

Back Country Horsemen of America

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Winter 2015

New Mexico Northwest Chapter

Submitted by Teddie Bruce, Northwest Chapter, New Mexico



Appaloosa: Photo provided by the Albuquerque Journal Newspaper

You may not be familiar with the New Mexico Northwest Chapter of the BCHA. The Northwest Chapter is one of eight chapters in the state. George Marr founded the NW Chapter in 1993 and has served as president since that time. This year, George stepped down as president and Dan Key was elected as the new president.

The Northwest Chapter has been busy this year establishing new or maintaining existing trails and equestrian facilities in New Mexico. The chapter has been working with the Bureau of Land Management with the long-term goal of building a better horse trailer parking lot and more defined trails in the Ojito Wilderness which is located

northwest of Albuquerque. In response to this request, 17 people, 18 equines, and 3 dogs went on a “recon” ride to check out the area to figure out how to best accomplish this task.

In August the NW Chapter sponsored the New Mexico BCHA Rendezvous. The Rendezvous was held high in the Jemez Mountains at the Valles Caldera National Preserve. The Caldera is an ancient collapsed volcano crater that is home to large herds of elk, deer, and other wildlife. The area has historically been used for logging and as a working ranch. For years it has been held by various entities with strictly controlled access. Equestrian access into the Caldera’s back country is something that has been dreamed of for years. Earlier this year, with the consent of the Preserve management, our chapter—with the help of other NM Chapters—went into the Preserve and tore out about 5 miles of old barbed wire fencing. The sweat equity expended by our group was one thing that allowed us to have our State Rendezvous at the Valles Cal-

dera National Preserve. Because of this newly established relationship, we hope to assist in locating and creating new trails and equestrian facilities, tearing out old fencing, establishing permanent fire rings and possibly building shelters in the Caldera with the ultimate goal of equestrians having more access to this wonderful area of New Mexico.

At the request of the Bureau of Land Management, our chapter scouted out riding trails in the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument. The National Monument, which is located 55 miles northeast of Albuquerque, consists of 4,645 acres of public lands.

One of the biggest highlights, especially for the Northwest Chapter, was the Corrales Christmas de Los Caballos Marine Toys for Tots Parade. This ‘equine-only’ parade, sponsored by the NW Chapter, took place in November in the Village of Corrales. The purpose of the parade was to collect toys for the Marines to give to children who might not otherwise have gifts at Christmas. There were more than

President, Dan Key, is bringing home the freshly cut Christmas tree in the Corrales Christmas de los Caballos Parade.

© Photo by Ozana Photography

90 horses and riders, including horse-drawn carriages, in the parade. In spite of the cold, many spectators turned out to watch the parade and took special joy in bringing gifts for children. Riders, as well as equines, were decked out in festive costumes to celebrate the season. The horse and rider combination that seemed to catch everyone’s eye was our President, Dan Key, ‘bringing home the freshly cut Christmas tree.’ This captured the true Back Country Horsemen nostalgia of Christmas! Our thanks to everyone who brought toys, who came to watch, and who participated in the parade!



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Inside...

Reintroducing a U.S. Army Unit to Mules and Horses.....	2
From the Chairman’s Saddle.....	3
Back Country Horsemen Say Farewell	6-7
National Reports.....	9
The Catch Pen	10-11
NextGen BCHA	12



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Reintroducing a U.S. Army Unit to Mules and Horses in the Olympic National Park!

By Ed Haefliger

In the history of the U.S. military, the main source of cargo and supply transportation over land was on the back of a trusty pack animal. This was the norm until our military became completely mechanized and did away with pack stock. The fly in the ointment of a fully mechanized military has been that many of our current military's actions have been in a terrain that has always been more sensible to travel through by foot or riding on a horse or mule, than a motorized vehicle. This has led to a reintroduction of training for our soldiers and marines in the fine art of working with pack stock.

How the heck did Ed get himself into the training seat to offer any insight or a U.S. Army unit on stock handling and packing? This all got started while I was putting on a saddle fitting workshop and was approached by a U.S. Army Veterinarian Major Therese Krautzberg, who was attending the class. Major Krautzberg asked me to consider a program to introduce some officers and soldiers from the 84th Civil Affairs Battalion, Alpha Company out of the Joint Base Lewis-McChord near Tacoma WA, to horse and mule handling.

It seems that this is a very unique military unit. They are our country's goodwill ambassadors in camouflage. They are prepared to go to any part of the world that has suffered a disaster, to be the front line of humanitarian assistance to the injured and suffering members of these countries. In the course of these duties, there may be the need to use pack animals to move medical equipment, supplies and food, into an area that has had its roads, airports and infrastructure devastated. This was not intended to be a packing instruction class, but instead one to prepare these soldiers to work safely around stock being packed by indigenous packers, from the country they are working in.

A request like this comes with a great responsibility and requires one to check out one's own references. As a fire officer, I have been training semi-military units, such as firefighters, for years, plus putting on stock safety classes for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Forest Service; so I agreed to take this on! But because of the numbers of students and varying locations, plus transportation needs, I was going to need helpers. These great assistants were my wife Sue, April Campbell (one of my packing helpers), Dale Fye (co-owner with April of The Cross-roads Equestrian Center in Shelton) and Destiny Beninger.

The bottom line of this project for me was to, in three days, make 33 members of Alpha Company, who may have never placed a hand on a mule/horse or even stood next to one, comfortable and safe in the possibility of needing to handle one. I can see the wide eyes many of my readers have looking back at me. My response to that is, no problem! I had a plan! The first thing I did was to look at the trainability of my students. One could never ask for a better palette to work from. All were highly trained and educated. The bulk of my trainees were medics, a medical doctor, a veterinarian and different grades of officers,

many were combat experienced. With this quality of students, it would be my fault as the teacher if they did not get the material.

The second thing was to develop a comprehensive plan of action. The first day of instruction was at our place in Shelton for a class on how to operate near and with a mule or horse. The students each brushed an animal, took control of their feet and picked it with a hoof pick. This gave them confidence to go on to different handling evolutions.

Safety was the order of the day, for all three days! After considerable instruction, the group was broken up into teams and the team leader was the safety watch. This put several sets of eyes on each animal and handler. During this evolution they were constantly being made conscious of the animals' attention, location and moves to define safety and awareness. To offer the true element of realism, an obstacle course was set up, through which everyone in their team led a mule or horse. They had to traverse logs, brush, swampy ground and streams. To do this safely, we taught them to use our two-man leading system to control the animal at all times. April instructed our two-person safer animal with Gus the mule. Students led our Ms Kitty across a log, using two people to safely control her every movement. Thus, it allowed them to always stay in a safe location! April supervised as Ms Kitty was led through a wet, and gooey bog.

We broke up after a very busy and fulfilling day. The next day the troops went back to the base to gather their gear and prepared to meet us at the Dosewallips trailhead. We all met at the trailhead at 0900 with the rain coming down in buckets. Here is where the rubber was to meet the road for our future third world stock handlers. They again broke up into small units of four handlers and each unit was assigned a mule or horse to care for, within the next 24 hours. Because this was not a packing exercise, I packed up all of their six pack animals, with the students' assistance. But students led them on the trail, watered, and fed them (under supervision). In short, students took care of all of the stock's needs, including checking on them all night long. Our Josie never received so much love and attention. She was a real suck up! Josie packed in 20 gallons of water and two 5-gallon buckets, for an additional training demonstration on the construction of a sand filter, to purify drinking water.

By the end of our time together, I was confident that every one of the handlers would do the best for anyone of my mules or horse. This has been one of my finest experiences training folks to use the back country. These officers are some of the finest one could ever wish for to represent our country.

