President’s Letter:

The spectacular fall weather has facilitated many satisfying trail rides for Jayhawk and me. Hopefully many of you have enjoyed a variety of horse trails to explore. And that brings up an important Back Country Horsemens of Missoula issue: we are a grassroots organization devoted to preserving trails for equestrian use. In the next few years, we will need a strong vibrant issues committee.

Currently the BCHM is working with the USFS and Missoula Parks and Recreation to enhance equestrian trail opportunities. Some of the issues include working to ensure no mechanized use on trails in wilderness study areas, recommended wilderness areas or wilderness areas. The explosion of users of motorized E Bikes is another looming concern. In addition, currently some horse facility parking spots are routinely filled by non-equestrian users leaving no room for horse trailers. With a projected 12,000 new residence expected in Missoula county in the next 10 years the pressure on trails will significantly increase.

With the increase of trail users there is a potential for conflicts reducing the number of trails appropriate for safe equestrian use. The BCHM must be present and contributing to local coalitions including all trail users. The state Back Country Horsemens of Montana organization has a large role in maintaining working relationships with the regional USFS, BLM and state lands organizations. Preserving and maintaining trails for equestrian use is a major objective.

The Back Country Horsemens of America is a national organization that relates directly with the national offices of the USFS, BLM and National Park Service. In addition, the BCHA maintains relationships and liaisons with other national trail user groups including the International Mountain Bike Association. The commitment of the BCHA to preserving equestrian trail use is illustrated by the lawsuit filed by the organization against the Tahoe National Forest. The Tahoe National Forest opened approximately 130 trails to E bikes without allowing adequate study and comments. The lawsuit resulted in dramatically reducing the number of trails allowing E bikes. The national organization has made a huge commitment to education not only for all trail users but also for politicians and administrators. The recent webinar on bikes and trail users provided an excellent overview of the challenges presented by E bikes on trails. This webinar is available on the national website. If you value the opportunities, we have here in Montana to safely ride on a great variety of trails consider becoming involved in the issues committee.

In any case your membership supports the BCHM working with local trail users and agencies to keep trails open and safe for horses. Your membership dues also support the Back Country Horsemens of Montana and the Back Country Horsemens of America. We must all work together on the state and local and national levels to preserve safe equestrian trail use.

This will be the last Presidents Letter for me. It’s been a pleasure to work with so many dedicated volunteers and to be a part of the Back Country Horsemens organization.

Happy Trails, Dan Harper
BCH of Missoula Officers, Board and Committees

**Officers**
- Dan Harper  
  President  406-544-7296
- Eva-Marie Maggi  
  Vice President  406-531-6037
- Carey Powers  
  Secretary  434-989-8018
- Jane Kelly  
  Treasurer  406-370-4363
- Mark Wright  
  Past President  406-531-2455

**Board of Directors**
- One year remaining: Robert Braun, Charles Erickson
- Two year term: Ken Brown, Gary Salisbury, Mike Chandler

**State Directors**
- Randy Velin (Senior Director)  406-544-4582
- Judy Allen (Junior Director)  406-274-2339
- Smoke Elser (Alternate)  406-549-2820

**Committee Chairs**
- Issues: Mike Chandler
- Project Chair: Mark Wright
- Social Chair: Nancy Chandler
- Membership Chair: Judy Allen
- Defensive Horse Safety: Dan Harper
- Electronic Media Coordinators: Adam Davis, Robert Braun, Carey Powers
- Feedbag Editor: Bonnie Doyle

### Back Country Horsemen of Missoula

**Purpose Statement**

- To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country, roadless backcountry and wilderness areas.
- To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
- To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
- To educate, encourage and solicit active participation by the general public in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resource by horses and people commensurate with our heritage.
- To foster and encourage the formation of new state back country horsemen organizations.
- To seek out opportunities to enhance existing areas of recreation for stock users.

