these goals. It is an effective integrated weed management tool for controlling spotted knapweed and/or Canada thistle.

Whether you mow or graze, removing above-ground vegetation will tax the target noxious weeds. Timing is important. Research conducted in Montana indicates that viable seed production of spotted knapweed is most effectively suppressed, 98-100%, by mowing or grazing during the late-bud/early-flower or full-flower stages (Benzel et al. 2009). Similarly, mowing to prevent seed production in Canada thistle is recommended at the late-bud/early-flower. In addition, Canada thistle populations were observed to decline 86% after one year and 100% after four years in alfalfa fields that were mowed twice a year (Jacobs et al. 2006). Once they have been cut down the noxious weeds will need to utilize energy stored in their roots to produce additional stems and leaves. If seeds develop prior to cutting be sure to bag material to prevent seed dispersal. Depending on the amount of moisture the infested area receives additional mowing may be needed throughout the summer to prevent seed production. By halting seed production and requiring the plants to deplete their below ground resources, mowing can be a very effective weed control method.

No matter what strategy is used - mowing, herbicides, and/or biological control - repeated treatments will be necessary to bring established infestations of spotted knapweed and/or Canada thistle under control. Utilizing an integrated approach for controlling well established noxious weeds such as spotted knapweed and Canada thistle here in Missoula County, will produce beneficial long-term results. If you are interested in developing an integrated weed management plan for your property please contact the Missoula County Weed District – Weed Prevention Coordinator, Ashley Juran at ajuran@missoulaeduplace.org or (406) 258-4218.

References

Benzel, K.R.; Mosley, T. K.; and Mosley, J. C. 2009. Defoliation Timing Effects on Spotted Knapweed Seed Production and Viability. *Rangeland Ecology & Management* 62(6):550-556.

Jacobs, J. Sciegienka, J. and Menalled, F. 2006. Ecology and Management of Canada thistle [*Cirsium arvense*]. USDA-NRCS Invasive Species Technical Note No. MT-5.

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-Mission Statement-**

1. To perpetuate the commonsense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness.
2. To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreation and stock use.
3. To assist the various agencies responsible for the maintenance and management of public lands.
4. To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise and sustained use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.
- 5. To foster and encourage formation of new Back Country Horsemen organizations.**