Kristi and I got back in late April from a trip to Utah’s Escalante Monument where we happily escaped Montana’s seven month winter, if only for a short time. We hiked some deep canyons and relaxed in the 80 degree heat, played cribbage in the open sun, 40 miles from nowhere in a desert we shared with only lizards and a few other hikers. We moseyed over to Albuquerque via pieces of old Route 66, crossed the Continental Divide east of Gallup in a place so flat we thought the sign was just meant to pull our leg. I got in a short ride with a friend in Rye, CO. at the foot of the Greenhorn Wilderness where eastern Colorado spreads away from you like spilled honey. It all made me mighty grateful to be a resident of the West. The last day of our vacation was spent driving from Rye to Butte. Wyoming showed us a thousand antelope and a little rain and by Bozeman Pass there was six inches of snow. Two days later Fred Fitzpatrick was sending me e-mail pictures of four foot snow drifts in Valier. I thought again of the Escalante.

Spring did arrive six weeks late and now my thoughts are of the mountains of Montana. Each year it seems I come across a place in the back country where a careless horseman has failed to practice Leave No Trace. The bared roots of a tree stripped of their
bark by a horse’s hooves, manure left unscattered and too close to a creek, an overgrazed meadow where a party stayed too long. This is why every chapter of BCH needs to recruit and educate all users of equines who want to travel in the fragile back country. The amount of time available for trees, bushes and grass to recover from misuse is minimal on an annual basis. Repeated offenses to the same areas eventually denude the landscape and result in restrictions by the land managers.

A decade back I came across a group from out of state who were visiting the Anaconda Pintler. They had a ton of equipment judging from their camp, over a dozen horses, one of which was tied to a live tree. The muddy circle around the tree told me he had been tied there quite awhile and wasn't too happy about it either. Several years later the damage was still visible. Some pre-planning and a willingness to rough it a little will go a long way toward lessening your impact. Make 'Leave No Trace' a challenge for you and a game for the kids. Pretend you're being pursued by the Cavalry and don't want to be detected. Start the game in your mind the moment you ride into your camp area.

Last month my buddies Ray Thoen, Rowdy Troyer, and I saddled up to go locate some weeds at the base of the Humbug Spires WSA. Knapweed and Houndstongue, spread by vehicles, cattle, and big game. Many BCH chapters join in the fight against noxious weeds and participate in spray days. Our other part in this fight is to be darn sure our live-stock, trucks, and trailers are clean before we hit the trail head. Groom your horses thoroughly before loading up. Remove every cockle burr and houndstongue seed, have them on a weed free diet 48 hours before leaving and hose off all that mud stuck to the underside of your rig.

Lastly, let me share three of my favorite websites for those of you who like to study a little geography, biology, or land use. 1) Peakbaggers http://peakbagger.com 2) Encyclopedia of Life http://eol.org/index and 3) Wilderness.net http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm All three have a wealth of useful and fun information.

Hope you all have a good summer and be safe as we do our 2009 'half million dollars' worth of service on public lands and back country.

Charlie

Wrong place to tie up………..
Tie your horses on a high line, 200 feet from water on a hardened site and not where others may wish to camp

TransitioningHorses on Spring Pastures
Submitted by: Charlie O’Leary

As Spring is upon us and green grass approaches, we need to look at some problems/issues horse owners can get into. Horse owners need to gradually introduce horses to new spring pastures to avoid digestive upsets. Since horses were born to graze approximately 16-18 hours per day, this can be an issue on green lush grass. Spring pastures are usually higher in protein, energy, vitamins, minerals, carbs, and sugars (fructans) in comparison to other times of the year. Horses, especially those who are confined during the winter, may over-consume these lush green forages because of the palatability. Over consumption can put horses at risk. Some of those risks include: loose stools, obesity or overweight horses, colic, insulin resistant issues, or laminitis (founder). Horses were not designed for a high sugar or starch diet, so these high sugars and starches can aggravate laminitis (rotation of the coffin bone), and even worse, cause colic (#1 cause of death in horses) from the sudden change that causes excess gas and upset stomachs. Some management practices that we can enforce are:
♦ Pasture early in the morning and late at night “Pasture early in the morning and at night instead of during the day when NSC’s are high”
♦ Avoid pasturing during the afternoon’s since the sugars and starches are at their highest

See Spring on page 7
Keep your land weed-free for the next generation.

The Best Defense Inside Your Fence: CERTIFIED FORAGE

When you purchase certified forage, you’re protecting your land investment by preventing new infestations of noxious weeds.

