

BACKCOUNTRY HOOFBEATS

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172 Members Strong!

Meadow Creek Project 2009 by Paul Pasley

Great weather brought a great attendance at the 2009 Meadow Creek Memorial Day weekend campout. A total of 59 members attended, accompanied by family, friends and stock.

Eight new members from this year's membership drive attended. Besides the numerous trails that were cleared, the memorial kiosk was erected and stained, and there was quite a bit of camp clearing, as well as an exciting run over the Meadow Creek Bridge

by one of our brave guests.

The project manager was Paul Pasley and trail leaders included Mid Creek led by Steve Barker, Spotted Bear Trail

led by Mark Brust, Harrison Trail led by Ed Langlois, Gorge Creek led by Paul Pasley, Sergeant Creek led by Greg and Deborah Schatz, and Lost Jack led by Al Bartos. Some of the clearing projects were completed, but there was an avalanche on Gorge Creek Trail that made it impos-



Lost Jack Crew... from left to right - Ray Knotts, Mark Brust, Al Bartos, Chuck Allen, Mike Righetti, Jim Thramer, Stu Sorensen, Gary Dalen and Rick Mathies



The new kiosk built and maintained with the cooperation of Back Country Horsemen and the Spotted Bear Ranger District. The plaque reads: "In memory of the many volunteers who have cleared trails and packed supplies in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex."

sible to continue down that trail.

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Trail Clearing on Lost Jack Creek with Gary Dalen, Chuck Allen, Al Bartos, Mike Righetti, Mark Brust.

BCH Officers & Directors

President—Gary Dalen
Vice President—Mark Brust
Secretary—Bob Friedman
Treasurer—Keni Hopkins
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Alternate State Director—Deb Schatz
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Chuck Allen June Burgau Tony Sadino
Al Bartos Rick Mathies Greg Schatz

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On-Time Drawings/Prizes—June Burgau
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Trails Project Coordinator—Andy Breland
Website—Ralph Hopkins and Deborah Schatz
Issues Committee—Edd Blackler, Greg Schatz, Don Holman,
and Mark Brust

THE PURPOSE OF BCH

The Back Country Horsemen is organized to:

- Perpetuate enjoyable common sense use of horses in the back country.
- Assist government agencies in maintenance and management of the resource.
- Educate, encourage and solicit active public participation in wise and sustaining use of horses and use by people commensurate with our heritage and the back country resource.

BCH Meeting Calendar

All GENERAL meetings are held on the SECOND Tuesday of each month. All BOARD meetings are held on the FOURTH Tuesday of each month. Everyone is welcome!! The meetings will all be held at the Fish, Wildlife and Parks building in Kalispell at 7:30 P.M.

November

10th — General Meeting 24th — Board Meeting

December

8th — General Meeting/
Election of Officers 22nd — Board Meeting

12th — Christmas Party

January, 2010

12th — General Meeting 26th — Board Meeting

Welcome New Members!

Please welcome new members: Scott and Kathy Hageny, and Flathead Valley Trout Unlimited, Chris Schustrom, President.

President's Corner by Gary Dalen

Montana summers are way too short. It seems like winter is around the corner. We had a good year again and I'd like to thank all of you who participated. We should have the actual numbers next month.

It is almost time to pull the shoes and ponder last summer and anticipate the next. We have two projects we received grants for and will be scheduled next summer. Both involve packing in MCC crews so they can work on long neglected trails. One is Long Creek and Bergsicker Creek. We have cleaned Bergsicker for 4 years now and have yet to reach the Lake. It seems like it is a never ending job to maintain a trail through an old burn. The other is Elk Calf Mtn. and it is also in a burned area.

While riding through the wilderness this short summer, I noticed many areas that were a little difficult to get the pack animals through due to inadequate width of the trail. We are supporting the new classification of the trails system where a minimum of 8 feet trail width would be required (Class 3).