NOTE: A project like this takes some serious planning. Not just because of the sheer numbers, but because it represents the desire for such fine members of our U.S. Army to work outside of the normal view the world has of our country. The planning for this has to take into consideration that one is not working on one's own time table, but a bigger one being kept by our student's



employer. The leaders and members of this unit were very appreciative for all of our efforts and our understanding of their type of operation. The Olympic National Park was great to work with! This program was greatly assisted by the Olympic National Park Ranger, Mark O'Neal. He assisted us with opening the way for the use of the parks facilities at the Dosewallips campground. The value of this project rang true in my ears when one of the soldiers took me aside and told me that this was one of two highlights of his military career. The first was jumping out of an airplane and the second was the time spent with his team's mule!

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From the Chairman's Saddle



By Jim McGarvey, Chairman

For this chairman's article, I thought I would write about two very important but separate topics. First, I wanted to recognize the incredible contributions of one of BCHA's founders, Ken Ausk who passed away in the early hours of November 30th. Second, I wanted to talk about participation by BCHA members in the Wilderness Week celebration held in Washington, DC this past September. While attending Ken's funeral, I realized that both topics—Ken's four decades-long dedication to the BCHA and Wilderness Week—were in many ways inseparable.

Ken Ausk was born on September 16, 1934. The Wilderness Act was signed into law in 1964. The Back Country Horsemen was founded in 1973 by Duane Fulton, Dennis Swift, Roland Cheek and Ken Ausk with the unique idea that they could be more successful by helping rather than fighting the U.S. Forest Service to keep the trails open for riders and pack stock.

In Ken's four decades of continuous work and support of this simple to understand but difficult to adhere to concept—helping rather than fighting—the Back Country Horsemen grew from one chapter in the Flathead Valley of Northwestern Montana to 174 chapters in 27 states with 14,000 dedicated members. This enormous achievement seemed to all come together during Wilderness Week in our nation's capital.

In June BCHA was invited to participate, along with a select number of outdoor organizations, in celebrating the signing of the Wilderness Act. Working with our Executive Committee, eight Back Country Horsemen were selected to participate: our Public Lands Advisor **Randy Rasmussen**; past National Chair and Public Liaison Committee Chair **Alan Hill**; Montana State Chair **Connie Long** and her husband and outfitting partner **Mack Long**; Jim and **Cindy McGarvey**; and **Ken and Phyllis Ausk**. The travel expenses were nearly all covered by contributions in-

cluding a special contribution by the PEW Charitable Trust.

The celebratory portions of Wilderness Week were events held in the evenings of September 15, 16 and 17. Prior to leaving for DC, we set up meetings with federal land managers, congressmen and their staffs. To accomplish the challenge of over 25 meetings, we divided ourselves into four teams: Randy Rasmussen and Alan Hill, Connie and Mack Long, Cindy McGarvey and Phyllis Ausk. I was privileged to team up with Ken Ausk. We attended meetings as a single team, sometimes two teams, and a few times we all were together. Ken and I visited several congressmen and their staffs which required us walking some very considerable distances and at times at a very considerable pace to reach our appointments.

Our meetings with federal land agency managers were very productive, including those with BLM and USFS. We met with Director of the National Park Service Jon Jarvis and later that day there was a ceremonial signing of our fourth Memorandum of Understanding with the National Park Service. At that meeting and many others, attendees were impressed to meet Ken who was one of the founders of the Back Country Horsemen of America.

On Tuesday evening, September 16th, coincidentally Ken's birthday, we attended a social event in the rotunda of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. The Museum had held a year-long photography contest "Nature's Best Photography" (http://www.naturesbestphotography.com/smithsonian_exhibitinfo.php). That evening the winners were announced along with a large exhibition of Wilderness photos. One photo in particular struck me more than any of the others. It was not a contest photo. Instead, it was a photo taken with a BCH member's cell phone of Montana BCH Chair Connie Long pointing to our name on the Smithsonian banner. On that list, below our name, are such great organizations including the Sierra Club, PEW Charitable Trust, and The Wilderness Society. In a special way, this photo sums up our past forty years and portends well for our next forty years. Thank you, Ken.

The last vote that Ken Ausk cast during his work for the Back Country Horsemen of America was to approve a 3-year contract with our Public Lands Advisor Randy Rasmussen. The vote was unanimous.

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3. To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
4. To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.
5. To foster and encourage the formation of new state Back Country Horsemen's organizations.

BCHA Calendar

2015	
April 22-25	BCHA National Board Meeting - CA
May 17-20	American Trails International Trails Symposium - Portland OR (BCHA will have a booth)
2016	
April 20-23	BCHA National Board Meeting - NV

Index of Sponsors

American Endurance Ride Conference	4, 5
Back Country Store	8
Bear Country Containers	8
Chris Tornow Saddlemaker	8
High Desert Trail Riders BCH.....	3
Kern Valley Veterinary Clinic	2
Kinsey Horsemanship.....	12
North American Trail Ride Conference	3
Outfitters Supply	5
Trailhead Supply.....	3

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Great Reads for the Trail Rider

Like many of us, this is the time of the year when my easy chair sees more of me than my saddle. A warm fire, a comfortable chair, and a good book will help pass the long winter nights before the spring thaw opens the trails.

As I was going through my winter reading list I was surprised by how many of the books were written by my fellow Back Country Horsemen. From inspirational reads that will have you aching to ride and camp to How To guides that will give you the skills to do so, my collection is filled with BCH names and memories.

Pack Saddles & Gunpowder, by Susie Drougas, BCHW

We have a novelist in our midst; and a good one at that. Susie has taken her experiences riding and packing throughout the Pacific Northwest, and turned them into an adventure series starring many of the areas across the region that BCH members ride, and enjoy. The first installment of the series will have you yearning to return to the high country of the Cascade range as you follow Dusty Rose through Big Crow Basin and on into the Pasayten Wilderness in this rousing adventure story. Backcountry riders will hone their LNT skills as Susie deftly wraps the tenants of Leave No Trace into this riveting saga of a reluctant big city lawyer who rides and packs into the high country. Get your copy at www.susiedrougas.com

My New Mountain Pony

By Helen Glidden – Heartland Back County Horsemen ID

What do you get when you breed a good looking Arab with flaxen mane and tail to a sturdy, small Tyrolean mountain pony? You get a cute as can be, but strong and sturdy breed called Haflinger. These little horses stand 13.5 to 14.5 hands high and were originally bred in the Alps on the border between Austria and Italy. They have been used for all work including riding the steep trails of the Alps, plowing ground, pulling carts and carriages, showing at fine shows in dressage and jumping and more. There are photos of a single pony pulling heavy logs on a snowy mountain trail. Every Haflinger is a golden chestnut color (yep, officially chestnut although they look kind of palomino) with a fancy flaxen mane and tail. After reading up on them and perusing YouTube videos and checking the on-line horse sale websites I decided I just had to have one. My tried and true trail horse is getting on in years and I've heard these ponies are good mountain horses, so I bought one.

Pony minds are clever, not so easy to deal with sometimes, but I take her on and see what training she has. It seemed like she has trained more people than people have trained her. She had some bad habits for sure, like backing up when I want to mount, kicking out when I ride, shaking her long lovely locks in frustration and generally not having much in the way of steering or braking. Oh my gosh, what have I gotten myself into?! I thought anyone could ride one of these golden horses and they all are advertised as being very mellow to deal with.

It took a good three months, not only to train her to be a bit more respectful, but also it took me that long

It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time, by Vern Hopkins, BCHW

Longtime BCHA member, Vern Hopkins, has taken his recollections, adventures, and memories from a lifetime spent ranching, rodeoing, and horse racing, and put them into a collection of short stories that will have you smiling with each chapter as you follow Vern through the decades spent with horses. Each tale shares Vern's good-natured swirl as he shares his remarkable life from 1934 to the present. When I read it for the first time I didn't put it down until I finished the whole book, so plan accordingly! Get your copy at www.amazon.com/Seemed-Like-Good-Idea-Time/

Riding Southern Oregon Horse Trails, by Kim McCarrel, BCHO

Hailing from Oregon, Kim has taken her love of riding and camping and created a series of trail guides that are the best that I've encountered.

