In writing my first article for the newsletter, I was not quite sure what to talk about. It seems like we have expressed our views on Wilderness a lot and that area is not my strong suit. I am, and always have been, a tread person, meaning I live, eat, and breathe trail maintenance; just ask my wife. I can’t remember the last time I rode a new trail without thinking, “What can we do to improve it?” That being said, guess what? I’d like to share with you, an experience I had last summer on a trail project.

Coming out of the last travel plan here in the Jefferson Division of the Lewis and Clark National Forest, a few trails were designated non-motorized. One of these is Pilgrim Creek Trail and it is one of my favorites. The trail needed some re-treading on about 1 ½ miles along very steep terrain. There was also a new trailhead in the works that would need ¾ miles of connecting trail installed. Well, putting in new trail, retreading, is done by hand or with motorized equipment. Not wanting to use motorized equipment or ask club members to swing pulaskis all summer, I wondered how they did it back in the day. I had heard trail plows and Betty graders pulled by mules were the only equipment available back then.

I love going back to basics so finding one was the next problem. With the help of US Forest Service ranger districts from the Rocky Mountain Front and Belt Creek, we located a Betty grader in Region 1 and borrowed it. To my surprise, the grader weighed 250 pounds.

Finding a mule to pull it was another issue. I wanted a mule with what I call a plow gait (slow and strong). I did not want to teach the mule to pull, so I looked for an Amish mule in Pennsylvania. A friend located a mule for me, whom I named Jethro. He was built just perfect and had experience in field work, something I lacked. Since my wife and I were headed to Pennsylvania for vacation it seemed like things were coming together; and, oh yeah, I needed a new trailer to bring the mule back. Convincing my wife of that part took a little doing (and the mule would also need a work harness).

Arriving back in Montana with Jethro and practicing with the Betty grader in the driveway, I soon felt confident this could work. The day came to try things out. The Charlie Russell Chapter often partners on our projects with the Belt Creek Ranger District. The extra hands and camaraderie makes even the most difficult projects fun. We kept it to just a few people, including a Forest Service technician. We decided to do the retreading first, starting down the trail with someone leading Jethro, and myself guiding the grader. I thought this was real cool. Fifty feet later, the
The Charlie Russell Chapter often partners on our projects with the Belt Creek Ranger District. The extra hands and camaraderie makes even the most difficult projects fun.

Mark Himmel

View a video of Mark, Jethro, and others plowing a trail:

“It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value. By value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense.”

Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, 1949

BCH of MT Contacts

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Whether it was growing up helping her mother in the kitchen, working at her husband’s logging camp, or volunteering for community organizations, Helen Morris has never been one to shy away from hard work. “I never thought anything of what I’ve done,” Morris said. “I’ve always stayed busy. It’s the way I was brought up.”

Helen was born in Whitefish and has lived there all her life. She served many roles in Whitefish, ranging from wife, mother, grandmother and family business partner to horsewoman and community and church volunteer.

Helen’s life journey in Whitefish witnessed both triumphs and tragedies, beginning with her birth as Helen Velvedere on Nov. 24, 1916. “My parents died in the flu epidemic,” she said. “I was adopted when I was a little under 2 by Obie and Pearly Clark.”

Helen learned later that before her parents died, they thought her younger brother had died, so they set him outside on the wood pile. A nurse sent to remove the body was startled when she thought she saw him move. “He was still alive,” Helen said. “She took him home and put him in the oven to warm him up.”

After adoption by the Clarks, she lived on a farm where she helped out with chores and attended Whitefish schools. She met her future husband of 73 years when his mother sent him “to grandma’s place” for a pail of milk. “I was 8 and he was 12,” Helen said.

It seemed that fate had matched the two of them. Born on the same date of Nov. 24, they continued their relationship through school, then married on their joint birthday in 1935, when Helen turned 19 and David turned 23.