We should stay informed about Senator Tester's bill regarding new wilderness in Montana. At the present time this bill adds over 600,000 acres to our wilderness system. Our state BCH has endorsed this bill. There is supposed to be about a year for public comment and I'd like to encourage you to do it.

Finally, I'd like to encourage you to join us December 12 at Tiebuckers for our Christmas party. Bring a wrapped \$10 gift to exchange. It starts at 6:30.

What's the Strangest Thing You've Ever Packed into the Bob?



Bobbie Tillman, a local artist participating in the Artist Wilderness Connection artist-in-residence program, poses with her accordion. Bobbie spent two weeks at Pentagon Cabin and presented her work at Voices of the Wilderness, the annual art exhibition, silent auction and fundraiser for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation.

Meadow Creek continued from page 1

We learned a few new horsemanship tips, including watching for ducks when watering your horse in a creek. The camp crew included Ken Ausk, Claudia Mathies, Rick Klein, Dave and Lorrie Gomez, and several other family members and friends. Forest Service workers accompanied us on the trails, and it is always fun to have these young, enthusiastic people with us on the trails.

Many mule deer accompanied us at camp and on the trails. Grizzly footprints were spotted, and a nice elk rack was found on the trail. The life of the party was Ray and Carol Knotts' three-year old granddaughter, who visited most of us on foot and sometimes on horseback. Stories were told around a campfire, always getting more colorful each year. As usual, the breakfasts and pot luck dinners were excellent, and the kitchen crew's work is surely appreciated. On Monday, it was a dusty drive back home, and it was difficult to turn onto Route 2, getting back to the "real world."



Gary Dalen hard at work.



After a great dinner, folks gather at the camp fire to swap stories.



Our cook – Alice Thramer (on Right) with Judy Breland.

Northwest Montana Fair Parade by Mark Brust

Question: Where can you perform a twofold exercise, educating the public about our mission and showing off your horse's ability to deal with distractions, which may or may not be encountered when riding the trails?

Answer: The Northwest Montana Fair Parade.

Ten members of The Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead gathered on Friday, August 21, 2009 to ride in the parade. The route ran down Main Street in Kalispell from Eighth to Center Street. Our riders gathered in the Flathead High School parking lot as early as 7:30 AM for the 10:00 start. It is a fun experience and this year's participants thoroughly enjoyed it. If you think riding with a variety of animals – dogs, llamas and goats to name a few – flashing lights, marching bands, and spectators cheering and waving sounds like a good time, then consider riding along next year.

Special thanks to June Burgau, she drove a truck and trailer decorated with BCHF banners and, along with her assistant, demonstrated one of the seven tenets of Leave No Trace – Dispose of Waste Properly.



Vinegar Mountain Project by Janet Holter

Does anyone know how Vinegar Mountain got its name? Not much information exists about the mountain, but I did find out that the current Spruce Cabin was the third one built in that location. The exact date the first cabin was built is unknown, but the second structure was washed away in the catastrophic flood of 1964. The cabin that is there now was built shortly after 1964 and was used by the Forest Service. The Army Corps of Engineers used it, also, while surveying the area for the proposed dam just downstream of the cabin where the canyon narrows into the Spruce Park rapids. The water would have been channeled underground to the Hungry Horse Reservoir. Today, Spruce Cabin is used by trail crews, river rangers, fishery crews, game wardens, volunteer groups, and the "Artist in Residence" program.

September 19th, Ron Trippet and I left the Bear Creek trailhead at 9 a.m. with four pack horses to pack out the gear for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation trail crew. Only a few weeks earlier I was fumbling with knots trying to mantle up my first load at the BOW packing

clinic for women, put together by Andy Breland. (At that clinic, both Deborah Schatz and June Burgau were very skillful, providing helpful instruction to get started packing.) Ron also had great pointers on pulling a string and on trail etiquette along the way. About five miles into Spruce Cabin we ran into the trail crew hiking out. When we got to the cabin, Jonah Libsack was already preparing their gear to be packed out. She had packed the trail crew in, along with Ralph Hopkins and Ron Stuber.

