



The Feedbag

February 2019

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Volunteer Organization, 501c3

Presidents Letter

Howdy Folks,

I hope everyone had great Christmas and a good start to the New Year!

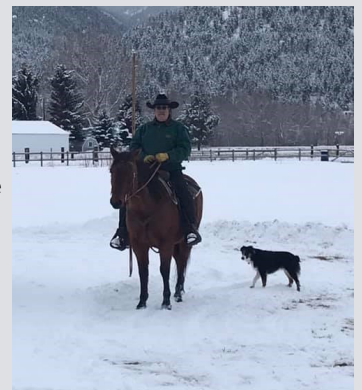
BCH of Missoula is off to a good start as well. We had the members at the November meeting fill out surveys as to what they think would be beneficial to them to keep them engaged and to attract new members. We (the BCH Board and engaged members) are taking the survey responses to task. We may not be able to do every suggestion; however we have narrowed them down to several suggestions that seemed most important.

Here are a few of the suggestions we have already started working on and implementing.

- *More member rides, we have added quite a few new rides to the schedule for this year. They are on our website and also in this Feedbag issue.*
- *We will have members and guests introduce themselves at every meeting.*
- *We are ramping up our social media information; this includes Facebook, email and our website.*
- *We are striving to bring really good speakers and programs to our meetings and continue to offer educational and training opportunities throughout the year.*
- *We are going to allow a longer coffee break/social time at the general meetings so ya'll can connect with new and existing members.*
- *We will keep the business agenda small and give time for feedback from members so we can better meet your expectations.*
- *We will offer information in a timely manner so folks know about opportunities to volunteer for projects or help with.*
- *We are having door prizes at every meeting and you may be a lucky winner of really neat stuff.*

As always we value your membership and encourage you to be involved at every opportunity. I also want to hear if you have any suggestions for us to improve on or provide a better experience as a member. I look forward to seeing you all at our next meeting on February 20th and at our membership round-up on February 23rd at the Lolo Community Center at 6:30pm. We have a great year ahead. So get ready to Ride!

Randy Velin, BCH of Missoula President



Upcoming Meetings and Events

February:

20th - General Meeting 7:00 PM at ORI
23rd - Membership Roundup 6:30 PM at
Lolo Community Center

March:

1st-3rd - BCH State Convention in Great Falls
6th - Board Meeting 7:00 PM at ORI
20th - General Meeting 7:00 PM at ORI
23rd - Packing and Pannier Training
10:00 AM or ORI

April:

3rd - Board Meeting 7:00 PM at ORI
13th - Spring Tune-up, Ride and Potluck
10:00 AM Bashams arena
17th - General Meeting 7:00 PM at ORI
20th - Defensive Horse Safety Clinic
9:00 AM at Harpers arena

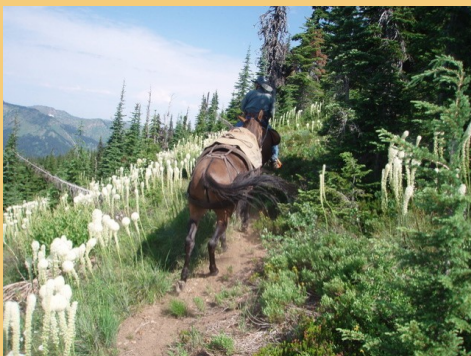
May:

1st - Board Meeting 7:00 PM at ORI
15th - General Meeting 7:00 PM at ORI

Defensive Horse Safety Class

The U.S. Forest Service requires completion of the defensive horse safety program before one can use stock either as an employee or as a volunteer. That requirement is here to stay. The reason, livestock related accidents have significantly decreased since the program was instituted. Decreasing accidents means decreasing costs for the forest Service. Based on the success of the defensive horse safety program other organizations such as the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation now require the training for the volunteer packers taking trail crews and equipment into the wilderness.

