OUR PURPOSES

- To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America’s back country and wilderness.
- To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
- To assist various agencies responsible for the maintenance and management of public lands.
- To educate, encourage, and solicit active participation in the wise and sustained use of the back country resource by horsemens and the general public, commensurate with our heritage.
- To foster and encourage formation of new Back Country Horsemen organizations.

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Back Country Horsemen of Montana Youth Program
By Greg Schatz, Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead, and Kathy Hundley, Selway-Pintler Wilderness Back Country Horsemen

We would like to thank everyone who came out to help BCHMT with youth education at summer camps this summer. We presented hands on packing demonstrations at 3 summer camps for 68 kids from age 11-17. Most of the kids were from Montana, several had horses of their own and some knew how to pack. We had several adults sit in on our demonstrations as well. Let us know if you have a summer camp in your area that you think may want to have stock packing demonstrations included in their camp. Also let us know if you would like to help put on the demonstrations next summer.

Photos clockwise from top:
Having fun with tree savers.
Yes, you can pack a wheelbarrow!
Leading the finished loads.
Students’ manties.
June teaches Light on the Land.
By Mark Himmel  
National Director, BCH Montana

The 2017 BCHA convention was held in Great Falls, Montana this year on April 20th, 21st and 22nd.

Prior to this year’s convention, on Tuesday, April 18th and 19th, there was an offering for BCHA members to obtain chain saw certification at the B bucking & limbing and C bucking & limbing levels. Twelve BCHA members were certified, ten at the B level bucking & limbing and two at the C level bucking & limbing. On April 20th the BCHA conducted its regular business with Chairman Don Saner presiding. Reports were given by Jim McGarvey (Exec. Dir), Randy Rasmussen (public lands), Erica Fearn (headquarters report), Cindy McGarvey (Country Store) and Karen Saner (BCH Foundation). Darrell Wallace updated us on the new business plan. Vice Chair Freddy Dunn introduced the proposed budget for 2017. John Aliberti reviewed basics on using the ‘Your Membership’ side of the web site.

On Thursday evening members were bused to the Charlie Russell Museum where they had the opportunity to observe Russell art work from the early days of the west. Leaving the museum the bus stopped at the second event for the night, the Sip & Dip Lounge known for the swimming mermaids in the aquarium.

On April 21st Randy Rasmussen conducted the Public Lands Workshop. This year’s theme was “Celebrating our Partners, Our Success.” We heard from Forest Service officials Leanne Martin (Regional Forester), Glenn Casamassa (USFS Deputy Chief), Jaime Schmidt (USFS National Trail Program Manager), and Joni Packard (USFS Region 1 Volunteer Coordinator). Other partners speaking were Land Tawney (Exec. Dir. Back Country Hunters and Anglers), Paul Spitler (The Wilderness Society), Ben Pendergrass (American Horse Council), and Lee Gault (Montana Conservation Corps). We also learned the details of how three BCHA states (Montana Conservation Corps). We also learned the details of how three BCHA states recently plotted a path toward success; from proactive campaigns to identify horseback riding opportunities on public lands, to disrupting proposals for the sale or transfer of federal public lands. Presenting were Sherry Copeland (Missouri), Barry Reiswig (Wyoming), and Jim Allen (South Dakota). The purpose of the Public Lands Workshop was to offer BCHA National Board members practical lessons that might be applied at home. On April 22nd the business meeting of BCHA continued with reports from the various BCHA committees. A round table discussion was held with topics of concern for states (membership, leadership and organization, partnerships, education, and programs).

Elections were held with the following results:
Freddy Dunn – Chairman
Darrell Wallace – Vice Chair
Sherry Copeland – Treasurer
Yvette Rollins – Dir. Exec. Committee
Rebecca Krueger – Non Dir. Exec. Committee

The annual banquet was held Saturday evening along with the passing of the gavel, awards, and the live auction. These are notes from the 2017 Convention. More detailed minutes will be posted when approved.

Committee Chairs have stayed the same with Mack Long chair of the Education Committee and Mark Himmel chair of Media & Marketing Committee.

During the summer the Media & Marketing committee has continued to update the BCHA web site. The Trails Forever Fund (TFF) has been introduced to replace the $5 a month club by the Donations Committee. Donations to the TFF are at 70% of projected income to date.

Overall the BCHA budget is within 4% of estimated income, which is pretty good considering the income has come from donations, dues are not due in until the beginning of 2018. BCHA received a large donation from the Stoor Foundation for $20,000 and recently received $5,000 from the Community Foundation.