As we were mantying up the bear boxes, Jonah told me about the gourmet Thai dinner the trail crew had packed in with them and prepared for everyone. Ron gave us a refresher course on the basket hitch while slinging loads. As the weather started to turn on the way out, we reached the trailhead by 4 p.m. As always, the BMWF trail crew was waiting for us at the trailhead, and expressed their appreciation for the packing help.

The only downfall to this trip was that the projects were over for the season and I was just getting started! Until next year.....



Ron with Jonah Libsack. Ron giving us a refresher on a Basket hitch.



Ron Trippet readying a manty.



Janet Holter returning to the trail head. Photo by Ron Trippet.



Ron giving us more instruction! A good example of how to sling a mantied load.



Ron's horse packed standing in front of Spruce Cabin.



Jonah, her dog Zoey, and Ron having lunch at Spruce Cabin.



At the trail head unloading all the gear.

Black Bear Pack In/Out - July 14 & 18th, 2009 by Rick Mathies

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation provides support for a group of Smokejumpers to do corral repair and trail work in the "Bob." This year they were headed for Black Bear Ranger Station, about 13 miles south from the trail head at Meadow Creek.

The crew for the pack in was Gary Dalen, Ron Trippet, Tony Sadino, Don Holman, his two grandsons, Dominick and Dustin, and nephew, Matt. This group was planning on packing in the Smokejumpers, riding out to get their gear and then packing back in to stay the rest of the week and do some fishing.

Tony's horses were going in "o natural" (shoeless) and did just fine until the trip out, when one of them just refused to go any further. It seems they were about 4 miles from the Meadow Creek Trailhead, so they just had to tie it



The stock corrals at Black Bear.



Tony Sadino and Chuck Allen mantying up.

to a tree and go the rest of the way to get their gear. Tony finally got all of his stock back to the trailhead where they were able to rest up.

The crew for the pack out was Gary Dalen, Tony Sadino (without his pack stock), Andy Breland, Chuck Allen, and Rick Mathies. Don Holman, Matt, Dominick, and Dustin rode along and helped with the mantying. Andy's crew (Rick, Chuck and Janet (who was along for the ride) left before Gary Dalen's crew... at about 3:00pm we left the trailhead. It was a pretty uneventful ride except for this certain Huckleberry patch before Mid Creek. As we were riding through this level area, we could

smell the Huckleberries on either side of the trail. They were very ripe and we could see them hanging on the bushes, when unexpectedly a large brown bear jumped out of the bushes, about 30 yards in front of the horses. The bear ran right down the trail for about 20 yards and then off the trail to the right and out of sight he went. The horses didn't seem to be bothered by the bear; just curious that something had just ran in their field of view.

We met a few pack strings on the trail and as usual had to negotiate a way around each other, most of the riders and hikers were very courteous and we made it through without incident.

As we neared the Black Bear Cabins, we asked our project leader, Andy Breland, which trail to the West was going to take us to the cabins. Andy said that Gary told him to keep to the left!! At about 6:30pm we rode upon a trail that went directly to the West, I looked on my GPS and told Andy that the cabins were off to the West of us. Andy said keep going South on trail 80 and it should get us to the cabins... after about a mile on the same trail the cabins on my GPS was disappearing off the screen. At this time I decided that I was going back and take the trail to the West toward the cabins. After taking this



The Breland crew's stock saddled, packed up and ready to go!

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Black Bear *continued from pg. 5*

