

Photo by Kari Schiffman, Bitter Root BCH

Decker Dispatch



Adjusting and Adapting is Part of Life

By Ally Pike, Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead

It's early December and the warm weather hangs on for a little bit longer here in the Flathead Valley of Montana. The moderate weather has given us a few extra weeks to work around the barn, a few more beautiful days on horseback in the mountains, and a couple more sunset rides...when it's not insanely muddy. This upcoming weekend I'll be at a small outdoor gathering with some close horse friends, and as usual we'll be talking mostly about horses the whole time. It's quite fun.

Part of my joy in being with these humans is the diversity among us. I love having friends from all walks of life; the conversations are so rich and full of life. As we gather around the fire, we swap stories, questions, knowledge, wisdom, and ideas. We particularly love creating and collaborating on how we can be moving forward in the horse world, culture, and the Back Country Horsemen organization. Recently we've been talking about the big question...how do we get more young people involved? Why is there a large age gap in involvement? What can we do as individuals and as an organization? I am so blessed to have friends from mixed generations, because we can learn so much from each other. Having friends

in totally different walks of life has incredible benefits, especially in the horse world, but how do we encourage more of this?

The Back Country Horsemen needs to grow to perpetuate our values for future generations. How do we entice the up and coming generation to join us? Some of the practical solutions we've had around these conversations include watching the words we use around young people and addressing the fears of young people. Reputation is everything these days, and being a role model is of utmost importance. It is important that young members have a safe place to confidently say no. What if they feel the trail is too steep or if the ride is too long? We need to treat them with respect and refrain from deriding them and telling them that they need to "toughen up".

In Montana the weather always keeps us on our toes. Nothing is ever stagnant, and we constantly adjust as the year cycles through each season. We adapt, or at least we continue to try. Adjusting and adapting is part of life which also includes keeping our communication skills up-to-date.

Over the past year I have been a part of the ongoing conversation on how to

[continued inside]

OUR PURPOSES

- To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country, roadless back country 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 formation of new state Back Country Horsemen organizations.
- To seek out opportunities to enhance existing areas of recreation for stock users.

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involve young people with the Back Country Horsemen of America. Most recently, I was asked to participate in a panel discussion for a webinar for BCHA. The panelists talk

about how to attract young people to join us in BCH. If you would like to watch the video it can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqwC1DhaB0M&feature=youtu.be>



Schedule for chapters' news article submissions

E-mail to: deborah.bcha@gmail.com

Winter Issue: articles due January 5th
Beartooth, Bitter Root, Cabinet, Mission Valley, Three Rivers, Upper Clark Fork, Wild Horse Plains, and convention hosting chapter.

Spring Issue: articles due May 5th
Charlie Russell, East Slope, Flathead, Gallatin, and Judith Basin.

Fall issue: articles due September 5th
Last Chance, Mile High, Missoula, Northwest Montana, Selway-Pintler Wilderness, and Trout Creek.

Photographers:

Remember to take photos at the highest resolution possible. Then, attach your photos to your email as separate .jpg files. Do not imbed your photos within your Word documents. Thank you!

Letter from the Chair

By Sherri Lionberger, Last Chance Back Country Horsemen
Chair, BCH Montana

As we ring in the New Year, I'm working to be thankful for things that help us carry on with our mission. I might get frustrated with technology (only because of my lack of skills), but that very thing has allowed our organization to stay working and in touch with each other. We've now canceled one convention, but held three state directors meetings via the Zoom platform, and quite successfully. Some chapters have utilized it for their local meetings as well. By the time you read this, it will already be known that this 2021 convention will also be held via Zoom. This was a relatively easy decision for us to make in order to keep our members and community safe, but yet difficult in that we all miss the personal face to face meetings and discussions that cannot occur via Zoom.

This is the time of year chapters normally start planning all of their work projects and outings for the coming year. Hope-

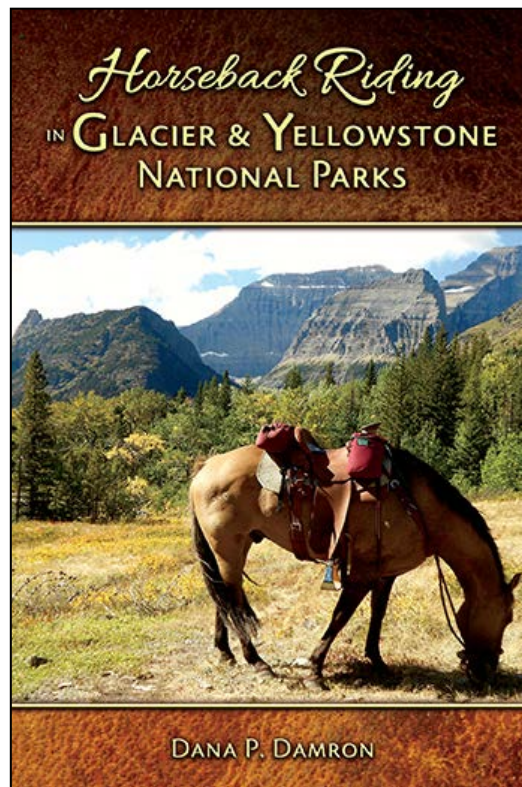
fully vaccines will be implemented in time for us to gather again to complete the much needed work waiting for us on our trails throughout the state. Smoke Elser brought up a wonderful idea about gathering rendezvous style sometime in August - we will work to get a date set so chapters can get that on their calendars as well.