Why use certified forage?

- Protect the monetary and production value of your land.
- Protect your livestock from toxic weeds.
- Protect Montana’s water, wildlife and native plants.
- Save yourself time and money.

Get certified today!

For a list of producers in your area, visit www.agr.mt.gov
Mile High Back Country Horsemen had a busy year in 2008, which means that 2009 will be equally as busy as they continue work to provide backcountry trail opportunities. MHBCH has been concentrating its efforts for the last several years on trail maintenance and development in the East Pioneers, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST), and Thompson Park on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF). Take a ride with us to find out more about these great getaways in southwest Montana.

Our first ride takes us to Wise River to maintain trails such as the Gold Creek trail that are in need of repairs to switchbacks and tread. Work projects and overnight trips in 2008 completed much needed trail maintenance. 2009 will continue work on reconstructing switchbacks and tread repair.

The East Pioneers provides great riding opportunities into high mountain lakes that provide fishing and spectacular vistas of mountain ranges and rocky peaks to the south, east and north making it a great adventure for visitors to the Pioneer Scenic Byway. To get there, take I-15 south to Divide and exit onto MT Highway 43 to Wise River. Turn south onto the Scenic Byway. There are several trailheads that access trails into the East Pioneers.

As you ride on, MHBCH has adopted the CDNST from the north boundary of the Butte Ranger District south to I-15. The Club has assisted the Forest Service to locate new trail routes and maintain existing trails. Thirty miles of trail have been constructed so far with 8 more miles planned in 2009. MHBCH will assist to locate a route from Elk Park north to the district boundary. The CDNST, while close to Butte, offers riders a chance to ride the backcountry with spectacular vistas of the Highland, Pioneer, and Fleecer mountain ranges. Remnants of early settlers and unique geology make for a great ride in Butte’s backyard backcountry.

Our last ride in southwest Montana is Thompson Park, a 3500 acre municipal recreation area managed by the Forest Service and the City-County of Butte. Designated by Congress in 1922, the Park is located south of Butte along MT Highway 2 and offers backcountry trail opportunities that include connections to the CDNST.

MHBCH partnered with this project to assist with trail improvements for non-motorized recreation. There are over 15 miles of trails that provide quiet rides, great views, and unique geology formations. Funded through a grant from the Natural Resource Damage Program, MHBCH is assisting with many of the trail projects including constructing stream crossings, new tread, and general maintenance. Last fall the first bridge of many stream crossings was reconstructed with assistance from the Americorps St. Louis.

Southwest Montana offers a unique blend of backcountry trails that not only take you far away from human sights and sounds, but also connects urban areas with the backcountry. MHBCH has partnered with the Forest Service, BLM, and other non-motorized interests for many years to maintain trails in the backcountry. MHBCH works hard to maintain trails throughout the year, but we always make our projects a ride worth remembering.
Are you a back country genius?  
By Charlie (with apologies to National Geographic)

See how many of these back country questions you can answer correctly!

1) If you just rode over Knifeblade Ridge and had lunch on Greathouse Peak, what mountain range are you in?
2) The active ingredient in bear spray is a) ammonium bicarbonate, b) capsaicin, c) napalm, d) nitroglycerin.
3) Which of the following apply to the American Pika? a) rodent, b) endangered species, c) marsupial, d) hibernator.
4) The Mountain Goat is the symbol of which proposed wilderness area? a) Great Burn, b) Rocky Mountain Front, c) Scotchman Peaks, d) East Pioneers.
5) 'Ovis canadensis' is the scientific name for what animal? a) Canada Goose, b) Bighorn Sheep, c) Yellow-bellied marmot, d) Moose.
6) On your trip to the Bob Marshall your GPS unit says you are at 45° 10' N; 109° 48' W You are... a) at Benchmark Trailhead, b) on Granite Peak, c) crossing Larch Pass, d) really lost.
7) Considering the highest peaks in Flathead, Powell, and Silver-Bow Counties, which County has the highest spot?
8) What ingredient is not in sourdough pancakes? a) eggs, b) olive oil, c) baking soda, d) molasses e) sourdough starter.
9) Which mountain range has most of Montana's highest peaks? a) Tobacco Roots, b) Madison Range, c), Crazy Mountains, d) Beartooth Range.