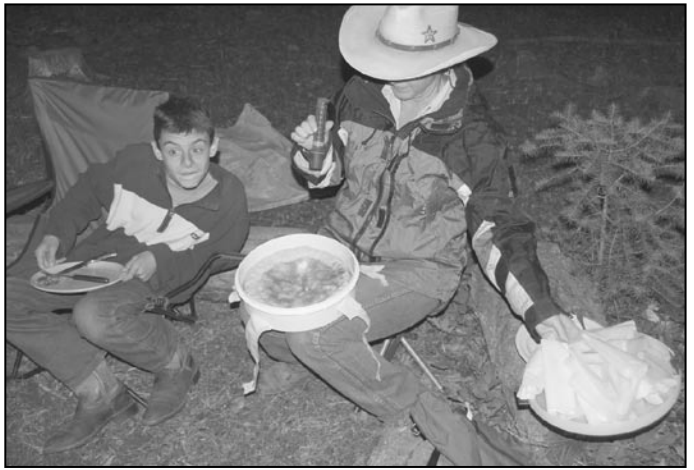
West cross trail for about 1/4 mile, the cabins and the swinging bridge came into view. We thanked Andy for his great trail guiding skills and all were happy to see the cabins before us.



Smokejumpers getting their gear ready before they hike out.

Unfortunately when we arrived at the cabins, some floater had stolen all of the Smokejumper's beer. They had placed almost a case of beer in the river to keep it cool and speculated that one of the rafting groups had come across it and figured it had been lost and helped themselves. Needless to say we were all disappointed.

We set up camp and started preparing a wonderful dinner, Moose steaks (courtesy of Andy), baked potatoes and corn on the cob...all cooked over the open fire. MMMM good!!! I almost forgot to mention Janet (our guest rider) had prepared a Huckleberry pie and a Huckleberry Crisp that we packed in for the trip. How many times can anyone remember having pie for dinner on the trail after a long ride



Dominic and Janet and the "pie"

into the back country? Andy now can say he has packed in a pie that made it totally unscathed.

The following morning we were up early and I prepared bacon and eggs for the Breland crew. Dominick would sneak over from the Dalen crew to sample some of our grub!

Everyone helped in mantying up the gear and we were ready to head back to the trailhead at about 11:30am. The most exciting thing that happened on the way back was that we fell in behind two outfitter strings and were the tail end of a 35 animal pack string headed for Meadow Creek. It was a little dusty, but we didn't have to yield the trail to anyone.



Our group at the tail end of a long line of stock on the ride out.

We arrived at the trailhead at 3:30pm, taking about 4 hours to go the 13.5 miles to come from the Black Bear Ranger Station. It was a good trip for all, but the beer from Andy and Gary's cooler when we made it to the trailhead was the best of all!

If any of our members want to have a great experience, they should join us for one of our projects that provide packing support. It is a great ride with only a small amount of work. It is a good way to get some experience in the back country and get some trail miles on those horses. Hope to see new faces on future projects!

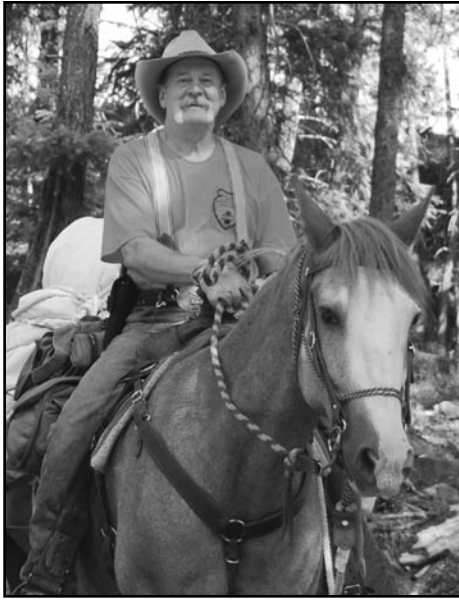


Crossing the swinging bridge.

Get to Know Your BCH Officers

Rick A. Mathies

I was born in South Eastern Oklahoma, in a small town called Poteau. My father was a railroader for the Santa Fe so we moved around Oklahoma for most of my early life, finally settling in Newton, Kansas (just North of Wichita). Here is where I spent most of my life, graduated High



Rick and his horse, Tonto.

School and met the love of my life, Claudia, in my senior Drama class. We were married the following summer and have had 39 wonderful years.

