



EAST SLOPE BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN

FOUNDED 1978 38 YEARS OF TRAIL TAILS MARCH/APRIL 2016

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ESBCH-Web Site:

www.bchmt.org/esbch/default.html

Montana BCH Web Site

www.bchmt.org

Dear ESBCH Members,

While I know there were times we wondered if we would ever get through this (myself included) convention, it finally came and gone and you can all be very proud of your contribution and most rewarding success. We made it through another convention. With any luck we hopefully won't be in line to host another one for at least 15 years, by then I am not sure how many of us older members might be around.

From all the feedback that I have received everybody thought it was one of the nicest convention they had been to in a while. I think we should be extremely proud of the chapter signs that Ron and Brad Brenteson made they are truly a work of art. This is something that we can look back on when we attend the next convention in Polson and from years to come.

I just want to Thank everybody that helped with and contributed in making this a remember able convention.

While I won't go down the list to name everybody individually. I know LeAnn has put together a Thank You that will also be in the newsletter, so instead of being redundant. I will offer my sincerest Thanks and Gratitude to each and every one of you, without every one of you this convention would not have been the success that it was.

This month we will need to get all the convention stuff finalized along with working on getting our calendar set for the year. I realize it is getting along in the year for setting the calendar, but with all we have had to do with the convention I thought it would be best to forgo doing it until we had finished the convention business and got that behind us.

I am looking forward to us having a prosperous year, and I hope we can all work together and make some memorable accomplishments this year.

I have also been busy working on a couple of slide shows. I have completed one for the National Board meeting for BCHA that is the volunteer hours report for the state of Montana. I have also done one that will be used on the state website to document the convention. These two slide show are on YouTube and also the East Slope Back Country Horsemen Facebook Page and our own website, so if you get a chance please check them out. I would also like to Thank Linda Huso who took all the pictures at the convention and got them to me for making the slide show.

When in doubt, let your horse do the thinkn'

Fred



APRIL
WILL EARLY
GARY MANNING

MAY
HELEN SUTA
FRED FITZPATRICK, KURT DYER,
MARTY METZ, MERLYN HUSO

Next meeting April 28th, 7:00 PM at the
Conrad Public Library.

Potential 2016 ESBCH Projects

Crown Turnpike – Between the Wilderness boundary and Whiskey creek on the North Fork Sun River Trail 201 there is a turnpike not far off the river that needs to be crowned. The other work in the area would include pulling the old turnpike fabric out of the train near the junction with the K-L trail, clearing Arsenic creek trail (depending on time of year), and clearing the drains on the turnpike between the gates in Arsenic. There is potential to stay at the head of the reservoir/Fish and Game cabin or camp in the lower North fork.

Willow Creek Area – Several trails leave from the Willow creek area that need annual maintenance. It would include Ford Basin Trail 258, Beaver Basin Trail 210, and Willow creek Gorge trail 204 always seems to have some rock needing thrown off it. I usually have these trails done by mid-August.

Puncheon Repair on Bruce Creek – I don't have a lot of details, but there is a broken stringer on a bridge near the head of Bruce Creek. If you want to take this one on, I will get more details.

Elk Cr. – You know the drill if you want to tackle it again, it always helps. I understand if you want to go see something else.

South Fork Teton Maintenance – There is a num-

ber of trails in close proximity to Green Gulch in the South Fork Teton area. Several of these trails are loops that can be cleared in a long day in the saddle. I would propose that the group do the annual maintenance on any of the following trails. Green Gulch to Sheep Gulch 127, Reirdon Gulch to Slim Gulch 126, South fork Teton to North Fork Deep Creek 168, and Lonesome Ridge to Middle fork Teton 154. Down fall is typically light along many of these trails, but there is a lot of miles on this list. I typically try to get these trails cleared by August 1st.

Weeds -There is always help needed with coordinating efforts on spraying or pulling weeds in the backcountry, so if the club has an interest in this we could come up with any number of weed projects.

Bob Marshall Foundation Pack Support – I would put in a plug for anyone interested in doing some packing to contact the Bob Marshall Foundation. They have their schedule posted and are always looking for volunteer packers on the east side.



Keith Alltucker giving a diamond hitch presentation at the State Convention.

Don't forget to check out the video from our State Convention at;

<http://www.bchmt.org/esbch/default.html>

THANK YOU!