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After you've enjoyed these rousing yarns and great trail info a good instructional guide will give you the con-

just to like her! She is showing what this little breed from the Alps can do. I had a friend tell me that some years ago a fellow showed up with a Haflinger for a pack horse on a pack trip they were planning. My friend and the whole crew scoffed when they saw the pretty blond pony show up: "That there thing's gonna be a pack horse?" They all laughed, but that little horse showed sure footedness up and down the steepest terrain, never batted an eye at anything, never complained, and stood quietly on the high line overnight. The whole team praised her by the end of their journey.

My little gal has proved to be an excellent trail horse. She crosses streams, goes over logs, tangles of branches, through deep footing, up steep grades and down proving herself just fine. Along with that she goes barefoot too. She had a little trouble on a gravel road barefoot, but nothing seemed to faze her otherwise. She even finds the trail turn-off when the others horses have passed it by. And, as long as she has grass in her mouth she hangs out at lunch break or when I take my camera out to photograph the view. Because I am short, she is easy for this ole gal to mount and going under tree branches is a cinch.

I only had her out a couple of times trailering away from home, where she proved herself to be able to take on whatever trail was ahead in company with other horses. At home the training continues. We have a lot of trails close to home with logs, water, rocks, traffic, kids on motorcycles, logging trucks, dogs -- a big German Shepherd that barks and runs behind his fence as we ride down the road. Not only is her training going well, but she seems to



confidence to do the packing and camping that you'll be dreaming of. BCHA members have that covered too!

Packers Guidebook, by Ed & Sue Haefliger, BCHW

If packing cargo for camp, trail work, or any other reason is on your list of To-Do's the Mountain Canary Company's Packer's Guidebook should be high on your list of references to use. Ed explains the concepts of safe packing in a clear, concise, and entertaining manner as you accompany him and his better half, Sue, deep into the backcountry of the Olympic National Forest where Ed is a long time volunteer packer for the park. My copy is worn, dog eared, and dirty from use. Get yours at www.mtcanaryco.com

Get the fire going, and pull up the chair! You're going to enjoy these winter reads that will inspire you to ride and camp with your horses and mules and teach you to do so safely.



like it too.

This past summer our Heartland Back Country Horsemen chapter in Idaho wasn't able to work the trail we normally maintain each year. The weekend we chose to climb the Council Mountain trail was not a good one; there were lightning storms on the West Mountains, so we called it off. But next year I intend to take my little gal on this ride. There were a lot of club rides we missed this year, so I'm looking forward to spring when the trails open up and we can get out there with the whole crew.

Photo of Helen and Lyra, the Haflinger on an Idaho trail overlooking Payette Lake near McCall.

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From the Secretary's Desk



By Peg Greiwe, Executive Secretary

Hello BCHA Friends,

The Back Country Store is up and running! At last! We are getting more items all the time. Cindy McGarvey is the brain behind the clothing items! She ordered t-shirts, caps, bandannas, button-down Columbia men's shirts, hoodies, ladies short-sleeved polo shirts, and leather vests. I have most of the inventory in stock here at the office. It's been such fun having the new brand to work with. By the time you get this newsletter, we will have the new bumper stickers and trailer decals along with the shoulder patches on hand. Minutes after the notice went out on email to the members that the store was live, there were orders coming in!

The National Board Meeting is coming up fast—April 22-25, 2015. Because the local coordinator Dennis Serpa also coordinated the BCHA booth at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's Hunt Camp in Las Vegas, we will have the information shortly. We might have it by the time you get this newsletter. What we know so far is that the host hotel is The Holiday Inn, Capitol Plaza, Sacramento CA. The room rate is \$124 for single and double with local taxes and fees of 15%. Guest overnight self-

parking is \$16/day. Reservations cut off is March 20th. As soon as we get the code for our room block we will let the national directors know. The plan is to have the national board meeting start on Wednesday the 22nd of April and conclude on the 25th (Saturday). Public Lands Day will be held during the meeting's regular schedule. The optional evening entertainment plans are for Thursday at a local arena. The national director registration should be similar to last year's (\$265 or thereabouts) for the meetings, lunches, and Saturday banquet. Tuesday and Sunday are the travel days with nothing scheduled.

Dues are payable now to national for the states/affiliates memberships. The dues increase takes effect in 2015 with the payments from the states. The new rates are singles \$15 and families \$18. An invoice has been emailed to each of the national directors and presidents to be given to the treasurers for payment in January.

We are so sad to learn about the passing of Ken Ausk of Montana, one of the four founders of BCHA. Our condolences go out to Phyllis and the family. Ken was a valuable asset to BCHA in addition to being of the founders. He was always bringing the group back to the basics of Back Country Horsemen. We were fortunate to have him on the BCHA Executive Committee for the past several years and to have his presence at the celebration of the Wilderness Act's 50th Anniversary in Washington DC this fall. Ride on, Ken!

I hope that everyone had a wonderful and happy holiday season. See you on the trails!

Peg

NATRC Receives 2014 CHA Safety Award

By Cris Ballard

North American Trail Ride Conference was awarded the 2014 Partner In Safety Award from Certified Horsemanship Association.

Since 1996, the Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) has recognized an "outstanding individual or organization that has helped not only the equine industry and CHA, but the equine community at large to promote safety and awareness" through its Partner In Safety Award. At CHA's 2014 International Convention held at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY, the North American Trail Ride Conference (NATRC) was honored and received this prestigious award.

NATRC was recognized because of its history as the longest running trail association that evaluates and provides feedback to competitors related to horsemanship skills with an eye toward horse and rider safety, both on the ground and in the saddle. NATRC sanctions challenging timed distance events in a friendly, family environment.



2014 CHA Safety Award-Mary Anna Wood with Ward Stutz. Photo by Tom and Michael Kays with Moving Images NW.

For more information about NATRC and the sport of competitive trail riding, go to www.natrc.org.

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Back Country Horsemen Say Farewell

Until we meet again in that great Wilderness in the sky, you are sadly missed and always remembered.



L-R: Dennis Dailey, Ken Ausk, Bob Hoverson, Terry Morrison, Charley O'Leary, and Mike Reedy at a trails classification session in Missoula 2008.



Ken Ausk



Ken and his Rocky Mountain horse, Red, on a BCH project.



Ken in the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

From Roland Cheek

Most everybody I know has a “best” friend. Some folks even have two “best” friends. And a few who are very lucky might even have three. I’ve had four. And Ken Ausk was two of those!

Neighbor, wilderness travels companion, imbibing partner, thoughtful debater... especially when properly irrigated with suitable amounts of the stuff pulled by Budweiser Clydesdales. There was nothing flamboyant or ostentatious about Ken Ausk. Instead, he was given to the long haul, steady, solid, and reliable—a man you could trust. As neighbors, their kids were the same age as ours, in the same grades in school. Jane and I often danced in nightclubs with Ken and Phyllis. Our families rode and packed into the wilderness together. We hunted together, fished together, climbed mountains together, and cross-country skied together. And we held the same values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness together. I took him to his first Bob Marshall elk hunting camp where he spent much of his time marveling over the craft applied to my constructing a comfortable toilet seat. I bugled in a monster bull elk. Ken shot same.

There was nothing flamboyant about my friend Ken. But there was a whole bunch of great qualities to him. For one thing, he understood most everything that confused me. Of course he understood what went on inside those mysterious electrical wires that so confounded me; after all, the guy was a qualified electrician. He was also a good welder. And he was the kind of automotive tinkerer and household repairman that always embarrassed me each time my wife watched “Mr. Fixit” Ausk repair something—just before she turned a comparative, critical eye on me.

