A message from Chairman Dave

Happy New Year everyone!

It looks to be a challenge in 2005 for all of us in the Back Country Horsemen with all the issues and the forest plan rewrites going on. Our state board members work hard watching these two areas with a lot of concern. I would like everyone in the Back Country Horsemen to get interested in the issues and forest plan rewrites as it’s going to affect us all. If you see an article in a paper or hear information on the TV or radio in these areas, please take down the information and contact the board to make sure that issue has been covered. We don’t want to miss any issues or comment periods in these areas. The Forest Service rewrite plans are going to affect us all down the road and while they are in the rewrite process we can comment which could have made a difference in the way it was written in the final forest plan. It is hard to cover all the areas and make sure they all get looked at in the process, so let’s all work together and get involved with the issues and re-writes and help the Back Country Horseman gain by working hard together.

Please see Chairman, 2

Back Country Horsemen of Montana

Mission Statement

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

- Issues chairman: Kurt Dyer
- Forest Plan Rewrites: Mike Chandler
- State Chairman: David Crawford

I hope all the chapters have a good year with their projects and functions in your respective areas around the great state of Montana. I look forward to seeing you all at our annual BCH State Convention in Great Falls on April 1, 2, 3 and this year, being hosted by East Slope Back Country Horseman.

Permanent Recreation Fee
Bill HR 3283

CHUCK MILLER
National BCH Director
December 12, 2004

HR3283 was passed this December 6, as a “rider” to accompany the Omnibus Appropriations bill. This bill was authored by Ralph Regula (Rep. Oh.). This will replace the current and, unquestionably popular, Federal National Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. Mr. Regula was also the sponsor of this program in 1996.

The Fee Demo Program did help in some Ranger Districts as it kept a large amount of monies that were collected from outfitters and guides, and put them into the trail budget, as here on the Bitterroot National Forest. This new replacement bill will be implemented in 2005, unless it is repealed by Congress when it reconvenes. The bill is 42 pages long and subject to much interpretation. The new program has been authorized for 10 years and will include, BLM, USFS, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and, Bureau of Reclamation.

An “America the Beautiful Pass” will be required for these Agencies, and there may be $85 to $100 fee for this. In addition there will probably be layered fees that a Forest Region or Regional Agency may add (site-specific).

The major provisions include:

1. The requirement that at least 80% of fees collected at a site be used to improve services and facilities at that site.
2. Direction to the agencies to coordinate fees and avoid multiple or layered fees.

Please see Fee, page 15

Campfire Cookin’

This recipe was submitted by Chuck Miller of the Bitter Root BCH.

These beans sound delicious so you may want to try cookin’ them up in your kitchen or at the campfire.

Thanks Chuck for sharing!

“The”
Baked Beans Recipe

As you put this recipe together remember all of the great pack trips and potlucks we’ve had together! Mules, horses, and riders belong in the backcountry, so here’s to wilderness enjoyment!

Ingredients
- 3 cans of pork and beans…. Any brand
- 1 large sweet yellow onion
- 1½ jalapeno pepper….more if you like
- ½ pound sausage, bacon or cocktail sausages
- 1/3 cup brown sugar…. more or less as you like
- 1 Tbsp. Wrights liquid smoke
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire Sauce
- 2 Tsp. Thai-style chili sauce…..more or less as you like
- 1 Tbsp. yellow mustard…..the hot dog kind

Cut bacon or cocktail sausages into bite size pieces, sauté in a cast iron skillet with the chopped onions and the jalapenos that were seeded, deviened and chopped.

Cook until the meat is slightly brown and the onions and peppers are soft (10-15 min. on medium heat).

In a baking dish or pan, empty the three cans of pork and beans including the liquid. Combine with the brown sugar, liquid smoke, Worcestershire sauce, chili sauce, and mustard. Stir with a wooden spoon until thoroughly mixed. Add the cooked meat, onions, and peppers to the beans and stir again.

Pre-heat oven to 300 degrees and place beans in center of oven, cook 1 ½ hours and check to see if they are done. Beans are done when the top starts to dry slightly and when the liquid is absorbed, but don’t get too dry. Check often after one hour.