The Back Country Horsemen of Missoula has been in the forefront in developing the horse safety program. The chapter's program agenda meets the forest service requirements. The Defensive Horse Safety Manual developed by the Missoula



Chapter has become the standard for all the Montana back country horsemen chapters. The Missoula program has certainly bene-

BCH of Missoula Officers and Committees

Officers

Randy Velin	President	406-544-4582
Ken Brown	Vice President	406-207-6067
Kirsten Pabst	Secretary	406-396-7050
Suzette Moore	Treasure	406-370-7561

Board of Directors

Judy Allen	Lee Crawford	Smoke Elser
Chuck Erickson	Lana Hamilton	Earl Tidball
Cody Allen (Membership Chair)	Nancy Chandler (Social Chair)	

State Directors

Gary Salisbury (Senior Director)	406-529-7242
Richard Tamcke (Junior Director)	406-239-6417
Mike Moore (Alternate)	406-370-7549

Issues

Mike Chandler	406-549-7639
Ken Brown	406-207-6067

Recreational Trails Grant

Richard Tamcke	406-258-6621
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Defensive Horsemanship

Dan Harper	406-258-6467
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Website

Adam Davis	406-529-1892
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Feedbag Editor

Bonnie Doyle	406-546-1793
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fit from the expertise of well-known course instructors including Smoke Elser and Gary Salisbury.

Completion of the full day course will earn a certificate good for three years. Attending the first 4 hours of the program will enable individuals to be recertified for another three years. Those folks recertifying are always welcome to stay for the whole event.

Our membership is generally very horse savvy; indeed many members could easily teach the course. Yet there is always something to learn and safety requires a continuing commitment.

The next Defensive Horse Safety Course will be starting at 9:00 am on Saturday, April 23 at the Harper barn / arena. There is no charge for BCH members. Certification is required in order to volunteer for any of the chapter projects involving livestock. Dress for the weather. Bring a lunch and a lawn chair.

For questions call Dan Harper at 258-6467.

Saddle and Pack Saddle Cleaning

Every January when it's cold and snowy the Backcountry Horsemen of Missoula gather together to clean saddles and tell stories. This year was my first time joining in this event. It was also my first experience in taking a saddle apart, cleaning and oiling it. Gary Salisbury let me use his saddle stand and he also provided me with soap, oil and instructions along the way. Saddle maker Larry Henderson was available to answer questions and provide a helping hand.

I opted to clean my endurance saddle. Others worked on cleaning their pack saddles and a variety of riding saddles. It doesn't matter what type of saddle you have because horse sweat, dirt and debris will accumulate in every crook and cranny it can find. Cleaning and maintaining the leather will surely lead to many years of functional use and enjoyment.

It was a very informative day for me. I learned how to take apart and reassemble my saddle. We used Fels-Naptha soap and a soft bristle brush and warm water to clean the leather. I was surprised at how supple the leather became. After it was clean but still slightly damp, we oiled it using Neatsfoot oil. This particular Neatsfoot oil has a rodent deterrent to help keep mice from chewing the leather.

It was a fun day of smelling leather and feeling a sense of accomplishment with the work well done. I enjoyed listening to all the great stories shared around the lunch table. Next year I might even bring a "real" saddle to clean!

Bonnie Doyle



The Moonlight Ride

First, I have to say if it doesn't kill you just sit back and enjoy the ride. I must admit it was a little hairy, but I have a very trusty steed. I love her to pieces. Fun? Yes! Scary, but fun! Really scary, but really fun! There will be another and your can count me in.

And the story goes:

We met at Blue Mountain trailhead at 7:30pm. There were 12 of us. This was the first time I had ever ridden this horse in a halter and lead rope. Her jaw dislocates with a bit, so this was trial time. So, horse and I dropped in behind Bonnie Doyle and Handsome, a very large horse that my horse likes. He is very big and she, not very big so the first



half of the trail we mostly saw his beautiful large behind. The night was cool and so pleasant. I must admit I was impressed with how plucky all these horses were. These are really trail horses. No misbehaving, no fighting. Couldn't ask for a better herd. The way up we got to look out over the Frenchtown/Missoula area. It was getting dusk and it was just beautiful. When we got to the top, I said to Bonnie that it was getting dark, shouldn't we be going down? Her reply "This is a moonlight ride". That was my wake-up call. The grass was very tall in one area and the horses going by made the grass swoosh. My first thought was "something that is going to eat us is next to us in the grass". Then reality slipped back in. The trail was very rocky and the horses wearing shoes would send sparks flying (never saw that before). My horse did not have shoes on.