We have twins, Jason and Heather, and 5 grandchildren all of whom live in Kansas and Oklahoma. Most of my professional career was spent in the consumer electronics industry. I have worked with various retail operations and opened my own store in 1980 in Wichita; the business was called Rolling Thunder and was a car stereo, car security retail business. We closed that in

1996 after the property was taken by the state for road expansion. It was in 1996 that we visited the Flathead Valley for the first time and fell in love with the people, the mountains and the area. For years we had vacationed in the Rocky Mountains, from Colorado to Wyoming and always thought that if ever it was possible, we wanted to live in the mountains.

In 1996 we started a second career in non-profit association management. Still in the consumer electronics field, I was the Executive Director of the Mobile Enhancement Retailers Association and Claudia served as my Director of Membership. This second career enabled us to bring this job to the Flathead Valley and in 1999 we moved to just outside of Kila.

My entire life I always was intrigued with the West, the cowboys and the whole era from 1865 to the 1900's. I guess I always wanted to be a cowboy, so after moving to Montana we acquired horses. While growing up I occasionally would get the opportunity to ride my Uncle's or some acquaintance's horses, and all I remember is that it was a hoot. I still own my first horse, Tonto, and he has been a great friend, pal and trusty mount. It was my love of horses and riding that brought me to the Back Country Horsemen. I just thought that I should hang out with like minded individuals and maybe I would learn something plus get to ride more often in the back country. What a joy it has been to meet all of the folks involved in this grand organization, and I feel privileged to serve on its board.

Electing BCH Officers by June Burgan

At the December general meeting the members will be voting for next year's officers and board members. The board members serve a two year term.

The nominating committee is comprised of the three previous presidents. This year's committee is Deborah Schatz, Don Holman and Jack Bradford. They contact members they feel will be dedicated to conducting business, keeping in mind the mission statement. If you would like to be on the ballot, let the committee know, or you can have a member nominate you at the December meeting

prior to the vote. If you know a club member you feel is willing to serve, ask that person before hand so they can say "yes" or "no" to becoming a candidate.

The officers and board members meet every fourth Tuesday of the month to discuss issues, projects, events and other subjects. This information and their recommendations are brought to the membership at the next general meeting for further discussion and votes by the membership if needed.

Your vote is your voice,
your opportunity to be involved.



BCH Christmas Party

Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 12th for the BCH Christmas Celebration. It will be held at Tiebuckers in Somers. Happy Hour will begin at 6:30pm and dinner will be served around 7:00pm. There will be a gift exchange (some fun way of exchanging) so if you want to participate in the exchange bring a wrapped gift with a maximum cost of \$10.

Dinner choices will be as follows:

- Prime Rib - \$24.00
- Chicken - \$18.00
- Ribs - \$18.00 (Individual Pork Ribs in an oil/vinegar sauce)
- Fish - \$26.00 (Fresh Salmon in a ginger, sesame seed, soy glaze)

Desert choices: (all are \$6.00) Cheesecake, Mud Pie and Apple Dumplings.

All prices include gratuity and need to be paid in advance. You will need to specify what dinner selection you want and if you want dessert, which one. Meals also include sides of potatoes, veggies and home-baked bread.

Lively entertainment will be provided by Lance Witt. Sign up at the next general meeting and we must have a head count on November 28th.

Hope to see everyone there!



Ladies Pack Trip



The BCH 2009 Ladies Packing Project was held August 8 and 9th, and included an overnight campout and packing project for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation. Whitefish Boy Scout Troop #17 went into Elk Lake on the Hungry Horse Ranger District and did some trail work on Elk Lake Trail #602. BCH packers included Jonah Libsack, Deborah Schatz, Kathleen Toomey, Keni Hopkins, Sylvia Pasley, and June Burgau.



Become a member in 2010 !!!

Dues are \$40 per year for a family, or \$30 per year for single membership. This price includes all newsletters - local, state and national. Please fill in this form and mail it to BCH of the Flathead, P. O. Box 1192, Columbia Falls, MT 59912.

Name _____

Spouse's Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (very important) _____

E-mail: _____

_____ \$40 Family (# in family _____) _____ \$30 Single