This recipe is adaptable to your taste, as the sweet and spicy can be adjusted.
Hands Across The Border

By DAVE CRAWFORD
LNT Trainer
Mission Valley BCH

On September 18, 2004, two of our state LNT instructors made a trip to Rexford Bench on Lake Koocanusa by the Canadian border to give a demonstration in Leave No Trace (LNT). Every year the Montana Boy Scouts and Canadian Scouts (both boys and girls) meet for a weekend filled with different types of training sessions. This event is called Hands Across the Border and this is the fourth year BCH has been invited to give training sessions on LNT. This year Montana Backcountry Horsemen had two LNT trainers participate.

June Burgau of the Flathead Chapter taught how and where to find an appropriate campsite and also how to protect the site. June also taught acceptable methods for campfires, human waste disposal, how to wash dishes and bathe in an environmentally friendly way, the need for quiet conduct, how cool colors blend with nature’s earth tones, that wild lands are home for wildlife, and how we are privileged visitors in the back country.

Dave Crawford of the Mission Valley Chapter demonstrated the art of packing live horses or mules, how to mante the loads, slinging the loads on the horses in both the basket and barrel hitches, the use of high lines in the back country and food storage with a high lift system into trees in the back country. This Hands Across The Border event is a great opportunity to teach children the value of caring and preserving the back country in light on the land.

The State of Montana Back Country Horsemen have many trained LNT instructors within each chapter who are trained to demonstrate Leave No Trace Camping (LNT). If you know of a group or a function in your area that would benefit from this type of training, please let us know.

Distributed by Thelma & Smoke Elser
BCH of Missoula

October 26.....M.A.D. (Mule Appreciation Day)

On October 26, 1785 a ship docked at the Boston Harbor carrying a 15 hand, 4-year old Spanish jack named Royal Gift. The jack, a gift from King Charles III of Spain to George Washington, is today credited with developing the American mule, an equine that has contributed as much to the foundation and history of this country as any pioneer, warrior or statesman.

In 1985, the Lynchburg Mule Traders Association in Lynchburg, TN succeeded in having October 26 proclaimed Mule Appreciation Day, as a one-time event basically sponsored by Jack Daniels Distillery.

The year 1985 just happened to be the 200th anniversary of mules in America, and that is why Mule Appreciation Day was established.

Dates of Interest
Submitted by Thelma & Smoke Elser
BCH of Missoula

October 26.....M.A.D. (Mule Appreciation Day)

Tennessee Mule Artist, Bonnie Shields, has designed a T-shirt with a M.A.D. logo. Now there is a specific date and logo that makes M.A.D. nearly official, even if there is not a specific proclamation.

Mules have served man for centuries and their popularity has grown in the past 20 years. October 26 is our chance to tell others what great equines mules are and show the world that we’re M.A.D. about mules.

December 13.....National Day of the Horse

On October 7, 2004, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Devine and Ms. Landrieu submitted the following resolution to the 108th Congress, 2nd Session S. RES. 452.

The committee considered and agreed to designating December 13 as National Day of the Horse and encouraging the people of the United States to be mindful of the contribution of horses to the

Please see Dates, 10
When the work is done and the horses put out, that’s when we can kick back and relax.

After 500 plus hours of trail rebuilding, gravel hauling, and cutting out down falls, we here at MVBCH know that all work and no play makes for NO FUN!!!!! That is why we have our annual October fest!!!

This year it was held on October 8th (a great time for an October fest) at the Leon Club. The Leon Club house is a historic site going back to the early 1900’s as a grange hall, community dance hall, and gathering place. That is the reason we used it as our place of choice.

We use the October fest as a way of getting new memberships and giving back to our members an evening of old time fun. It was a pot luck dinner with so many great country dishes (including hot Dutch Oven Trail Beans) brought in by the members. Members were set aside by special name tags and guests were given colorful name tags. In that way we would make a point to talk them up and tell them about the club and what we do.

The entertainment for the evening was The Old Time Fiddlers. A local group whose numbers range from between 15 to 25 fiddlers and from the age of 10 on up to… (well one could say the leaders remember the dances held weekly there in the EARLY DAYS).

