Letter from the Chair

Connie Long, Chairman, BCH Montana

This being my first Chairman’s message, I would like to start off by saying “Thank you” for giving me your trust and confidence to lead the Back Country Horsemen of Montana organization and electing me as your Chairman. I am humbled. I will do my best to work hard for you, to be a capable and competent leader. I invite you to contact me with any issues, concerns or questions related to Back Country Horsemen of Montana. I have a very busy summer planned, but I will get back to you as soon as I possibly can.

As you know, this year is the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Wilderness is very important to the legacy of BCH and to our heritage as horsemen.

In wilderness, we keep the traditional skills of pack and saddle stock alive on our public lands. I have heard of several 50th Anniversary celebrations around the state. I would like to encourage each chapter to get involved with your local events. These events are a great avenue to showcase BCH, and to show folks that what we do is important. Back Country Horsemen are assisting public land organizations meet their goals through our projects.

If you need any assistance organizing or planning your participation in 50th Anniversary events, please let me know. I am very interested in what is going on around the state. I would appreciate being informed about what your organization is doing or did as part of these state-wide celebrations.

As always, when we are out on the trails, whether for a BCH project or just for your own enjoyment, let’s keep in mind that we should leave the trails and campsites in better shape than when we found them.

Yours on Wilderness Trails,

Connie
Members of the Cabinet Unit recently began a project of building two drive-through campsites with corrals and feeders at the Pleasant Valley Campground on Highway 2, 30 miles south of Libby, MT.

The project was originated through cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and funded by a RAC grant. The feeders were built by Troy High School students under the supervision of Cabinet BCH member Cecil McDougal.

About 15 members of the Cabinet Unit put in several days erecting the corrals and feeders. The two spots will accommodate vehicles with large trailers. It is our hope the camp spots will be available for use by the end of July.

For more information please feel free to contact the Cabinet BCH @ 406-293-7954

We the people of Montana, grateful to God for the quiet beauty of our state, the grandeur of our mountains, the vastness of our rolling plains, and desiring to improve the quality of life, equality of opportunity and to secure the blessings of liberty for this and future generations do ordain and establish this constitution.

– Preamble of the Constitution of the State of Montana
**Dutch Oven Breakfast**

Compliments Rona Johnson, Wild Horse Plains, BCHM

**Ingredients:**

- Corn bread ingredients for your favorite recipe
- 2# Sausage (plus 3 Tbs. olive oil if sausage is lean)
- 1 medium to large onion
- ½ # mushrooms (optional)
- 2 cans whole berry cranberries

In a mixing bowl, mix your favorite cornbread recipe.

Heat a medium to large Dutch oven over the fire. Add sausage and onion (and oil, if needed) and brown. Add mushrooms and continue cooking for a couple minutes.

Spoon cranberries over the sausage mixture. Move to low fire area.

Layer the cornbread mixture over the top, smoothing the surface. Cover oven with lid.

Check when you smell the cornbread. Test for done-ness. A straw or dry pine needle should come out dry if inserted into the cornbread layer when it is thoroughly cooked)

mmm-mmm!

Best served with scrambled eggs and cowboy coffee.

*Photo Courtesy Craig Edwards*
A Few Highlights of the 2014 “Legends & Legacy” Conference

The Annual Back Country Horsemen of Montana Conference coincided with the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act and the 40th Anniversary of the hosting Missoula Chapter. The Missoula Chapter did an admirable job organizing the conference, themed “Legends & Legacy”. The conference went off without a hitch, as far as this observer could tell. The Hilton Garden Inn in Missoula provided a great meeting space with plenty of room for vendors and meetings, good service and tasty meals.

Connie Long (Missoula) was nominated Chair of the Back Country Horsemen of Montana. Connie’s energy, organizational talents, and vision will be great gifts for the organization’s future. Previous Chair of two years standing, Mark Himmel (Charlie Russell), was recognized by the group with applause and an award of a BCHM-embroidered vest. Mark’s quiet and humble approach created a great atmosphere for success during his tenure. Brad Pollman (Bitterroot) takes over as Vice Chair, Carl Rich (Charlie Russell) as Treasurer, and Sandy Taylor (Three Rivers) will continue as Secretary. Chuck Miller (Bitterroot) is National Secretary. He will be spelled by John Chepulis (Beartooth), who was nominated Alternate National Director.

