



The Feedbag

March 2023

In this Issue

- 2 - Officers, Board Members & Committee Chairs
- 2 - Schedule of Events
- 3 - You are invited - 50 year celebration of the BCH
- 4 - Muddy Moose Tracks
- 5 - BMWF Packer of the Year
- 5 - John Mumma Memorial
- 5 - Did you Know That??
- 6 - Defensive Horse Safety
- 6 - The Very Beginnings
- 6 - Mission Statement
- 7 - Issues
- 7 - Packing Class Info
- 8 - 2023 Membership Application

Website:

<http://bchmt.org/wp/missoula>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/missoulabch/>

Address:

BCH of Missoula
P.O. Box 2121
Missoula, MT 59806

Volunteer Organization, 501c3

President's Letter:

I am grateful for those who came before me, thankful for those who are here now, and excited about what comes next. When I took over the Presidency this year, one fellow BCH member texted me: "You have big shoes to fill, but you have just the right size!"

Dan Harper set a great example on how to steer this club through stormy waters of a global pandemic with integrity, calm, wit, fun and focus on the goal: keep us above water. As a result the Missoula Back Country Horsemen are still afloat while many other horse organizations in town didn't make it through the storm. But, it is not one man's voice but the choir that makes all the difference. New board members stepped up, creating new ways of getting all members involved and new people interested in joining our club.

I encourage all of you to join one of our committees, to write articles for the Feedbag, help on a trail project or pitch-in to organize our 50th Anniversary next year.

But most importantly come to our fun events, learn about horsemanship, packing, colt starting, obstacle courses, wildflowers along the trail and so much more. This club has a lot to offer and is what we make out of it.

Let's go on a ride!

Eva-Maria Maggie

President, BCHM



BCH of Missoula Officers, Board and Committees

Officers

Eva-Maria Maggi	President	406-531-6037
Ken Brown	Vice President	406-370-7374
Carey Powers	Secretary	434-989-8018
Jane Kelly	Treasurer	406-370-4363
Dan Harper	Past President	406-544-7296

Board of Directors

Second year: Robert Braun, Mike Chandler

First year: Alex Drayton, Eric Skelton, Sydney Young

State Directors

Judy Allen	406-274-2339
Gary Salisbury	406-529-7242
Smoke Elser (Alternate)	406-549-2820

Committee Chairs

Issues:	Mike Chandler/Ken Brown
Social Chair:	Nancy Chandler
Membership Chair:	Judy Allen
Electronic Media Coordinators:	Robert Braun Carey Powers
Feedbag Editor:	Bonnie Doyle
Assistant Editors:	Dan Harper Sydney Young



A true "Cow Pony" - photo credit Dan Harper

**2023 SPRING AND SUMMER
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

March 28: Noon-1:00pm. Mules on the UM oval. Contact Eva -Maria Maggi. BCHM will provide manual patrol and control, as well as a tabling event.

April 29: 10am Spring Demo and potluck luncheon. Gary Salisbury will demonstrate colt starting in the morning. Gary and Chris Basham will demonstrate how to get horses over obstacles in the afternoon. Chris will also do a chiropractic demonstration on a horse. The event will be held at the Basham arena south of Lolo. Contact Gary at 406-529-7242.

May 6: 9:30am-4:00pm Defensive Horse Safety Clinic will be held at the Harper barn and arena. Recertification's will be completed at noon. First time participants will continue in the afternoon. Dress according to the weather, bring a lunch and a comfortable camp chair. This certification is good for three years. To sign up contact Dan at 406-544-7296.

May 10: 6:30pm-8:30pm Trail Horse Obstacle Course will be held at the Big Sky Horse Park. Be ready to ride at 6:30pm. The course will present obstacles that one could easily find on a trail ride, including bridge, crossing, water, crossing, open the gate, mailbox etc. Contact Dan at 406-544-7296.

May 27-28: Smoke Elser will hold a packing course spanning the two days. Members of the Missoula BCH will receive a discount on the registration fee. The course will be held at Smoke's barn. To register contact Smoke Elser at 406-549-2820.

June 3: National Trails Day. BCHM will be clearing a trail on Blue Mountain. Contact Ken Brown at 406-370-7374.