See page 14 for answers
Reflections and thoughts of a National BCH Director

It has been my pleasure to serve you and all of the Backcountry Horsemen of Montana. As a native Montanan, I learned early to appreciate the great outdoors and the opportunity that it held. I first learned of Backcountry Horsemen in the early 1980’s and joined the Idaho Panhandle BCH. I started riding more in the mountains as well as started to pack in a serious way. I held several offices with the Panhandle BCH, and upon moving back to Montana, I became more and more involved in the day to day organization and running of our Bitterroot Chapter as well as the State BCH organization. As a result, I became the National Director at the Missoula BCHM Convention.

I went to the first BCHA meeting at Jackson Hole and found that the other Directors were helpful, friendly, and very opinionated. I guess that was something that shouldn’t have surprised me, as I too have an opinion on most subjects. What amazed me the most was the true dedication and willingness to spend hours and hours in a room with no sunlight to hammer out the issues and policies of a nationwide organization. That dedication continues to this very day!

What I have seen new in the last several years is the inclusion of BCH groups east of the Mississippi River. Yes they do have some of the same trail access issues that the west has, but their attitudes and methods of handling the issues are different than ours. They are counting on BCHA to help them resolve the longstanding problems that have arisen in the past and are depending on the BCHA Public Lands Committee to provide solutions and possible legal alternatives.

There is very little Wilderness in the East, with more State Land, and with a larger population they have many more shared use trails. The hiker and bicyclist would like to see equine use diminish or disappear entirely. It’s not possible for BCH to make anymore public lands, or cause the population to change in numbers. The Alabama BCH representative spoke of the fact that Alabama has only 90 some miles of trail on public lands. Are their issues going to be different than ours? I would say yes to that. That same director cornered me at lunch, for two straight days, and wanted to discuss what Front Country was compared to Back Country. To him all these lands are Public lands and should not be segregated into Front and Back Country. There were other folks talking about the issue of replacing Backcountry in BCH with some other wording. Of course that went nowhere. Different places, different issues.

Many other issues will continue to surface and be discussed and discussed. One of those is the further inclusion of Wilderness within their respective states. There are at least two states that have issues that have lead them to see Wilderness as restricting their ability to ride their stock in those areas. Therefore they oppose further Wilderness designation. I have said many times that if a particular state organization has a problem that affects them, let them deal with it at a state local and do not make their views a National policy. So far that has been taken to heart. It has been my policy never to argue over something I do not have all the facts for, nor someone’s personal point of view.

It was also my personal view that, outside of the meeting times, it was necessary to get to know as many people as possible and to be friendly, and perhaps present my State’s point of view on a subject. That was well justified, as an example, at the Public Lands Committee meeting, when Montana asked for support for our Wilderness position. It was pointed out by the Chairman that this was in direct conflict with what the current policy of BCHA was. That was written as a statement in a letter written by BCHA Chair, Mike Reedy, that “BCH will not support new wilderness proposals that do not provide protection to historic pack and saddle stock use.” The Washington State Director took a direct stance that Montana has position on Wilderness that was correct for our situation and our support groups, and that we have a different view of that position and that Montana should be supported in our quest for Wilderness. The Committee did then support our position on Wilderness, and it was passed. Reason prevailed.

I will miss those discussions and the many friendships I have made.

As the Alternate BCHA Director I would like to continue to serve Montana BCH as much as possible.

Thank you,
Chuck Miller
Spring continued from page 2

- Limit exposure & make gradual increases in turnout time
- Feed before turn out to avoid overeating
- Look into using a grazing muzzle for sensitive horses

Other management tips once horses transition a bit would be, try not to overstock pastures, de-worm your horses (consult your veterinarian), and pick up manure in pastures to destroy parasites.

By Crystal Cline

CHS Nutrition
(406)690-3066

Pasture early in the morning and at night instead of during the day when NSC’s are high.
FAMILY FUN RIDE  
Annual Fundraiser Event

Date:        July 11, 2009  
Registration: 8:00 am to 10:00 am  
Place:   Gold Creek, MT  
(Exit 166 of I-90, follow the signs, 5 ½ miles)

Ride & BBQ .......... $20.00/rider  
BBQ only .......... $10.00/person  
Children under 12....... $7.00  

Approximately 4 hour Ride. You can ride through a Historic Ghost Town and past a Gold Dredge

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!

Camping Available  
Enjoy evening campfires  
Absolutely NO Dogs on Ride!  
Dogs in Camp must be on leash!

For More Information Please Contact:

Dayna & Charlie Gilman – 846-2464  
Pat & Wendy George – 846-3499  
Ron & Karen Haubbert – 498-8310 or 498-2733
From the convention
Submitted by: Charlie O’Leary

Mark Himmel (Charlie Russell) is the immediate past BCHM Treasurer and the new Issues Chairman.

