

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.



2016 SPWBCH Officers - Contact Information

President: Linda Habeck	Ph. 961-1435
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Treasurer: Betsy Hepburn-Day	Ph. 381-1378
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NEXT MEETING Thursday, October 13, 2016
Hamilton Forest Service
General Meeting @ 6:30 Board Meeting @ 5:30



HAPPY 10th ANNIVERSARY
Celebrate 10 years of service and volunteering.
Cake and drinks served

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President's Note – As I started the annual fall chores of rolling up irrigation hoses and draining sprinkler heads while thinking of all that's necessary to be ready for winter I was reminded of something I read earlier in the year; "did June and July last like 5 minutes?" Add August and September to that and sure enough another summer is gone in the blink of an eye. By the end of September, all scheduled work projects (minus Sawtooth) will be done. Thanks again to the hard working individuals who invested their time, energy and use of their personal stock to get all the projects accomplished. You've done it again! Poor old Sawtooth took a beating once more this year. Luckily, neither trail work nor bridge replacement has been started. The trailhead is also toast. I think our adopted trailhead will be a work in progress for quite a while. It would be nice to think that next year, work on both Sawtooth bridge and trail can proceed. In writing how fast time goes, the Selway-Pintler Wilderness BCH chapter celebrates its 10th anniversary in October. In that time hundreds if not thousands of miles of trails have been cleared, a successful State Convention was hosted and loads of memories were made. What an accomplishment with what started as a handful of members. Those who had the vision of this BCH Chapter can indeed be proud. Here's to what I hope will be a beautiful fall with the bluest of skies and those gorgeous red and yellow colors. Ride often, laugh more and stay safe. Respectfully, *Linda Habeck*



Health & Training



RIDING PROBLEMS CREATED BY SADDLES

Part 1



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. Not only is proper fit important, proper rider

balance, which puts the rider automatically over the center of balance on the horse's back, is vitally important. An out of balance rider becomes quickly tired and then puts undue stress on a working horse forcing him to carry twice the load (dead weight) than he would if all things were equal. These noble animals can't talk, or can they? Horses use sign language amongst each other and if you take the time to learn it you will be ahead of the game

Sign 1: Horse goes lame. Problem appears to be in the shoulder.

Reason: Saddle too wide, interfering with shoulder movement causing muscle fatigue and eventual lameness.

Sign 2: Horse refuses to trot or gait for any length of time, preferring or insisting on breaking to lope, canter or pace in order to throw the rider off the correct lead, time and time again, then swishing or ringing his tail and ear swiveling.

Reason: Ill-fitting saddles cause discomfort. Horses try to move riders into more comfortable positions by changing gaits or leads and so shift the point of painful contact to a less irritated spot. Tail ringing/swishing is a definite sign of unhappiness or irritation. Laying back or swiveling his ears constantly could not be speaking more clearly warning, "Please stop, this hurts".

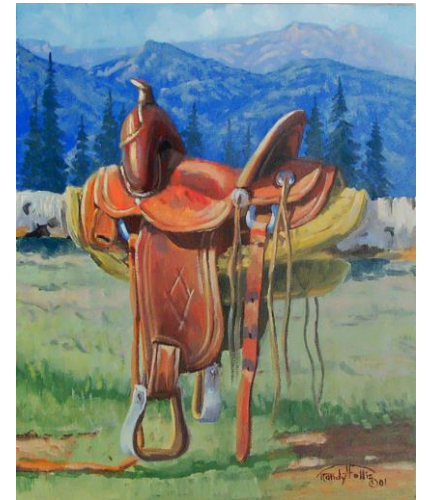
Sign 3: Stumbling on the trail.

Reason: Saddle too tight across withers causing pinching or too wide causing interference with

freedom of shoulder movement. Also, check your breast collar. It might be riding too high, cutting your horse's oxygen supply and the stumbling is an early warning that your horse is about to faint. Some horses pass out in these situations giving everyone a dreadful fright and possibly a nasty injury.

Sign 4: Consistently changing leads without permission.