On July 26th I attended the Lewis & Clark Foundation meeting in Billings at the request of the BCHA Chairman. At the meeting I spoke to the Foundation chapters on partnering with BCHA on their projects using pack stock.

Politically not much has happened this summer, now that Congress is back in session BCHA will be active in that arena.
Hello, Montana BCH Members!

I hope that by the time you read this we will have received some rain! In spite of all the fires and hot weather there has been a lot of work being accomplished by the BCH. It’s definitely been more than enough to close out our RTP grant, keeping our record clean for future grant applications.

I’d like to thank Mark Himmel and Connie Long for the training they have done. We are able to reimburse some of their expenses through the Cost Share Agreement we have with Region 1. It looks and sounds like the new saw program is getting off to a good start; I think we can get more people involved with both saw and First Aid/CPR training. If there are other BCH members who would do some of this training, it would be great – we can cover some of the expenses for that.

There hasn’t been a lot going on at the state level since our last meeting as everybody has been busy with their projects — and then the fires started — and many continued to press on. I hope you were not directly affected by the fires. Hopefully, we can see its end by the time this is in print.

I’d like to take a moment to thank a few of our members:

- Deborah and Greg Schatz attended and represented BCHMT at the Last Best Outdoors Fest in July in Columbia Falls.
- Kerry Bartlett has been attending meetings in Helena to keep us apprised of what the new Montana Trails Coalition group has covered as they develop their purposes and by-laws. I think we need to stay a part of this coalition to ensure stock use remains a part of the discussion. Like many of our partners, there are things they will be doing that don’t pertain to our mission, but there are some that will and we will have a seat at the table when that time comes.
- We’ve received several thank you notes from attendees of the Youth Program’s Boone & Crockett event. From the looks of the handwriting, this was a young group! Thank you, Greg Schatz and Kathy Hundley, for creating this youth curriculum and for the time and effort invested putting these programs on. My appreciation, too, for the support groups who assist you with these events.

If there’s anything you think the state level of BCH could help you and your chapter with, please contact your State Director or contact me; we will do what we can.

Happy Trails,

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**Constitution Changes**

*By the BCHMT Constitution Committee Members*

Dear Back Country Horsemen of Montana,

The State Board of Directors chose to update the Back Country Horsemen of Montana constitution almost two years ago and a committee was appointed. The original idea was to have it done and voted on at the last convention in Polson, but with all the comments on dual memberships, the committee was unable to complete a draft that could go to press in time to be able to vote on at the convention.

The committee has taken into consideration the dual membership resolution that was voted on at the last convention, along with some minor changes in verbiage and punctuation, and clarifying what to do with funds in case of dissolution to meet the criteria of being a 501(c)(3).

A draft for you to review is located on the State’s website:  

For those who do not have access to the electronic version, please work with your chapter’s State Directors to obtain a copy.

If you have any comments please make them to one of the committee persons. We ask that if you do make a comment please be concise and to the point and all comments must be made by November 15, 2017, so the committee will have time to consider them before the State Board meeting on December 2, 2017.

Once the draft is voted on at the State Board Meeting by your directors it will then be presented at the convention for approval by the delegates.

Thank you,

Committee Members:
- Chair Ron Stuber ([mtsms@centurytel.net](mailto:mtsms@centurytel.net))
- Trish Foster ([tmfoster@cybernet1.net](mailto:tmfoster@cybernet1.net))
- Chuck Miller ([circlemr@cybernet1.com](mailto:circlemr@cybernet1.com))
- John Chepulis ([barddiamond@gmail.com](mailto:barddiamond@gmail.com))
- Kathy Hundley ([montanakath@yahoo.com](mailto:montanakath@yahoo.com))
- Connie Long ([long@montana.com](mailto:long@montana.com))
- Fred Fitzpatrick ([richfitz@3rivers.net](mailto:richfitz@3rivers.net))
- Keni Hopkins ([khopkins@centurylink.net](mailto:khopkins@centurylink.net))

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**The Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation extends a warm “Thank You” to our terrific BCH partners!**

We couldn’t accomplish as much wilderness stewardship without your skilled and committed support.

This season we were able to field more than 10 wilderness projects in both the Selway and the Frank, thanks to pack support from dedicated BCH packers.

Special thanks to Bruce Scott and Kathy Hundley who packed us in and out for the Blodgett-High Lake-Big Creek volunteer project in the Bitterroot, in July. The project was a lot of fun and Bruce and Kathy took great care of us. Everyone enjoyed getting to know them—and their fine animals!

