

BITS AND SPURS Jul-Aug-Sep 2017, SPWBCH Newsletter

Mission Statement:

Our purpose is to perpetuate the common sense use of horses in America's back country, wilderness and roadless areas; to assist various government and private agencies in their maintenance of said resources; to work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use; and to educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resources by horsemen and pack stock.



2017 SPWBCH Officers - Contact Information

President: Mike Foster	Ph. 777-4383
Vice President: Bruce Scott	Ph. 239-1007
Secretary: Christy Bennett	Ph. 361-0767
Treasurer: Betsy Hepburn-Day	Ph. 381-1378
Local Board: Senior- Nancy Bender & Bob Driggers	Ph. 360-1666 Ph. 360-6519
Junior- Duane Krown & Patty Hascall	PH. 642-3932 Ph. 370-8546
BCHM State Directors: Julie Schram & Trish Foster	Ph. 961-2457 Ph. 777-4383
Alternate: Kathy Hundley	Ph. 363-8230

CONTENTS

President's Note	pg. 1
Saddle Fit cont.	pg. 2
BCHMT/Member Recipe	pg. 3
"Meadow Creek Mishaps"	pg. 4
Blodgett Pack Support	pg. 5
Big Creek Pack Support	pg. 6
Bell Tail/Ptarmigan Trail	pg. 7
2017 Volunteer Hours	pg. 8
Sawtooth Bridge Project	Insert

NEXT MEETING



Thursday, October 12, 2017

Hamilton Forest Service

General Meeting @ 6:00pm

Board Meeting @ 5:00pm



President's Note – I would just like to take a minute of your time to say how proud I am of SPWBCH for stepping up and doing such a great job on the Sawtooth Bridge project. I know there were some people who thought that such a small chapter could not accomplish this ambitious job, but we proved them wrong. This project was a couple years in development and under the leadership of Bruce Scott and Kathy Hundley, in cooperation with the Forest Service, funding was secured and the expertise was provided to build an impressive walkway to the Sawtooth Trail. A big "thank you" to all the members who showed up to do the work, feed the group, and celebrate a fine achievement. Now that the weather has taken a positive turn and the smoke has cleared, maybe we can get a little riding in before the snow flies. Hope to see you on the trail!

Mike Foster

Health & Training



RIDING PROBLEMS CREATED BY SADDLES

Part 4 cont.



Bad saddle fit can be blamed for a variety of problems with your horse, not to mention your own aches and pains after a ride. We will continue the signs and possible reasons of a bad saddle fit.

Sign 14: Your horse has a very expressive face, and if you observe closely, you will notice his displeasure or concern because he will frown, or wrinkle the skin around his mouth in a tight pressing together of the lips. Read and listen to these signs, they are there for good reason.

Sign 15: Does your horse work happily for you all of the time, moving out just as enthusiastically when you are alone on the trail, as he does when you are riding with friends

Reason: If he does not, he is unhappy about something and it's not necessarily because he doesn't have a friend along for the ride. Horses who are anxious because their friends turn around and leave without them usually settle down after a short while. However, a horse who is experiencing pain or discomfort will have to be kicked, prodded, smacked and any other forceful trick riders often resort to in order to get their mounts to go. When the horse realizes he is nearing home, he will gleefully work well, knowing the pain is going to stop soon.

Sign 16: When a horse stretches his neck and head down during a ride, he is trying to give his back muscles a rest, After a good workout, it is excellent to allow your horse to carry his head and neck in this way before putting him away. If your horse has a habit of doing this during a ride, he is talking to you again about his discomfort.

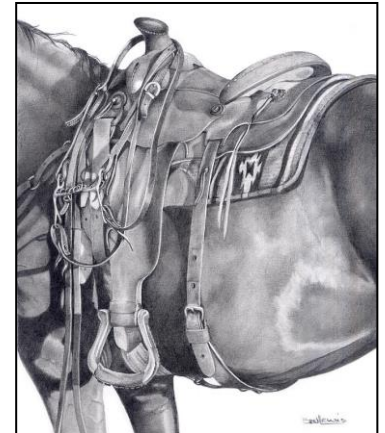
Sign 17: Does your horse try to bite you when cinching or girthing up? Does he object in some way

by perhaps pinning his ears, pursing and wrinkling his lips and giving you the evil eye?