Schedule of Events through December 2022

**November 2:** Board Meeting 6:30 pm at FWP meeting room.
**November 16:** Membership meeting with officer and board elections at 6:30 PM at FWP meeting room. Erika Vanhavel Leister Front Country Ranger for Rattlesnake talking about the Ambassador program.

**Those recommended for officer and board elections are:**
- Eva Marie Maggi for President
- Ken Brown for Vice President
- Carey Powers for Secretary
- Jane Kelly for Treasurer
- Gary Salisbury for State Board Representative

**Board Member nominations:** Sydney Young, Alex Drayton (other nominations welcome)

**December 7:** Board Meeting at 6:30 PM at FWP meeting room

**December 17:** State board meeting 9 AM to 4 PM at FWP meeting room. This is an opportunity for any member to attend and learn more about the BCH and current issues.

**December 17:** Christmas party and potluck dinner at Lolo Community Center, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Bring a main dish or side dish or dessert. The club will provide plates and utensils as well as coffee and soft drinks. BYOB! Special music will be provided by ROB and ASSOCIATES. Bring your family and friends and enjoy a relaxing evening!

My name is Alex Drayton. I am originally from Spokane, but have been in MT for a good 10 years now! I work at Bank of Montana downtown and enjoy getting outside with my husband, Casey, and two dogs, as much as possible. I am most fascinated with the relationships we can have with horses - how they all have different personalities, different pasts, and different training. How each is unique, yet so similar to another. Sort of like all of us.

It's been a while since I've been on a pack trip, but I still have great memories of a couple I went on years ago in the Bob and to Upper Priest Lake in Idaho. Owning a horse is definitely a goal we'd like to accomplish someday!
DOING GOOD PAYS
By Dan Harper

Ken Brown, Taylor Orr And I agreed to pack in and out a Bob Marshall Foundation weed crew consisting of Back Country Hunter and Anglers volunteers. We were scheduled to meet at the Indian Meadows trail head on June 20th to pack the crew into Webb Lake. With a pounding rain on the 20th the pack in was pushed back to the 21st. On that bright sunny day we loaded up gear including seven backpack sprayers and weed spray chemicals. As usual the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation crew leader, Zack, was organized and professional. The BCHA Volunteers were an enthusiastic crew eager to hike and work.

Taylor’s well trained beautiful white Scottish Highlander horses carried most of the loads. The trail was in good shape. We marveled at the abundance of snow on the peaks especially Red Mountain. The loads rode well and only one stop for a minor adjustment was necessary. At the Webb Lake cabin the packs came off quickly and the work crew soon arrived. Soon enough we were back at Indian Meadows where we camped until the pack out on the 25th. We did a day ride to Heart Lake anticipating catching large Cutthroat trout. The riding was excellent, the fishing not so good.

When we arrived back at the Webb Lake cabin at 10 AM on the 25th we found all the gear ready to pack. We were surprised at all the work that the crew had accomplished. The weeds were attacked all the way from Webb Lake to the mouth of Sourdough Creek.

Yup, We sure had an enjoyable time doing good. Now about the pay. The Bob Marshall Wilderness foundation is a non-political stewardship organization which works closely with the United States Forests Service to support projects in the Bob Marshall Wilderness complex. In recognition of expenses for the packers including cost for hay and fuel the Bob Marshall Williams foundation is now reimbursing packers. Each pack in and pack out of a volunteer crew is reimbursed at $500. For each mile a horse trailer-truck unit travels to and from the trail head the reimbursement is one dollar per mile. So there it is, doing good pays.

The BCHM encourages any interested member to consider packing in volunteer crews for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, the Great Burn Alliance or the Wild Montana organization.

Pressure and Release
Helping your Herd Bound Horse
By Alex Drayton

Pressure and release might be something you have heard of, practiced or still do practice with your horse. Last year, I responded to a fellow horseman’s call to help exercise some of his horses. I was excited, but had not ridden for a while, so I searched around for some basic groundwork material and eventually watched a series of Buck Brannaman’s videos. The consistency and clear communication he demonstrates through pressure and release was amazing to watch!