If you have some time and interest, we would love to work with you! Please contact Courtney Wall, SBFC Program Director: [courtney-wall@selwaybitterroot.org](mailto:courtney-wall@selwaybitterroot.org).
As we draw close to the close of a very successful third year as the newest BCH Chapter in Montana we reflect on some of our accomplishments.

The 4-H Packing program had another successful year with 19 4-H members participating. We had a slow start with all of the snow and icy roads in the spring but the kids were determined to show up, learn and perfect their packing skills. This year’s shining star was Quindy Gronley, who completed her first volunteer packing trip on a SNOTEL project in August.

We received an RTP Grant for work on Trail 35 and Owl Creek Packer Camp. This project entailed blasting rock and rebuilding the trail at about the 4 mile marker from the trailhead. A Montana Conservation Corps crew was engaged to build a retaining wall and prepare the site for the blasting as well as tread work to make the trail safer for stock users. This trailhead and trail gets more use than any other in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex so work here was a priority for our chapter.

We worked on other projects including a project on Dean Creek in conjunction with Spotted Bear Ranger District, where we completed two re-supplies for the MCC crew. We provided packing support for Swan Lake Ranger District to replace the hitch rails at Upper Holland Lake. Our members packed in the outhouse and a load of hay to Shaw Cabin for the Forest Service. We also participated in the Forestry Expo, an effort by the Forest Service and Stoltze Lumber to educate 5th graders about the importance of the forest and all of its uses. We also participated in various trail clearing project as well as several Bob Marshall Wilderness projects providing much needed pack support.

Our chapter feels that to promote Back Country Horsemen it is extremely important that we are engaged with our community. Therefore we have attended and participated in multiple trail planning efforts in the Flathead Valley. New trails are being developed and others are being officially designated and we are there to ensure that horses have access to any new systems that are developed. We are also serving on the Flathead County Trails Coalition which is charged with developing a plan for all trails within Flathead County. Participation in community efforts gives us an opportunity to promote our chapter and BCH as a whole. This is an important part of looking to the future regarding trails, membership and promotion of BCH.

As our chapter continues to think outside the box, we have had an exemplary fundraising effort this year. The annual Scrabble Ride, held atSWisher Lake Trailhead by Eureka had over 100 riders and fun was had by all. Our spring gun raffle was a huge success as well and we were fortunate to be asked by the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks to manage their parking lot during the Northwest Montana Fair. The fall gun raffle is in progress and will continue until our annual Christmas party in December. All in all we have raised almost $8,000.00 in 2017 with a huge possibility that the fall raffle will exceed our expectations.

This year’s fire season has taken a devastating toll on our forests and trail systems. We fully expect that the Forest Service will need additional help in the coming months to recover the trail systems affected by the fires. Northwest Montana BCH stands ready to mobilize our membership to help with these needs.

On an ending note as this article was written we have lost one of our members, James Floyd lost his battle with cancer on September 2nd, we offer our support and prayers to his family.

NorthWest Montana BCH Celebrates a Successful Third Year!

By Rick Mathies, NorthWest Montana Back Country Horsemens

A mighty fine ‘thank you’ from the BMWF!

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation just wrapped up their 2017 Field Season and wanted to give a Bob-sized thanks to the Back Country Horsemen for their support. The BMWF relies on experienced packers to transport food, tools, and gear to volunteer project sites while educating volunteers about the importance of traditional stock use in the Bob, a key aspect to our wilderness heritage.

BMWF is having a volunteer appreciation pint night on Tues, October 17 from 5-8 pm at Kalispell Brewing and you are all invited. To volunteer for 2018 projects, call 406-387-3808 or visit www. bmwf.org/packers to learn more.
"It’s not usually this way, Dean," I gushed as I looked at the wreck, broken quarter straps, torn up top pack and gear pounded into the gravel. The mule got to his feet standing there quivering.

For Dean this was the first trip with our crew: Don, Jaye, Mike and me. The four of us had many trips with many miles in the wilderness. I could not remember any wrecks like this one. Indeed, we often never even had to stop to adjust a load. For this trip Mike had a beautiful new riding mule. The mule had tolerated the pack saddle and load at home so it was concluded that he had packed before. This apparently was a poor assumption. Don was mounted on his mule, Duke. This was his last pack trip before succumbing to cancer. Jaye had a new lead horse and two mules that he worked with on his ranch. We intended to show Dean how to do this packing, camping, and fishing thing the “right way”.