They played on into the evening with square dancing and good old time foot stomping tunes. Our members, guests and their children, were introduced to entertainment that was not on television or out of a head set.

Of course we had our info metrical supplied by our President Jason Newton during a play break. He invited the guests to join and sign up for the club and gave a short brief of our mission as BCH. The guests were then invited to go to the admissions table and sign up.

We have found that this event, above all, has helped to bring in new members. The ability to get our Mission Statement out to new and interested people is number one on our list of priorities. We hope this idea will spread and some old fashion values will again be in the forefront of times gone but not forgotten.

State President, Dave Crawford and Sharon, a fellow Mission Valley chapter member, “kick-it-up” at October Fest

The annual October fest
By KAREN TROMP
Mission Valley BCH

Pryor Mountain Wild Horses
BY JOHN KAISER, BOARD MEMBER
BCH of Missoula

Over Memorial Day weekend, I visited a unique and interesting place called the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range. It’s an area miles above cactus and juniper in the gritty red desert south of Billings, where the spirit of the West thunders across high mountain meadows. Brushing the sky at about 8,600 feet, the Pryor Mountain wild horses thrive in a Garden of Eden, blanketed with the deep purples of shooting stars, lupine, and forget-me-nots.

Among horseshoe-shaped sites marked in stone by long-forgotten vision seekers and cairns still marking ancient travel routes, the horses live in the 31,000 acre Pryor Mountain National Wild Horse Range. Like a plateau out of time, their home atop East Pryor Mountain is a giant pedestal holding to the heavens the remnant of a lost breed. They live by savvy and spirit, forging an existence in country so rugged and remote, would-be captors wouldn’t bother.

Currently about 120-160 horses with about 31 different harem groups roam the hills, with 8 to 10 bachelor stallions on the periphery, hoping to win mares of their own.

They have roamed Montana’s skyline since the days of the Lewis & Clark expedition in 1806, but the blood of this herd reaches back to the 16th century. They are not renegade former ranch horses. They are a genetic sample of Old World Spanish horses, brought to North America with the conquistadors.

Please see Horses, 12
Annual Family Fun Ride
Club Fund Raiser

Date: July 9, 2005
Registration: 8:00 am to 10:00 am
Place: Gold Creek, MT

(Exit 166 off I-90, follow the signs, 5 ½ miles)

Approximately 4 hour Ride. And we will go through a
Historic Ghost Town and Gold Dredge

Children under 12……………………… $7.00
Ride & BBQ …………………………… $15.00
Poker Hands (18 yrs & over)…………… $5.00 each
50/50 Tickets…………………………… $1.00 each or 6 for $5.00

BBQ starts at 3:00 pm and Drawings for Door Prizes to follow.

Everyone Bring Your Horse or Mule and Have Fun!

Absolutely NO Dogs on Ride!
Dogs in Camp must be on leash!

For More Information Please Contact:

Patrick George 560-1670
Wendy Micu 846-3499
Karen Haubbert 846-1088
**Convention Registration**

**2005 BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF MONTANA**

**STATE CONVENTION**

**APRIL 1st THRU 3rd, 2005**

*Hosted by: The East Slope Back Country Horsemen*

*Heritage Inn and Convention Center, Great Falls Montana 59404*

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**Convention Participant**

Back Country Horsemen Chapter___________________________________________________

Name: ______________________________________ Voting Delegate: Yes_____ No_____

Mailing Address: _______________________________________________________________

City: ______________________________________ State: ___________ Zip Code: ________

Phone: (_____) _____-___________ E-Mail: ___________________________

Registration Fee: Until March 7, 2005 is $65.00 after March 7, 2005 the fee is $75.00

Registration Fees Include: Lunch and Banquet.

