Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan Resolution

Sponsored By: Beartooth Back Country Horsemen
Co-Sponsored by: Greater Yellowstone Back Country Horsemen

Whereas:
Back Country Horsemen of Montana (BCHM) by mission statement is dedicated to perpetuating the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's backcountry and wilderness; and,

Whereas:
BCHM acknowledges that not all public lands are suitable to stock use in the historical/traditional manner. And further acknowledging that management and mitigation of impacts on those lands must be through a site specific National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment including a full range of reasonable alternatives, an effects analysis, and which must provide the minimum disruption to customary and historic pack and saddle stock usage necessary to accomplish the objective; and,

Whereas:
BCHM also acknowledges a potential threat to historic stock use on public lands, by blanket Area and Seasonal Closures, as outlined by the Gallatin National Forest (G.N.F.) Travel Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement (D.E.I.S.). In reviewing the D.E.I.S., the analysis and rationale for this decision, do not appear to to be clearly justified or specifically displayed; and,

Whereas:
BCHM has worked extensively on the public trail systems over the years, assisting the managing agencies in their mission of providing quality recreation experiences to all Americans. And To meet the mandate of the Wilderness Act to administer Wilderness lands "for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness", while also providing for historical use.

Therefore be it resolved:
That BCHM is opposed to any blanket type (area or seasonal) closures to stock use. However note, BCHM would support other type restriction / actions by most other means than blanket closures, to the extent that they are clearly necessary to meet the intent of Congress and are determined through site specific NEPA analysis providing public involvement, a range of alternatives, which provides through public involvement, a range of alternatives, and associated effects analysis. Also, BCHM will continue to support our heritage of stock use on public lands, will continue to work with management agencies, to seek workable alternatives (i.e. site specific closures, timing restrictions, and/or trail relocations, education and the enforcement of existing regulations), to any type of stock closures; and,

Therefore be it also resolved:
That BCHM adopt this resolution and send letters stating this position to Region 1 Regional Forester, Gallatin N. F. Supervisor, Chief of U. S. Forest Service, and Montana Congressional Delegation; and,

Be it further resolved:

That BCHM support, by written comment, the local Chapter's responses to the Gallatin Forest Travel Plan; and,

Be it further resolved:
That this resolution be forwarded to the Chairman and Executive Secretary of the Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA), with a request that it be a part of the agenda at their 2005 Annual Convention, and that our National Directors, on behalf of BCHM, request that the BCHA Board of Directors provide written comment on the Gallatin N. F. Travel Plan in support of the local Chapters responses to that Plan.