The film “Untrammeled” was introduced by Connie Long, who, along with many members of Montana’s Back Country Horsemen, dedicated a huge amount of time and caring effort toward the project. The theme of the film is about introducing a love for wilderness to the next generation. Filmed in Montana’s Scapegoat and Bob Marshall Wilderness areas, it features Montana high school and college age youth as they experience wilderness, some for the very first time. This film is both moving and inspiring; “awesome” was the consensus of conference attendees. There were many a dewy eye to be seen during the showing. Produced in partnership with the US Forest Service for the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act, it will be featured at wilderness celebrations occurring throughout the nation. You can watch it anytime you like by following this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krtp5gFvixc&feature=youtu.be

Encouraging the presence of youth in the back country and cultivating youth leadership and participation in the organization is a thread that ties last year’s convention theme to this year’s gathering. The Flathead Chapter proposed a resolution that would include entering a line item into the State budget to support youth education and youth programming. The resolution was accepted and Rick Potts rose to the challenge by making a personal donation of a whopping $700 for that purpose! Thanks, Rick! It will be great to see how the new Youth Committee moves this important issue forward.

The Beartooth Chapter entered a resolution that would advocate use of a “Limited Entryway” gate designed to permit pack animals through while blocking ATV access on trails where motorized use is not permitted. The resolution was read. John Simmons (Beartooth) provided background on the entry gate design, which he built, and demonstrated to attendees by video clip. The Limited Entryway gate is already in use by the BLM. The design is currently being evaluated by the Forest Service for ADA compliance.

Jim McGarvey, Chair of Back Country Horsemen of America, served as this year’s keynote speaker. One of his challenges is to help introduce horsemen across the country to the BCHA and informing those not in the know about the important work BCHA and state chapters do. Among the many projects Jim has accomplished is the creation of a new BCHA logo, a website, and the development of an educational film. Attendees got a sneak preview of the film under development and rose to the Utah Challenge, agreeing to **(continued)**
provide financial support for the project. We wish Jim and the BCHA the best on this project and look forward to seeing the final product.

A “Special Resolution” was written and read in fun by Mike Chandler, offering to bring government officials to the Nine Mile center to teach them a thing or two! ;-)

In addition to the screening of *Untrammeled*, there were a number of other great multimedia presentations featured at the conference. This year’s hosts presented an inspiring slideshow highlighting Missoula Chapter training and events throughout 2013. The Missoula chapter has a lot of energy, based on the accomplishments highlighted in the slide show!

Cindy Ray introduced a video from the Wild Horse Plains entitled *Rehabilitation of Big Hole Peak Lookout, 2013*. As part of the “Passport in Time” project on the Lolo National Forest, grant funding was secured and many groups participated in the lookout rehabilitation. The film was well done and it is inspiring to see great work like this accomplished. There’s more to do, but it will all be finished by next year. Might be a nice spot to take a ride and check it out.

The video, *How ‘Bout Them Cowgirls* was a light-hearted tribute to women in the Back Country Horsemen. This film was especially appropriate this year in light of the first woman Chair being elected to the BCHM.

The 2015 BCHM Convention will be in the Bitterroot (March 27-29, 2015, Hamilton). Kathy Hundley (Selway Pintler) presented a slide show for next year’s convention. Kathy noted that the last two years’ conventions were held by the two oldest chapters, while next year’s convention will be held by the youngest chapter. As if organizing a convention is not enough work, the Bitterroot chapter was just awarded a RAC grant and will be building another campground. This will be completed by year-end.

Congratulations to the organizers of this year’s BCHM Conference. It was a great success!

*Sawing competition brought on the grrrls, the boys, youth, and the peanut gallery.*

*Passing the torch. The new guardians take the helm.*
Thanks for all you do and all you’ve done, Smoke!
Rick Potts’s generous donation kicks off new BCHM Youth Program.

Carol Thoen announces nominations.
The youth voice was heard.

Say, who’s that movie star?
2014 for the Last Chance Back Country Horsemen started out strong and productive. To start with, our membership is up 37%. The best part of that is the age of most of the new members is below 40 years old. It’s nice to see the younger generation getting involved.