Ken and I used to joke about how many times I called on him for a rescue, from a failed truck engine to an understanding of why a Norsky would leave the fjords of his homeland to take a dry-land homestead thirty miles north of Havre.

Kenneth Lyle Ausk.

When I left my secure lumber company job to begin outfitting and guiding other folks into the Bob Marshall Wilderness, my friend took vacation time to serve as an occasional guide. It was in that capacity that Ken and I, along with another friend, neighbor, and also part-time guide, Dennis Swift, spent considerable campfire time in the fall of 1972 discussing a serious bureaucratic threat to the future of horse use in wilderness. The outcome of those discussions was the formation of Back Country Horsemen (after his family and his electrical trade, the thing that became most important in Ken’s life).

Over the years, Ken and I had many debates over campfires and at each of our kitchen tables. Of the two of us, I was the aggressor and he was the observer. I was the rebel; he was more inclined to passive resistance. But God! Ken’s resistance well thought out, clever, consistent.

The formation and operation of the new organization, Back Country Horsemen, provides excellent fodder for me to illuminate my friend’s quiet style. Ken Ausk was the observing supporter. Soon after forming, the group defined its purpose as three-fold: 1) to combat the agency’s drift toward regimenting wilderness horse use, 2) to do so through service to the resource, and 3) education of the wilderness using public to responsible horse use.

Dennis Swift served as our first project committee chair, Ken Ausk volunteered for education committee, and as the nominal club leader, I became the “point man” in defense of our horse-using heritage.

One could easily suppose, under the circumstances, that my friend’s and my kitchen debates might tail off under the weight of our time-consuming commitment to the new horse group’s foundation, but not so. Instead of space flights to the moon, Nixon and Watergate, we now launched into late-night discussions about the organization and operation of Back Country Horsemen. And it was then that our management styles clashed.

As the more aggressive one, I wanted to take us farther, faster into conflict with the questionable bureaucratic dictums. Ken favored a more measured approach. Our wives would often wearily retire while we argued till a wee hour of the morning.

When finally we parted, I invariably thought I was the victor, only to bump up against a stone wall of Ken’s argument in a board meeting a few days later. You see, I wasn’t the only one to which my clever and consistent friend talked. He had some quietly effective viewpoints (though to tell you the truth, he sometimes drove me batty with his quiet resistance). But that was tempered by years of friendship. And it was easy to overlook my frustration because of Ken’s sterling attributes, including being as steady as a rock, solid as a sphinx, and reliable as a sunrise.

Those were attributes that served Ken Ausk well for 42 years of close involvement in Back Country Horsemen. They were of tremendous value to the incipient group as they made the transition from a novice organization in a distant place to the respected representative for horseback trail riders all over America. When other clubs formed throughout Montana, Ken was there in the background as a trusted adviser. When Idaho, Washing-

ton, and California demonstrated interest, Ken was a quiet presence offering advice and a historical perspective about what worked for the club he helped found in the Treasure State.

Today, Back Country Horsemen of America reflects the values and attributes Ken Ausk brought to the table. And I’d be a fool were I not to recognize the sterling values my lifetime friend was able to impart to what became his own work.

God am I proud to have played a small initial role in the concept, the foundation, and the implementation of the outfit! But all the while, we all must give credit where credit is due—without Ken Ausk, Back Country Horsemen might not be the superb organization it is today.

One of my favorite quotes is an observation by Helen Keller: “The world moves not alone from the mighty shoves of its heroes. But by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each of us.”

Ken Ausk’s multitude of tiny pushes made for one hell of a mighty shove! What a guy!

Roland Cheek, BCH founder, read this memorial at Ken’s funeral.

From Alan and Bev Hill

I was honored to attend my first National Board Meeting in Columbia Falls in 1993 as a representative of BCH of California. In attendance were the four founders, Lloyd Fagerland, plus many others. Unfortunately, I don’t remember all who were there, but Ken and Phyllis welcomed us all in their house. Lloyd took us out to his house for a ride. The hospitality extended from everyone was long remembered and greatly appreciated by Bev and me.

We knew we had found the organization that was so badly needed and one we were honored and pleased to be a part of.

Alan Hill serves as Public Liaison for BCHA.

Ken’s wife Phyllis wrote to

thank the “14,000 members who made Ken’s life so much richer by your dedication to BCH. Many of you attended the service, sent beautiful cards and contributed to the beautiful flower arrangement. I and all of Ken’s family thank you for the kind words and outpouring of love you have shown us. Keep up the good work.”

From Mylon Filkins

I recall a great BCHA meeting in Columbia Falls where the Ausk and Fagerland families along with other Montanans provided great hospitality. Ken was the BCHA treasurer during my tenure as BCHA chair 1991-1993.

Mylon Filkins DVM is a past chairman of BCHA.

From Jim McGarvey

We are deeply saddened that one of our BCHA founders, Ken Ausk from Columbia Falls, Montana passed away Monday night surrounded by his family. Ken was feeling well Saturday taking care of his horses and watching Montana Griz football on TV. Ken was 80 years old and married to his sweetheart Phyllis.

He was a wonderful husband, father, friend, and horseman and was deeply focused on preserving the right and privilege of horse use on public lands. In 1973, Ken, three others and their wives started the first Back Country Horsemen chapter in the Flathead Valley of Montana. That chapter grew to over 174 chapters in 27 states with 14,000 members. I can say with great certainty that Ken thought about the Back Country Horsemen every day of those 41 years. Even as late as this past Thursday and Friday, I received emails from Ken responding to questions on guiding BCHA on its mission into the future. Ken Ausk and the founders had a great dream; it is our responsibility to carry on that dream.

Jim McGarvey is the current chairman of BCHA.

From John Gatchell

“Ken was a gentleman, an eloquent and effective voice for wilderness and backcountry equestrian traditions. I will never forget Ken’s leadership in the Bob Marshall Alliance -- from the dark days when the Reagan administration was pushing for the unthinkable --to sell oil and gas leases covering every inch of the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat wildernesses. That’s when you realize your true friends. Ken was a true friend.”

John Gatchell is the long time conservation director for Montana Wilderness Association.

From Mike McGlenn

I was the first Chairman to have a voting Executive Committee. One of that Committee’s members was Ken Ausk. I was really concerned about how this would go with a Founding Father on a new Committee with a new BCHA Governance plan. I needn’t have been concerned. Ken was the consummate gentleman, mentor and friend. He really helped to make what could have been a difficult situation a good one instead. Ken was a valued advisor and friend.

Mike McGlenn is a past chairman of BCHA.



Ken and Roland Cheek on a BCH project.

Ken and Phyllis Ausk

Keith Brown

From Chuck Miller

We may never know the exact words that Ken Ausk, Dulane Fulton, Dennis Swift, Roland Cheek or their wives spoke over the kitchen table in Columbia Falls Montana. Nor are we likely to know what was said in the wall tent next to the wood stove and hissing Coleman lantern in the Bob Marshall Wilderness during the early 70s.

What we do know is that after a liberal sampling of Early Times Whiskey, the voices of reason began to plan a recipe and vision that would forever change the way horsemen think and act in the back country.

The back country was being loved to death by the placement of permanent camps, corrals, piles of garbage, not to mention human waste, and dying trees due to stock being tied to them causing root damage. The Forest Service was suggesting that many camping and prolonged use areas were to be closed to stock use.

Our BCH founders found a recipe that was presented to the USFS, general public, recreational and commercial pack and saddle stock users. All found these back country use guidelines much more acceptable than the proposed closures and regulations. Our four founders and their supporters never dreamed that they were the initial developers of programs like Tread Lightly and Leave No Trace stock management programs—even before there was ever any thought of those organizations. They also had no idea that their idea would spread within the United States from sea to shining sea with 27 state organizations and potential states as well as nearly 15,000 members of today.