Registration Fee: $___________

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**Spouse and/or Guests of Participant**

| Name: ______________________________ | Name: ______________________________ |
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Please make checks payable to: **East Slope Back Country Horsemen**

Please mail form to: **ESBCH - 415 31st Ave S., Great Falls, MT 59405**

All registrations should be received by: March 7, 2005

For further assistance please contact:

Connie Manning - Phone: (406)453-8010 / E-Mail: cmanning@sofast.net

Debbie Ries – Phone: (406)278-3727 / E-Mail: riesrd@tetonwireless.net
AGENDA

Friday April 1, 2005
- State Board Meeting (Pre Convention) - 1 - 2 P.M. @ The Heritage Inn
- Friday Evening Registration - 4 - 7 P.M. @ The Heritage Inn
- Photo Contest Registration - 4 - 7 P.M. @ The Heritage Inn
- No host cocktail and social hour 7 P.M.

Saturday April 2, 2005
- Convention Registration - 7 A.M. to 8 A.M @ The Heritage Inn
- General Session Starts - 8 A.M
- Presentation of the Flag/ Pledge of Allegiance
- Introductions.
- A year in review slide presentation, by East Slope Back Country Horsemens
- General session Back Country Horsemens of Montana
- Break
- Morning Work Shops
- General Session Continues
- Lunch
- General Session
- Break
- Afternoon Work Shops
- View Vendor displays
- No host cocktail hour
- Banquet
- Speaker: Gene Sentz

Vendor Displays
- The vendor area will be open during the convention, so attendees and guests can view the vendor displays.
- If you have or know of somebody interested in having a booth, let us know.
Contact: Dick Preputin (406)627-2224 (dphar@3rivers.net)

Raffle Items
- Ruger Model 77 Stainless Steel, Bolt Action Rifle - with laser engraving
  (Montana Back Country Horsemens 1995)
- Original Oil Painting, by artist; Ron Ukrajetz.
- Pentax Binoculars (1 x 42)
- Raffle tickets are $2.00 or 3 for $5.00.
Contact: Any East Slope Member for additional tickets.

Silent Auction
- Auction items will be on display at the convention.
- Individuals can also donate items.
- Any chapter can also donate an item for the silent auction.
Contact: Connie Manning (406)453-8010 (cmanning@sosast.net)

Live Auction
- Auctioneers: John LeFebre and Bill Davis

Each Chapter is asked to bring one item for the State Organization as this is the fund raiser for the BCHMT. (Item should be at least $50.00)

Photo Contest and Display
- Photo contest will have four categories.
- Categories: Participants can enter 2 photos for each category.
  1. Animals: Horses, wildlife, dogs, cats, etc.
  2. Scenery: Mountains, lakes, streams, trees, etc.
  3. People: Friends, kids or family, etc.
  4. Work Projects: Club work projects, activities or events.
- Photos are by amateur photographers only and must be backcountry horsemen
- Photo size shall be 5x7 or 8x10 and must be mounted or matted, (no frames).
- Name and Address shall be attached on the back of the photo.

Photos can be registered on Friday evening at the Heritage Inn
Contact: R. Fred Fitzpatrick (406)279-3232 (richfitz@3rivers.net)

Sunday April 3, 2005
- Cowboy Church: Steve Skelton
- Presidents' and Spouses Breakfast
- General Session reconvenes
- Round Robin (Time Permitting)
- Break
- General Session adjourns
- State Board Meeting (Post Convention) Immediately after the convention at the Heritage Inn
Three Rivers 2004

By DAN PENCE
Three Rivers BCH

Three Rivers BCH, with headquarters in Dillon, reports a very busy and interesting year. Tom Hough took the lead as we hosted the Montana State BCH convention March 19-21. We recorded 208 registrants from around the state and nation, a record for attendance at such an event. In addition to normal state business, we took a field trip to LaCense Montana to view “natural horsemanship” in action and gain an understanding of the University of Montana Western’s new equestrian program. Larry Jordan had his hands full keeping track of the outstanding photograph contest that was part of the program.

Our first spring ride occurred on May 15 in the Tendoy Mountain Range south of Clark Canyon Reservoir with Dan Pence and Larry Davies as trail boss. Over 25 members made the scenic ride. We sponsored “Kids Day” at the local fairgrounds on May 22, with Rene Johnson as trail boss. Safeway furnished hot dogs, and Harrington Pepsi, the drinks. Twenty-two children showed up with their parents. It was the first time many of them had ever been on a horse. Several members also made the Virginia City Poker Ride on May 29th.