An experience I was able to accomplish from this simple technique was helping one of the horses, Molly, who was herd bound, be more willing to go for a ride without her buddies. Actually being able to put what I learned into practice was so rewarding! The key to it all, is having time and patience.

From the videos, I learned to ride Molly wherever she wanted to go. When possible, I tried not to use reins or leg queues to direct her. The goal was to just keep her moving - walking, trotting, loping. If she decided she wanted to move away from her friends, I stopped and let her rest. I tried to keep a marker of how far away we were going before the rest. Each time she got to that spot or beyond, she got to rest. If all she wanted to do was be with her friends, that was okay. The only criteria was that she kept moving.

The objective was to have her associate the rest/reward with being with me, and away from her friends. It is important to be sure you have enough time to get to the point where your horse will start going as far away as possible or to where you deem a sufficient distance before ending the session. When they have done this successfully and you feel they are comfortable being only with you, ideally you would end the day right there, on a positive note. Un saddle, away from their buddies, so they can be rewarded again with rest and knowing they did a good job!

You may have to repeat this whole thing a couple or many more times, but it is sure cool to watch how they start to understand where and why the release of pressure happens! The successful communication between you and your horse inevitably also releases some of your own tension too!
Leading the Ride for Horse use in the Rattlesnake Recreation Area
by Dan Harper

Ken Brown has been leading the way to preserve and maintain horse use in the Rattlesnake this year. He has led numerous rides ensuring that horses are seen on the trails and that horse trailers are noticed in the horse parking lot. Together with the Rattlesnake Front Country Ranger Erika Vanhavel Leister, Ken has dealt with issues including unauthorized use of the horse bridge and bike used on restricted trails.

Recently fish wildlife and parks has proposed to open the lower Rattlesnake Creek to the horse bridge at Spring Gulch for fishing. There are obvious concerns for safety for the horseman. Fly fishing especially near or on the bridge could cause some adverse horse behavior. Vehicle parking pressure for fishing access could impact parking at the horse trail head. BCHM has been in contact with Trout Unlimited, some of the trail head neighbors who are at the trail head area and FWP in an effort to restrict fishing near the horse bridge.

The Rattlesnake Recreation Area is a real gem for horsemen in Missoula. There are numerous trails of varying length and difficulty. The scenery is superb and it is in our own backyard allowing quick access to the trails. BCHM is working to promote safe horse use on the Rattlesnake trails.

Make plans to ride in the Rattlesnake if you haven't done it recently!

HELP NEEDED!

I first became a member in 1974 when the Missoula BCH was formed. My husband, Mike, along with 6 other men met with the newly formed officers of the Flathead BCH and decided to form our chapter here in Missoula.

Mike and I (and three young children) had moved to Missoula in 1963 for Mike to attend UM Forestry School. We lived in student housing on a limited budget. Mike had met Smoke Elser and attended one of the first packing classes taught by several “old timers” in the trade. In Smoke’s “Three Miles An Hour” video there is a picture of Mike (bearded young man) standing on a bale of hay to reach the top of a mule! In the following years, Mike worked for Smoke in his early years taking time off from school, and also worked summers for USFS packing at Bonita Ranger Station as part of the summer trail crew. He later had his own outfitting business. Of course, in the very beginning, he needed a horse, so a lovely little 3/4 Arab mare joined our family...just what we needed! This was a life changing event for all of us, living on a limited budget with three kids and me coming from a “town family” knowing very little about horses. Val, the first in a number of horses we acquired in the subsequent years...was mother to a number of great riding horses and much beloved to our own family. Looking back I realize how much I personally value the opportunity to ride in the backcountry with experienced and great people. Many, many memories.