June 4: 10am-3pm The annual Marshall Canyon wildflower ride. The ride is moderately strenuous. Bring your lunch and be ready to ride at 10am. The ride will start and return to the Harper barn. To sign up contact Dan Harper at 406-544-7296.

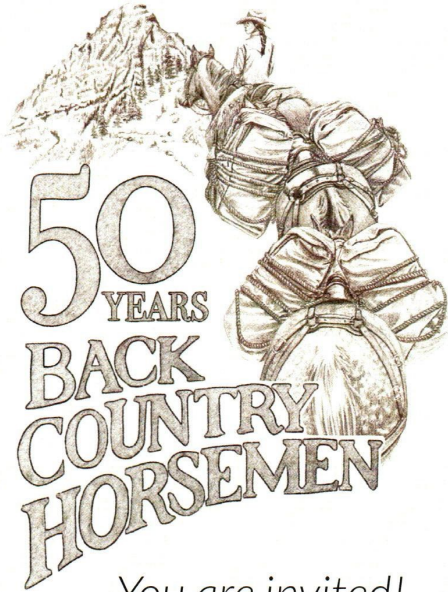
The following events will be scheduled as soon as possible

- ❖ June event at the "A Carousel for Missoula"
- ❖ The "Camp and Ride" event
- ❖ The West Pioneer wilderness study area issues committee pack trip will occur over 4 to 5 days during August 20-26. Contact Ken Brown for more information.

Starting in May there will be several day trail rides in the front country. Generally led by Ken Brown although, other people may lead some of the rides. The rides will be limited to between 8 and 10 riders. To be on the list to be notified of the upcoming ride send a text message to Ken Brown at 406-370-7374. These rides will occur throughout the late spring, summer, and early fall. The rides will be scheduled according to weather and other events. Typically notice will be from a few days to 10 days in advance.

Back Country Horsemen Celebrates 50 Years of Service

April 14-16, 2023 in Kalispell, Montana



You are invited!

In 1972 four horsemen sat around a campfire in the middle of the Bob Marshall Wilderness discussing the Forest Service's plan to eliminate stock from the Bob Marshall Wilderness. They decided the best way to counteract this proposal was to start an organization of like-minded individuals to protect stock access to the back country. In the spring of 1973, these men, along with the help of their families and friends, started the Back Country Horsemen in the Flathead Valley of Montana. The organization has now spread to 212 chapters throughout the U.S.

It is with great honor that the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead and Back Country Horsemen of Montana invite you to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the organization of the Back Country Horsemen. We are celebrating everyone who is, or ever has been, part of BCH. It doesn't matter if you have just become a member or if you have been a member for all 50 years - you are welcome to join us.

Deborah Schatz
President, Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead

Wade Murphy
Chairman, Back Country Horsemen of Montana

There will be something for everyone:

- Seminars regarding stock use and wild country
- Dinner and entertainment
- Vendor booths
- Food trucks
- 50th Anniversary keepsakes including belt buckles
- Raffle items to win/ live auction/ silent auction



Campfire



Majestic Valley Arena, our meeting venue



Educational opportunities

Find all the information at <https://bchmt.org/wp/flathead/50-years-of-service/>

Please keep checking back - we will keep adding to this website as our plans progress.

Muddy Moose Tracks – part 1

Last fall, I met my first of two bull moose on the trail. He was on his way down the mountain as we headed up to our camp some fifteen miles along the north fork of Birch Creek, an extraordinary cold mountain stream feeding into Swift Dam at the north east corner of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The birch trees that gave the stream its name, were in their brightest yellow of the year, the water in the reservoir low after a dry summer and dark clouds to the west promised a vicious afternoon storm. From below, the bull's large rack looked huge. I thought about how more people are injured by moose encoun-



ters per year than by all large predators – bears, wolves, mountain lions, coyotes – combined. Our horses stiffened up, nervously snorting, their escape instinct kicking in. He didn't budge. The big jaw, slowly moving side to side, chewing a twig. He looked curious about what would happen next. For a second I thought about turning back. There was no safe way around the bull. The hill on both sides of the trail was steep, covered in loose rock. Our mule quietly browsed on the dry sedges, unfazed. What a gem! Then, we started singing loud and bad and the bull started moving.