We answered a request for assistance from the Bureau of Land Management on June 5. The BLM obtained a beautiful cabin that overlooks the Madison Valley in the Axolotl Lakes area southeast of Virginia City as part of a land exchange. Plans are to make the cabin available to the public via a special rental program probably coordinated through the Forest Service’s Madison Ranger District. No horse facilities were present at the site, a new safe water system was needed at the cabin and the entire area was covered by hounds tongue, a noxious weed. Three Rivers BCH turned out in force to build a corral, install a water trough for horses, treat 20 acres of hounds tongue and bury the cabin’s waterline. Some dynamite would have helped dig the post holes, since we couldn’t have located the corral on a site with more huge rocks. We encourage others to look into renting the cabin—it is a beautiful place to ride with outstanding facilities. Mark Sant was trail boss for the project.

Mike Cox led several members who participated with other horsemen on the St. Jude’s Children Hospital Benefit Trail Ride at Fish Creek on June 19th to complete June activities.

Andy Allard was trail boss for the area assigned to Three Rivers BCH on July 10, Beaverhead County Weed Day. Our assignment was to treat 25 scattered acres of leafy spurge and other noxious weeds in an area not accessible by vehicles. Members carried herbicide on their pack animals and treated the weeds with backpack sprayers.

Members Dave Mathson, Larry Davies, Bob McNeill, and Dan Pence gave demonstrations on packing horses at Bannack Days at Bannack State Park on July 17 and 18. We also had a display on Leave No Trace use of our public lands. Two demonstrations were presented each day to help give the over 2000 people attending the event a concept of skills required in early day Montana.

Dave Mathson led the group in manning the concession stand for the University of Montana Western’s Horse Show on July 30-August 1. Member Dr. John Xanthopoulos, Director for Western’s Equestrian Program, organized the event.

Bob McNeill led the group on a well attended overnight pack trip to their outfitting camp at Sand Lake east of Wisdom on August 14th and 15th. Bob and his son Chris hosted a very enjoyable outing. Fishing was great, the food delicious and the opportunity for interaction between those attending couldn’t have been better. Andy Allard had the misfortune of finding out how expensive a cheap brass spinner really was at such a remote location when he borrowed one from Dan Pence, then lost it on a snag on his first cast. Really, and the lure was what the fish were biting at the time. Andy also had the dubious distinction of being the only fisherman not to catch a fish on the trip.

August 21st found members busy clearing trails in the East Fork of Blacktail drainage, followed by a general cleanup of the East Fork Campground. This site receives heavy use by horsemen, especially during hunting season. Our chapter has volunteered to maintain area trails on both the BLM and Forest Service, and keep evidence of the heavy horse use as minimum as possible.

Montana’s Biggest Weekend (Beaverhead County’s Fair and Rodeo) saw us well represented in the Rodeo parade on Labor Day, with Larry Davies serving as trail boss.

Kathy Cherry and Steve MacArthur hosted our final outing of the year with a beautiful ride in the Little Sheep Creek drainage west of Lima on September 19. The fall colors couldn’t have been better and the scenery was outstanding. The ride was followed by a delicious steak fry.

Our year ended with an annual Christmas party on December 7. As indicated, 2004 was an exciting and busy year for Three Rivers BCH. We look forward to being as involved in 2005.

Please see Three Rivers, 10

Laugh a little…..

What horse sellers REALLY mean:

- Has been ground worked (has been chased around the pasture)
- Beginner Horse (on his last leg)
- Loads (usually you can tell when he’s about to kick)
- Loves to Go! (preferably without you, but if you do manage to mount, hang on.)
Economy, history and character of the United States.

The Congressional House Caucus estimates the horse industry contributes much more than $100,000,000,000 each year to the economy of the United States.

Horses continue to permeate our society as witnessed on movie screens, TV, open lands, and in our own back yards.

Larry Gleason has decided he needs more time for hunting and fishing and is closing his saddle shop in Ronan. He decided to donate the remaining stock to BCHM as a fund raiser for the state organization. His generosity will mean an extra $750 to $1000 for our state treasury.