Reason: The horse is uncomfortable at some point of contact from the saddle. Here again, the horse is trying to shift the pain to a less irritated area. (cont. next issue)



DUTCH OVEN RECIPE

PUMPKIN CRUNCH

Ingredients:

- 1 can (15oz) pumpkin
- 1 can (12 oz) evaporated milk
- ¾ cup white sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ¼ tsp ground cloves
- 2 eggs
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 ½ cups chopped pecans
- 1 stick butter melted



Mix pumpkin, milk, sugar, spices and eggs. Pour mixture into the oven. Sprinkle dry cake mix over pumpkin mixture and top with pecans. Dot the butter on top in very small pieces. Put 8 briquettes bottom and 17 top. Check at 50 minutes, done when knife in center comes out clean. Continue cooking if necessary and check every 5 minutes.

Left – High and Dry

by Mary Mills

Walking off the backside of Fire Creek Trail, I watched as the two riders in front of me disappeared around a distant switchback. Kathy had been kind enough to give me a full bottle of her extra stash of water before heading down the hillside, eager to reach the much needed refreshment for the trail dogs and horses awaiting them at Fire Creek. Kathy and I had taken turns riding her Missy Gray Mule for the last mile before I told her just to go ahead, get the animals to water, and I would meet up with them back in camp. After another mile of steep switchbacks, I reached the bottom of the Fire Creek trail and the intersection with Crazy Creek. The last mile and a half of relatively flat, easy trail that led to camp was a welcome relief from the bone jarring descent from the ridge. As I walked along my thoughts skipped from, *I hope my horse is okay*, to *I wonder if Stu found her*, to *When I find her, I'm gonna kill her*. I spent the last mile of my little forced march/walk determined to put these anxious thoughts from my mind, including the woeful regret of my momentary lack of judgment. As much as I worked to shake my dark mood, I was greeted at the trail head by an accusatory sign declaring in bold, block letters – **ONE CARELESS MOMENT!** Though I know this sign referred to forest fire danger, I hung my head and walked the last hundreds yards into camp.



Mary Mills and Yin Yan

It was a beautiful cloudless morning when we prepared for our ride on the Fire Creek Trail, setting out from the trailhead, about ¼ mile up Warm Springs Road. Having ridden into the Two Good cabin the day prior, this was the second day of our overnighter at Crazy Creek Horse Camp. Because it is almost eight miles on a dirt road from the camp to the Fire Creek Trailhead, the three of us riders; Karen Hedges, Kathy Hundley and I loaded our horses into Kathy's three horse slant, leaving the other two rigs at the campground. When we rode back into camp one of us would shuttle Kathy back to her truck on the way out. Good plan – been there, done this many times before.

In anticipation of the dry, steep trail, we planned accordingly, packing lots of extra water

for both ourselves and our trail dogs. The horses, well fed and watered at camp, began the steep incline and we settled into our saddles, gazing out on the valley below. Stopping often to water the dogs and give the horses a breather provided many photo ops of the scenic overlook and the variety of wildflowers along the trail and we relaxed into the day knowing that once we dropped over the other side of the ridge our equine and canine friends would find refreshment upon reaching Fire Creek.

We stopped for lunch at a high flat shady vista, about three and a half miles in for a much needed rest. When we resumed our ride, it was obvious as my horse kept looking behind she was ready to go back down the mountain. Out of curiosity, on a wide flat spot I loosened my reins and sure enough she immediately did a 180. With a chuckle, I pulled her head back around and she reluctantly trotted to catch up with the other riders. When we reached the trail marker indicating the descent off the ridge we stopped again for a dog watering break. I decided this was a good opportunity to “release some water” myself and since no one was around, I made the decision to tie up my reins onto the saddle horn and take care of business right there. How many times I had done this in the past without incident I can't count but my dear horse chose this moment to take advantage of my vulnerable position and before I could even stand up she repeated her earlier 180 and started back down the trail.

“Stop!” I hollered in a frustrating attempt to cut her off, all the while pulling up and zipping my Levis. *Surely she’ll stop when she gets around the bend and realizes she’s left the herd*, I hoped. Yelling over my shoulder to the girls behind, “I’ll be back in ten minutes if she doesn’t stop”, I continued my pursuit. It soon became obvious that she had no thus intention and I reluctantly turned back. Not only did she leave me, she left me high and dry without my water or my cell phone, both of which were on my saddle. When I returned I found my friends talking with a couple of mountain bike riders that had just come up from the other side. When we explained our dilemma, they offered to catch her if they could, should they encounter her on the way down to where Kathy’s truck was parked.