Meeting Smoke and his wife, Thelma, was also a life-changing event for us....they were our age, had two children the same ages as ours and similar interests and life challenges. To this day they remain our best friends. As Smoke and Mike and others recruited more people to join BCH, Thelma and I met many other BCH wives and single women who joined in the functions of operating a club. Not only did we help plan club trips but helped with educational sessions about meal planning and food buying for all sizes of club events (steak rides and issues trips), helped with club trip food buying, newsletter writing and everything else needed to get the trips on the road. Smoke and Thelma took outfitting on as their lifetime occupation and we have been so fortunate to have them share their expertise. As their business increased, Thelma spent a number of seasons running her own trips with competent wranglers. I consider myself so lucky that I was asked to join her on one of these excursions across the Bob.

Both Mike and I have served on the Montana State BCH board in several positions and value friendships with those in other chapters. It takes more than a handful of people to keep a good club running. We need people with all skills and the desire to work hard, be it in the kitchen, membership roles, helping with trail work, interacting on the state level and being ambassadors of BCH principles.

But, as always all these “fun” jobs need more bodies and some of the gals have reached our last years of wanting to be productive! Please reach out and volunteer! As social chair I find many of you very willing to provide treats for meetings and I thank you. The potlucks and Christmas parties require lots of planning ahead and work on the scene. The more people involved, the more time each of us has to enjoy the function. That also is important! And, by the way, these duties aren’t limited to the female gender! We have had lots of guys who enthusiastically help with the set up and clean up at events.

Gals....if you don’t already, take the chance to hit the trail with the men. You'll have experiences you will never forget!

Nancy Chandler, Social Chair
Like most horse and mule owners, the health and well-being of my animals is top priority. With winter snow and ice knocking on the door we need to consider the significant impact that may have on our older equines. Recently I made the tough decision to have my elderly mare Freya euthanized. She had a knee injury from a couple of years ago that was steadily causing more lameness. Even though she was still able to lay down, roll, and even canter across the pasture, albeit with one stiff leg, it was becoming apparent that winter would not be kind to her. After consulting with trusted friends and my veterinarian I decided that the most loving act was to have her laid to rest in my pasture.

The following article was posted on the website of UC Davis Veterinary Medicine and Center for Equine Health. I am sharing it here because I found it informative and believe this to be an important part of caring for our beloved equines.

Bonnie Doyle

Caring for Horses Through Life and Death

Medical advances and an ever-increasing knowledge base about health and disease over the last century have resulted in longer lives for humans and animals. However, prolonging life does not always equal quality of life. As with humans, increased longevity due to better care has resulted in increased populations of older horses who will one day begin a decline. Illness and debilitation may come gradually over an extended period, accompanied by a subtle rise in suffering.

Euthanasia, or the humane termination of an animal’s life, is a gift that we give to our suffering animals. When properly chosen and applied, it is one of the most humane acts a person can accomplish. Unfortunately, there is no one who can give you a precise answer as to when such a gift should be given. It is a personal decision that each of us has to make based on our own values and experiences.

The decision is rarely made easily but often comes less painfully to those who have thought about it ahead of time. We recommend that animal owners, especially those with older animals, establish a close working relationship with their attending veterinarians. They should discuss the subject of euthanasia with those caregivers and come to an understanding of how the events surrounding the loss of their animals should be handled. This includes not just if, when and how euthanasia should be performed, but who should be present, where it should occur, and what is to be done with the animal afterward.

Life for all living creatures comes to an end. While it is easier to avoid thinking about the subject, we have the ability to make that end lovingly easy for our beloved animals. Your veterinarian can guide you in making this determination, especially regarding the degree to which the horse is suffering. Each case should be addressed on its own merits.

Published by the UC Davis Veterinary Medicine Center for Equine Health
How did you meet and join the Back Country Horsemen??

Here is my story:

I had been pressured into buying my first horse late in life by my wife who had a passion for it. We bought a couple of wonderful older horses that were perfect for beginners like me. However, I did not grow up around horses and had ridden only a handful of times growing up in dude ranch settings where the horses were more suitable for the glue factory than for the open trail!