Everything I know about traveling with horses and mules in the backcountry I know from being a member of the Backcountry Horsemen. I joined the Bitterroot Chapter fifteen years ago, shortly after I immigrated to the U.S. from Germany. I learned how to trust my horse and be comfortable riding through storms, using cross-cut saws to cut hundreds of trees from trails, crossing muddy creeks and climbing steep passes. The more time I spent outside, the longer I wanted to stay, travel further and explore new areas. The ink on my new job, teaching at the University of Montana was still wet when I signed up for

Smoke Elser's packing class and we started an unlikely friendship that changed my life. The legendary outfitter told the best stories, and I had no choice but record and write them up. Eight years later, our book "Hush of the Land – A lifetime in the Bob Marshall Wilderness" is due to be published with Bison Books. Now I can pack a mule and horse, spend many nights in the backcountry, and even take a class of university students on a five day pack trip up the North Fork of the Blackfoot to the Danaher Valley. I will not back off from the moose, because sometimes in the backcountry you just can't.

Once the bull moved, our voices grew louder and the horses got more confident and climbed up the trail, piercing the large animal with their ears and eyes until its large rump disappeared behind a boulder. We saw two bears before the storm violently but slowly soaked through our layers. We continued to sing crossing the cold creek when lightning echoed off the canyon walls, whipped up by the wind carrying the next rain gust, stinging our faces like cold needles. The horses and mule quietly and confidently carried on, their feet squishing into the mud, warming our legs through the saddles. A comforting rhythm of weathering a storm, fully enjoyable with the knowledge of a tent with a woodstove, and a warm supper. The sun broke through the clouds when we reached camp. The birches were brilliantly yellow against the pines and moisture was steaming from the meadow as we looked down the canyon of dark clouds. Perfectly happy and ready to heat up the stove.

Eva-Maria Maggi

(This story continues in the next Feedbag issue)



Packer of the Year: Eric Skelton

2022 was Eric's first year packing for BMWF. He came to us via a Missoula Backcountry Horsemen recommendation. At first impression, Eric seems to fit a stereotypical 'Wilderness Packer' type – but if there is anything we know about packers, it's that there really is no typical type. A man of few words, Eric just wants to know what trailhead and what time, and you can bet that he, his string of mules and his son Hudson will be there and ready.

Our crew leaders and volunteers came out of the backcountry singing Eric and Hudson's praises. When packing a group 12 miles into camp on a hot day, Eric waited halfway for over 3 hours for them to catch up to him, then insisted on taking even more of their personal gear to lighten their loads and help make the remainder of the hike easier for the team. He's also quite culinarily diverse and can appreciate a good tofu curry, yet has also been known to indulge in a two-day-old Trix's hamburger that's been transported in a wrapped up napkin.

When asked about their most memorable experience from the Bob this past year, Hudson responds, "Finding a knife at Palisade Lake." Eric replies, "...and then we found its owner." Hudson's favorite spot in the Bob is Spotted Bear, while Eric's is the top of Scapegoat Mountain. When we asked a trail volunteer to relay a trip highlight he said, "Watching Eric (the packer) and his son play Go Fish around the fire next to Palisade Lake."

Big thanks to all the hard work Eric and Hudson put in this year for BMWF. And to all our packers, who certainly deserve a standing ovation for all the miles traveled for the betterment of The Bob.

Article and photo curiosity of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and Eric Skelton

John Walter Mumma

9/30/39 to 9/1/2022

Missoula, Montana Memorial: June 16, 2023 at The Barn/Ranch Club, 8500 Mullan Rd. from 3:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. A Taco Bar will be served in John's honor who would answer his phone "Tommy's Tacos, Tommy Speaking".

Durango, Colorado Memorial: July 7, 2023, Junction Creek Picnic Area, San Juan National Forest, 12:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Directions: From Main Street in Durango, travel west on 25th Street (across from the fairgrounds entrance) for just over three miles, to the forest boundary. Continue just over a mile to the campground entrance. The day-use area loops to the left. Lunch will be catered by Serious Texas BBQ.