We kicked off our work projects with a two-day trail clearing in the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. This is an adopted trail project our club has done for years. There were two main reasons for starting early in May, one was a person disappeared in 2013 and the search for him continues, but was hampered by heavy downfall that blocked the trail and second we needed to clear the trail in preparation for a pack support project for the Helena Nation Forest.

The first day 17 members showed up, we split into two groups and proceeded to saw our way through. Bob Tomaskie, an expert teamster had big Iris in harness and removed a large number of trees without cutting them. What a powerful mule!!

The second day, nine members returned to complete the project. In all there were around 100 trees removed in a 10 mile section.

The next project we participated in was the equine expo at the fairgrounds. We set up a complete backcountry hunting camp, an administration tent and a tent for the Montana Wilderness Association group to use, along with our club trailer and 3 pens to display our pack mules. The administration tent had all the information about what we do along with a video highlighting some of our work projects. We raffled off a yeti cooler and a pair of Cape buffalo chinks. The packing demonstration was well attended and our hands on packing at the camp was even better. We had young, old, male and female participate and enjoy what they learned. As a result of everyone’s effort we added 8 new members that day.

At the parade of breeds our club again was well represented. Jeff Brandt had his pack string all decked out in show quality Decker pack saddles, matching halters, blankets and mantied loads with his brand on the manties. Bob Tomaskie drove his 4 up hitch with his show harness and wagon. Bob’s 83 year old mother Beverly, (also a member) drove a single cart and was decked out in show attire impressing the crowd. All in all, a great turn out and participation by LCBCH!

Our latest project was to pack hay and repair fence at the Indian Meadow work center. At 9:00 am, 23 members show up at the work center with 2 Forest Service personnel. A quick tail board and safety meeting, and the work began. Twenty-four bales of hay were manties and loaded on the mules. Six LCBCH members left the work center early and cleared trail to Webb Lake so the pack stock wouldn’t have any delays. Three small strings of four each, with two outriders departed an hour later enroot to Webb Lake Forest Service Cabin. The trip to Webb Lake was a great trip, cool and no bugs, no problems with stock and not even one load of hay had to be adjusted. Maybe a combination of good packers and good luck! Once we arrived at the cabin we unloaded, removed all manties and placed the hay in the Forest Service shed.

A nice warm sunny afternoon we enjoyed our lunch and numerous lies were told about who had the best string, whose mantie looked the best, were some but, all in good humor. Finished with lunch, prepared our stock and headed back, made the round trip in six hours. The crew that stayed at the work center had the task of repairing the pasture fence. Several trees were cut out, wire spliced, and stretched until the pastures were secure. This short paragraph doesn’t do justice to the amount to all the work that was done and the amount of pasture fence (continued)
that was repaired. All work competed it was time for dinner, great spaghetti feed with salad, French bread, cakes, cookies and all the trimmings. What a feed! This is what it is all about, great food, great friends and a great sense of accomplishment. Oh! By the way, my string was the best and my manties looked the best. Again thanks to all for jobs well done! Looking to the future to do it all again!

Some of the upcoming projects are Search and Rescue pack support, Continental Divide Trail pack support, Tizer cabin reroof, build a new porch and clear trails in the Elkhorns; and Bob Marshall Foundation pack support.

The Wilderness Act – A Legacy

“Legacy” is a powerful concept.

A legacy is something that individuals build to last long after they’re gone.

While some choose legacies based on what they think is important, others hope for a way to be remembered as they see their time getting short. Both motivations can drive individuals to surpass normal goals to leave something for their families or communities.

But some are compelled to leave a legacy for the nation. And few things provide a longer lasting legacy than wilderness protection.”

–by Laura Lindquist
Bozeman Chronicle, June 22, 2014

This story features Smoke Elser and Joan Montagne. Read the story here: http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/sunday/article_917a7d28-f8cf-11e3-b6a8-001a4bcf887a.html

“Common Ground”
Film features the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act

The Rocky Mountain Heritage Act would establish 40,000 acres for protection along the Rocky Mountain Front. This 18-minute long film interviews ranchers in the area about their perceptions of wilderness and protection.