Anyway, I quickly began to develop a real and deep connection with horses ad for the horse lifestyle. Trail riding to me is real therapy! I love the quiet, and the exploration. Anyway, back to the story. I also need to mention that I have 4 children, most of which were very young when I got into horses. The kids being kids loved to be with the horses and feed them and brush them, but they also liked to “fix my equipment” from time to time which means that they would remove all sorts of parts and pieces of tack to move to other saddles or to somewhere else entirely! Haha! Back to the story...

One month a few years back I had been growing an awful and ugly mustache to embarrass my family. It looked like a huge messy handlebar mustache, but it looked bad. Really bad. Anyway, I digress from the story. Anyway...

I had taken the kids and three horses up to Bass creek for a nice little ride and we unpacked the horses and were prepping them for the ride and then I tried to put the saddle on my horse when I noticed that the kids had removed and “fixed” my saddle for me! So, my attitude soured quite a bit and I wasn’t sure what to do.

Across the parking lot I saw a couple of guys getting ready to ride and I walked over to ask them if they happened to have an extra cinch for me to borrow. However I got nervous as I approached and instead of being a grown up and asking if they had a cinch, I stammered and forgot the name of the equipment I needed SO I walked up to Dan and Gary (Without knowing them) and said something to the effect of...

“I see that you are admiring my mustache..... I need one of those...(then I went blank) those, you know, one of those pieces that goes under the horse....”. And I couldn’t think of the name and I could speak like a human being. Hahaha! They both looked at me and either they felt sorry for me, or thought that I wasn’t “all there” and they gave me a cinch!

I insisted that I return it, but they looked at me and said “keep it”. I must have looked nuts. I did return it by the way. Either way, we talked a little and they introduced me to the Back country Horsemen.

I would like to say thank you to all of you in the group! My love of the lifestyle has only grown stronger, and the camaraderie between all of you has only grown deeper and thankfully my knowledge and experience has grown as a direct result of meeting and joining all of you!

I also shaved the mustache and never did it again! Haha!

Thanks to the group!

Rob Braun
Some History of the Rattlesnake Horse Trailhead, Quarter-mile trail, Ford, and Horse bridge

By Ken Brown

The following has been based on Orville L. Daniels’ 5/3/90, the Forest Supervisor, decision on the appeal of the horse trailhead for the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area (RNRA)

1985 - Public discussion began on looking to develop a new parking facility for the RNRA. The Forest Service decision at that time was to expand car facility to its present size and add just north of the car facility, a horse facility.

8/25/86 - This Forest Service decision was appealed through influence of Friends of the Rattlesnake to the Bitterroot-Mission Chapter of the Sierra Club. The appeal stated that the horse facility extended too far into the RNRA. Too be clear, we are talking about an acre into the 68,000 acres in the Recreation and Wilderness Area. Clearly the intent of the appeal was to exclude horse use from the area.

12/86 - The Backcountry Horsemen of Missoula [BCHM} hired a lawyer and appealed the Missoula District Ranger’s decision to defer building a horse trailhead in the lower Rattlesnake. Based on a settlement agreement reached with the Backcountry Horsemen, the Missoula District Ranger did defer construction of the horse trailhead, but agreed to complete a new analysis that would analyze all potential horse trailhead sites in the lower Rattlesnake area.

1987 & 1988 - Missoula Districts annual reports printed in the Missoulian Newspaper invited the public to participate in this planning process; along with individuals, organizations, and other government agencies.

3/22/89 - A public meeting was held.

3/89 - Meetings with BCHM, Friends of the Rattlesnake and adjacent homeowners took place in order to reach agreement of the issues where consensus had not been reached.

"One of the goals in the Forest Plan for the Rattlesnake, NRA, is to “Provide for a wide variety of dispersed recreation opportunities in a forest setting available to a wide segment of society.” Based on this Orville Daniels made the following decisions:

1. Design a horse trailhead facility for 10 trailers, but develop 7 units at this time. This means that should the 7-unit facility prove too small, there will be room in the design to expand to 10 units. I was the BCHM representative that met with the landscape architect to design the trailhead. A key component was full through parking, not backing up trailers.