We've had a rather dry and open December and so far January. As the saying goes, "There is nothing better for the inside of a man (or woman) than the outside of a horse." It is my hope that many of you are taking advantage of that.

Happy trails.

Sherri

Contact Sherri at chair@bchmt.org



Dana P. Damron shares his expertise and insights on riding on some of the most scenic trails in the world. The Parks' vast trail systems were created with horse riders in mind. This guidebook is designed for novice and experienced horseback trail riders alike; with detailed information about the best trails for horses, trailhead parking, and tips for a safe and enjoyable ride for both horse and rider.

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Three Rivers Back Country Horsemen Year in Review

By James Hollifield, Three Rivers Back Country Horsemen

Like many chapters, Three Rivers Back Country Horsemen faced challenges for meetings and rides this year due to health concerns. We were able to get a large group together for a ride on May 17th. We had 17 riders from Three Rivers and the Mile High chapter (Butte) in the Rochester mining area near Twin Bridges. The weather was pretty mild and we enjoyed a picnic lunch after the ride, while practicing social distancing.

On June 28th, five members rode to Sawtooth Lake and enjoyed very cool weather while clearing only one tree. We made it back to the trailers just before a cold rain began to fall.

Several members spent some time clearing trail at Canyon Creek, Rock Lake and elsewhere.

On September 13th, thirteen members and guests of the Three Rivers Back Country Horsemen rode up to Sheep Lake via the Sheep Creek Trail in Madison County. This ride has become an annual ride for us, with the beautiful mountain lake our reward. It is approximately a 13-mile round trip ride, and fairly technical in some spots. We even came upon a bear on the way down. Even though it was quite smoky, it was a wonderful ride. We found the trail to be in excellent shape. Come join us next year on this great adventure!

On October 9th, the Three Rivers BCH participated in a packing clinic put on by the Center for Natural Horsemanship in Dillon. Many of the attendees were students with the Center.

The Northern Region Pack Train, of the United States Forest Service's Nine Mile Ranger District, demonstrated packing their string of seven mules with everything but the kitchen sink. The packing demo was three hours of fun.

Three Rivers BCH sponsored an excellent emergency equine first aid talk by Dr. Megan Igo, DVM, which was well received by the attendees. We had a lot of interest in the BCH as a whole. We hope to collaborate again with the Center in 2021.



Photos:
The Sheep Lake ride
The Northern Region Pack Train



National Director's Column

By John Chepulis (Beartooth BCH)
National Director, BCH Montana

In 2020, Back Country Horsemen of Montana donations of volunteer hours, miles, equipment and stock totaled \$823,995.50. Well done!
Contact John at barcdiamond@gmail.com.

\$823,995.50

Backcountry Horsemen of America Volunteer Hours Report

BCH MT
2020

	Totals	Rate per hour/mile/day	Total Value	
Total Basic Hours	5593	\$27.20	\$152,129.60	Calculated per hour
Total Skilled Hours	4110	\$40.80	\$167,688.00	Calculated per hour
Total Trail Recon Hours	360	\$27.20	\$9,778.40	Calculated per hour
Total LNT - Education	1316	\$27.20	\$35,795.20	Calculated per hour
Total Public Meetings	1139	\$27.20	\$30,980.80	Calculated per hour
Total Administrative Service	2493	\$27.20	\$67,809.60	Calculated per hour
Total Travel Time	2702	\$27.20	\$73,494.40	Calculated per hour
Total Hours	17713			
Wilderness Trail Miles	603			
Other Trail Miles	1661			
Total Trail Miles	2264			
Personal Vehicle	35933	\$0.90	\$32,339.70	Calculated per mile
Stock Hauling	52208	\$1.10	\$57,428.80	Calculated per mile
Total Travel Miles	88141			
Power Equipment	823	\$26.00	\$21,398.00	Calculated per hour
Heavy Equipment	166	\$81.00	\$13,446.00	Calculated per hour
Total Equipment Hours	989			
Total Stock (Pack and Saddle)	1013			
Total Stock Days	1514	\$100.00	\$151,400.00	Calculated per day
Total Donations	\$10,307.00		\$10,307.00	
		Total	\$823,995.50	

Youthful Experiences

By Jean Nemeth, Dave Crawford and John Errecart, Wild Horse Plains Back Country Horsemen

Similar to everyone else in 2020, Covid-19 threw a few kinks into our plans for the spring and summer. We did manage to do some packing for the local Forest Service trail crew and get miles of trails cleared, but we missed our most cherished activities which are interactions with our local youth groups. Looking forward to re-engaging in 2021, we'd like to recall some of the activities we've been doing in the recent past with our local youth and are eagerly looking forward to this spring.