The film is free and available to be viewed at www.commongrounddoc.com.

Thanks to Al Luebeck for alerting the editor to the press release and the film. Al is a wilderness advocate, conservationist, past legislator, and member of the MWA “Council of Elders.”

“In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”

–The Wilderness Act, 1964
O
n Sept 3rd, 1964 President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act and simultaneously created a number of ‘instant’ wilderness areas in Montana, one of which was the Anaconda Pintlar Wilderness Area. It had been previously known since 1937 as the Anaconda Pintlar Primitive Area. In later years it underwent a slight spelling change to correctly honor its namesakes, Charles and Katie Pintler.

I have packed and camped there many times since 1958 and would like to offer up one of my favorite routes in case you are thinking of a pack trip there in the coming months. It is truly a place to be celebrated in this 50th year of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

There are numerous ways to enter the “A-P” but my preference is from the beautiful Big Hole Valley and specifically Pintler Creek trailhead. If you arrive at the trailhead late in the day you can set up there for the night and enjoy a nice hike to Pintler Falls or visit Pintler Lake a couple miles back down the road. If you are anxious to get going and don’t mind just a short ride the first day you can go in just two miles to the mile long Pintler Meadows. Camping at the upper end gives you access to the Beaver Creek trail which leads to the Elk Park area near the Continental Divide, but it can be a bit challenging and isn’t cleared as often as the main Pintler Cr. trail.

It’s about 8 miles from the trailhead via the main trail to Oreamnos Lake which is a beautiful location. You have to camp 1/4 mile from the lake with stock and you are limited to 12 head throughout the area. If the lake has been stocked recently the fishing can be good. From Oreamnos you can ride over Pintler Pass on down to Johnson Lake (about 4 miles). There are two places to camp with stock – south of the lake and east of the lake in a meadow that was about half burned over a few years back. Johnson has good fishing and is popular with hikers who camp close to the lake.

There are several day rides you can do out of Johnson Lake. East over Rainbow pass to Rainbow Lake (3 miles), north to Edith (3 miles), Tamarack (5 miles), or both lakes (12-13 miles round trip) . All of these rides involve 1,500 to 2,500 foot elevation gains and multiple switchbacks.

To continue on a loop that will take you back to the trucks, head west to Phyllis Lakes. You have to stop and hike down to Lower Phyllis (a tenth of a mile and 200 feet elevation drop) where the fishing can be good. Continue on to Little Johnson and over Bitterroot Pass to Kelly Lake, which is a good stock camp but no fish. Ripple Lake is a mile away and has fish. If you stay there two nights you can easily visit both Ripple and Hidden Lakes on day rides and view the regenerating forest which was completely burned in the upper Bitterroot in the 2000 fires. Those of you who are ‘peakbaggers’ may want to climb West Pintler Peak from Hidden Lake for a great view of 40 miles of the Continental Divide which bisects the Wilderness.

Ride southward next to the Continental Divide Trail and down to Mystic Lake. There’s an excellent horse camp three tenths of a mile to the west. Fish at Mystic and enjoy seeing the restored ranger cabin while you’re there. Nice day trip from this camp down to Lion Lake (3 miles) where the fishing is usually good.

Time to head home via the CDT by either going back to Pintler Creek or down the Beaver Creek trail. Either way, plan on 13 miles, but it’s mostly downhill. So check this out on the maps and Google Earth. You can mix and match as you like and enter from the portal of your choice. Check with the Pintler, Wisdom, or Wise River Ranger Districts for specific regulations and trail conditions. Have fun, be safe and enjoy one of Montana’s wilderness gems.

(more info at http://www.wilderness.net/NWPS/wildView?WID=10)
The Montana Horse Welfare Council had its first organizational meeting in October, 2010; we received our federal 501(c)3 in July, 2012. This process was tedious as we started on a shoestring budget and what was once a large group of interested people dwindled to a small core group of volunteers who have steadfastly persevered to move the Council forward to where it is today.

We formed as a state-wide non-profit and have developed four main areas of function: Hay/Healthcare, Support of Law Enforcement, Education, and Foster/Placement. In our first years, we mainly focused on education and fielding calls of reports of equine neglect. We sponsored several mini educational workshops including Montana equine law and essential oil for equines.