Because of our founders' foresight, Back Country Horsemen and the general public protect, preserve, and promote these proactive protective measures of equine use. Remember that with this recipe and vision, we stand on the shoulders of these great founders and giants of the Back Country Horsemen of America.

Chuck Miller is a member of the Bitterroot BCH and serves as a state director for Back Country Horsemen of Montana.

From Greg Schatz

One of the things Ken was most proud of was his involvement with the Back Country Horsemen. In 1973, there were these three hunting buddies setting by their campfire on Pedro Creek in the middle of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, lamenting the fact that the Forest Service had a plan to do away with stock use in their wilderness. Then after a snort or two of the good stuff they decided they'd form this group of like minded souls to combat this way of thinking by the Forest Service. They would offer their support

to help pack supplies and clear trails. The one thing they decided they'd do different from all of the other groups, was be nice to the Forest Service instead of yelling and screaming at them. Their plan actually worked, Ken, Roland Cheek, Dennis Swift, and Dulane Fulton, and their wives formed the Back Country Horsemen which has grown beyond any of their wildest dreams to include about 174 chapters in 29 states across the US. All of the founders need to be honored though Ken was the one who was active for 41 years in the local, state and national organizations. I don't ever remember him missing a state board meeting or convention or a national board of directors meeting.

Teaching kids how to pack was very important to Ken. He loved taking his kids as well as his neighbor kids along on pack trips. He was proud to be able to pass his knowledge on to his grand children.

When we first joined Back Country Horsemen I remember being in awe that Ken would come to our local chapter meetings when he was the chairman of the Back Country Horsemen of America. I also remember that he'd get up at a meeting and tell of another BCH or Forest Service meeting or project that he was going to attend and then at break time he'd invite me to come along, offering that he'd drive and buy lunch. How can you say no to an offer like that.

For 25 years we rode backcountry trails and the highways of Montana with Ken, going to hundreds of projects and meetings. Ken loved talking about Back Country Horsemen and the Bob, enough so that we could easily talk the entire ten hour round trip to Bozeman. After several years of this, I started to figure out that Ken kept repeating the same things which were his ideals of how Back Country Horsemen ought to be run, the interesting thing about Ken's ideals is that they apply to all facets of life.

Things such as:

In anything you do for BCH, make sure the betterment of BCH comes first, not your own agenda. Ken was often embarrassed by the praises poured upon him by others. He felt that BCH is what it is because of all of the members, not just one.

When deciding if BCH should be involved in an issue, make sure it furthers the purposes of the organization, always remember we are a volunteer service organization, not a riding club.

Fight your battles in the meetings, if the majority of the members vote in favor of a motion, support it, don't take it to the parking lot and always, always remain friends.

On his last day we watched the Griz win their playoff game and we talked

quite a bit about Back Country Horsemen.

Having worked on the road his whole life, Ken knew all of the finest eating establishments in Montana. The next time you go through Polson have a memorial donut in Ken's honor at the Lakeside Bakery. One of Ken's favorite things to say after a belly busting Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner was "Well...I'm not so hungry anymore."

To honor Ken today we're going to ride to Ken's camp on Pedro Creek, in the Bob, so close your eyes and ride along.

You're riding up the headwaters of Indian Creek, there is the waterfalls cascading over the rocks, you ride around the corner and the high mountain cirque opens up before you, a carpet of thousands upon thousands of wild flowers in white, orange, purple, red and blue fill the basin. Eagles are soaring among the steep limestone cliffs of the great divide which tower around you. As your horses' shoes clatter on the rocks, you look over your shoulder to check the mantled loads on your string of pack horses and everything is looking good. You come up over White River Pass and ride up the White River with the great divide towering beside you and mountains all around you. You ride through Brushy Park and on the way to Larch Hill Pass you watch for the faint trail off to the left that takes you to Pedro Creek and there is Ken's camp, up on the great divide.

Many of us gathered represent an elite group, not of money and power, but of concern for Ken's and our way of life, packing stock along the great divide. Never doubt that a small number of concerned horsemen can change the world, because we all ready have.

Happy trails my friend, may your horses always be gentle, May your packs always ride well, and may your trails always be clear.

Greg Schatz serves on the board of directors for BCH of the Flathead, Montana. Greg read this memorial at Ken's funeral.

From Merlyn Huso

Having accomplished a goal of moving to Montana to "Ride in the Bob" and skiing its mountains I learned of an outfit called the Back Country Horsemen. It fit well with my desire to explore, develop back country skills, and help to protect the wilderness from ourselves.

Later, when helping set up for a BCH convention in Shelby, Ken Ausk introduced himself, most likely after noticing the Hill County plate on my truck. That had been Ken's home when growing up and where he met Phyllis, his bride to be. His unpretentious bearing left me to wonder who he was, only to learn that he was one of the founding members. We talked

many times over the years, discussing various aspects of the BCH, its purposes, and mostly that it was all about "Preservation of the Resource", which has been indelibly inscribed on my mind.

I grew to have a profound respect for Ken and his fellow members of the Flathead chapter when they interacted with the Forest and Park services. Mostly because of the mutual respect demonstrated during these actions. And, mostly because they, too, had learned, and lived, "Preservation of the Resource."

As the years passed Ken continued to stay engaged, serving on the state and national boards and most recently as a member of the national chairman's executive committee. Ken had become the conscience of the Back Country Horsemen.

We will miss you, and your wise council, immensely, my friend. Vaya Con Dios.

Merlyn Huso is a member of the East Slope BCH of Montana and a past chairman of BCHA. Merlyn read this memorial at Ken's funeral.

Front Range BCH CO

It is with much sorrow that our Keith Brown passed away on October 19, 2014 of a massive heart attack while traveling with his twin brother. He gave so much to this organization; words cannot express the huge loss we shall experience.

Show Me Missouri BCH

Ed Copeland, husband of Marsha Copeland and father of Sherry Copeland, passed away on Friday, Oct. 31. In addition to supporting SMMBCH (often behind the scenes), he was a positive role model in every way for those who knew him. This empty saddle has saddened our community, statewide. For more <http://greenlawnfuneralhome.com/obituary/edward-avery-copeland>

Submitted by Mary K. Church, MO Delegate

North Georgia BCH

Robert "Bob" Goggins of Amarillo, TX died November 19. Better known as the "Energizer Bunny" by friends and family, Bob served on the board of directors for the North Georgia BCH out of the Blue Ridge Georgia area. Bob was one of our most dedicated volunteers, always the most loyal participant and hardest worker at workdays and the keeper of volunteers' hours. Bob was 80.

Submitted by Sharon Goggins and Carlos Martel

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Letters from our Readers

What a pleasant surprise to come upon and read Doug West's Fall 2014 BCHA newsletter account of his pack trip up the Lamar River and down into the Pelican Creek Valley. Years ago, I was fortunate to be able to experience packing into the Lamar headwaters area and day riding in Pelican Creek Valley. (The story is in the July 1997 BCHA newsletter, page 17).

On this year's Public Lands Day (Sept. 27), I joined other volunteer trail enthusiasts for a trailhead and trail restoration project at the Soda Creek stock trailhead—from where Doug's party started. We spent the drizzly day moving rocks, reclaiming bridled trails and reseeded. My fellow workers and I visited as we worked and we discussed BCH, agencies, trail use, and volunteerism.

As I read Doug's article, I not only enjoyed remembering my own travels, but I also got "warm fuzzies" knowing that my efforts do make a difference. All of us together make a HUGE difference. Give yourself a pat on the back.