The first blow up happened before we got out of the Indian Meadows trailhead parking lot. After patching the saddle up and reloading the gear and food we immediately found trouble. As Jaye started across the low bridge heading out of the trailhead his lead mule balked and then firmly com-

bridge heading out of the trailhead his 
ble. As Jaye started across the low
trailhead parking lot. After patching

ble for Mike. The horses let us know that he was arriving. Mike’s euphoria over finding his mules with their loads intact was short lived as he saw our so-
er countenance. Dean, the lawyer, did mention that for a while he thought Mike would likely need his professional assistance.

As we dropped the loads, placed the high lines and started to take care of the stock I mentioned to Dean, many times, “it usually isn’t this way.” Well, as we assessed our situation, life started to look better. There was no Life Flight ambulance and no injured stock. The gear was repairable and beer was cold. Life was good. We were lucky.

After a good night’s rest the three of us headed out to fish. What a day in the sunshine. We all caught fish and Don landed his last trout. Dean enticed and netted an exceptionally large trout on a small fly. I muttered under my breath, and said, “It usually isn’t this way, Dean.”
Sawtooth Trail Collaboration
Submitted by Trish Foster, Selway-Pintler Wilderness Back Country Horsemen

Future hikers and trail riders who embark on a trip into the Bitterroot National Forest, via the Sawtooth Trail, will begin with access to a newly constructed stock bridge across Roaring Lion Creek. The 49 feet long by 10 feet wide structure required collaboration by several forest savvy groups. Leadership for this project came from Bruce Scott and Kathy Hundley of the Selway-Pintler Wilderness Back Country Horsemen (SPWBCH), a small chapter that works on trails throughout Ravalli County. Kathy wrote the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Recreational Trails Project grant that awarded over $17,000 for materials in the spring of 2016. Bruce headed up the project and coordinated efforts with the Montana Conservation Corps and the Forest Service.

The SPWBCH volunteers had worked on the Sawtooth Trail for years, clearing brush and downfall and repairing sections of the trail that had seen many years of neglect. In the summer of 2016, parts of the trail and the footbridge near the trailhead were destroyed by the Roaring Lion Fire. That event forced the Forest Service to remove the old bridge and heightened the importance of the collaboration that would lead to the construction of this pack bridge. The Forest Service provided engineering expertise so that the bridge could be made to withstand decades of foot and stock use and exposure. The SPWBCH started months in advance by ordering supplies and lining up delivery at the trailhead, which is just south of Hamilton, west on the Roaring Lion Road. Finally, on August 8, 2017, SPWBCH volunteers were joined by the Montana Conservation Corps, led by Steve Bull, at the bridge site and work began.

The first three days were prep days getting the abutments ready and all material on site. Then on day four, a crane was hired to position the four 49 feet long laminated beams that would establish the foundation for all other work. The banks on either side of the bridge had to be reinforced with boulders and some mortared rock work. After five days of brutally hot work, the bridge was nearly complete. As the group of about 40 workers took a break for lunch, they watched the first pair of hikers cross the bridge and head up the Sawtooth Trail on the other side. The hikers and workers casually waved to each other with no real acknowledgement of the importance of those first steps across the bridge.

The construction of this bridge will increase the usage time for this trail by several months. In the past, riders and pack stock had to cross through the creek, which could not be accomplished until spring high water had subsided, typically in July. With the new bridge, access will be much earlier and trail maintenance can occur well in advance of the anglers, hikers, and trail riders each year. In future years the focus for SPWBCH will be to repair and maintain this rugged and pristine trail.

Photos clockwise from top:
Abutment beams hauled to creek sides using old-fashioned muscle power!
Crane swings laminated beams into position.
MCC and FS crew members prove that moving rocks ROCKS!
SPWBCH volunteers proud of the new bridge over Roaring Lion Creek.
Last Chance BCH started the summer out with a bang. The annual Freeze Branding and Dutch oven challenge in May was well attended with a variety of Dutch oven victuals. Early June, 40 members and 35 head of stock, divided into 9 separate crews, to clear 20 miles of trail in the Elkhorn Mountains, trails that haven’t been cleared for years are now ready for travel.

The same month we packed retired smoke jumpers, working on Mann Gulch monuments in and out, packing not only their provisions but, 100 gallons of water to maintain their camp for a number of days, Followed by four trips into the Gates of the Mountains with Montana Conservation crews working on trail restoration.

Pack projects continue for Bob Marshall Foundation into the North Fork of the Blackfoot and Indian Creek on the West Fork of the Sun, sign posts for the Forest Service and aid stations for the annual Elkhorn Run.