We got to the top and it was dark, horse and I slipped in front of Bonnie and Handsome for the trek down. We got behind Angela Lovato and her lovely white horse who was easy to follow in the dark. The trail down was covered on both sides with a lot of vegetation and the front riders started yelling, which sent me into a cower. Someone said



that it was to let the bears (if any) know we were there. As we were going down the Blood Moon was coming up. It didn't light the trail as there were too many trees between us and it, but it was very large and very beautiful. Bonnie tried to take a picture of it with her phone. I was shocked as to how much light that phone put out, it was like a semi-truck and I was very impressed. The horses took us all back to the trailers without a hitch, we loaded up and went home.

Now, I have this to say about the whole adventure. My truck is a stick shift and I was in the saddle about 3 hours or so. The things I did wrong. I should have walked my horse around for a while, but I didn't. I had a large light in my trailer that I forgot about. I couldn't see to hook my trailer door and it came back on my horse when I was trying to load her. Because I didn't walk around when I got off the horse I walked like a drunken sailor. I also didn't have good control over the brake or gas when I left. I succeeded in banging her around in the trailer. I went down the next day to check on her, she still liked me and didn't seem foot sore. I had been riding her in prior weeks, so she was in good shape. So, I will do it again. I will work her before hand again. She will wear easy boots and I will take a flashlight and an emergency kit for injury. I have practiced locking and unlocking the door, to hold it out of way, with my eyes closed. Now I have to close my eyes to do it at all! Lessons learned. Yes, I will do it again. Join me!

Judy Ward



Great Burn experience!

I was contacted in May by Bob Grillo with Montana Conservation Corp to see if the BCH of Missoula could pack out a trail crew working up Straight Creek in the Great Burn west of Missoula. He said they would be ready to come out on the 1st of August. Bob said there were 8 trail crew members and it would take 2-3 pack stock. I volunteered myself and my friend Dwayne to do the job. I got a map of the area so I would know where to go. I had only been as far as the west fork of Fish Creek trail head many years ago and then again soon after the latest burn a few years ago. We decided to go in a day ahead of time to make sure we had time to find the crew, who Bob estimated would be about 9-10 miles up Straight Creek.

We arrived at the Fish Creek trail head about 10:00am and started to saddle the stock. We wander around looking for the trail to Straight Creek, the map was vague as to where you started from. We did find a fairly well used trail that crossed Fish Creek and headed in the general direction of where we thought we were going. We followed the trail for about 2 miles but it was not going to turn back across the creek and head west to Straight Creek. We stopped and I pulled out the map. After a bit of head scratching we decided that this trail would not get us to the Straight Creek trail. So, we turned around and headed back to the trail head. It was a nice trail and easy, so nothing lost but a little time.

At the trail head we started to look in more directions for sign of a used trail. Some hikers came in near where a new corral and ranger station were being built. They had come down Straight Creek and said that the trail was alongside of the corral. We rode to the corral and saw a very light indication of a trail. We started to follow it, but in about 30 yards it became to overgrown to get through with stock even if we walked them. So, we turned around and decided to just start bush whacking in the general direction that we knew we needed to go. Wouldn't you know, in about 50 yards we spotted an old forest service sign hanging sideways on a tree. We headed for it and there was the trail that leads to North Fork Creek. After about ½ mile we saw a sign on the ground reading Straight Creek. We got lucky and picked the right way to go as there were three trails to choose from.



