A message from Chairman Dave

I can hardly believe it’s a new year once again. I hope all of you had a great holiday season filled with quality time with family and friends.

At our December state board meeting Charlie O’Leary reported that we had an increase in our 2005 membership for the state of Montana. This is good for our organization as numbers count when getting our message across to the appropriate agencies and government.

However, with this growth it is very important that the message we give is within our mission statement and we follow all the reasons we are backcountry horseman. As chapters of the Montana Backcountry Horseman, we need to follow all guidelines and objectives to protect our resources within the state of Montana and perpetuate the common sense use of horses in America’s backcountry and wilderness areas.

It is very important that we continue to share our knowledge by encouraging and soliciting active participation in our chapters through education of stock handling, packing and leave no trace camping to continue to keep our members interested in preserving the back country and staying involved in Backcountry Horseman.

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
Memorandum of understanding and partnership between the Back Country Horsemen of Montana and the Montana Wilderness Association

Since the inception of the Montana Wilderness Association (MWA) and the Back Country Horsemen thirty plus years ago, the two organizations have worked together for a lot of the same goals. The Montana Wilderness Association published the first manual on wise use of stock in our backcountry. Since then we have worked on numerous Wilderness Management Plans and wilderness designation issues together. While we have disagreed on some issues, it is still clear that we stand for a lot of the same values. Those being, quiet trails in a wild setting, wildlife and traditional recreations and preserving some of the last wild places in Montana. MWA has always supported wise use of pack and saddle stock in keeping with the tradition and knows of how important a role that the stock has played in maintaining our wild places and trails.

Montana BCH and MWA are working together to put in writing a more formal plan and agreement for working as partners on issues of mutual interest and compatible goals. We have a rough draft of ideas that have so far been fully embraced by both organizations and are moving forward to refine the language and create a good tool and guideline for both organizations. We look forward to comments and help from both memberships to complete this document.

Please contact:
Dave Schilz, BCH of MT
PO Box 1745
Red Lodge, MT 59068
(406)445-9808
dlazys@aol.com

John Gatchell, Conservation Director, MWA
PO Box 635
Helena, MT 59634
(406) 443-7350 ext. 106
jgatchell@wildmontana.org

It’s hard to keep up with them

Nancy Stevens Submitted by: Myra Mumma
BCH of Missoula

Missoula BCH Club was involved in so many work projects last summer that it was hard to keep up with them all, but I’ll try! Our first big shindig was the National Trails Day Blue Mountain event that was organized by Barb Koepke. This was a huge success with a lot of club participation. The parking lot was cleaned and trails from the parking lot to the lookout were cleared. The Bitterroot Draft Club brought work horses to harrow the fields near the parking lot. Passing hikers and riders filled out over 100 questionnaires on suggestions for improvement, such as a bigger parking lot! The club fed excellent chili and corn bread, courtesy of Theresa Joseph, to all who showed up. The dogs even got dog biscuits! There were so many club members coming and going that I couldn’t keep track, but participants included Paul Evenson, Don Bohne, Mike Chandler, Don and Claudia Bath, Dan Tuxbury, Don Schusted, Nancy Stevens, Mike Hartkorn, Keith Guschausky and, of course, Barb Koepke. Barb did such a tremendous job of putting the whole thing together. Thanks to all who worked so hard on this event.

Also in June, Dan Harper and Don Barth cleared the Stuart Peak Trail in the Rattlesnake. Kirk and Liz Sybrandt (son of Christian), Rick Sherman, Mike Chandler, Nancy Stevens and Keith Guschausky took on the Monture Trail clearing project. They stayed at Burnt Cabin. The trails to Limestone Pass and to Hahn Pass were cleared and we also cleaned out a

Make a note!

The post office box number for the BCH of Montana has been changed from 5431 to 4051.
mouse-infested cupboard in the cabin. Meanwhile, Pat and Charles Culver, Don Dodge and Jack Reneau worked on the Falls Creek Trail and the Lodgepole Trail.

Paul Evenson and Dan Ruxbury have made a couple of re-supply trips to lookouts on the east side of the Bob Marshall. Kirk Sybrandt has really been keeping his mules busy by packing in Fish, Wildlife & Parks biologists on several projects and also helping Paul re-supply Patrol Lookout.