Reason: Try squeezing your own foot into a shoe that is too tight. Then tie the laces really snug and see what that feels like...need I say anymore on the subject? Here are some tests you can perform to see how your horse really feels about his saddle and rider: After a long ride, strip the saddle from your horse and allow him to cool out and dry off. Do not wash him down before the test, as wet horses sometimes act 'goosey' or ticklish when you examine them and you may not get an accurate reaction. Now run your fingertips gently but firmly down the horse's back. Use two hands so you can work all the way down either side of his spine. If he gives or buckles, or arches and squirms to the pressure at any point along the way, he is demonstrating an 'ouchy' spot even if his reaction is mild.

Now gently walk your fingers over his loin area where the saddle ends at the back. He is much more likely to show you a sensitive loin reaction if you are gentle than if you are too firm in the area. Usually, a sore loin is directly

attributed to a poor saddle fit, basically in the length of the bars. Bars are the strips of wood inside the saddle, which run down either side of the horse's back. However, lots of downhill work will sore a horse as well, especially if the saddle



doesn't fit, because it rocks from side to side, causing a rubbing movement. If the bars are too long they work back and forth over the horse's loin and it becomes very sensitive to the touch.

Try rubbing one spot on your tough old sun-hardened arm and see how quickly this irritates you. The same thing is happening to your horse's back. If he gives to heavy or too firm tickling pressure, this does not necessarily mean he has a sore back. You would buckle too, if tickled or poked hard enough down the muscles in your back. However, this can be an indicator that something is about to become sore, both in horse and rider. If you feel your saddle fits properly, the pad may be the problem. Change pads between rides and see if he is happier with downhill

The Meadow Creek Mishaps

By Kylie Rhoades, backcountry survivor
& SPWBCH Youth Member

(Written when she was 11-Scapegoat Wilderness)



Monday, July 22, 2013: We started at the trailhead with 10 horses and mules and five cowgirls. After an hour, I started saying, “To your left you see trees, to your right you see trees, and straight ahead you see a trail.” For lunch we stopped at Heart Lake. It was beautiful-the water was green, yellow, blue, red, brown, and clean. After that, I saw many trees and crossed many bridges. I was at the back of the string on Meeko, but then I was put ahead of my mom so her animals did better. I said, “Mom, I think we’re getting close.” We went by a swampy lake, but we were still not getting close. I thought Kathy lost her way. She said we missed a fork on the road. We got back on the correct trail. We crossed a river and our stock was acting like idiots. Then we stopped for there were 7 or 8 logs to cut. Up the trail there was a beautiful blue pool, and then we came to a meadow where we tied up and ate dinner and Luanne’s raspberry shortcake. I was cooked, so I went to bed.

Tuesday, July 23: I woke up to (something like), “Oh shoot!” Some of our horses got out and were heading down the trail at high rates of speed. My mom ran after them, but they were headed out. When Mom came back,



we ate breakfast, and then Mom and Kathy saddled up Missy and Gus to ride out and find the missing horses and mules. They were probably going to have to ride all the way to the trailhead about 15 miles, so I was left with Karen and Luanne. Karen and I took a walk, saw a daisy meadow, made little bridges, skipped rocks and played Yahtzee. Luanne read short stories to us. We lazed around and took the horses to graze. We took them through the willows to a nice grazing area. Then we heard this loud bell. It came closer and I saw dust flinging and flying. I saw lots of horses and mules running at top speed coming for me. I said, “Oh crap,” and I ran into the willow with Stocks and Rookie (the dogs.) Luanne fell, and we almost got trampled. About then, the wrangler came along and told us to look out, because there were coming through.



We went down by the creek and I hid in the willows. Deuce was going crazy bucking and running around. I was scared to death. The collar came off Stocks, but he stayed with me. Luanne and Karen scared the horses and mules off, and I was safe. Luanne and Karen laughed about it, even though Luanne was drug through the willows. I saw many beautiful paint horses.