Each May we begin by participating in the local Plains 6th grade campout that originated in 1989. The campout involves 40-50 students being bused to the historical Bend Guard Station, 33 miles north of Plains, located near the Thompson River. From the moment the students step off the bus, they are in the outdoors until it is time to get back on the bus, the evening of the following day. During the day students participate in hands-on learning, followed by outdoor dining and social time around the campfire before retiring to their wall tents for the night. The active classes in outdoor sciences presented by the Montana State Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service and the Wild Horse Plains BCH include stream habitat, soils, wildlife, range management, fire ecology, timber management and equine education.

Since 2011, our Back Country Horsemen chapter has participated in the 6th grade campout with three to four of our members and their horses. Wild Horse Plains BCH presents an introduction to horses, trail etiquette, simulations of horse and rider, light on the land camping, and balancing pannier weight. We typically find several students have been around horses, but the majority have never touched a horse. We demonstrate, and the students practice, how to approach a horse, how to groom (which tool, etc.), reading a horse's body language, and progress to picking up feet, etc. for those comfortable doing so. Trail etiquette involves what to do when meeting other users, particularly those with stock, while on a trail. One simulation involves students hooked together bunny-hop style to

be the horse; representing the head, ribs, and hindquarter sections. Another student is the human trying to communicate to the 'horse' through body language, the language of the horse, not talking, to get the 'horse' to do a particular task. The Light on the Land camping is demonstrated through examples of good camp versus bad camp and the introduction to packing by building and hanging balanced loads on the stock.

Once the Forest Service Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) crews (14-18 year old students from Hot Springs, Superior, Plains and Thompson Falls) get rolling for the summer, an in-depth one day hands-on packing clinic is our next youth event. Each segment of the clinic starts with instruction followed by hands-on practice. We get started by showing students safety when catching, haltering and grooming equine. Next comes learning different types of knots to tie horses and mules safely. The students are now ready to catch, halter, tie and brush the stock on their own. With the stock now ready to saddle, a short segment on different saddles and pads for riding and packing is covered before demonstrating how to saddle stock with a Decker pack saddle. Each student takes a turn at practicing saddling one of the stock and we're ready to move on to mantying up loads. Next the students learn and practice weighing the gear to be packed, mantying the load and hanging it on the saddle using both a basket and barrel hitch. After the full day of instruction and hands-on experience, the students are given a challenge to test their new skills. The students are paired up and tasked to put a pack saddle on their animal, manty two balanced loads, sling their loads, and lead their pack animal around the grounds to a finish line. As expected, this ignites the competitive fires and with a bunch of hootin' and hollerin' the game continues until all teams have crossed the finish line.

As an introduction to all the different natural resources that the Forest Service manages, the YCC crew spends a week or better doing hands on projects in each function (fire, range, wildlife, silviculture, timber, recreation,

etc.). For their hitch in recreation, we merged the local YCC with a Montana Conservation Corp (MCC) youth crew, paid for with a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant we'd secured, to build a 15-person trail crew and put them to work reconditioning an old section of trail leading to the newly restored Big Hole Lookout.

Our trails hitch starts with setting up the base camp where our chapter folks and the MCC crew will be staying during the project. Complete with two hundred gallons of potable water, wall tent, port-a-potties and a shower, the kids deemed it as Camp Glamp (glamor-camping). And of course, what would an introduction to setting up a wall tent be without doing it in a 15 mile an hour wind? A chore that calls for all hands and teamwork, always the best way to get things started.

The first several days start early with a short drive to the trailhead, the youth crews doing the digging and the sawyers from our chapter clearing the trail right-of-way of dead fallen trees and small live trees growing in the trail corridor. On Thursday, around noon, pizza and a cooler of ice cold bottled water arrives just in time for lunch near the trailhead, where we just happen to be working that day. These kids do a tremendous amount of work on the trail and the way they can put down the pizza shows the amount of fuel their hard work takes, impressive!

We wrap-up the week long effort with a six-mile interpretative hike on Friday. The hike begins with an exercise where one of the youth members uses a GPS unit to bushwhack the group to an old cabin from the 1930s, once used as shelter for a subsistence type lifestyle. Further along the hike there are multiple stops to talk about topics such as forest disturbances (wind, fire, insect, disease, etc.), the development of the network of trails and lookouts from the 1930s, timber harvest of green trees, salvage of burnt timber, reforestation, mining exploration, livestock grazing, the Endangered Species Act and grizzly bear recovery, just to name a few.

We find it tremendously rewarding to share our passion and knowledge of

Youthful Experiences continued...

the woods and stock with young folks. But honestly, it's difficult to know who gets the most out of the experience. The energy and true exuberance these young adults share with us even puts some buck back in these old bones.

First column photos:

For many of the 6th grade students participating in the annual school campout at the Bend Guard Station, the equine sessions by the Wild Horse Plains BCH chapter give them their first equine experience.