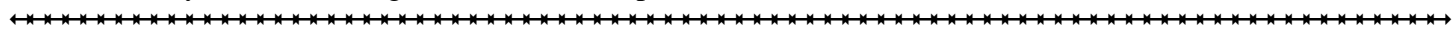
I debated whether I should just walk back down to the truck myself when Karen got the idea to call her husband Stuart who might be home, which was conveniently located less than a mile from the trailhead. Amazingly she was able to reach him and he agreed to go to the trailhead and intercept my renegade mare and tie her up to the trailer. My biggest concern was that she might wander out to the highway and get hit by a car. With that plan in place we started down the other side.

And here’s where the communication and thus the plan gets a little wonky. We’ve now got mountain bikers, an unsuspecting husband, an errant horse, thirsty dogs and horses and three hot sweaty women in various locations between Crazy Creek and the Fire Creek Trailhead. How is this all going to pan out? Here’s what happened.

When Stu showed up at the trailhead, he sat patiently waiting for my horse to make her descent. After about a half hour the mountain bikers came down off the hill and informed him that they caught her and tied her to a tree about three miles up. He waited another half hour or so thinking we may return soon, then tired of waiting, up the hill, Stu – now my hero – trekked. In the meantime the three of us woman converged in camp, loaded up the dogs and horses and headed down to where we hoped to find a relaxed Stu and a tied-up-to-the-trailer-horse. Instead we got there to find an empty trailer and a parked four wheeler. Amazingly Karen was able to once again reach Stuart by cell phone and he told her about the bikers. That is when Karen – another hero of the day – made the decision to take her horse home, saddle a fresh horse and head up to meet Stu and my horse. Within the hour, horses and heroes alike appeared over the ridge and all was well.

I am very grateful to: The unnamed mountain bikers for catching my naughty horse, to Kathy for sharing both her Missy Gray Mule and her water, and to Stuart and Karen Hedges for retrieving the renegade girl. Bless you!

Now for the moral of this story ... Think twice before you drop your pants and your reins at the same time! You may be in for a long walk back to camp.



SAWTOOTH UPDATE
The bad news is the Roaring Lion fire devastated the Sawtooth trailhead shown at left. It also burned planks on the bridge. The good news is we were successful in our RTP grant application and have been awarded the full amount we requested to rebuild the bridge next summer! We still have grant money available for trail work also. Looks like it might be another “summer of Sawtooth”! We will be making plans through the winter for the work next summer. Come and help be a part of this amazing project.

More Sawtooth photos



Regional Forester Pack Trip Monture Guard Station

June 20-23, 2016



The Back Country Horsemen of MT hosted an overnight pack trip for Leanne Marten, Region 1 Forest Supervisor, and 4 other FS members of her staff. BCHMT volunteers from around the state packed in the camp, kitchen, food and gear for an overnight “back country” experience to help promote the partnership between BCHMT and the Forest Service. A campfire discussion enabled BCH to address current issues and future concerns of the management of our forests and trails. SPWBCH members Julie Schram, Kathy Hundley and DL Ferris assisted at this year’s event...and don’t forget the horses and mules!



Photo right: L to R: Leanne Marten, David Smith, Rachel Feigley, George Bain and Joni Packard

Bottom photo: L to R: Brad Pollman/BCH, Leanne Marten, David Smith, Rachel Feigley, Mack Long/BCH, Joni Packard & Rich Carl/BCH



Magruder Youth Camp

Magruder Ranger Station

July 18-20

Twenty Bitterroot Valley youth attended the week long camp in the Frank Church Wilderness. SPWBCH members were on hand to help educate youth on various topics. Tom Powers coordinated the event, Kathy Hundley helped BCHMT with horse packing and Fred Upchurch assisted with fly fishing. All students got an autographed book, **“Packin’ In on Mules and Horses”**. Author, Smoke Elser, co-volunteered to lead a campfire discussion on wilderness along with Dale Burk. The camp was sponsored by conservation groups from around the valley and the state.



Campers display their mantied loads with Kathy & Greg Schatz from the Flathead BCH



A “happy camper” leads Missy Grey Mule and Reba displaying stock pigtailed together



Campers proudly display their autographed books!