With the help of our volunteers and contributions from various fundraisers, we were happy to be able to offer our first hay bank support this year. Horse owners can apply through our website; funds are sent directly to their hay suppliers. The recipients are asked to repay the hay bank fund when they can, so that others may benefit as needed.

This year we were also able to assist in our first foster care/placement and we are proud to present the story of our little filly (Taffy):

Late last year we received a call from an out of state truck driver who reported seeing some severely underweight horses in southeastern Montana. He and his wife are horse owners and they decided to make a donation to help after we were able to remove a mare and filly from an unfortunate situation.

The horses were located on the Crow reservation and we were grateful to get the help of the agency’s law enforcement to oversee the removal and eventual release of the surviving filly to our custody. The horses were seen by our veterinarian and initially given a body score of one for the mare and the filly a two. He gave the mare a poor prognosis and unfortunately she did not make it through the sudden cold weather that had hit the area at that time.

In April of this year, Taffy was adopted to her forever happy home and you can see by the photos that she is a beautiful example of what can be done when humans care. Please contact us or donate via our website mthorse.org. We are also on Facebook as mthorse.

Volunteers are always needed and welcome!

Joanna Dove, President, Helena, MT
Wendy Hergenraeder, Vice President, Billings, MT
Karen Ososki, Treasurer, Bozeman, MT
Barb Thomas, Secretary, Helena, MT
Mike Thomas, Co-Secretary, Helena, MT

MHWC, PO Box 752, Helena, MT 59624
mthorse.org; 406-461-4088
In 2006, at the urging of then Senator Conrad Burns, MWA initiated dialogue between Montana mills, loggers, landowners, recreational interests, and conservation leaders, which led to the Blackfoot-Clearwater and Beaverhead-Deerlodge partnerships. As you know, the proposals developed through these partnerships were integrated in Senator Tester’s Forest Jobs and Recreation Act, a bill that has polled consistently above 70% among Montana citizens...

H.R. 1526 takes a very different approach than the one described above ...The legislation was written, vetted, and passed through the U.S. House without the benefit of input from Montanans and without a single public meeting or hearing within our state boundaries. This complete lack of local public process is unacceptable to our members because we believe public input is essential to the management of public lands.

H.R. 1526 requires the Secretary of Agriculture - within 60 days - to designate vast tracts of national forest lands as “Forest Reserve Revenue Areas” (FRRAs) to be immediately removed from historic multiple-use management and converted into timber harvest areas, which will be managed to meet mandatory new timber volume requirements to generate revenue for local county governments. H.R. 1526 is not accompanied by a map that identifies which national forest lands will be transferred to “Forest Reserve Revenue Areas,” but instead requires the Secretary of Agriculture to include “not less than 50 percent of the National Forest System Lands . . . capable of producing twenty cubic feet per acre per year.” This sweeping criterion would include even remote mountain areas with sparse timber resources, such as the Scotchman Peaks, the Great Burn, Monture Creek, Jewel Basin, the Gallatin Range, Little Blackfoot Meadows and Swan Range, which have been recommended for wilderness and valued for their outdoor recreation opportunities for decades.

We oppose these provisions for a variety of reasons. First, this mandate represents a radical overhaul of the way our national forests are managed without accounting for other multiple uses including hunting, fishing, habitat restoration or myriad other activities under way today on our national forests. Second, the percentage of federal lands prescribed for timber harvest defies every scientific definition of sustainability. Under this mandate, the negative impacts to wildlife, watersheds, and Montana communities would be dire...

Within 60 days of passage, H.R. 1526 requires the Secretary of Agriculture to map and identify one or more FRRAs on each of 155 National Forests. Yet, H.R. 1526 contains no provision for public comment prior to the establishment of “Forest Reserve Revenue Areas.” We believe the legal obstructions to public participation in project planning that are present in this legislation are unethical and represent a radical departure from the principles on which our national forests have been managed for generations.

In the 30 days following the establishment of these areas, the Secretary of Agriculture must provide Congress with “Annual Volume Requirement”, a predetermined volume of timber, which must be cut every year within each FARRA, regardless of impacts to clean water, fish, wildlife, outdoor recreation, and other public resources...