YCC members build a mantly load during the packing clinic.

YCC members load manties during the packing clinic.

Second column photos:

Trail prior to reconditioning by Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) and Montana Conservation Corp (MCC) crews.

YCC and MCC youth crews reconditioning trail.

Trail after reconditioning by YCC and MCC crews.

Bottom left photo:

YCC and MCC group photo at Big Hole Lookout during the interpretive hike on the last day of the trail reconditioning project.



Nonprofit Bookkeeping [part two]

By Carey Monson, Treasurer, NorthWest Montana Back Country Horsemen

Schedule of Tasks

To stay organized and on top of your BCH chapter's bookkeeping and accounting responsibilities, complete tasks that need to be done daily, weekly, quarterly, and yearly. Keep necessary financial information up-to-date so the chapter is prepared to submit paperwork to the government and to the people involved in the organization.

Daily & Weekly Tasks

To ensure your chapter's daily activities are completed, organize a weekly to-do list and prioritize the tasks so the important ones are done first, and other jobs are scheduled around them. Apply these guidelines to your chapter's weekly plan:

- **Set up daily priorities.** Knowing what you need to accomplish each day allows you to take care of the most pressing matters.
- **Keep your goals before you.** To maintain a clear vision, keep your eyes on the prize. Post your vision or your goals in a place where they are visible to you every day.
- **Manage your time by planning and scheduling your daily activities.** Be mindful of distractions that pull you away from completing your tasks.

Monthly Tasks

As a treasurer of your BCH chapter, you require monthly budget assessments to track and manage your nonprofit's finances. Monthly meetings should involve your finance committee and the board of directors. These meetings should go over management efficiency and include these items:

- **Reconcile all bank accounts.** Match your check registers with your monthly bank statements. You should also be reconciling your chapter's balance sheet monthly to look for any miscoded items.
- **Review budget projections and compare the projected budget to actual results.** To ensure that you have revenues to take care of expenses, evaluate what happened the previous month and what the impact will be on future months. Adjust future planned actions based on your actual results to date.
- **Trim the fat from your budget.** Analyze every line item and look for

ways to cut costs.

- **Seek ways to cut variable costs.** To do so, change them to fixed costs or eliminate them altogether.
- **Meet with your budget task group to analyze every cost and get rid of unnecessary ones.** Consider everything that will keep you efficient without compromising program quality.
- **Submit grant proposals and contracts to stabilize your funding streams.** Be aggressive in seizing funding opportunities to sustain and expand your organization's existing programs while adding new ones.
- **Search your local newspaper for new businesses in your area that may support your cause.** Find out what their areas of interest are and talk to them about working together.
- **Look for ways to collaborate with other nonprofits in your community.** Form partnerships with larger nonprofits for fundraising activities.

Quarterly Tasks

To analyze the financial health of the BCH chapter, the board of directors needs quarterly financial statements, which monitor the flow of revenue. Likewise, for taxes, grants, and contracts, quarterly reports are required by federal and state government organizations. Make sure to take care of the following nonprofit accounting tasks:

- **Prepare quarterly financial statements for the board of directors.**

The board needs to know the financial status to plan future activities and to offset potential financial problems. Quarterly financial statements consist of a Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows, and an Income Statement (Profit & Loss).

- **Complete quarterly financial status reports for government grants and contracts.** The government expects you to track all expenditures and submit a report of what you have spent and how much you have left according to your records.
- **Complete quarterly progress reports for government grants and contracts.** Quarterly progress reports indicate performance results in terms of numbers. They evaluate your progress by comparing what you expected to accomplish with what happened.
- **Meet with your board of directors.** Your board must meet at least four times a year to fulfill federal and state requirements.

Annual Tasks

Running a nonprofit requires that you annually prepare and submit paperwork to the IRS and any other interested parties. Each year, you should evaluate your nonprofit's progress, go over your strategic plan, and celebrate the year's successes. This list represents tasks you should complete yearly:

- **Submit Form 990, Annual Information Report, to the IRS.** This form is where you report all financial activities to the IRS. It reveals



Bookkeeping continued...

your financial strengths and weaknesses, sources of income, and how the organization is spending the funds. This information helps the government determine whether you are engaging in activities that could cause you to jeopardize your tax-exempt status.

- **Contact a CPA to audit your financial statements.** Having audited records is like getting a professional second opinion about the validity of your financial health. It adds credibility to your record-keeping and accounting practices.
- **Celebrate your success and hard work with your staff and board members by having an annual party.** Reward everyone for a job well done.
- **Organize your budget task force for the next year.** Single out the analytical minds or penny-pinchers on board or within the members. These folks will make up your budget task force, which assesses all budget costs and does a benefit analysis of each line item.
- **Organize a proposal development team for the next year.** Find three people who are organized, enjoy reading technical stuff, and are willing to write. Then organize them into your proposal development team to research, develop, and submit grant applications and contracts for your organization.
- **Prepare for your annual board meeting by re-evaluating your organization's goals.** Cross out goals completed and develop new goals for the upcoming year.
- **Declutter your office files and prepare for the next year.** Getting rid of the clutter frees your mind and saves time. It is important that you know where things are and can put your hands on them when needed.