Now That the convention is over and we have had time to take a breath, I want to thank all the club members who stepped up and worked hard to make the convention such a success. To Ron and Debbie Ries for their generous donations towards the raffle, trailer to haul “stuff”, metal for signs and use of your home, etc. Thank you. For Fred who stepped up and organized the convention, dealt with the hotel plus making sure everything ran smoothly. Thank you. To Bob Hermance for working behind the scene getting things organized, Thank you. Brenda Ries for her expertise in developing the spreadsheet for the auction items, taking care of the auction items after the auction. Thank you. Joe and Helen for taking care of the photo contest and help throughout the convention, Thank you. To Sue McNeal, Debbie Ries, Connie Manning, Linda Huso, Lisa Schmidt and Abigail Hutton at the registration desk, Thank you. Merlyn and Linda Huso for taking pictures, Keith Alltucker and Greg Schatz for doing the pack demonstration, Thank you.

To have a successful auction, you need a great auctioneer, Thank you Zane for doing what you do best and doing such a great job. I saw people smiling who I thought had forgotten how. Awesome job. Also another awesome job was our very own Dr. Richard (Dick) Kinyon, DVM, for his talk on Equine 1st Aid, Thank you. To Clete and Patsy Gregory for getting the color guard to present the flags and doing the church services on Sunday with Marty Metz, Thank you. To Abigail Hutton for playing the national anthem, working at the registration table and presenting items at the auction. Thank you.

We also had help from Mark and Sandi Himmel, Connie Long, Rich Carl. Thank you. I hope everyone also enjoyed themselves. Also to those who helped put the registration packets together, helped set up and tear down, were just there if things needed done, Thank you. Thank you for all the donated items towards the live and silent auction, we rocked. If I have forgotten anyone I apologize and I know things went on behind the scene that I was not aware of. We can all be very proud of our club and its members. *LeAnn*



BCHA Chairman Don Saner and his wife Karen Saner



Wildfire Disaster Funding Act:

Because it doesn't make sense to steal from
wilderness and trails budgets to pay for fires.



MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION
wildmontana.org

Sunset tinted red by smoke and fires, Jordan Hall

Time for Congress to Quit Treating Our Trails Like Dirt Congress needs to take action on shrinking trails budgets

From the ancient [Old North Trail](#) to the centuries-old [paths that Lewis & Clark traversed over the Rocky Mountains](#), trails have a long and legendary history in Montana. Over time, Big Sky Country has changed a great deal, but our need for trails and our love for the public lands they cross have remained constant.

Unfortunately, our trail tradition, including the CDT, is under threat and, as a result, our access to wild places is endangered.

Since 2009, Congress has reduced Forest Service budgets by 48% overall in Region 1, the region that manages all 10 national forests in Montana. These budget cuts have created real consequences at the local level, where trail crews have shrunk to a vanishing point in some districts during tough years. And if we continue to “borrow” from trails budgets to pay for wildfire in the future, then the consequences shouldn't be a surprise to anyone: our well for trail funding will run completely dry.

What do Montanans think about this? As a [recent poll by Colorado College](#) shows, 63% of Montanans believe that a lack of funding creates a real problem for properly managing American public lands, which fuel \$5.8 billion in economic spending and create 64,000 jobs in Big Sky Country.

The solution to this problem lies not in the hands of public servants and land stewards within the Forest Service, but with Congress, an institution that had a public approval rating of just 11% last year.

In Montana, we need all three members of our congressional delegation to help make our trails a national priority by giving the Forest Service the funding it needs and deserves to do its job. This work requires a long-term effort, but there are some initial steps that Congress can take this year, which include passing these three pieces of legislation: [Wildfire Disaster Funding Act](#): [National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act](#): [Recreation's Economic Contribution Act](#):

(See Next Page)

[Wildfire Disaster Funding Act:](#)

In short, this legislation would separate fire funding from recreation funding, alleviating the need to rob Peter to pay Paul during high-cost fire seasons. Sen. Tester, Sen. Daines, and Rep. Zinke all support this bill, but it failed to pass last year because too many Senators tried to add in too many other requests. We encourage our delegation to work together to pass a clean version of the bill as soon as possible.

[National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act:](#)

This policy piece – also supported by our entire delegation – would allow agency partners and outfitters to more easily contribute their time and resources to assist in trail maintenance, freeing up agency crews to work on other, more technical projects that volunteers might not be able to handle. Groups and partners such as our own CDT Montana program, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, Montana Backcountry Horsemen, Professional Wilderness Outfitters Association, and Montana Outfitters and Guides Association (among others) are already working hard to steward our trails. This bill will draw even more volunteers to this important work.

[Recreation's Economic Contribution Act:](#)

This legislation, which has support from Sen. Daines and Sen. Tester, would require the federal government to measure the outdoor recreation industry's impact on the U.S. economy by counting recreation spending as part of our Gross Domestic Product. How can we expect our great outdoors to become a national priority when our nation fails to accurately measure the economic impact of outdoor recreation? We can't. That's why we need this bill.