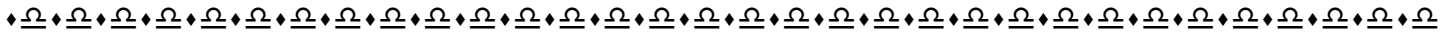
You can’t SURVIVE the running of the mules unless you EXPERIENCE the running to the mules!

Wednesday, July 24: I did it! I slept by myself with the dogs. When I woke up it was 9:30, and Karen was cooking breakfast of eggs with sausage. Luanne said it would be another 2 hours before Mom and Kathy got here, but about 5 minutes later, they came riding Missy and ponying Gus. My mom was riding Zip and leading Meeko. The mules were loose and following. We helped them unpack. Karen and Luanne went for a day ride. Then I just had to show Mom the reenactment of the running of the mules. I showed my mom where I hid and how Luanne got drug through the willows by Vader. We lounged for a while and then decided to go down to the K Lazy 3 Camp to meet Susan Metcalf (writer of Cooking in the West for the Western Ag Reporter.) We made the cutest pies with their brand and a mule head on them. We hiked home and that night, Brett Todd (outfitter) came up to warn us that he would be running the stock up the canyon soon. I got two good pictures.

Thursday, July 25: We packed up early and ate caramel apple sticky buns that I made and we saddled up. Everyone was saddled except Packer the mule. When Mom went to cinch him up, the latigo snapped. We fixed it, packed him, and set off. Zip was jiggging and Karen's horse Rowdy was jiggging. Kathy's packs were sliding and Luanne's horse was bucking. Karen's bridle broke. We went past Parker Lake. Luanne was out so far we couldn't see her. Then Kathy fixed her packs and took off. Karen, Mom and I stopped to rest and reprogram the horses. We went over 10 bridges and I had to lead the pack string, Tillie and Packer, because Zip was jiggging and getting worse. We got halfway to the junction on the Heart Lake bypass trail, so I traded the mules back to Mom. Mom said, "Give your horse some rein," and then she cantered off. We renamed Zip "Jackhammer" because that was what it felt like to ride him. I could see the trailers from a mile away, so I let my horse canter up the last hill to the trailers.

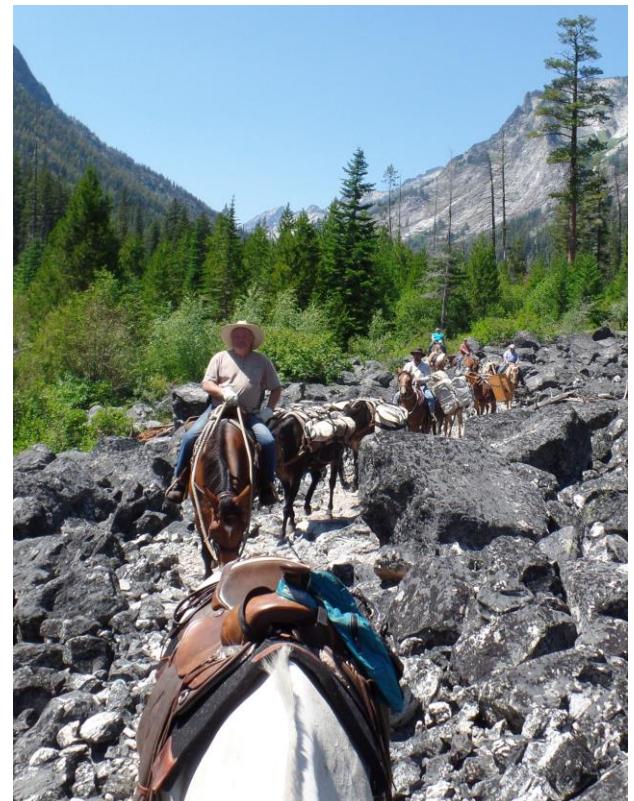


We had survived the Meadow Creek mishaps!



BLODGETT PACK SUPPORT
In partnership with
Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation
July 13 & 16

SPWBCH members Julie Schram, Bruce Scott and Kathy Hundley, along with assistance from Bitter Root BCH members Ed & Christy Duggan and sons helped provide pack support for a SBFC Foundation trail crew to 7 Mile Meadow. The trail crew cleared to the Lake, Blodgett Pass and also did work on the High Lake trail.