Carole Genaro
Wind River BCH WY

Along with a donation, BCHA received this nice note from a member:

Thank you for your dedication to keeping trails open to stock use, although I'm using them less and less due to OLD AGE!

Thank you again for everything you do. My grandson has mentioned being a trail maintenance helper with a pack horse—he's 15 years old and loves trail riding.



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The Wind River BCH volunteers for a trail and trailhead restoration project at the Soda Creek stock trailhead.

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Made in Montana
by Jerry Kawasaki

National Reports

BCHA Double Diamond Award Application

In 2003, the Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA) National Board established the special annual award. The Double Diamond Award is presented to BCHA chapters for exceptional volunteer projects and/or educational programs. Projects or programs eligible for recognition include—but are not limited to—trail maintenance, trail construction, trailhead construction, educational programs, and youth programs.

Any chapter or unit can submit applications for a project or program completed during the calendar year 2014 (Jan-Dec). Applications must be received prior to the April National Board of Directors Meeting. Award applications are for a specific project or educational program, not for multiple projects or programs undertaken during the year. Multiple outings to accomplish a specific project are acceptable.

To nominate your chapter, unit, state or affiliate, provide a detailed description of what the project entailed and how it was accomplished from start to finish. Be sure to answer the questions: who, what, where, when, why, and how. Please include photos that you believe will help the committee make its decision (a maximum of eight). Also include any additional support letters from the agency or private parties that you worked with on this project or program. Applications should be submitted via email in Word or Adobe (pdf) format. No more than four pages will be accepted. Digital format is preferred; however, a hard copy will be accepted if electronic options are not available to the nominator. Applications must be received by April 1st of the current year either by email to: Volunteer@backcountryhorse.com or US Mail to: BCHA Double Diamond, 64 Clayton RD. Clarkston, WA 99403. No applications received after April 1st will be considered.

The BCHA Volunteer Hours Committee appointed by the National Chair of BCHA will decide the winner or winners. The award will be presented at the BCHA National Board Annual Banquet. For questions, please call 970-247-3231.

Thank you for submitting your application!

BCHA Volunteer Hours Committee

RMEF Elk Camp

By Dennis Serpa, past president BCHC

BCHA was at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's (RMEF) annual Elk Camp called Hunter's Christmas. We were right next door to the very popular Cowboy Christmas. There were all kinds of hunter-related equipment and outfitters and seminars. We were there for 4 days promoting "What We Do" for BCHA. We had 14 members from 4 states participating. We talked to people from over 19 states about what BCHA does and where we operate.

During the 4 days, over 28,000 people passed through aisles, so we had

Exciting News From Back Country Horsemen of America

BCHA is excited to announce a new program that will help protect horsemen's access to trails in future years. The Back Country Horsemen of America Legacy Society will recognize individuals, corporations and foundations whose gifts exceed \$5,000, ensure the BCHA mission to perpetuate the use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness areas. We will be asking them to enhance their legacy with a gift from their estate to BCHA. Large donors will be recognized with an appropriate BCHA reward program, commensurate with their level of giving.

As each day passes, pressure increases on public lands: reduced federal and state budgets, expanding urban landscapes, climate change effects and an increasingly techno-centric culture. For BCHA to continue leading efforts to protect access to America's public lands, BCHA leadership has created this ambitious, long-term fund-raising plan that will ensure that our members' good works continue for generations to come.

The key components of BCHA estate giving are in place. BCHA is an established 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. BCHA has opened a stock account that enables receipt of donated stocks directly from a donor's account to the BCHA account. This process has the additional potential benefit of providing significant tax savings to donors. Gifts can be donated now or as part of a donor's estate. Donors should consult their estate planning advisors to establish the best methods and timing of their gifts.

By including The Back Country Horsemen of America in wills, trusts or beneficiary designations, donors can pass on their love of riding on the public lands of America to future generations. Your gift will be a lasting legacy to ensure your family's future enjoyment of the view from a saddle.

Please contact BCHA Executive Secretary Peg Greiwe for more information: phone (888) 893-5161 or email peg@backcountryhorse.com.

a good showing.

We want to thank these members for their dedication and traveling such a distance—from California: Carl and Julie Perry, Lloyd and Susan Erlandson, Karen Lopes, Gail VanVelzer, Bill Carter, Dennis and Loretta Serpa; from Oregon: Jerry Bentz, Casey Hufstader; from Nevada: Terry Jones; from South Dakota: Jim and Alice Allen. It was a good time to visit with the members from different states and to exchange information about what we do!

Winter Public Lands Report

By Randy Rasmussen

As described in the Chairman's article, BCHA made significant strides in 2014 to perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and Wilderness areas. Two recent developments I highlight below are our continuing efforts on the "Forest Trails Bill" in Congress, the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act, and our work with Olympic National Park on its **Wilderness Stewardship Plan**. Both topics were described in detail in BCHA's Fall 2014 newsletter.

Forest Trails Bill

BCHA continues to throw its support behind legislation in Congress that would remove current barriers to the use of volunteers in maintaining trails within our national forests. At the time of this writing during the final weeks of the 113th Congress, H.R. 4886 had 27 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives.

We expect to see a companion bill to H.R. 4886 introduced in the Senate. The change in leadership in the Senate for the 114th Congress no doubt will result in a shuffling of legislative priorities. However, as with the House version of the Forest Trails Bill, BCHA and its allies continue to promote trails, volunteerism and the benefits they provide to the American public as a non-partisan issue accompanied with near-universal appeal.

Olympic National Park

A representative of BCH Washington and I met in November with the chief planner and park Superintendent. The park expects to release a draft Wilderness Stewardship Plan (WSP) for public review and comment late this summer or early fall. We were heartened to hear park staff report there were few visitor and resource conflicts associated with stock use in park Wilderness.

In addition, BCH WA enjoys excellent relations with park staff. I calculated and shared with the Superintendent the value that BCH volunteers bring to the park's trails program—an in-kind value worth over \$50,000 in 2013 alone! Such numbers speak volumes to the importance of BCH service projects in augmenting the agency's beleaguered trails budget, both now and into the future. We look forward to continuing our work with park staff and a broad coalition of regional trails and recreation organizations throughout the course of the WSP process.

Looking Ahead to 2015

A policy shift is occurring within the National Park Service toward minimizing the number of helicopter trips in park Wilderness that support park administration and science programs. The shift in policy likely would result in the need for more stock-assisted trips in some parks. This represents an excellent opportunity for BCHA to demonstrate that stock use increasingly should be viewed as a management tool to both maintain and improve Wilderness character. In other words, with the agency's push to limit helicopter trips comes the need to recognize and promote the historic role served by pack and saddle stock use—a primitive mode of travel consistent with the 1964 Wilderness Act.

The following are some initiatives that BCHA will champion in 2015 in order "to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use." BCHA will:

- Partner with a diverse coalition of trails- and recreation-related organizations to advocate that Wilderness Stewardship Plans for Olympic, Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon national parks will preserve and enhance Wilderness character while not unduly restricting recreational stock use.

- Work with hiking organizations, The Wilderness Society and other trail organizations to promote a national strategy for the planning and development of trail systems located on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management throughout the Western U.S.

- Push for rapid reintroduction of the Forest Trails Bill, formerly listed as H.R. 4886. As with each new Congress, the bill will receive a new number upon reintroduction. So be on the lookout for alerts from BCHA on the new bill number and how you can voice support with your members of Congress.

We expect more positive and proactive developments to flow in 2015 as a result of BCHA's new strategic plan, strong leadership and improved communications with BCH state organizations. But it is BCH volunteers that make this all possible. Your passion, commitment and dedication for service represent the very backbone of the organization.

It is one thing for BCHA to make demands upon our federal agencies and expect them to act upon our behalf. It's quite another thing when we can partner with the agencies, with the knowledge that we can back our demands with a commitment to work side-by-side with them over the long haul. That is the essence of teamwork.