In the next issue of the Decker Dispatch, we will have our third and final discussion on using accounting software designed for nonprofits.

Carey Monson holds a B.S. degree in Accounting and works at JCCS in Whitefish. If you have questions, you can contact Carey at cmanson@live.com.

Bob Marshall Wilderness Outfitters Horse and Mule

Packing Skills Class - Ashley's Takeaway

By Ashley Luginbuhl

It was a tremendous honor to have been selected for the scholarship to the Bob Marshall Wilderness Outfitters Packing Skills Class, awarded by the Back Country Horsemen of Montana. Our group was in great hands with Connie, Mack and their crew of like minded horsemen. All were eager to share their excitement for getting people into the wilderness.

This five-day course started from square one - horsemanship. Ultimately it lead to mantying, loading, saddling and caring for a string of mules in the backcountry. It was a safe place to fail with no judgment, only lessons to be learned. The obstacles (high water crossings, hikers, dogs, trails giving way, horses having a bad day) along the way couldn't be staged, and proved priceless in learning how to safely manage difficult situations in the heat of the moment.

My goal for this course was to build and strengthen skills from previous pack trips, and hone in on things learned from the packing course at FVCC. Recreating in the Bob comes with great responsibility. This course gave the self-confidence needed in order to do so on my own. I have recently acquired two mules, and with the valuable knowledge shared on how to prepare, where to go, and how to safely manage my own stock in the backcountry, I can't wait to hit the trail. I kept a list of best practices on grazing, responsibly managing campsites, food/kitchen supplies, bear safety, and low impact livestock practices that will come in handy.

A former employee, Jackson, now employed with the Forest Service, visited our camp. He rides the area reporting trail usage, maintenance needs and other important functions in maintaining the area for users. This got me thinking about all the opportunities available not only in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, but all natural areas and public lands in need of people to advocate for, and care about its future funding and usage.

Jackson mentioned that although being in the wild and seemingly alone, there is still a community within the



wilderness. Whether it's repeat hikers, outfitters bringing in guests for the first time, or individuals coming in year after year, it's a community nonetheless. I am excited to not only be a part of this community, but inspire others to realize how special our public lands truly are. I look forward to getting involved with the Back Country Horsemen of Montana, and delving deeper into gaining more experience in the backcountry.

You can tell Connie and Mack are proud of their stock, their crew and the beautiful lands which they advocate for. They run an outfit with top notch equipment, people and horses to boot. I am blessed to have spent my classtime with seven others, all from different walks of life, eager to learn everything they could from this experience. Such as checking loads twice BEFORE leaving camp as Chris stressed the importance of; since most accidents happen on the side of a cliff, at night, in a thunderstorm, alone. Oh, and a personal takeaway - don't forget your Chapstick.

Mustang Chronicles: Training Chica

By Sandra O'Brien, Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen

When I adopted my mustang, I didn't realize what I was taking on. The bay roan mare I watched at the mustang event moved gracefully and looked at everything. She had been mixed in with a herd of other mares. Some were young, some seemed almost gentle. I didn't pick one of those to adopt. I had chastised a friend for picking out a mustang who was not a youngster. Why would you take on such a task? And yet, I picked the wildest mustang of the bunch!

Chica was born in 2013, and captured in November of 2016. She was almost four years old and she had given birth to at least one foal. In that time, she learned to defend herself and her foal from predators. She didn't escape the roundup though, in November of 2016.

Chica came by her name easily. She is fairly small, about 14.2. She was captured in Rock Creek, Nevada. The mustang herds are purportedly descended from horses brought to the Americas by the Spanish. Chica means "girl" in Spanish and also "small". My Chica chica is a small girl.

Interestingly, this small girl grows magically when she is frightened and needs to appear larger, and she was extremely frightened when I first got her. She was untouchable. When I went inside the small round pen she was housed in at first to feed her, she would go to the far side. I would sit on a stool outside the fence and watch her through my peripheral vision. I didn't want to feel like a predator to her, although human beings are predators. We are meat eaters. We are generally not rhythmic. We are something to be feared by the mustangs, until we can show them that we are leaders who keep them safe, rather than predators who are stalking them.

Horses learn by the release of pressure. They learn when they are not frozen in place by fear, or bolting from perceived danger, or striking or kicking as a reaction to a threat they cannot move away from.

Chica was leery from the start. I chose to have a halter and lead on her, which, in retrospect, I would not do



again. She fled from the rope beside her, possibly reminiscent of the snakes in Nevada. As soon as I was able, I had the lead rope removed so she could move freely without a snake following her.

I have since had to teach her that ropes are not after her. She tolerates them now. Her lessons started with touching her forehead and then working the tangles out of her mane. And then moving away from me, in a circle, and then moving toward me, off the halter pressure.