Please RSVP by text or phone call to Myra (406) 802-0932. Donations in John's honor can be made to the wildlife conservation group of your choice or to the Aldo Leopold Foundation. Online donations can be made at <https://www.aldoleopold.org/join-support/donate/> or checks can be sent to The Aldo Leopold Foundation, E13701 Levee Rd., Baraboo. WI 53913

DID YOU KNOW THAT...??

The Back Country Horsemen of Montana and the BCH of America take a very big cut of our membership dues. For the \$30 single membership the state organization takes \$5 and the national takes \$15. For the \$45 family membership the state gets \$12 and the national gets \$18. That does not leave much of the dues for our organization to work with. In addition, the BCH of America plans to increase their fees next year.

Our members know that the 50th anniversary of the Back Country Horsemen, which started in Kalispell area in 1973, will be celebrated in Kalispell on April 14th-16th. Lots of events are planned including many educational programs. You may not know that the Missoula BCH started in 1974, so next year will be our 50th anniversary! Share your thoughts and how we should celebrate.

Let's party!!
Dan Harper



Nancy Chandler receives the Outstanding Volunteer Award for 2022

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 benefited 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 9:30 am on Saturday, May 6 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.

The Very Beginnings

Back Country Horsemen of Missoula

The early '70's saw changes in Forest Service trail maintenance plans. They had suffered cutbacks in funding and started announcing that some trails would no longer be maintained and horse use curtailed or eliminated on many trails. The talk about limiting horse use was the great call to action.

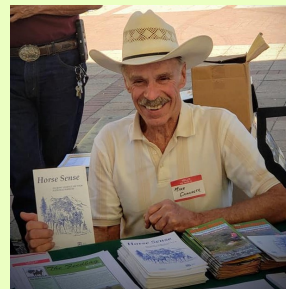
In December of 1973 while Smoke was attending the Outfitters' Convention, he heard a presentation by Dennis Swift and Roland Cheek about a new group formed in Columbia Falls to support backcountry livestock users. He informed a number of us in Missoula. Later in December, Smoke Elser, Jim Brogger, John Lance, Ray Roberts, Mike Chandler, Chuck Smith and Fred Hartkorn met in the 4-B's on East Broadway and agreed we should start a similar club in Missoula. In January of '74 Smoke, Jim, John, Mike and Allen Bedord attended the BCH meeting in Columbia Falls for more information.

We planned to organize and invited many friends to our first meeting which was held Feb. 13, 1974 at the Montana Power building on Russell St. Three early members from Columbia Falls, Roland Cheek, Ken Ausk and Lloyd Fagerland, came and explained BCH stated purposes and answered questions. They discussed how we must get more involved in forest management travel plans and how maybe doing selected work projects for the Forest Service would help us gain credibility.

Smoke Elser was elected as our temporary chairman and Sandy Mytty, our secretary/treasurer, until full elections would be held in April.

More to come in future Feedbags....it's a long story.....!!!

Mike Chandler & Smoke Elser



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.

Back Country Horsemen of Missoula (BCHM) Issues Committee 3/23

Wallman Trail Reroute - The Wallman Trail in the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area was rerouted this past summer by Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) and Mountain Bike (MTB) Missoula. BCHM members hiked and rode the new trail. It was found to be unsafe, not for multiple use and did not meet Forest Service trail standards according to trail professional John Favro and club members. BCHM has had conversations with MCC, MTB Missoula, and the Forest Service. An onsite review with the groups will happen in June.

New Forest Service Land - The Forest Service was just deeded some land west of Missoula. We want to make sure that any trails built in this area meet Forest Service Pack and Saddle Standards, taking into consideration wildlife and erosion.

Lolo Forest Service Plan Revision - The Lolo Forest Management Plan is being updated. This process will take us into 2026. I sent out the Forest Service email notification on the zoom meetings to members. Dan Harper went to the most recent in-person meeting. The format and structure for the Forest Plan review and input was presented. If you have suggestions for the Lolo Forest Plan, please email or text them to me Kenbrown1042@gmail.com or 406 370-7374.

E-bikes - Both of the Montana legislative house's bills on e-bikes to be treated as mountain bikes on Montana State lands failed. However, expect to see this issue again in the future. We have U of M Law Professor and BCHM member, Sandi Zellmer talking about e-bike on public lands at our October General Meeting.