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March 5, 2015

BCHA Newsletter Media Kit

Our BCHA newsletter is read by passionate trail riders, saddle and pack stock owners, avid back country packers and others who have an investment in saddle and pack stock and public land management. We serve over 14,300 members nationwide who belong to 180 active chapters/units and affiliates in 27 states.

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The Catch Pen

Front Range BCH of CO: Trail Work Weekend Sept 12-13

A general trail clearing weekend was scheduled for the South Ben Tyler Trail in the Lost Creek Wilderness of the Pike National Forest. A major wind event caused blow down that completely covered the trail for a half a mile, 4 miles from the trailhead! This collaborative project involved the FRBCH, Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek wildernesses, and two Forest Service ranger districts. Our crews headed down the trail with cross cut saws, hard hats, and an extra pack horse.

Several FRBCH members needed recertification on the cross cut saw by the Clear Creek Ranger District Wilderness Ranger Ralph Bradt. We had no shortage of trees to accomplish that task. A total of 64 trees were cleared in two days—more than the other entire trail clearing work parties put together for FRBCH this year. It was a learn-



ing experience for some who have not had an opportunity with clearing trees blown over each other. Some were 6 feet or more off the ground. Everyone definitely got a workout as we dragged back to camp each night.

It was a satisfying feeling of accomplishment as some hiked and some rode back to camp through the cleared trail.

Submitted by Dee Lyons

North Central ID Hanover-Martin Sweat Whip

In September, members of the North Central Idaho chapter took on a trail project on the Salmon River Ranger District of the NezPerce National Forest. The project was for trail maintenance on the Hanover-Martin Trail Loop. Part of the trail was in wilderness and part in non-wilderness.

So on Labor Day weekend the chapter headed to the trailhead prepared to use both crosscut and chainsaws for this maintenance project. Twelve members took part, ten who rode and two camp tenders.

It was a 16-½ mile loop; approximately seven miles were non-wilderness, the remainder in wilderness. A party with two 6-foot crosscut saws started up one side of the loop trail, two shorter crosscuts on the other side. Two groups of five riders worked each side. The biggest tree encountered—that had

to be dealt with a crosscut—was approximately 22 inches. Overall the group found scattered trees on the entire trail and the project was completed in one day.

Hikers at the site told members they appreciated what BCH was doing.

As with most BCH trail projects the day ended with a feeling of accomplishment, for some a new knowledge of an old tool, an evening potluck and a nice



Lannette Enneking and Ed Perrine

place to camp with friends (both two legged and four legged).

Submitted by Raenette Didier

Mammoth Cave BCH KY commit to park trail work

On October 15, 2014, Mammoth Cave National Park Superintendent Sarah Craighead signed an agreement with representatives of the Mammoth Cave Backcountry Horsemen, as a way to improve maintenance of the park's horse trails.

"Our agreement with the Mammoth Cave Backcountry Horsemen will greatly boost the care and condition of the park trail system," said Craighead. "Funding for trail maintenance continues to be a management challenge and concern. Monitoring shows the physical condition of the trails has significantly deteriorated in the last five years, accentuated by severe erosion, mires and trail braiding. Help from trail users is essential to keeping the trails open, enjoyable and safe."

The agreement states the park and the Mammoth Cave Backcountry Horsemen will meet biannually to develop and review an annual work plan, and discuss organized workdays. The park will provide tools and materials. Volunteers who operate chainsaws must undergo specific training and conduct operations in accordance with the park's chainsaw plan.

"Park staff constantly battle downed trees across trails," said Craig-

head. "We are taking a new approach in allowing volunteers to operate chainsaws in the park, after they have received the required training."

"This agreement is an important first step in what we hope will be a long-term partnership between Mammoth Cave National Park and Back Country Horsemen in Kentucky," said Ginny Grulke, chair of the Kentucky Backcountry Horsemen. "We look forward to working as volunteers with the Park staff to ensure that trails are maintained and preserved for the enjoyment of all Mammoth Cave visitors."

Mammoth Cave National Park has more than 90 miles of trails. All are open to hikers, about 60 miles are designated for horse use, and 25 miles for bicycling.

The inaugural annual planning meeting is scheduled for December 18, to set a work plan for 2015.

Submitted by Vickie Carson, Public Information Officer, Mammoth Cave National Park



Photo credit: NPS photo
Caption: Brenda Cecil, president of the Mammoth Cave Backcountry Horsemen, Superintendent Sarah Craighead, and Ginny Grulke, chair of the Kentucky Backcountry Horsemen, sign an agreement to improve maintenance of the park's horse trails.

The Catch Pen

NEMO River Valley Chapter, Show-Me Missouri BCH

NEMO River Valley Chapter, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen (SMMBCH) members pitched in on Sept. 27, National Public Lands Day (NPLD) at Corp of Engineers (COE) managed Mark Twain Lake. The chapter contributed 20 volunteers, a tractor and loader, and a Kubota 4 x 4 for a show of support for land managers to complete work at two trail heads. Additionally, local Boy Scouts with their adults and Hannibal High School FFA students with their teacher were present to participate in this NPLD event. At the Frank Russell Trail Head, volunteers worked at landscaping, including building a spillway from a fishing pond, setting donation boxes at the horse stalls and in the pond area, setting and painting barrier posts, planting trees and refurbishing and assembling tables. NEMO River Valley Chapter volunteers then moved to the Spalding Trail Head where a hitch post was set,

and more tables refurbished. Spalding Trail Head is the staging area where a newly acquired restroom is located (previously made possible by chapter and COE partnership on an RTP grant). Chapter members who participated in this project are to be commended, as the horses stood at the hitch rails or in their stalls, watching this NPLD labor! Some members did saddle up on Sunday, before loading up and heading for home, as a needed reward for all that work!

Eight NEMO River Valley Chapter members again took to the trails on October 25 to clean up the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. This historical point of interest is surrounded by a chain link fence, installed by COE when the lake was built, and the resting place for many souls. There are only four engraved stones, the others being stone slabs set on end to indicate burial sites. It was a tangle of dead trees, downfall and briars

before chapter members took on the task of an annual clean-up day. It is accessible by foot, horseback, or ATV, and the latter requires permission to cross privately-owned property, and from COE. David and Deb Logsdon again

brought their Kubota 4 x 4 to haul our tools, lunches, and Culligan-donated water to the work site. Other volunteers rode in, including Wendell Smith, who packed in his chain saw on his mule.



Wayne Lake brought his tractor and loader for NPLD trailhead work.

The site was transformed after a few hours of work, and the remainder of a perfect day was used to ride the "scenic" route, via trails, back to our rigs.

Submitted by Mary K. Church

BCH of Pisgah NC

When stakeholders get together and work on trails together, everybody wins—we all know that—but it's so HARD!

Here in the Pisgah Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest, the lower Trace Ridge trail was showing its age and its unsustainability. Deep gorges and huge boulders made the trail almost impassible by foot let alone stock or mountain bikes. The Forest Service doesn't have the man power or the budget to fix it and it was looking pretty grim, but collaboration is the key word and collaborate we DID! The young guys in the local International Moun-

tain Bike Association, Pisgah Area Southeastern Off Road Bike Association were ready, willing, and able to put some muscle up and some money. Our BCH Chapter (gray but great) matched their buying power and got 'r done! It's official now, the reroute of the Trace Ridge trail will be open in the spring as soon as its settled after a professional trail builder was hired to do the finish work. There is nothing that can't be done with great teamwork, a willing and positive attitude and some sweat equity!