I spent a lot of time just hanging out. I played music and talked to her. I worked at looking at a foot until she picked it up, off the pressure of my intention, until she would pick up each foot with a mental "ask".

We walked at liberty for hours. I matched her steps. I approached her from both sides and from the front and rear. I felt our first big accomplishment in communication when I showed her how to step on an empty plastic shav-

ings bag. I stepped on it and then asked her to come forward to step on it. To my surprise, she did! It felt like such a huge (literal) step! After that, I was able to ask for many different steps. She learned to load onto a platform, to walk over poles, to jump over barrels, to load into a trailer. She is a willing partner most times. We are still working on the most basic of tasks. I am hopeful she will be a willing partner and her feet trimming is our next goal. And then one of these days, I'll take her packing.

Stay tuned for more of Chica's story in our next issue.

Sandra O'Brien is a member of Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen and served as its chapter's treasurer in 2020. She has a deep-rooted love for horses and has been involved with them for nine years in Alaska's and Montana's wilderness areas. Stay tuned for more adventures of Sandra and Chica.

2018 RTP Overview

By Nancy Pollman, Bitter Root Chapter

We know from the annual volunteer hour reports that our organization does an amazing amount of work. Looking at this from a different perspective let's look at our recent RTP grant.

The state organization, the Back Country Horsemen of Montana (BCHMT), submitted an RTP request in 2018, with chapters able to work under the umbrella of the state chapter. This was the second RTP grant managed by BCHMT. The purpose of the grant was to perform trail and facility maintenance, as well as provide pack support for outside crews performing similar tasks.

Eleven of our 18 Montana BCH chapters chose to participate. The grant's project timeframe covered July 2018 through October 2020, or basically the majority of three of our work seasons. Timing meant that some of our 2018 projects were completed prior to receipt of the grant, so they could not be counted. And of course, 2020 provided unique challenges with the coronavirus, which delayed and/or restrict-

ed participation in work projects as we all muddled through the cans, can-nots, and how-to scenarios ... and I'm sure in the middle there was weather and fire coming into play, too.

As timing of the grant came to an end the remaining allotment of funds were made available to the other participating chapters to use as needed. There's a special shout-out to Gallatin Valley BCH for pulling together additional documentation after the other chapters had exhausted their ability to use any more funds.

All in all, I guess I'm saying that BCHers are a hearty group and because of that we can report that all \$90,000 of the grant was used.

Thank you to all who performed the work itself and to those who diligently kept the records and worked with the BCHMT RTP committee, which consisted of Deena Shotzberger, Laura Nelson, and Sherri Lionberger, to complete this funding opportunity.

Below is an overview showing how the 2018 RTP Grant funds were uti-

lized. It's an eye-opener as breakdowns are tallied together. Though the grant is not meant to cover all costs absorbed by our volunteer members, it is nice to see a program where some reimbursement can be made.

A reminder - though the grant covers three years, what's shown accounts for only 10 of our 18 statewide chapters and just a portion of the trail work performed during that time.

Contract #1803-2018 Grant: Reimbursement Overview 2018-2020					
Montana Back Country Horsemen					
Chapter	Draw 1	Draw 2	Draw 3	Final Draw	Total Used
Bitter Root	\$ 783.22	\$ 6,928.23	\$ -	\$ 3,936.54	\$ 11,647.99
Cabinet	\$ 233.47	\$ 3,777.78	\$ 2,161.90	\$ 2,432.60	\$ 8,605.75
Gallatin Valley	\$ 5,472.83	\$ 2,527.02	\$ -	\$ 17,467.78	\$ 25,467.63
Last Chance	\$ -	\$ 2,683.68	\$ 4,387.24	\$ -	\$ 7,070.92
Mission Valley	\$ 889.60	\$ 2,031.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,921.10
Missoula	\$ -	\$ 1,376.76	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,376.76
NW MT	\$ -	\$ 8,941.93	\$ 8,180.05	\$ -	\$ 17,121.98
Selway-Pintler Wilderness	\$ 1,208.16	\$ 2,648.23	\$ -	\$ 2,632.98	\$ 6,489.37
Three Rivers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Upper Clark Fork	\$ -	\$ 1,249.97	\$ 1,323.84	\$ 197.90	\$ 2,771.71
Wild Horse Plains	\$ 949.78	\$ 2,572.24	\$ 2,280.66	\$ 723.32	\$ 6,526.00
	\$ 9,537.06	\$ 34,737.34	\$ 18,333.69	\$ 27,391.12	\$ 89,999.21
Breakdown: Meals	\$ 641.00	\$ 7,839.00	\$ 5,855.50	\$ 4,130.50	\$ 18,466.00
Breakdown: Mileage/ Trailer/Stock	\$ 8,896.06	\$ 26,898.34	\$ 12,478.19	\$ 23,260.62	\$ 71,533.21
	\$ 9,537.06	\$ 34,737.34	\$ 18,333.69	\$ 27,391.12	\$ 89,999.21
In-Kind Contribution (Labor)	\$ 24,230.00	\$ 96,067.00	\$ 43,060.00	\$ 70,790.00	\$ 234,147.00

2021 CONVENTION CANCELLED - Well, Pretty Much

By Nancy Pollman, Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen

In many ways 2020 is still biting at our heels. Vaccines are now coming available, but even with the most aggressive of timelines it isn't likely the number of doses given and population reached will provide an environment where most would feel comfortable with an in-person convention yet this March.