Larry marketed the best and certainly the most reasonably priced high line swivel that I’ve seen. I’ve been using them, along with a lot of other members, for several years and I don’t think anyone has ever had a problem. They’re sturdy, well made, and work well. There are several hundred in use in our back country helping to protect the resource.

The swivels will be available at the state convention unless we have sold them by then. The cost is $4 each and the supply is dwindling. If you wish, you can prepay and pick them up at the convention to save shipping costs. Make checks payable to BCHM and order through Ken Ausk, 3020 Middle Rd, Columbia Falls, MT 59912.
Building Partnerships and New Trails

BY PETE MADISON
President
Mile High BCH

Mile High Backcountry Horsemen have had a busy year. The Club focused a lot of time and stock not only to continue their commitment to maintain backcountry opportunities for horsemen, but to build coalitions with other groups who have the same objectives and goals for quiet, single track trails.

Butte has the luxury of being nestled at the headwaters of the Clark Fork drainage, surrounded like a horseshoe by the Continental Divide. Being so close to the divide has given us an opportunity to partner with the Forest Service in the planning, construction, and maintenance of 50 new miles of Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST). With this project MHBCH has formed new partnerships with the Continental Divide Trail Alliance and Highlands Cycling Club. This past summer the Club worked with volunteers from all over the country to clear 3 miles of new CDNST trail in the Highland Mountains south of Butte. It was a great opportunity to meet and work with other trail enthusiasts whose objectives parallel MHBCH. Over the course of two days, MHBCH members worked side by side with volunteers, including a 15 member crew of Americorps from St. Louis. Many of the volunteers had not been around horses and quickly found the value of a good horse that will carry in chainsaws, water, and other equipment used to clear the trail. The weekend included social time to talk over a campfire and try out individual cooking skills.

MHBCH partnered with the Highlands Cycling Club to construct a new bridge and turnpike by packing in one ton of bridge materials and over one ton of gravel and fill material on the Beaver Ponds trail south of Butte. To accomplish this project, MHBCH partnered with the Anaconda Job Corps to build timber bunks. Club members constructed gravel bags, which made the job of moving gravel more efficient. The project provided the Club with additional resources and experience to hone their packing skills. Several members have attended the Nine Mile Training program. Projects such as this give additional time to ‘get it right’ and learn how not to lose a load, which reduces the chance for injury to the horse and handler, and makes for a successful project.

Butte is located near the Big Hole Valley, which provides horsemen an opportunity to truly get ‘into the backcountry’ of the Pioneer Mountains and Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. The Club has been working to forge a partnership with the Wise River Ranger District to open and maintain neglected trails to provide additional backcountry riding opportunities. The Club continues to work hard with their Federal partners in these times of dwindling trail budgets and resources. The Club understands the important role they have in ensuring that backcountry trail opportunities continue in the future.

Not only are the Federal partners important, but also local governments. A partnership with Butte-Silver Bow, and the Forest Service, on Thompson Park, a congressionally designated Municipal Recreation Area, will provide urban trail opportunities for day rides and connections to the CDNST. The last new partnership is with the East Ridge Foundation, who received a grant to improve trail access on their property to the future CDNST segment on the East Ridge near Homestake Pass.

If we’ve accomplished one thing over the course of the previous year, above and beyond trail maintenance, it’s been to build new coalitions with groups and individuals who have the same goals and objectives. These partnerships are invaluable as we all try to juggle work, home, and play into a short summer season. Partnerships help to make the job of volunteering a little

Please see Partnerships, 12
“Sad News”
Reprint from Charlie Russell Chapter
January 2005 Newsletter

“We were saddened to learn last week of the death of one our most valuable members, Someone Else.” Someone Else’s passing creates a vacancy that will be hard to fill. Someone Else has been with us for many years and everyone of those years, Someone’s person’s share of work.

Whenever leadership to for inspiration as well as recognition that Someone Else support a particular project. Everyone in town — sometimes can only do so much.

Were the truth known, everyone expected that too much of Someone Else. Now Someone Else is gone. We wonder what we are going to do? Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow, but who is going to follow it? Who is going to do the things that Someone Else did? When you have a chance to participate in our activities, Remember — we cannot depend on Someone Else anymore!