Project Chairman Keith Guschausky came down with a severe case of strep throat and was laid up for nearly a month, but he still managed to keep us and the stock running! July 7-9, Mack and Connie Long, Kirk, Don Schusted and Nancy took seventeen head of stock from the North Fork Trailhead into the Danaher Cabin. We hauled lumber and construction supplies to repair damage to the cabin from a marauding grizzly bear who had ripped a hole in the wall and sampled everything edible and non-edible inside.

This was a real packing challenge. We hauled eight foot planks, concrete blocks, cement, lime, paint and stove pipe. We got a real lesson in lumber bunk use with three mules loaded down with boards. We told everyone we met we were going to build a cabin! The mules and packers did great. We didn’t have enough stock to get all the supplies in, but what we did take arrived in good shape and we had no “wrecks” or injuries to stock or humans. The day we arrived at Danaher Cabin the grizzly had been there, ripping into the cabin again. We patched up the hole and did some clean-up work inside. What a mess! Every pot, pan, cupboard and grocery item had been sampled. There was a fresh pile of bear poop outside which contained aluminum. It’s true what they say about belt buckles!

Boy, was Keith steamed he couldn’t go on this project. He had to stay home and worry about us. He ran up his phone bill keeping track of our movements through the Forest Service. He knew where we were and what we were doing before we did!

On July 10-12, Nancy Stevens and Brendt and Nancy Stoverud made a grocery run from North Fork Trailhead up to the Limestone Forest Service trail crew. We got “moosed” by a big bull in camp which livened things up for a while.

In late July, Keith crawled of his sick bed (he said he was tired of looking at his toes) and joined Kirk and Brendt to pack in some retired smokejumpers to Shanly Creek. They returned the following week to pick the smokejumpers up. Christian and Liz also joined the trip.

Keith and Nancy did two more grocery runs to the Limestone trail crew. Dry ice does an impressive job!

Paul, Kirk, Christian and several East Slope BCH members packed thirty sacks of hay cubes from Benchmark over Stadler Pass to Basin Cabin.

Please see Missoula, page 6
What have we been up to?

October 15th Day Ride in the Jette Area

The ride was lead by Scott and Bonnie Kiser and was attended by 22 riders. Of the 22 riders, 15 were brand new to the club. The ride took about 4 hours. The weather was perfect for a sunshiny fall ride. Scott decided to make this ride a bit different from the norm. He made this into a Poker Ride. Each rider throughout the ride drew a playing card. Riders were encouraged to exchange cards until the drawing of the last card. Then you were set with the hand you had. Prizes were given for the highest and the lowest hands. High hand went to Kate Campbell and low hand went to Carson Coryell, both new members as of the Oktoberfest. Thanks to all who attended and made this a fun first event for many riders.

Bonnie Kiser

November 7th Day Ride at Buffalo Bridge

The weather reminded all 16 riders of just what their warm coats were for. The wind was brisk but we still had a nice ride. We rode along the banks of the Flathead River for approximately 4 hours. Fortunately we were in terrain that allowed us to stay low and out of the wind most of the time. A good time was had by all. Carl and I were happy to lead this ride and we look forward to many more.

Sincerely,
Dennese and Carl Schauss

(Thanks to Karen Tromp for the photos.)
Annual Family Fun Ride
Club Fund Raiser

Date: July 8, 2006
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
Karen Haubbert 846-1088
Packing Support for BMF

Deborah Schatz
Flathead BCH

In August of 2005, my husband and I volunteered to provide packing support for the Bob Marshall Foundation’s (BMF) Straight Creek Project. On a warm Sunday morning, we packed in the food and tools for the project leader and five volunteers from the Continental Divide Trail Alliance, who would perform a week of trail maintenance in the Straight Creek area. The following weekend, we went back to pack them out.

The BMF coordinated the project with the Forest Service, organized the volunteers, provided food for the week, and provided the project leader who oversaw the details of making the project come together on the ground. A lot of time is invested in these projects before they ever happen.

The five volunteers came from all over the United States—one from Chicago and one from Los Angeles. I was touched by the people who came on this project, some using their summer vacation time to work on trails in the Bob. They all worked very hard, and made sure the BMF received a good return on their investment in this project. During their week in the Bob, this crew cleared 14 trees, installed 38 new log water bars, re-treaded 1,316 yards of trail, and cleared 4.5 more miles of trail.