Jim Brogger (East Slope) and Ray Thoen (Mile High) enjoy a good laugh at the Convention banquet (left to right).

Luiga Crippa of Ramsey, MT with the new pack saddle she won in the convention raffle.

A couple of Back Country Horsemen (guess who) getting teased by the Ringling Five about their skinny little “rancher legs”.

Rich Fitzpatrick (East Slope) formerly co-chair of the Issues Committee is the new Treasurer for BCHM.
The Army Corps of Engineers contacted the BCH of Montana in 2008 requesting assistance with the design of stock facilities at three campground locations at Fort Peck Reservoir. They later attended the 2008 Convention and further discussed their plans. The campgrounds chosen by the Corps were at Crooked Creek and Devils Creek on the south side and Fourchette Creek located on the north side of the reservoir. Merlyn Huso of East Slope BCH, Mark Himmel of Charlie Russell BCH and Gene Couch of Judith Basin BCH participated with a visitation to the sites and provided recommendations on pad layouts, stock containment and camp facilities. The picture(s) portray the five corral installations at Fourchette Creek that have since been completed. It is likely that the installation at Crooked Creek will have been completed by the time this newsletter will be received. Available water for stock use in some locations will be the reservoir; however, the water source at Crooked Creek has already been improved as the water level of the reservoir was significantly lower than at the time of the original campground construction. Interestingly, it had been necessary to drill 1250 feet to reach water in that location resulting in a costly application. Our recommendation was to simply extend the line from the existing well to a frost free hydrant closer to the camp location with stock facilities to improve the convenience of watering stock. This has since been done. Requests for stock facilities at additional locations have since been received by the Corps. The sites are used quite heavily by stockmen in the fall during elk hunting seasons. Appreciation is extended to the Corps of Engineers for their collaborative efforts on expanding the availability of stock facilities to Montana horsemen and the imprint of Back Country Horsemen as well.
BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF MISSOULA
35TH ANNUAL FATHER’S DAY
STEAK RIDE
JUNE 21st, 2009
BLACKFOOT CLEARWATER GAME RANGE
$25.00 for Ride and BBQ
Ride leaves the Boyd Ranch at 11:00 am

Tickets available at:
Quality Supply, Pet Smart, Cenex,
Blue Mountain Vet Clinic,
Sport Land Trailers, Trader Brothers,
and BCH of Missoula Members.

Meet at the Boyd Ranch entrance
off Highway 200, 6 miles east of
the Cow at Clearwater Junction.

Non Riders Welcome!
Over night camping available.
Certified weed seed free feed mandatory.
No alcohol, studs, or dogs on ride please.
Dogs in camp must be on leash.

MISSOULA  For more information: 273-6967
Last Chance Back Country Horsemen
Submitted by: Grace Senseney

This has been an exciting and busy year for our chapter, culminating with hosting the very successful State Convention in March at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel in Helena. Seventeen chapters from around the state participated with 128 delegates in attendance. Guests were greeted upon arrival with a display of the wonderful raffle ticket prizes.

The workshops, including Back Country Camps, Digital Photography, Back Country Equine First Aid, Getting Along with Griz, Back Country Equine Nutrition, and Selecting Riding and Pack Stock for Back Country Use, were all attended to capacity. The two Charlie Russell Tours at the Montana Historical Society were also enthusiastically filled.

The many vendors, both inside and out, offered an array of interesting goods. Both the silent and live auctions were quite successful. Two hundred and fifty members attended the excellent buffet banquet on Saturday evening and enjoyed the entertainment by the Ringling Five.

The photo contest received dozens of quality prints and were divided into five categories. The winners were as follows:

**Judge’s Choice Award**
Critters in the Back Country - Ernie Strum, Beartooth Chapter
Back Country Views – Sherrie White, Gallatin Chapter
Folks in the Back Country – Hugh Henderson, Mission Valley Chapter
Traveling in the Back Country – Jeff Brandt, Last Chance Chapter
Back Country Horsemen at Work – Donnie Chepulis, Beartooth Chapter

**People’s Choice Award**
Critters in the Back Country - Ernie Strum, Beartooth Chapter
Back Country Views – Orville Riley, Last Chance Chapter
Folks in the Back Country – Hugh Henderson, Mission Valley Chapter
Traveling in the Back Country – Kathy Hundley, Selway Pintler Chapter
Back Country Horsemen at Work – Darlene Horne, Last Chance Chapter
Other projects included the construction of a new Crow Creek Bridge for foot traffic. LCBCH provided the labor and materials. Twenty one men and women built the bridge in 12 hours. Thirty horses and mules were used to pack people, material, and equipment 3 hours from the trailhead to the job site. Forest Service reimbursement calculations estimated the value of this project at over $16,514.