The Bitter Root chapter is disappointed - yet again - to have to say Montana's annual convention has been cancelled. Many hours were spent last year preparing an exemplary meeting: location, layout, speakers, breakout sessions, banquet, and of course the more social portions: evening gatherings, auctions, and vendors. We were excited to once again showcase the Hamilton area, which included a tour of the historic Daly Mansion. Our convention committee forged ahead again last fall with hopes that all would calm down and allow the 2021 convention to take place but, alas, it wasn't meant to be.

Though the convention has been cancelled, the State will host a board meeting via Zoom to conduct all necessary business. Primary participants of these meetings are the State Officers and State Directors, though any BCH member in good standing is welcome to audit the meeting. There has been a whisper of hope that perhaps a get-together could be scheduled later this summer; keep your fingers crossed and be ready to offer assistance should this work out.

There IS one portion of the convention that will still take place: the annual raffle! The Bitter Root chapter will be donating all profits from the raffle to BCHMT. The State usually receives the proceeds from the live auction items, which consists of an item donated by each chapter, plus its share of the 50/50 drawing. They lost funding last year, and the Bitter Root does not want to see that happen two years in a row. A packet has recently been mailed to each chapter, which contains raffle

tickets and instructions. You can help in two ways: grab some raffle tickets to sell to friends and family - yes, strangers, too! -- and purchase some yourself! Contact your chapter president or treasurer to obtain the tickets. We hope to make tickets available online; a link will be added to the State's website if we are successful. The raffle drawing will be held at 4pm Saturday March 27 via live feed. We invite you to join us online during the live drawing. There are three great raffle prizes available! Check the raffle poster in the newsletter for details. Let's work together selling raffle tickets to raise a boat-load of funds for the State.

The Bitter Root chapter will now pass the convention baton to the next chapter in line. We look forward to seeing you all next year in a new location! Thank you for all your support through these trying times. The convention committee wishes you and your loved ones a safe and healthy 2021!



Raffle Items Draw Date: March 27, 2021 No: 0001

2021 Back Country Horsemen of MT State Convention

3 CHANCES TO WIN!

TRIPLE CREEK RANCH ONE-NIGHT STAY, DARBY, MT

All Inclusive Luxury Resort (Value: \$1,625)

QUINN'S HOT SPRINGS ONE-NIGHT STAY, PARADISE, MT

Natural Mineral Water Hot Springs (Value: \$229)

MONTANA SILVERSMITH JEWELRY

Stunning Set of Earrings, Necklace, & Buckle (Value: \$150)

Winner need not be present to win.

Tickets: \$5 each or 5 for \$20



2021 Back Country Horsemen of MT State Convention Raffle Items



3 CHANCES TO WIN!

ONE-NIGHT STAY AT TRIPLE CREEK RANCH

- ✓ Value: \$1,625
- ✓ All-inclusive luxury ranch resort
- ✓ 5 Star service in a unique Montana setting in the beautiful Bitterroot Valley



ONE-STAY AT QUINN'S HOT SPRINGS RESORT



- ✓ Value: \$229
- ✓ Natural mineral water hot springs with fine dining
- ✓ Nestled in a majestic canyon on the Clark Fork River near Paradise, MT

MONTANA SILVERSMITH JEWELRY – NECKLACE, EARRINGS, BUCKLE

- ✓ Value: \$150
- ✓ Stunning ensemble:
heart earrings & necklace, double heart buckle
- ✓ What more could you want for yourself or your sweetheart?



Winner need not be present to win

Tickets \$5 each or 5 for \$20

Draw Date: March 27, 2021

Your assistance both in selling and purchasing tickets is needed!

Hosted by Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen Chapter www.bchmt.org/bitterroot

Need more raffle tickets? Questions? Nancy Pollman 406-546-6492 or npollman20@aol.com

All profits from the raffle ticket sale will be donated to Back Country Horsemen of Montana to help with annual operating expenses.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY!

attend the



2021 PACKING SKILLS CLASS

courtesy of the Back Country Horsemen of Montana

JUNE 9-13, 2021

Learn by doing! Hands-on work is the best way to retain packing skills. Manty, load, balance, and watch the loads on the trail from your classroom in the great outdoors. You'll learn the basics and history of the Decker Saddle, stock care and management in a Wilderness setting, and campsite essentials. Students also learn backcountry meal planning and logistics as the group moves camps every day, so there is plenty of practice. This is a working, learning trip and is not intended to be a relaxing vacation. While there will be downtime to relax, your instructors also want you to learn as much as possible in this short time in the Wilderness. Sign up today!