2. Closing "The congested trail segment is located on the Rattlesnake Trail between the care parking area and Spring Gulch, a distance of about 1/3 mile, to horseback riding.

3. A trail bridge is necessary. "The Rattlesnake corridor is a favorite for spring horseback rides because it opens up early. Fording the creek is not feasible before June 20 in a normal year due to high spring runoff. With the congested areas closed to horses, the only feasible access is with a bridge.”

4. The location of the bridge "offers the least impact to the residential neighborhood, is easily accessed from the trailhead and does not negatively change the current pattern of use of accessing the existing ford.”

5. “Management presence, at least initially, will be required to direct non-horse related activity and parking to the foot trailhead. Local walk-in visitors expected from the neighborhood, will not be a management problem.”

We are presently experiencing:

1. No real non-horse related vehicles in the horse trailhead. That is a huge success story, for us and the close neighbors. Our relationship has changed over the years to having the neighbors supportive of us.

2. Use by mountain bikes, baby strollers and trail runners at the horse trailhead, trail to the horse bridge and on the bridge. This creates a dangerous situation for horse riders and other users in that there are narrow, steep drop offs and blind corners. The regulations need to be changed from prohibiting “using “a bike to prohibiting “possessing or using” a bike. Some bike riders will argue they can walk their bike. This is not the case. Walked or ridden, bikes are a problem in this area. The signs indicate “No bikes”, not walk your bikes.

3. Unleashed dogs. Dogs are to be leashed up to 1.3-mile marker up Spring Gulch and 1.7-mile marker on the corridor from the trailheads. Clearly, dogs need to be leashed in the horse trailhead, on the horse trail and horse bridge.

4. People standing on the bridge, having to be asked to move off so we all can be safe while taking our horses across the bridge.

BCHM has provided the horse gateway to the Rattlesnake. It is a gem, with a variety of trails and a relaxing trailhead for sitting in your chair with your fellow horse riders after a ride. Take advantage of it. Go for a ride, and ride often!!
BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF MISSOULA
P. O. Box 2121 Missoula, MT 59806
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2023

NAME(S): ________________________________________________________________________________

ADDRESS: ________________________________________________________________________________

Street
City
State
Zip

PHONE #: _________________________________ EMAIL: ____________________________________

ATTENTION!!
Notice of Risks Inherent in Equine Activities!! Serious injury or even death can result from equine riding and related activities. There are risks inherent in equine activities, and these dangers or conditions that are an integral part of equine activities include but are not limited to: a) the propensity of an equine to behave in ways that may result in injury or harm or the death of persons on or around the equine; b) the unpredictability of an equine’s reaction to such things as medication, sound, sudden movements, and unfamiliar objects, persons or other animals; c) hazards, such as surface and subsurface ground conditions; d) collisions with other equines or objects; e) the potential of another participant to not maintain control over the equine or to not act within the person’s ability.

Participants in any equine activity shall act in a safe and responsible manner at all times to avoid injury to themselves and others and shall be aware of the risks inherent in equine activities.

The Back Country Horsemens of Missoula shall not be liable for injury to or the death of a participant as a result of their voluntary participation in any sponsored activity.

**I certify that I have read and understand the above notice**

MEMBERSHIP DUES

_____Family: $45/year New Member _____

_____Individual: $30/year Renewal_____

_____Secondary Membership: $15/year

The membership list will be distributed to the members to be used only for legitimate BCH Missoula business. You may choose to opt out by place a check next the following options:

opt out of email sharing _________ opt out phone number sharing _________

Membership is on a calendar year basis (expires December 31st). Please make payments to Back Country Horsemen of Missoula. Any membership dues received after October 1st will be applied to the following calendar year.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Feedbag (quarterly club newsletter)? EMAIL_____ MAIL_____ 

Occasional notices of meetings, rides, and special events? EMAIL_____ CALL_____

State BCH Newsletter? EMAIL_____ MAIL_____ 

Print Name___________________________**Signature________________________________Date________________