Under the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960, national forests are now managed for a mix of uses including “outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes. In FRRAs established under the mandate of H.R. 1526, the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act and laws such as the Clean Water Act will no longer require the mitigation or limitation of environmental impacts and other purposes, including outdoor recreation, would be ignored.

Our members have worked hard to advance timber and watershed restoration projects, projects that have generated jobs, and delivered direct benefits to Montana communities, but we cannot consent to the suspension of environmental safeguards in the interest of elevating timber production as the exclusive management objective for vast tracts of national forest lands to the detriment so many other uses that are immensely valuable to communities across Montana...

... we believe that H.R. 1526 is antithetical to national forest stewardship. It would destroy existing zones of agreement between diverse forest users in Montana, reject basic principles of fish and wildlife conservation and erase decades of multiple-use management without first disclosing even one of the hundreds of FRRAs required by the legislation. The extreme nature of the legislation would almost certainly return Montana, and other Western states, to the polarizing days of the ‘timber wars’ when timber companies and communities dependent on timber resources were pitted against conservationists, hunters, and anglers.

We are disappointed by your commitment to such a radical redesign of our national forests within a year of taking office without first gathering ideas and input from across Montana.
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FOR DETAILS: WWW.WILDMONTANA.ORG/50TH
Are You and Your Stock Up To Speed for a Wilderness Trip?

by June Burgau, Flathead BCHM

Planning and preparing are the key to a trouble-free pleasure adventure into the beckoning back country. You are in the planning stage but in some ways you feel unsure about if you have what it takes to put your skills to the test in all the situations that can arise. The biggest concern to heading out from the trailhead is the fact that you are totally dependent on your own abilities. You leave behind the security of emergency services that, here at home, can be activated by a cell phone call and are accessed in minutes. That is certainly something to think over.

The group going on the trip: Don’t encourage an individual to go on an extended wilderness trip if it is not “their cup of tea.” All in the party must be in good condition to be in the saddle for the better part of the day. Once the destination is reached, there is a camp to set up, stock to care for, and meals to cook. These trips are physically demanding. It’s best to travel with at least three responsible, trained partners. Each should know how to give CPR and first aid. They must have wilderness survival skills. They should be familiar with all the stock. Map reading is important to be able to give geographic location.

Don’t pack your first aid kit. This could be part of your survival plan should your loaded pack string encounter a big, bad spook (who knows?? what!!!# L) and returns to the trailhead or some remote hiding place without you. An important part of the first aid kit is the “How To” manual. Check to insure all the supplies are up to date. You will need a way to purify water. Keep your all-weather gear close at hand; a good place is in the cantle pack. This could be a slicker large enough to fit over warm clothes, a wide brim hat, water repellent chaps, rubber overboots, and warm gloves. Maybe hand warmers. A wall tent that can be heated is recommended after Labor Day. In the mountains, it can snow any month of the year.

In grizzly country: Bear resistant approved boxes, the 4’x10’ high system or an electric approved fence are needed. Stay safe, don’t sleep with food “smells” which include items like tooth paste and cough drops. Clothes you wore while cooking are bad too.

Stock Going On the Trip: They must be calm. They should be ok being sprayed or wiped for fly, be on a highline, be hobbled and on a picket rope. During the trip they will be on a highline except for grazing and travel time. A horse camp requires water and grass. Feed can be packed in also. The most popular method to graze is to use hobbles. Other ways are a picket rope and an electric fence. These methods must be moved often so the area isn’t damaged. While using hobbles for grazing all the stock need to have them on. If there are loose stock, they will get to running around. The hobbled stock will try to keep up with the loose ones and will get hobble sores real fast. Always keep a wrangle saddle horse tied. The boss horse is a good choice because the herd looks to him for leadership. Leaving the trailhead with stock that are unfamiliar with their place in the string spells trouble. Knowing their nature, there is a pecking order and being put in a string won’t stop them from trying to establish dominance, much kicking and biting can happen. Their attention must be on the trail. Mares and stallions are known as instigators of riots as they never forget about their love life. Even geldings can get riled from these commotions. Remember that safety in numbers and flight are the instinctive ways horses deal with perceived danger. If the lead rope is too long between string stock and they step over it, this is a problem. Horses travel at three miles per hour on average. Once in a camp, tie to trees only long enough to unload the packs. Get the highline up using tree savers. Between seven and eight feet high is the recommended height. Tie far enough apart on the line so each horse is out of kicking range from another horse. Tie just short enough with the lead rope so they can’t touch the ground with their nose. This discourages pulling on the highline. You will need to tighten this line often.