Without packing support, this crew of six people would each have had to carry approximately 12 pounds of tools and 17 pounds of food, in addition to their own personal gear, for ten miles from the trailhead into the Straight Creek area. We hope our packing support made that trip a little easier, and perhaps allowed this crew to get more trail work accomplished during the following days.

Whether we were all there because we love the Bob, because we love Wilderness, or because we simply wanted to get away from it all, it didn’t matter. Sitting around the campfire, sharing stories and experiences, meeting new people with new perspectives—these things made the project memorable and enjoyable for me.

To volunteer with the BMF, please call Paul Travis at 863-5411.

Missoula

continued from page 3

Thanks to all those who helped and contributed stock. Thanks to Smoke for the use of Homer and Manhattan, who at the time this was written, were getting ready to haul more bagels and broccoli up to the hungry trail crew at Limestone. Great job everyone!

Keith Guschausky
Projects Chairman
~ AGENDA ~

All Events to Take Place at The KwaTaQNuk

Friday, March 24, 2006

- State Board Pre-Convention Meeting: 1-7
- Vendor displays available 5-9 P.M.
- Friday Evening Registration: 5-9 P.M.
- Photo Contest Registration: 5-9 P.M.
- No host cocktail and social hour: 7 P.M.

Saturday, March 25, 2006

- Vendor displays available all day
- Convention Registration 7 A.M. to 8 A.M.
- Photo Contest Registration Continues: 7-9 A.M.
- General Session Starts: 8 A.M.
  - Presentation of the Flag/Pledge of Allegiance
  - Looking back at 2005 a slide presentation by MVBCH
- Break
- General Session continues
- Luncheon
- General Session continues
- Speake: “Be Bear Aware”
  Chuck Bartlebaugh of The Center for Wildlife
- Attend scheduled tours
- No host cocktail hour
- Quick Draw Artist Event
- Banquet
  - Live and Silent Auction
- Dance the evening away to Live Music
  Hosted by The Polson Elks Lodge, 512 Main Street, Polson

Sunday, March 26, 2006

- Presidents’ and Spouses’ breakfast @ The KwaTaQNuk 7-8:30 A.M.
- General Session reconvenes 9:00 A.M.
- Round Robin (Time Permitting)
- Break
- General Session adjourns
- State Board Meeting (Post Convention)
  Immediately following the convention at the KwaTaQNuk

Convention Chairman: Mr. Connie Flaissay, (406) 64-5001
  e-mail: dicon374@blackfoot.net

Vendor Displays Friday at 5 p.m., thru Sunday afternoon:
- The vendor area will be open to the public throughout the entire convention including during the General Sessions
- Interested in having a booth, please let us know.
  Contact Donna Perkins; (406) 675-2338 e-mail: dmferret@wcom.net

Raffle Items: Tickets $2.00 ea. or 3 for $5.00:
- King Size Down Comforter, by “Three Dog Down” valued at $100.00
- Framed and Matted print “Wild Horse Sunset”, by local artist Karen Nolas
- 40” Round Pen Pkg by Hi Qaul, valued at $1,740, from Mountain West Co-Op
  Additional tickets contact:
  Scott Kiser (406) 883-2158 skisoe@complus.net or
  David Crawford (406) 675-4201 dcrawford121@comcast.net

Quick Draw Artist Event:
- Local artists will be performing their artistic specialty, to include painting and drawing, during the no host cocktail hour and into the banquet.
  These pieces of art will be available for purchase through live auction later on that same evening.
  Contact: Donna Perkins; (406) 675-2338 e-mail: dmferret@wcom.net

Silent Auction:
- Auction items will be on display at the convention
- Individuals welcome to donate items
  Contact: Scott Kiser (406) 883-2158 skisoe@complus.net or
  David Crawford (406) 675-4201 dcrawford121@comcast.net

Live Auction, Auctioneer: Bobbi Rasman:
- Each Chapter is asked to bring one item for the State Organization auction.
  This is the fundraiser for the BCKML. Item to be valued at $200-300 or more.