It was a great ride following the creek. It was beautiful with several waterfalls along the way and no burn. The trail crew's camp was just short of ten miles in. We had a good place for a night camp up behind theirs. We visited with the crew and they said they would have all their personal gear packed and ready. They offered to carry out anything that we could not get on the pack stock. We turned in for the night and slept under millions of stars above. We were up early and the crew started bringing up their gear. We had no problem getting their stuff loaded and still had plenty of room for the trail clearing tools. The crew took off with very light packs and trail tools they wanted for the trip out, as they had some brush clearing and a couple of water bars to fix. They had a cache of shovels, axes, Pulaski's, couple of small tarps and three 5 gallon containers partially filled with chain saw gas and oil. The cache was about 1.5 miles from camp and we had seen it on the way in. The crew was ahead of us when we got to the cache so we stopped to load the items in Panniers and on pack boards. It took a little engineering to fit the gas cans on and keep the weight even. As we mantied the last pack board we couldn't find the manty rope and figured it must still be in a panier. So, we used duct tape to manty up the tools on the pack board. I think it was the best manty I have ever done. It didn't move at all and was really tight, kind of looked like a Christmas present. Since the tools load was bulky and the 5 gallon jugs not even in weight we had to stop a couple of times to adjust the load, as we were going down some steep inclines. After about ½ mile we hit the sweet spot with the pack load. The trail crew walked out the whole way and came out about an hour and half after we got to the trail head. They thought it was pretty ingenious to use duct tape for a manty rope.

We really enjoyed the ride in and out. It is beautiful country and we plan to explore it more.

Randy Velin



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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 the 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 campsite.

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 to 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 (figure 1). Next, pick up each corner of the short side of the tarp and fold over toward

the middle. Make the corner square (figure 2). Next fold the long sides over the saddles using wood or rock to hold the last flap down (figure 3).

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.



2019 Trail Rides for BCHM - Please RSVP for each ride as parking space may be limited

<u>DATE</u>	<u>RIDE INFORMATION</u>	<u>CONTACT INFORMATION</u>
April 13	Spring Tune up and Bitterroot River Ride	Gary Salisbury 529-7242
April 27	Tyler Creek Ride	Richard Tamcke 258-6621
May 4-5	Mission Mountain BCH Steak Ride	Laura Nelson 599-8809
May 11	Larry Creek	Gary Salisbury 529-7242
May 17-19	Monture Creek trail clearing	Randy Velin 544-4582
June 1	National Trail Day and trail clearing ride	Randy Velin 544-4582
June 2	Flower Ride	Dan Harper 258-6467
June 7-9	Monture/Burnt Cabin Trail Clearing & beyond	Randy Velin 544-4582
June 13	Wallman/Strawberry Ridge Rattlesnake ride	Ken Brown 207-6067
June 15	Calf Creek	Gary Salisbury 529-7242
June 21-23	Clearwater/Blackfoot Game Range family camp/ride	Mike Moore 370-7549
June 27	Woods Gulch/Three Larches ride Rattlesnake (evening)	Ken Brown 207-6067
July 13	Upper Clark Fork BCH Steak Ride	Cheri Fisher 724-462-9568
July 19-21	Too Good Cabin	Dan Harper 258-6467
August 18	Lubrecht Forest Ride	Mark Wright 531-2455
August 24 -25	Clearwater Crossing (West Fork of Fish Creek)	Gary Salisbury 529-7242
September 7	Fred Burr Ride	Richard Tamcke 258-6621
September 21	Primm Meadows Ride	Richard Tamcke 258-6621
September 24	Spring Gulch to Stuart Peak Trail Loop-Rattlesnake	Ken Brown 207-6067

To Be Determined Rides

Blanchard Creek	Spotted Dog	Blue Mountain Moonlight Ride
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Back Country Horsemen of Missoula

~Mission Statement~

- ◆ **To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America’s back country and wilderness.**
- ◆ **To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreation and stock use.**
- ◆ **To assist the various agencies responsible for the maintenance and management of public lands.**
- ◆ **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.**
- ◆ **To foster and encourage formation of new Back Country Horsemen organizations.**