The Pryor wild horses are the most Spanish of the wild herds remaining in the west. He says, “If the genetic marker data is considered along with the conformational and coat color characteristics of the horses of the PMWHR, the Pryor herd may be the most significant wild horse herd remaining in the United States.”

That they thrive in the care of East Pryor mountain is no surprise to those who know the mountain best, said Frederick Lefthand, zoning director for the Crow tribe. Winter grazing grounds, where the desert meets the base of East Pryor, covers a territory named “Bad Pass Highway”; once a route for Indians passing through the Yellowstone Basin - but a path white men found inhospitable. “That’s the white man’s name for it; it did not originate from the Indians,” he said. “There is a very supernatural thing up there in the canyons.”

It is, to this day, sacred Crow ground, said John Hill Sr., 79, advisor to the Crow tribal council. “It’s a very special place to Indian families, where we can trace back several generations to where their grandparents lived and looked for leadership from the great spirits.”

It’s a place where horses graze in the summer sun, where Whiteman-Runs-Him, a Crow scout for Lt. Col. George Custer, sat under a buffalo robe, looking for spiritual guidance, Hill said. “He held a fast up there on top of the mountain where the people could see the sun glimmer on the stretched buffalo hide...right above where the horses graze now.”

Although the origins of the herd are documented in Lewis and Clark’s journal, their history is alive in Crow memory, said Hill. They are believed to be the 65 head herd Sgt. Nathaniel Pryor bought from the Nez Perce to trade with the Mandan. By journal accounts, 15 escaped and the rest were stolen by the Crow. “We know the story, we remember when it happened,” Lefthand said. The horses have wandered the Pryors in peace, mostly, until the 1960's.

Please see Horses, 15
About your newsletter!

*Back Country Horsemen of Montana News* is published three times a year by BCH of MT, PO Box 5431, Helena, MT 59604-5431.

Publication dates are June 1, October 1, February 1. Deadline for submission of advertising and articles is the 10th of the preceding month (May 10, September 10, January 10).

The newsletter has three main emphasis areas: (1) issues (2) club activities/volunteer projects (3) light material (i.e. Humor, history, etc.). Please submit a copy that is typewritten or legible handwritten copy is acceptable. Photos should be prints only (no negatives or proofs). Black & white or color is acceptable. Please do not cut or write directly on the photos.

Submit articles, photos, and advertising to Linda Brewer, PO Box 31837, Billings, MT 59107. Phone: (406) 698-5880 e-mail: lbrewer@vikingcable.net

BCH Chapters are once again responsible for submitting articles for publication in this newsletter. Chapter divisions and deadline date for articles is as follows:

- **May 10**: Beartooth, Bitterroot, Cabinet & CMR, East Slope
- **September 10**: Flathead, Gallatin, Greater Yellowstone, Hi-Line, Judith Basin & Last Chance
- **January 10**: Mile High, Mission Valley, Missoula, Three Rivers & Upper Clark Fork

**If YOU HAVE MOVED OR PLAN TO MOVE**

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Please complete this form and mail to Linda Brewer, PO Box 31837, Billings, MT 59107.
Clarification please……...

Does MWA support horse use in wilderness areas??

At a recent MT BCH State Board meeting, a comment was made which I feel deserves a response. I had just explained that the group most responsible for the efforts of the coalition to protect the Rocky Mountain Front is the Montana Wilderness Association. Merlin Huso and I have regularly attended the Coalition meeting representing BCH. A comment made to me by other Board members indicated that in their opinion the “wilderness people” would like to eliminate stock use on public lands. I can’t speak for some of the more radical groups, but I can say that in many years of working with MWA, this has not been their policy.

I subsequently asked Bob Decker, who has served as the MWA Executive Director since 1992 to respond (response follows). Several of us have worked with Bob on conservation issues over a good many years.

Jim Brogger
Director, East Slope BCH

Montana Wilderness Association supports horse use in wilderness areas…..

November 29, 2004
By Bob Decker, Executive Director
Montana Wilderness Association

The Montana Wilderness Association (MWA) supports horse use in designated wilderness areas, both by private parties and by commercial outfitters.