Photo Contest and Display:
- Register Friday evening or Saturday morning until 9:00 A.M.
- Photo contests will have 4 (four) categories
- Photos to be voted on by convention attendees via silent ballot
- Categories: Limit 2 (two) photos for each category
  1) Animals: Horses, wildlife, dogs, cats, etc.
  2) America the Beautiful: scenery, mountains, lakes, etc.
  3) Kids of All Ages: People young old the not so old
  4) Back Country Homemen at Work: work projects, club projects, activities or events
- Photos taken by amateur photographers only and must be BCKML members
- Photo size shall be 5x7 or 8x10 must be mounted or matted (no frames please)
- Photographs Name and address shall be attached to the back of the photo.
  Contact Marie Hall (406) 676-6203, or Carol McCrum (406) 676-8184

Convention Registration: Contact Paula Weaver, (406) 883-3092
  e-mail: pweaver@tamsco.com
STATE CONVENTION REGISTRATION
“2006” Back Country Horsemen of Montana
March 24th, 25th and 26th, 2006

Our Legacy, “The Back Country” ~
Hosted by: Mission Valley Back Country Horsemen
Best Western KwaTagNuk Resort, Polson, Montana

Convention Participant

B.C.H. Chapter: ___________________________ Delegate: Yes No

Name: __________________________________________

Mailing Address: _______________________________________

City: ___________________ State: ___________ Zip: ______

Phone: (____)____________________ E-mail: _________________________

Guest: ________________________________________________

Registration Fee: Before 02/24/06, $65.00 per person, After: 02/24/06, $75.00 per person
Full Registration fees include: Lunch and Banquet and Guided Tour.

~ Spouse and/or Guest’s of Participant ~

Name: _____________________________ Name: _____________________________

Name: _____________________________ Name: _____________________________

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Guest Total: $________________
Registration Fee: $________________
Grand Total: $________________

Please make checks payable to and mail completed form with fees to:
Mission Valley BCH
P.O. Box 1132
Polson, MT 59860

All registrations must be received by: 03/15/2006
For further assistance please contact:
Paula Weaver, (406) 883-3092
or e-mail: pweaver@tamosco.com
10

2006 State Convention Raffle Prizes

King Size Down Comforter
Valued at $300.00
by “Three Dog Down”
of Polson, Montana

Framed & Matted Print
“Wild Horse Sunset”
Valued at $300.00
by local artist
Karen Noles

“I discovered this view of Flathead Lake’s Wildhorse Island while horseback riding with a friend. As we let our horses rest, we sat mesmerized, watching the splendor of changing colors in the sky and waters as the sun slowly set. It seemed only natural for me to paint this scene due to my love for Montana and of horses from an early age. A serene, pristine setting, where wild horses run free. Montana—the last best place.” Karen Noles, Artist

40’ Round Pen Package
Valued at $1,740
by Hi-Qual
From Mountain West Co-Op
of Ronan, Montana

~Raffle Items: Tickets $2.00 ea. or 3 for $5.00~
1. King Size Down Comforter, by “Three Dog Down” valued at $300.00
2. Framed and Matted print “Wild Horse Sunset”, by local artist Karen Noles
3. 40’ Round Pen Package by Hi Qual, valued at $1,740, from Mountain West Co-Op
Additional tickets contact: David Crawford (406) 675-4293 cbardiamond1@ronan.net or Scott Kiser (406) 883-2186 flyingk@compuplus.net
2005 has been a busy year for the Mile High Back Country Horseman. We began the year on April 16th when we had a membership drive and a ‘Leave No Trace’ display at the Davis Arena in Whitehall at a horse owner’s workshop. On April 23rd, we had a horse safety training followed by chainsaw training on April 30th for all our members.

On May 6th, 7th, and 8th, the MHBCH had a display at the May Fair in Butte to raise funds for the chapter. We ended May with an exhibit, in conjunction with a pack demonstration by Dave Crawford, at Quality Supply in Butte.

On June 4th, National Trails Day, the MHBCH started clearing the Elkhorn Lake Trail but had to stop due to snow accumulation over the winter. On June 11th, we had a fun ride in Elk Park and Joe Sologub hosted the event. During the last week of June, 6 members took a 5-day pack trip into the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

On July 12th, we cleared trails and hung signs on the Continental Divide Trail near the Beaver Ponds, southeast of Butte. On July 28th, we had a work project in Wise River clearing trails and building a bridge at Boulder Creek.

On August 6th and 7th, we worked on the Continental Divide Trail in the Highland Mountains south of Butte with the Ameri Corps volunteers from St. Louis, Missouri. Jocelyn Dodge, Butte Ranger District Recreation Forester and MHBCH member, received the Land Manager of the Year award from the Continental Divide Trail Alliance. We had a poker ride for fun at Elk Park to benefit the Elk Park Volunteer Fire Department on August 27th.