Submitted by Dierdre Perot Lightsey



Cabinet BCH of Montana

Below: Members of the Cabinet BCH of Montana take a break from their assigned duties on a trail project in the Yaak. Members are standing on the US/Canadian Border in NW Montana. Submitted by Jeff Nisbet, President CBCHM



NextGen BCHA (Youth)

Girl Power

By Deborah Schatz, BCH of the Flathead, MT

The ladies of BCH of the Flathead (BCHF) fulfilled a request to provide packing support for a Girl Scout trip into the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. We were honored by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation's (BMWF) request to help the girls—and their Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation crew leader and organizer Megan Ballard—experience the back country. Eleven girls and their leader spent five days at Webb Lake in the Scapegoat Wilderness clearing brush and providing trail maintenance on area trails.

The BMWF is an organization that helps volunteers, including youth, give back to the Wilderness by organizing volunteer projects. The project was so successful, we hope to make in an annual partnership. Sarah Megyesi, the Girl Scouts' leader from Missoula, wrote a wonderful letter on the trip.

Hello, Deborah.

Thank you so much for volunteer-

ing to pack our stuff for the girls' trip. The girls really enjoyed the hard work and pushing themselves on the trail. Without your help, the hike in and out may have just been a little too rigorous.

The work the girls performed does more than allow easier and safer access and passage for hikers and for horse packers. I feel that the girls had a hand in increasing the opportunity for people to venture into the Wilderness, and that by engaging in activities in the Wilderness, people are more likely to become stewards for the environment, and want to protect our sacred, wild places and help preserve them for future generations. In preserving natural spaces, stewards also help ensure the wild places are healthy and hearty enough to harbor wild animals and ensure their habitats can sustain the animals' needs.

Not only that, the girls have become very active stewards! Now, they will be more likely to take action for the environment in the future. They have found a connection to the wild and to their inner strengths that will hopefully last a



Girl Scouts are brushing the trail to Webb Lake in the Scapegoat Wilderness.

lifetime.

I interviewed the girls every day about how the work and the Wilderness experience was affecting them. In the end, one Scout explained how the trip was a "life-changing experience." She went on to explain that she has found an inner strength she didn't know she had. She didn't know she could hike that far, work that hard, and live so long without her cell phone, TV, or internet

access. She can't wait to return to the Wilderness for another trip – maybe even a longer one next time.

Many of the girls shared the sentiment that they felt stronger, they felt their work was very much appreciated, and that they thought it was great to be disconnected from society and social pressures for a little while.

I've attached a couple of photos you might enjoy. Thank you again!

Tales of the Trails

Brighty's World: The Rainbow Rim Trail

By Doug West

Ask most anyone who has visited the Grand Canyon and they will describe the magnificent views from the rim or the incredible power of the Colorado River while on a boat trip through the inner gorge. While the views are glorious and the boat trips unforgettable, what comes to mind when I think of the Grand Canyon is the story of a little, wild burro, Brighty, who lived in the canyon between 1892-1922. Marguerite Henry's wonderful book published in 1953, Brighty of the Grand Canyon, chronicles the life of this little jack who was the first to cross the suspension bridge over the Colorado River connecting the North and South Rims and who even met President Theodore Roosevelt. Today, a bronze statue of Brighty is located in the lobby of the Grand Canyon Lodge. Inspired by Brighty's story, three friends and I decided to visit Brighty's world and ride the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Brighty spent summers wandering the North Rim through the beautiful meadows and ponderosa forests of the Kaibab Plateau. In winter, he retreated to the warm depths of the Grand Canyon waiting for the spring sun to melt the winter snow. The Rainbow Rim Trail which Brighty wandered connects five overlook "points" along the North Rim. A relatively flat 18 mile trail follows the rim with scenic breaks in the forest at Parissawampitts, Fence, Locust, North Timp, and Timp. Your only views of the inner gorge and the river far below are from these points.

Transporting horses to ride the Rainbow Rim Trail requires some effort. The trail is south of Fredonia, Arizona and can be accessed from either Forest Road 22 or Highway 67. Forest Road 22 runs directly south from Fredonia and is graveled most of the way. While shorter than Highway 67, travel is slow because the road is narrow and steep in places with long stretches of washboards. If you plan to go, I suggest taking Highway 67 which is the



Gen takes in the view.

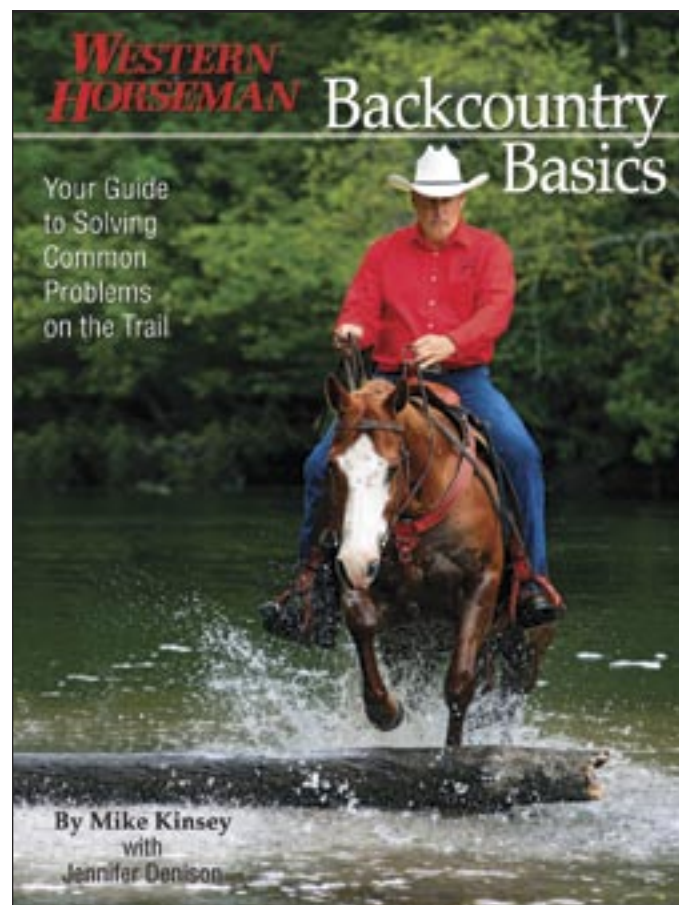
highway connecting Fredonia with the North Rim. The oiled road will take you to the turnoff to the Rainbow Rim Trail. Whichever route you choose, a map is essential because the many interconnecting Forest Service roads can be confusing.

If you plan to go, take everything you need for you and your horses. There are no developed camp grounds adjacent to the trail and any help or services are hours away. The trail is located on Forest Service land, but there are few places along the rim to graze your horses, and there is no water. I took my usual 200 lbs of pellets and 60 gallons of water for my two horses. By the fourth day of our trip, I had feed left, but was down to my last five gallons of water.

There are many dispersed camping sites along the length of the Rainbow Rim Trail. We found a nice spot next to Fence Point and adjacent to the trail. On good Walking Horses, it didn't take us long to ride the 13 miles out and back to Parissawampitts Point to take in the view. The next day we rode 15 miles round trip to Locust Point. As our four Walkers stepped out smartly, I watched hoping to catch a peek of one of Brighty's descendants watching us from an exposed ledge, but all we saw were beautiful views of the Grand Can-

yon which we shared with the many mountain bikers using the trail. The Rainbow Rim Trail is the only single track trail open to mountain bikes along the rim, so we had to share. In fact, we were the only horses using the trail, and all the mountain bikers showed excellent trail etiquette when meeting us.

Sleeping on the ground at my age isn't something I like to do, but the inconvenience and discomfort are worth the rewards of visiting Brighty's world. You are not only rewarded by the magnificent views but also by the incredible sense of deep time etched in the canyon walls. The Grand Canyon especially when viewed from the back of a good Tennessee Walking Horse is truly one of the great wonders of the natural world.



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