Missoula Parks and Recreation - We be talking with the City Parks and Recreation's Community Lands Advisory Committee (CLAC) during their fall meetings. The Land Plan has the tread for horses at 4 to 8 feet. The Forest Services tread for horses is 18 to 24 inches.

Rattlesnake National Recreation Areas horse trail from the stock trailhead - The Forest Service regulations posted at the trailhead say bikes are prohibited from "using" this trail. We want to further clarify that "possessing or using" a bike is prohibited. This information was given to Andy Bryden from the Forest Service, who oversees this area.

Public Lands Day - Public Land days rally was held in Helena on 2/23/23. 500 people attended in sub-zero weather outside of the capital for an hour. In years past those meeting have been held in the Rotunda in the Capital Building. Excellent show of support.

Garnet Mountains and Doney Lake Logging Projects - Letters with concerns from BCHM were sent to BLM and FWP respectively for their projects.

BCHMT State Convention April 14-16 in Kalispell resolution by Upper Clark Fork Club - The resolution wants changes to the state BCHMT constitution to mandate chapters must have the state organization's approval before suing a government agency. This is reaction to one of our members asking BCHMT at their December meeting for their support. BCHM and the Pinter-Selway's signed on to a potential lawsuit about the Odell Mountain Repeater station installed in the West Pioneers Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Our club intends to voice our objections to this resolution. BCHMT is based on a "bottom up" not a "top down" system. This is fundamental to the organization. Chapters are their own corporations, with their own Board of Directors. The BCHMT is within their authority to support a proposal or not. They choose in December not to give their support. That is the extent of their authority.

Packing Clinic

WILDERNESS OUTFITTERS CONSULTING GROUP, LLC.

Instructors: Smoke Elser, Jeff Miller (over 60 years of packing experience)

3800 Rattlesnake Drive, Missoula, MT 59802

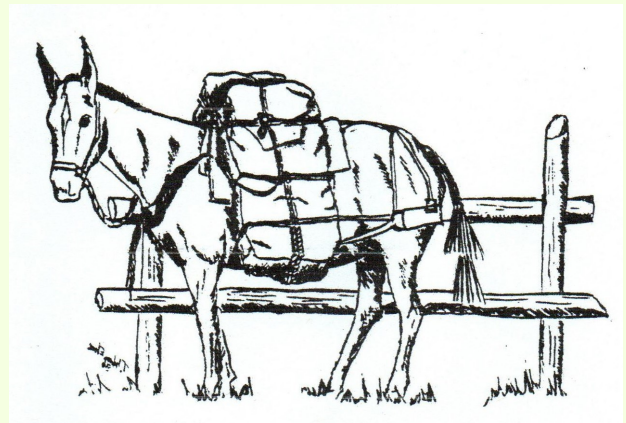
E-mail: Telserselser@gmail.com **Phone:** 406-549-2820

2-day Clinic: Sat & Sun May 27th - 28th 9:00AM - 4:30PM

Sat & Sun June 10th - 11th 9:00AM - 4:30PM

Sat & Sun Aug. 26th - 27th 9:00AM - 4:30PM

Sat & Sun Sept. 2nd - 3rd 9:00AM - 4:30PM



Subjects: Stock Safety Leave No Trace Carguing
Containing Stock Saddle Fitting Basket Hitch Barrel Hitch
Diamond Hitch How to pack game animals and horns

All equipment and stock provided.

Cost \$220.00 (\$15.00 per hour)

Cost for members of Missoula BCH is \$180.00

Class size limited.

QUALITY PACKING & WILDERNESS INSTRUCTION SINCE 1964

This years Montana Back Country Horsemen State Convention will be held in Kalispell April 14th - 16th. It will be the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the founding of Back Country Horsemen. The Flathead BCH chapter is planning an exciting convention to celebrate. There will be a variety of speakers, demonstrations and breakout sessions to attend along with vendors and multiple food trucks. A good selection of logoed merchandise will be available including a commemorative silver belt buckle.

Go to their website: bchmt.org/wp/flathead/50-years/ to get all information pertaining to convention.

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 Horsemen 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 _____