During five separate work sessions, the USFS’s Gates of the Mountains trail rehabilitation work was completed with our support of 67 pack loads, 27 individuals, and 44 head of livestock. Calculating miles traveled, work hours contributed, meals, fuel, etc., the estimated value of the project by USFS rates was $30,255.

In September our club participated with the Montana Wilderness Association, Prickly Pear Land Trust, Great Divide Cycling Team, the Helena Trail Riders, and the Highlands Cycling club in a cooperative effort to build a 2.5 mile trail segment for non-motorized users near Bison Mountain at the head of Joe Bower Creek. Our main focus was to provide meals for approximately 50 volunteer trail workers.
Carole serves as secretary for the Mile High Chapter. She enjoys trail riding and work projects. She was with the Petticoat Patrol Mounted Drill Team in Butte for 18 years.

I moved my family to Kalispell, Montana in the spring of 1996 fleeing from the mass of people and traffic of Seattle. Shortly thereafter the family got its first horse. But I find that horses are like potato chips, you just can’t have one!!! Then comes the real problem of what do you do with a horse besides feed it. My love of the backcountry and my wife telling me to do something with those animals you feed everyday took me to a BCH packing clinic and the rest is history.

I’ve now been a member of the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead for six years and in which time I’ve held the office of Treasurer for 3 terms and currently the Trails Project Coordinator along with serving as state director. I am currently working with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks BOW program trying to get a women’s packing clinic started. My wife Judy of 26 years has to be the most understanding there is, from spring to the end of hunting season she lets me and my rag tag string disappear any chance we get.

Connie Long has been a BCH member for 15 years, first in Libby and then in Missoula. She has served as a BCH of Missoula board member and as president in 2007 and 2008. She was alternate State Director in 2008 and this year was elected as State Director. Connie will also be serving on the state BCH Issues Committee. She is a LNT Master (Stock) instructor and enjoys doing LNT education with her husband Mack. Connie has been a licensed wilderness guide and enjoys taking personal trips into Montana’s wilderness areas, especially the Bob Marshall Wilderness complex. She is very passionate about wilderness and the solitude she experiences there when. In her personal life she is a semi-retired RN. She has two absolutely wonderful grandsons, ages 2 years and 3 months. She loves to hunt and fish, (if they are biting). She gardens and just loves being outdoors.
About Your Newsletter

*Back Country Horsemen of Montana News* is published three times a year by BCH of MT, PO Box 4864, Butte, MT 59701.

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 typed 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, 2167 N 4th Rd., Huntley, MT 59037. Phone: (406) 698-5880 e-mail: lbrewer@tctwest.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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May 10/08</th>
<th>Beartooth, Bitterroot, Cabinet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 10/08</td>
<td>CMR, East Slope, Flathead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 10/09</td>
<td>Gallatin, Hi-Line, Judith Basin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10/09</td>
<td>Last Chance, Mile High, Mission Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10/09</td>
<td>Missoula, Selway/Pintler, Three Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 10/10</td>
<td>Upper Clark Fork, Wild Horse Plans, Beartooth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Advertising Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>Twice</th>
<th>Three Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full page</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 page (vertical)</td>
<td>$ 75</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 page (horizontal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 page (vertical)</td>
<td>$ 40</td>
<td>$ 80</td>
<td>$ 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 page (horizontal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/8 page (vertical)</td>
<td>$ 25</td>
<td>$ 50</td>
<td>$ 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/8 page (horizontal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

**BCH of MT Contacts**

**Chairman** Charlie O’Leary
(406) 782-6504
staghornranch@gmail.com

**Vice-Chairman** John Chepulis
(406) 322-4823
bonnietrejohn@aol.com

**Treasurer** Rich Fitzpatrick
(406) 279-3232
richfitz@3rivers.net

**Secretary** Kathy Frazier
(406) 777-7269
TomKathy_frazier@msn.com

**National Directors**

Ken Ausk
(406) 892-4673
khaos1@centurytel.net

Dave Crawford
(406) 675-4293
cbardiamond1@ronan.net

(AAltimate) Chuck Miller
(406) 961-5453
circlemr@cybernet1.com

**State Newsletter Editor**

Linda Brewer
(406) 698-5880
lbrewer@tctwest.net
If you would like to join, please contact a chapter in your area.