We encourage all Montanans to [contact Sen. Tester, Sen. Daines, and Congressman Ryan Zinke](#) with a request to not only support, but also prioritize these bills. Perhaps more importantly, encourage them to put an end to the budget-cutting trend on our national forests. Share your stories and memories with them. Our outdoor adventures are priceless, but losing access to wilderness, public lands, and our trails is costly on so many levels. It's time for us to quit treating our trails like dirt and start treating them for what they are: priceless connections to Montana's time-honored outdoor traditions.

From the Montana Wilderness Association



Casey Perkins from the Field Office of MWA in Choteau gave a talk on the oil leases in the Badger Two Medicine at the convention. (See story Next Page)

Louisiana company challenges Badger Two-Medicine ruling

MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press Apr 15, 2016

BILLINGS – A Louisiana company challenged the cancellation of an oil and gas lease in northwest Montana on Friday, after federal officials said drilling would disturb an area sacred to the Blackfoot tribes of the U.S. and Canada.

The 6,200-acre lease owned by Solenex LLC of Baton Rouge is in the Badger-Two Medicine area of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. It's just outside Glacier National Park and the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

Attorneys for the company want U.S. District Judge Richard Leon in Washington, D.C., to reject the Interior Department's March 17 cancellation of the lease.

Leon has been sympathetic to Solenex's arguments in prior court hearings, lambasting officials for decades of bureaucratic delays since the lease was issued in 1982. It was suspended because of a legal challenge in 1985, and the issue had remained unresolved ever since.

Solenex sued the government seeking to lift the suspension in 2013.

The lease is within a 165,000-acre area deemed by the government to be a Traditional Cultural District of the Blackfoot tribes. It's the site of the creation story for the Blackfoot tribes of southern Canada and the Blackfeet Nation of Montana.

Attorneys for Solenex say the establishment of the cultural district was simply a pretext to deny the company its right to drill.

"For 33 years, (the Interior Department) affirmatively represented – through their actions, statements, documents – that the lease was valid and properly issued," Solenex attorney Steven Lechner wrote in a Friday court filing.

He added that the cancellation was done out of spite in response to prior rulings from Leon favorable to the company.

Interior officials contend the lease was improperly issued in part because environmental studies did not consider the effects of drilling on the tribes. Spokeswoman Amanda Degroff said the agency would not comment Friday on the pending litigation..



Our own Dr. Dick giving his presentation on Horse Tune-up and First Aid at the State Convention



As I am sure most everybody has heard of what has been happening with the monies that The Forest Service was trying to implement for the trail budgets for the next three years. The result is that Region One which includes Montana would have taken a thirty percent decrease over the next three years. As we all know the money appropriated through congress has seen dramatic cuts in the past years already and then with the Forest Service trying to appropriate trail funds by using a model that reflects census figures rather than trail miles, would have left Montana at the bottom of the trail allocation monies. After our Senators learned of what was trying to be done they have got this decision rescinded. The following is their press releases.

Senator Tester Statement;

(U.S. Senate)-One week after drilling the Obama Administration on failing to prioritize trail maintenance in Montana, Senator Jon Tester today announced that the U.S. Forest Service will not move forward with its plan to cut nearly \$1 million from Montana's trails budget this year.

"Montanans use public trails to hike, hunt, and experience our great outdoors," Tester said. "These trails are critically important to our outdoor economy, and restoring these damaging cuts will allow folks to continue to explore Big Sky Country. I appreciate the Forest Service taking another look at how important this is to Montana."

Earlier this year, the Obama Administration released its Fiscal Year 2017 budget that included a 10 percent cut to Forest Service's Region 1 trail maintenance, which funds trail maintenance in Montana. Before Tester intervened, the Forest Service had planned to start cutting Region 1's budget this year.

Last week during a Senate committee hearing, Tester [questioned](#) Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell and demanded that the Obama Administration restore the cuts to Montana's trails. Tester quickly followed up with a [letter to the Chief](#) demanding that he explain how the agency came to that decision.

As a result, Tidwell agreed to reconsider the formulas used to determine funding for trail maintenance for each Region, leading to today's announcement.

Senator Daines Statement;

At my urging, the U.S. Forest Service is increasing the FY 2016 trail funding for Montana's National Forests, reversing their previous decision to cut funding by 30 percent over the next three years.

Montana's National Forests and public lands are a treasured part of our state and today's news ensures that Montanans will continue to enjoy our great outdoors. As an avid outdoorsman, I know how important maintaining and expanding access to our public lands are for our way of life. This is a welcome step to see the Forest Service value Montanans' feedback and I will continue to press the Forest Service for strong trail budgets for Montana each and every year.

Our Jr. Director Miss Abigail Hutton who did a fantastic job playing the National Anthem and being one of the ladies to show items at the auction is seen here helping LeAnn with the raffle tickets.

Great Job Abbey!!

*Again Thanks so much
everybody for a great job at
the convention.*

Fred