Since MWA’s beginning in 1958, many of the organization’s leaders over the years have been back country horse users. In 1974, MWA published “Guide for Using Horses in Mountain Country,” by Robert W. Miller, a comprehensive booklet intended to “insure that saddle horses and pack strings will always be a part of the mountain way of life.”

MWA’s wilderness management policies, which define the organization’s beliefs about wilderness uses, state that the organization “supports human uses of wilderness for primitive recreation, including hiking, camping, and horseback riding.”

Over the years, the Montana Wilderness Association and the Back Country Horsemen have worked cooperatively on several issues that affect our mutual interests. Most importantly, MWA and the Back Country Horsemen have worked side-by-side to protect Montana’s wild public landscapes as designated wilderness areas, so that future generations may experience and revere Montana’s priceless natural heritage….on foot and on horseback.
HORSES
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That’s when the Bureau of Land Management put the horses in their cross-hairs and targeted them for elimination. Believing the horses were nothing more than unattended and unwanted ranch animals eroding grazing leases, the BLM announced a roundup to sell them to pet food manufacturers.

Communities on the Montana-Wyoming border became so enraged by the BLM’s plan that they formed the Pryor Mountain Mustang Association, which directly challenged the government. The grass-roots effort managed to take the cause to the American public with coverage from the likes of National Geographic, Newsweek, and national television affiliates.

When the roundup was scheduled in 1968, the Humane Society of the United States stepped into the fray and asked a federal judge to stop the hunt. The public outcry pushed then Interior Secretary Stewart Udall to put an end to the matter by declaring the area the Pryor Mountain National Wild Horse Range. In doing so, he created the nation’s first public horse range, free and open to the public.

“Why is it important to save them? Ours is the country that got involved with the buffalo when there was only 24 left,” said the Rev. Floyd Schweiger, 78, one of the forces behind the mustang protection group. “Why is it important to have a beautiful sunset or to have a beautiful rose?” Even today people think they are just a bunch of jugheads from neighboring ranches, but they are ignoring the science of things.

Three years later, in 1971, Congress passed the Wild-Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act, defining the wild equines of the west as “living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit.” Today the animals are protected from capture, branding, harassment or killing. With a Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range website, film documentaries and national exposure in prestigious magazines, managing the range’s human visitors has become a dilemma. “It’s been a battle all the way through to protect these horses, but that’s all in the past,” said Rev. Schweiger. “My only concern now is not to have them loved to death, not to have people intermingle with them and destroy their habitat and character.”

But just recently, multi jurisdictional turf battles and political agendas involving the US Forrest Service and the BLM, are once again putting their current and historic homelands in doubt. Powerful factions want to fence in the wild horses - limiting their ability to go into their higher meadows in July through the time the snows force them to lower elevations. Once fencing is done, the herd size (now around 160) will be reduced to about 100. That number puts the herd far below the genetically viable level and they can die out over time.

Wild horses have lived in the Pryors for at least 200 years and they are the last wild herd in Montana. I sincerely hope the powers-to-be will use courage and conviction in their decision and realize that the wild horses of the Pryors have a legal right to roam in the area in which they were found when the Wild Horse and Burro Act passed in 1971.

I envision that their spirit remains untamed, their freedom unbridled. They are the American West that was once - and still is - running free where land and sky collide in the Pryor Mountains.

Note: Parts of this article were reprinted with the permission of Betsy Cohen, reporter for the Missoulian.

FEE
Continued from 2

7. Authority to issue special recreation permits for group activities and recreation events.

8. Authority for discounted and free admission days.

9. Limits on the use of funds to ways directly related to visitor enjoyment, access, safety and prohibitions on the use of funds for biological monitoring under the Endangered Species Act and for employee bonuses.

10. A 15% cap on the total collections for administration, overhead, and indirect costs of the fee program.

11. Authority to use volunteers to collect fees.

12. Authority to waive or discount fees in exchange for volunteer services.

How, or in what form, these provisions will take place is not known, but we must keep ourselves involved and informed so we can have adequate input to the mix, as Back Country Horsemen are both volunteers and users of this resource.

For more information: www.horsecouncil.org and www.funoutdoors.com
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If you would like to join, please contact a chapter in your area.