A busy summer but, we have good involvement from all the members.
Using Facebook to promote chapters and reach new members
Submitted by Kelli Rohloff, Charlie Russell Back Country Horsemen

Facebook shares information quicker than any other platform, giving chapters the potential to reach wider audiences. On top of having an active Facebook page, clubs should be creating Facebook events to reach potential new members in the community. Examples of BCH events you may want to create Facebook events for would include potlucks, speakers, horsemanship clinics, poker rides, fun rides, packing demos and fundraisers. The benefit of creating an event over posting a flyer is that Facebook events remind those who click ‘interested’ of the time and date of the event, making it more likely they will attend. For a fee, Facebook offers a “boosting” feature that allows chapters to choose a target audience that their event will be shared with. This is crucial, because your event will be shared beyond just those who follow your page and their friends.

Charlie Russell chapter used this feature last March for their membership drive potluck. For a $10 boosting fee, they reached 2,100 people. 303 viewed their event and 55 people responded as interested. All of these people would not have heard of our event had we not boosted the event on Facebook. This is an excellent way to let others in the community know about your chapter!

How to boost an event on Facebook:
• Create the event.
• Click “boost.”
• Audience: select “people you choose through targeting.”
• Choose your demographics. Example: Charlie Russell chose both men and women, age 15-65+, Great Falls MT + 50 mile radius, interests of horses and wilderness.
• Budget: choose total budget ($10 is a good amount).
• Duration: choose dates to run the post (3 weeks up to the event to event date is a good time frame).
• Pay: via credit card.
Interior secretary recommends Trump alter at least three national monuments, including Bears Ears
By Juliet Eilperin and Darryl Fears August 24, The Washington Post

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended Thursday that President Trump alter at least three national monuments established by his immediate predecessors, including two in Utah, a move expected to reshape federal land and water protections and certain to trigger major legal fights.

In a report Zinke submitted to the White House, the secretary recommended reducing the size of Utah’s Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments, as well as Oregon’s Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, according to multiple individuals briefed on the decision.

President Bill Clinton declared the 1.9 million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante in 1996, while President Barack Obama designated the 1.35 million-acre Bears Ears last year. Cascade-Siskiyou, which now encompasses more than 113,000 acres, was established by Clinton shortly before leaving office and expanded by Obama in January.

Trump had ordered Zinke to examine more than two dozen sites established by Clinton, Obama and George W. Bush under the 1906 Antiquities Act. The nearly four-month process pitted those who have felt marginalized against backers who see the sites as bolstering tourism and recreation while safeguarding important relics, environments and species.

The Interior Department did not give specifics on Zinke’s recommendations, instead releasing a report summary that described each of the 27 protected areas scrutinized as “unique.”

Yet his proposal takes direct aim at a handful of the nation’s most controversial protected areas out west, according to several individuals who asked for anonymity because the report has yet to be made public. Zinke, who had called for revising Bears Ears’ boundaries in an interim report in June, is recommending a “significant” reduction in its size, an administration official said.

The report also calls for changing the management rules for several sites, such as allowing fishing in marine monuments where it is currently prohibited, and would affect the boundaries of other monuments beyond the three officials identified Thursday.

“No President should use the authority under the Antiquities Act to restrict public access, prevent hunting and fishing, burden private land, or eliminate traditional land uses, unless such action is needed to protect the object,” Zinke said in a statement. “The recommendations I sent to the president on national monuments will maintain federal ownership of all federal land and protect the land under federal environmental regulations, and also provide a much needed change for the local communities who border and rely on these lands.”

Read more at The Washington Post.

Update for Flathead National Forest Plan Revision & NCDE GBCS Amendment to the Lolo, Helena, Lewis & Clark, and Kootenai National Forests

Hello,

I would like to update you on the status of the final environmental impact statement for the revised forest plan and the draft records of decision. In addition to addressing the effects of the Flathead National Forest revised forest plan, the final environmental impact statement includes discussion of the environmental consequences of the forest plan amendments to incorporate habitat-related management direction for the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem grizzly bear population on the Helena-Lewis and Clark, Kootenai, and Lolo National Forests.

We had planned to have the documents out for the pre-decisional administrative review process, commonly referred to as the objection process, in August but because of the need to coordinate schedules with the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the U.S. Forest Service, we now plan to release the documents in October. The schedule on our webpage has been updated to reflect this change.

I appreciate your patience and continued interest in the revised forest plan for the Flathead National Forest as well as the forest plan amendments for the Helena-Lewis and Clark, Kootenai, and Lolo National Forests. I greatly appreciate the commitment of the interested participants who have provided important contributions toward the development of the revised forest plan and amendments.

For further information about the project, contact Joe Krueger, plan revision team leader, at 406-758-5243. Thank you for your continued interest in the management of your public lands.

Sincerely,
Chip Weber
Forest Supervisor