September began with the construction of switchbacks in the Gold Creek area. We also started our general meetings followed in October and November by hunting season when several of our members got a chance to pack an elk.

On December 10th, the MHBCH lost a member of the group, Dave Stevens, in an unexpected and tragic accident. Fellow horseman honored Dave by riding and escorting Dave to his final resting place. At the end of December, the MHBCH began preparation for the election of new Officers, the planning of next year’s projects, and 10 years as a chapter!
Tire and Automotive Service throughout Montana!
For a dependable ride, outfit your truck and horse trailer with Whalen Tires

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904 S. Utah
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 723-5495

Butte #2
2905 Harrison Ave
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 494-4441

Butte #3
101 E. Park
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 723-6596

Belgrade
410 Gallatin Farmers Rd
Belgrade, MT 59714
(406) 388-2300

Dillon
535 N. Washington
Dillon, MT 59725
(406) 683-6128

Billings
2318 1st Ave N.
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 245-3088

Bozeman
319 W. Griffin
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 587-4342

Helena
1935 Washington
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 442-4603

Missoula
3002 W. Broadway
Missoula, MT 59808
(406) 721-1030

Great Falls
1200 Central Ave W.
Great Falls, MT 59404
(406) 727-4400

Kalispell
2900 Hwy 2 E
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 755-8448

Havre
1736 Hwy 2 W. STE #4
Havre, MT 59501
(406) 265-3411

Membership stats show little growth

Charlie O’Leary
BCHM Treasurer

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Charlie Russell Chapter saw the largest growth with 20 new members or a 36% increase. Cabinet was a close second with 34%. Judith Basin had a respectable 27% growth.

Eight chapters saw an increase, seven a decrease and one remained the same.

Congratulations to these chapters for their great recruitment efforts! And remember everyone, new members are the lifeblood of any strong organization! Let’s see what we can do in 2006.

He will be missed
Charlie O’Leary
Mile High BCH

Mile High Chapter board member Dave Stevens passed away on December 20, 2005 by way of a logging accident. Dave and his wife Eileene moved to Montana in 1999 from Indiana where they raised their two sons. They bought a small ranch southwest of Butte where Dave trained and enjoyed his horses. He volunteered for many church and civic activities, and was a volunteer fireman. He was active in Rotary in Butte and participated in their East Ridge Foundation Trail Project.

After joining MHBCH, Dave soon became a board member and eagerly hosted our Horse Safety classes in 2005 at his facilities. He was involved in the work on the Continental Divide Trail and his slow talking humor entertained us at general meetings and on the trail. It was said that Dave could get more mileage out of a bad joke than most people could get out of a good one!

Twenty one riders followed a horse drawn wagon on December 16 to escort Dave to his final resting place. We, in the Mile High Chapter, were honored to be part of that procession. A truly fine Back Country Horseman has ridden on to greener meadows and higher peaks.

“Whalen Tire supports Back Country Horsemen”

It’strue!

The old mare watched the tractor work
A thing of rubber and steel,
Ready to follow the slightest wish
Of the man who held the wheel.
She said to herself as it passed by,
You gave me an awful jolt
But there’s still one thing you cannot do,
You cannot raise a colt.
-Source unknown
About your newsletter!

*Back Country Horsemen of Montana News* is published three times a year by BCH of MT, PO Box 4051, Helena, MT 59604-4051.

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

**NAME:** ___________________________ **PHONE NUMBER:** ___________________________

**ADDRESS:** ___________________________ **CITY/STATE:** ___________________________

Please complete this form and mail to Linda Brewer, PO Box 31837, Billings, MT 59107.
### OKTOBERFEST AND MEMBERSHIP DRIVE * A GREAT SUCCESS

By: Joanna Shelton Erb
Mission Valley BCH

Everyone who came to the annual Oktoberfest and membership drive on Saturday, October 8 was treated to a great night of good food, good music and good dancing – not to mention good conversation with new and long-time friends. Leon Hall near Charlo was filled with more than 100 people, dancing to tunes played by the Montana Old Time Fiddlers and eating beef, ham, turkey and a host of potluck treats that filled four large buffet tables. (I’d sure like to get the recipe for some of the side dishes and especially the desserts.)

The Fiddlers taught people some new dance steps, calling out the steps to their square dance medleys. And among those learning these new steps was a family that came all the way from Australia! No, they didn’t come all that way just for the Oktoberfest, even though the event attracted folks from as far away as Noxon and Hot Springs. They were visiting Connie and Diane Plaissey and just had the luck to be here when we locals were kicking up our heels and eating like kings. By all accounts, they went away impressed with the fun and the friendliness of the group.