Practices Before You Leave Home: Training your horses on a trip is dangerous. You need to out-think your stock, anticipate what is likely to happen. Entering a wilderness has a responsibility. Strive to leave the resources as untouched as you can. Remember, this is to be a pleasure trip; to enjoy the scenic views, watch wildlife, fish the rivers and lakes. The more you civilize your camp, the more you lose the pristine value. A Leave No Trace course is an excellent pre-trip preparation.

Horse sense is the thing a horse has which keeps it from betting on people.

–W.C. Fields
In May of 2000, a representative from the Gallatin Valley Chapter and another from the East Slope Chapter came to Lewistown, to meet with Gene Couch, John Schilling and other Lewistown locals to explore the possibilities of establishing a Judith Basin Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of Montana.

As a result, Judith Basin Chapter was formed, hence the celebration of its 14th Anniversary this year!

The Chapter’s Constitution was drafted according to existing guidelines and mission statement, under the able leadership of Don Bell, Judith Basin’s first president.

Other past presidents who have enthusiastically served the Judith Basin Chapter are: Eugene Couch, Mike Little, Bill Kuhlmann, Karen Johnson, Ron Holland, John Wichman, Christina McGiboney and Henry Gottardi.

Judith Basin Chapter has added to its coffers through tack sales, yard sales, onion sales, decal sales, a horse raffle, working the county fair gates, vet clinics and the solicitation of local sponsors for community events. In 2007, Judith Basin hosted the Back Country Horsemen of Montana State Convention which generated a prudent financial reserve for the chapter.

Chapter activities over the years have included production of an Annual Stick Horse Rodeo for children 3-8 at the Montana Winter Fair, the production of an annual “Sharing Trails All-Day Workshop” with the Bureau of Land Management for 6th graders in the community, riding as a unit in Lewistown’s annual 4th of July Day Parade, construction of Fort Peck Lake corrals, and ongoing trail work on many trails in the mountains surrounding Lewistown.

Judith Basin Chapter works hard and plays hard together. In addition to work-parties and trail rides, we have potlucks, occasional ice cream treats at our meetings, and host an annual Christmas Party with a goofy gift exchange that brings a smile to everyone.

Judith Basin Chapter is named for the Judith Mountains, the Judith River and Judith Gap. This area is 8,000 square miles, give or take. The Judith Mountains were named by John Clark on the trek of Lewis and Clark & the Corps of Discovery to find a water route from St. Louis to the Pacific. (continued)
Clark actually mis-named the mountains The “Judiths” in honor of his fiancé back in St. Louis, as her christened name was Julie. It didn’t matter, the name stuck and Clark returned to marry his sweetheart.

Lewistown, home base for the Judith Basin Chapter is surrounded by five inviting mountain ranges: the Judiths, the Snowies, the North Moccasins, the South Moccasins and the Little Belts. Big Spring Creek, one of the purest water sources in North America bursts out of an aquifer just south of Lewistown and provides fresh water for the Judith Basin. Judith Basin has some of the richest grass for livestock on the continent. Judith Basin was the choice of Granville Stewart, Teddy Blue Abbott and the playground of C.M.Russell.

Judith Basin Chapter has always stayed true to its objectives and mission. It enjoys a close working relationship and positive ongoing dialogue with the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service.

Judith Basin Chapter has always stayed true to its objectives and mission. It enjoys a close working relationship and positive ongoing dialogue with the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service.

The Chapter’s standing in the community is excellent. People support its efforts to involve youth, clear and maintain trails and heighten awareness of the value of preserving stock access to our beautiful wilderness.

Happy Birthday Judith Basin....14 years old and going strong!

See you DOWN THE TRAIL!

“A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”

–The Wilderness Act, 1964

"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."

–President Lyndon B. Johnson, upon signing the Wilderness Act into law September 3, 1964
Montana Back Country Horsemen State Chapters

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