- **Immersive, Comprehensive, and Fun!**
- **Five Day/Four Night Experience**
- **Meals and Curriculum Provided**
- **LNT Certification Included**
- **Instructors: Connie and Mack Long**
- **Location: Bob Marshall Wilderness**
- **1 Scholarship Available**
- **Registration Deadline: March 1, 2021**

FULL SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

The target age range of scholarship recipients is 18-25 years of age. Scholarship will cover \$1,725 for tuition plus transportation within Montana for the winning applicant. Applicants can download the application form online, OR write an essay, OR provide a short video with the answers to the questions. Applications should include a letter of reference and are due by March 1, 2021. The scholarship will be awarded April 1, 2021. Questions? Call or text Greg 406.261.5450 or Kathy 406.363.8230

DOWNLOAD THE APPLICATION AT WWW.BCHMT.ORG



In the News

Forest Service Announces Key Changes to NEPA Procedures

Press Office

(202) 205-1134

Washington, NOVEMBER 18, 2020

The USDA Forest Service today announced the publication of a final rule implementing key changes to its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations. The changes include new tools and flexibilities to tackle critical land management challenges as part of a broader agency effort to better serve the American people through timely, high-quality management decisions affecting infrastructure, permitting and restoration of natural resources on their national forests and grasslands.

“These changes will ensure we do the appropriate level of environmental analysis to fit the work, locations and conditions,” said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. “The new cat-

egorical exclusions will ultimately improve our ability to maintain and repair the infrastructure people depend on to use and enjoy their national forests – such as roads, trails, campgrounds and other facilities.”

Categorical exclusions are a type of analysis for certain activities that typically do not have significant environmental effects. The rule establishes new or revised categorical exclusions that eliminate redundant efforts, allowing for previous environmental analyses to be used to support new decisions under certain circumstances, among other efficiencies.

The Forest Service finalized the regulations following its review of ex-

tensive public engagement and decades of experience complying with NEPA, one of the nation’s foundational environmental laws. The changes will allow Forest Service officials to concentrate resources on projects that are potentially more complex or have greater public interest, while also meeting NEPA requirements and fully honoring the agency’s environmental stewardship and public engagement responsibilities.

The updated regulations will publish tomorrow, Nov. 19 in the Federal Register and will take effect immediately. For additional details about the rule, visit www.fs.fed.us/emc/nepa/revisions/.

Status of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

In 2019, permanent authorization of LWCF was secured as part of S. 47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. Passage of the Dingell Act ensures that LWCF no longer faces the uncertainty of potential expiration, and that the unique structure and inflow of funds to LWCF is protected. Then in 2020 permanent full funding for LWCF was enacted into law in the Great American Outdoors Act– ensuring that each year the \$900 million deposited into the LWCF account actually goes towards conservation and recreation priorities.

How have LWCF funds benefited Montana recreationists? Here is one example. Learn more about LWCF here: <https://lwcfcoalition.org/tools>

The **Great American Outdoors Act**, signed into law on August 4, 2020, secures permanent funding for LWCF and will use revenues from energy development to provide up to \$1.9 billion a year for five years to provide needed maintenance for critical facilities and

infrastructure in our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, recreation areas, and American Indian schools. It will also use royalties from offshore oil and natural gas to permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund to the tune of \$900 million a year to invest in conservation and recreation opportunities across the country.

The **Great American Outdoors Act** will enable national parks and other federal lands to repair and upgrade vital infrastructure and facilities that will enrich the visitor experience, protect resources, and enable increased access for all visitors.

National parks host more than 325 million visitors every year, and the infrastructure cannot keep up without significant repairs. The network of roads, trails, restrooms, water treatment systems, and visitor facilities are aging, and many are exceeding the capacity they were designed to support. The National Parks and Public Lands Restoration Fund will provide funding

for priority projects that address the maintenance backlog at NPS facilities, including campgrounds, picnic areas, roads, trails, and other critical infrastructure. Specific projects to be funded will be announced in the future.

BCH chapters can contact their local Park and USFS officials to suggest trails and facilities that need work.



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Charlie Russell BCH
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East Slope BCH
PO Box 967, Conrad, MT 59425

BCH of the Flathead
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Gallatin Valley BCH
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Judith Basin BCH
PO Box 93, Lewistown, MT 59457

Last Chance BCH
PO Box 4008, Helena, MT 59604

Mile High BCH
PO Box 4434, Butte, MT 59702

Mission Valley BCH
PO Box 604, Ronan, MT 59864

BCH of Missoula
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NorthWest Montana BCH
PO Box 23, Kalispell, MT 59903

Selway-Pintler Wilderness BCH
PO Box 88, Hamilton, MT 59840

Three Rivers BCH
PO Box 251, Dillon, MT 59725

Trout Creek BCH
PO Box 1435, Trout Creek, MT 59874

Upper Clark Fork BCH
PO Box 725, Deerlodge, MT 59722

Wild Horse Plains BCH
PO Box 640, Plains, MT 59859

If you would like to join us, please contact a chapter in your area.

Find more information on our website:
www.bchmt.org