And fun was not the only thing gained during the evening. Not only did we get some good publicity for the work of the club through an article in the Valley Journal, we also signed up some new members and even came out with a small profit from the night. This should help us as we get ready for the really big event coming up – the State Convention next March. With a little more money in our coffers and some more willing hands to help, we should be in good shape to make the 2006 Back Country Horsemen Convention as big a success as the Oktoberfest.

I want to give a special note of thanks to those who helped with the Oktoberfest (especially the volunteer clean-up crew) and to my fellow Oktoberfest planner and organizer, Donna Perkins.

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Advertisers that choose to run their ad two times get the third time running free.

Submissions can be received from individuals, chapters, or directly from the advertisers.

A 25% commission will be paid to individuals or chapters.
And then it rained!

Dan Pence
Three Rivers BCH

Unfortunately, all too many of our planned rides and projects can be summed up in four words—“and then it rained”. Actually, it snowed part of the time. We didn’t get that much precipitation after June, but it always seemed to show up any time a group event was planned. Sometimes we rode in the rain anyway, but it did put a damper on the season.

Our activities began on April 9 with a spring ride in the Frying Pan Hills starting at Tom and Patty Hough’s house. It was a fun ride with a barbecue and potluck dinner following the event.

Jack Sullivan was trail boss for the next ride in Hell Canyon on May 22. We never located the Indian pictographs Jack promised. Jack hadn’t seen the pictographs for 40 years and used logging and new roads in the area as an excuse. The rest of us decided he was just lost, which isn’t unusual.

The planned ride in East Fork of the Blacktail, which includes campground cleanup and trail maintenance, was postponed from June 4 to several dates. The work project never materialized as a group effort due to rain and slick roads every time anything was scheduled. The project was eventually completed as an individual effort by a couple of members who could slip in between storms.

Dave Mathson, Bob McNeill and Dan Pence gave horse packing demonstrations to about a hundred people during Bannack Days at Bannack State Park on July 16 and 17, while Larry Davies manned the “Leave No Trace” display until the tent blew down. Mark Sant rode with the “Vigilantes” during re-enactment of a historic ride from Virginia City to Bannack during the event. Mark apparently didn’t resemble Sheriff Henry Plummer or the “Innocents”, since no one strung him up when the dusty group arrived in Bannack.

Several members participated in a Lewis and Clark Parade when the “Corps of Discovery” display arrived in Dillon on August 5. On August 6 Dan Pence gave a horse packing demonstration during Lewis and Clark celebration activities using a sawbuck pack saddle hand made from canoe paddles (Lewis and Clark used their canoe paddles to make pack saddles when they acquired horses from the Shoshone at Camp Fortunate in August, 1805). On July 31 Dave Mathson gave a similar packing demonstration to those attending a re-enactment of Lewis and Clark meeting the Shoshone at Camp Fortunate (Clark Canyon Reservoir).

Our primary support activity for 2005 involved the first national endurance race to be hosted in the Dillon area on August 12-14. Members helped mark and clear trails involved, manned gates and check points, hosted breakfasts and dinner, and pulled flagging after the race. The race was a significant success in spite of fog that limited visibility and some rain.

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BigSky Convention

Would you like to know what’s going on in Montana horse circles? Then plan to attend the Back Country Horsemen of Montana Convention, to be held March 24-26, 2006, at the KwaTaqNuk Resort in Polson, Mont. Montana is where it all began; The first backcountry horseman group was formed there in 1973.

Hosted by the Mission Valley Back Country Horsemen, the convention will feature news from each Montana chapter, including a roundup of fundraisers, fun times, and trail work. Speakers and informative workshops will also be offered, such as a “Be Bear Aware” (www.bebearaware.org), presented by Chuck Bartlebaugh.

Each backcountry chapter in Montana will have club displays. Plus, there will be a photo contest, a silent and live auction, and a raffle. Vendor tables will display and sell Western artifacts, Native American art, saddles, and more. For more information, contact the Mission Valley Back Country Horsemen, (406) 883-3092 or (406) 644-5001: www.bchmt.org

# MONTANA BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEÑEN STATE CHAPTERS

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If you would like to join, please contact a chapter in your area.