Tom Powers leads a discussion at Monday night’s wilderness talk



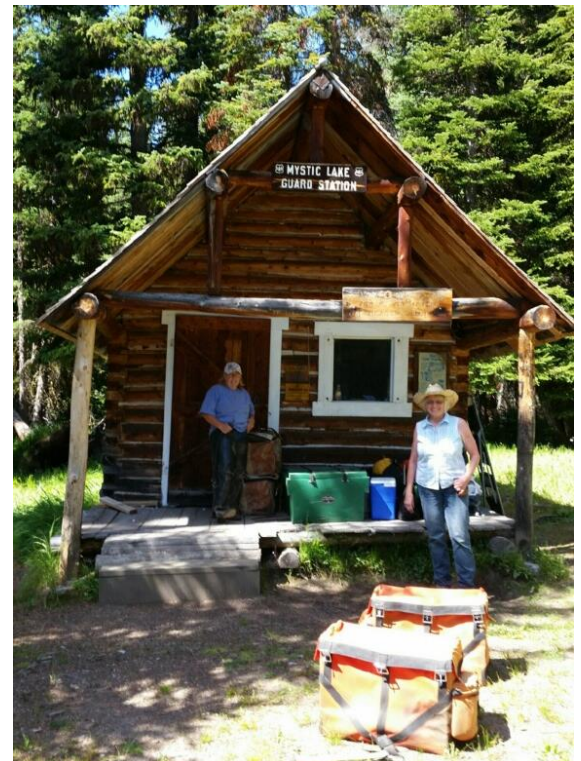
Learning to fit a breeching on Reba

Mystic Lake Pack In

CDTMT Artists in Residence

August 12

Ladies packing ladies was the theme for the “pack in” at this year’s CDTMT artists event. Julie Schram, Kathy Hundley, Terry Reed and Karen Hedges battled the 16 miles of “bad road” pulling stock trailers to take 3 lady artists to Mystic Lake cabin in the Big Hole for a week- long stay. Despite some awkward gear (a 5 ft. stepladder, a wooden box full of books, a large DeWALT tool chest, lots of camera equipment and an 8 ft. tube containing a rolled canvas), all loads rode well with no adjustments. The artists included a photographer, a film maker and a jewelry maker (works with metals).





Selway- Pintler Wilderness BCH
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To view in color go to:
www.bchmt.org/spwbch/Newsletters.html



**A Pard sticks till hell freezes over then
goes as far as he can on the ice**

Newsletter Information



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

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Selway- Pintler Wilderness BCH 2016 Volunteer Hours

Trail Work: Basic hours 19; Skilled hours 423

Trail Miles (pack support/logging): 293 miles (172 wilderness)

Education: 336 hours

Travel Time: 236 hours

Stock Hauling: 6017 miles Non-stock Miles: 1432

Power Equipment hours: 42

Stock Used: 125 Stock Days: 125

Dollar Donations: \$788

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



**Blodgett Pack Support
Selway Bitterroot Frank Church
Foundation Crew
July 14 Pack In**

SPWBCH members Bruce Scott, Kathy Hundley, Jim Hansen, Karen Hedges and Keith Brown volunteered to pack in the trail crew to 7 Mile Meadow. The original plan was to pack to High Lake Jct.-but due to the extreme slowdown, the FS requested crews to work on the main trail.



Bruce and our new saddle "clickers" device that he made for keeping track of logs under 8", over 8" and over 24" for the Forest Service reports. When counts get high, our brains go dead!



**Blodgett Pack Support
Selway Bitterroot Frank Church
Foundation Crew
July 17 Pack Out**

SPWBCH members Bruce Scott, Kathy Hundley, Julie Schram and Chris McCabe volunteered to pack out the trail crew.



Watchtower Campout

July 22-23

Our annual campout turned out to be another great project with over a dozen members enjoying Terry's great food and the logging "fun"! Photo above left shows our new rope-along in action, with Todd and Karen on the misery whip. We

also celebrated Mike Foster's 69th birthday on Friday night...yummy cake. Saturday a.m. was interesting with the FS crews chain sawing trees down all around us starting at 5:30 am-stock was not impressed as the trees fell 25' away-made saddling interesting.