DID YOU KNOW: A horse is usually not considered to be a "horse" until it is 5 years old. Before that, males are known as colts and females are known as fillies. However, it is still acceptable to call a colt or filly a horse.



BIG LAKE PACK SUPPORT
In partnership with
Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation
July 23 & 29

SPWBCH members Bruce Scott, Kathy Hundley, Gary Peters and Fred Upchurch along with assistance from Duane Krown, Gail Shulund and Jennifer Ginn provided pack support for a SBFC Foundation trail crew to Tee Pee Rocks. Adam Washebek, USFS Wilderness Ranger-Stevensville District, also assisted on the Pack Out.





Ptarmigan Trail

Glacier National Park

By Taylor Orr

A recent pack trip to Glacier Park took me and a pal up the Ptarmigan Trail from the Belly River to Many Glacier. It is a trail that was conceived in the 1920's and built in 1930 to provide a northern loop for the dude ranch trade. The trail was blasted out of sheer rock wall and tunneled through a ridge separating the Belly River and Swiftcurrent drainages. It is an exhilarating ride, and a testament to the adventure spirit of folks seeking guided backcountry pack trips in the 1930's and 1940's.



Be yourself,
everyone else is
already taken



Bell Tail: When the Army used mules in service a green mule had its tail shaved. By the time the mule was broke to pack, a 'bell' was trimmed in the tail. Once broke to drive, a second bell was added below the first. Broke to ride, a third tassel was trimmed below the second. Thus, a three-bell mule was a well-schooled animal. One might say a "3-bell mule" is a mule with a PhD! (Submitted by Jennifer Ginn)





Selway- Pintler Wilderness BCH
P.O. Box 88
Hamilton MT 59840

To view in color go to:
www.bchmt.org/spwbch/Newsletters.html



Remember-Please send me your stories and photos throughout the year if you would like to see them featured in the newsletter!



SPWBCH Bits and Spurs will now be printed quarterly.



Please help make our newsletter interesting, fun and informative by sending in articles, stories and photos! We love to read about your horses, mules, dogs, pack trips, campouts, hunting trips and good 'ole horse & mule sense! Trail history and updates are great too! Please send articles, news, pictures or horse/mule/back-country-related classifieds in to me for the quarterly newsletter at any time! Send to Kathy Hundley: 3448 Wright Way, Darby, MT 59829; prefer by e-mail: montanakath@yahoo.com

***Content of this newsletter shall not be reproduced in any form or manner without prior written agreement. This includes reproduction of articles, photos, and the SPWBCH logo.*

Selway-Pintler Wilderness BCH 2017 Volunteer Hours

Trail Work: Basic hours 347; Skilled hours 596

Trail Miles (pack support/logging): 353 miles (130 wilderness)

Education: 153 hours

Travel Time: 364 hours

Stock Hauling: 5,590 miles Non-stock Miles: 5,724

Power Equipment hours: 206

Stock Used: 145 Stock Days: 194

Dollar Donations: \$1,580

SAWTOOTH BRIDGE PROJECT

August 8-15 & August 27

This incredible project started out only as a thought back in 2008 when the SPWBCH made its first push into Sawtooth canyon. Nine years later, and never giving up hope, the stock bridge over Roaring Lion Creek now stands tall and solid. Thanks to all the SPWBCH members who worked tirelessly on this amazing project, along with the support and partnership of the Bitterroot National Forest and MT Conservation Corp. With the new bridge in place, hopefully we can begin in 2018 to repair the fire damaged trail. Seven SPWBCH members were able to ride and saw their way in on Sept 24, getting 2.1 miles. There will be tread work needed where the fires burned into the ground, and lots of blackened trees across the trail!

2018...Summer of Sawtooth perhaps!









**SPWBCH Bridge
Volunteer Hours**

512 Work Hours
 128 Admin Hours
 129 Travel Hours
 4,463 Vehicle Miles
 198 Power Equipment Hrs
 3 Heavy Equipment Hrs
 \$1,200 Cash Investment