In the early days of their marriage, they lived together in logging camps where David worked and Helen kept house and cared for their daughter, Marie. Their cabin was primitive with no indoor bathroom. “You could throw a cat out through some of the cracks,” she said with a laugh. “It was fun — it was like camping. You know, I lived on a farm all my life so it didn’t make any difference.”

As their family grew to add Marie’s brother, Bob, she and David bought their farm in 1942, on more than 100 acres on the south end of Whitefish. It was a dream-come-true for Helen.

“We always said when I walked to school from five miles out of town that ‘someday I was going to live there on that place’ and they thought I was crazy,” she said. “I liked the scenery. The house wasn’t much.”

It started out as a small log cabin. Over the years, they changed windows and doors, added a basement, plumbing, a bathroom, bedrooms, a porch, and sided over the logs. David became an outfitter and bred palomino Tennessee walking horses for the business. They also raised alfalfa hay and Helen grew a huge garden.

When she first moved to the farm, Helen wasted no time getting acquainted. “I walked up and down the road and met people,” she recalled. “We started a homemakers club. We had a lot of fun.”

She and David joined with about a dozen others to buy property and start the Whitefish Saddle Club. Marie remembered the fun young riders, including her brother, Bob, playing games on horseback. “We had saddle clubs all around the valley,” Marie said.

David worked with his twin brother, Lester, and others to found the Flathead County Sheriff’s Posse in Kalispell in the late 1940s. At first, their main function was to help with mountain search and rescue, but they expanded to perform precision drills, ride in parades, and perform crowd control. Women didn’t belong to the posse in the
early days but Helen attended all the events and rode in the parades. She also listened to the radio scanner and relayed messages. “When kids got lost on the mountain, I would hear it and call the posse members,” she said.

David and Helen were very active in the Back Country Horsemen. Marie said that her mother acted as historian for many years. “She made scrapbooks for all of them for their histories,” she said. Helen still enjoys reading all the newsletters and keeping up on the activities of the organization.

Helen remains active with gardening, canning, crocheting, and going to lunch with friends. For fun, she bakes cookies by the dozens that she sells for kisses from her eight grandchildren, eleven great grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren. In the summer, she grows beautiful flowers that she uses for weekly flower arrangements for First Baptist Church.

Helen shared her secret of health and longevity: “Hard work never hurt anybody and the more you work the better. It keeps you younger.”

(Helens of this story were reprinted with permission from Candace Chase, Daily Inter Lake and Heidi Desch, Whitefish Pilot).

Horsemen Join Wilderness Council

Two members of Back Country Horsemen of Montana have recently joined the Montana Wilderness Association State Council. Charlie O’Leary from the Mile High Chapter and Dan Harper from the Missoula Chapter are now members of MWA’s State Council which provides overall guidance to Montana’s “go to” conservation organization.

Council President Doug Ferrell said the addition of Harper and O’Leary will give us some needed input from the Back Country Horsemen of Montana. The two organizations have had a long-standing working relationship and share a considerable number of common members. “Our interests are very much intertwined with regard to quiet muscle powered recreation, leave no trace values, and protecting Montana’s last best places”.

MWA’s Executive Director, Brian Sybert, added that for many years BCHM has been a driving force, both in keeping the back country trails open, and in helping to promote key legislation to protect areas like the Rocky Mountain Front, East Pioneers, and the Bob Marshall Complex. “The packing support provided by BCHM for other crews working in wilderness and along the Continental Divide Trail is absolutely necessary to preserve the historic uses of wilderness”.

O’Leary, past chairman of BCHM, has been active in wilderness issues in Southwest Montana, including the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act and travel planning on the Beaverhead - Deerlodge National Forest. He is currently a BCHM state director representing Mile High Chapter of Butte.

Harper serves as Treasurer for the Missoula Chapter of BCHM and is the MWA Shining Mountain Chapter representative. He has been a member of the Great Burn Study Group for a number of years.
It seems like any large project our club takes on we always have a great turnout to get the job completed. The Crow Creek bridge project was no exception. Twenty three people, using 39 mules and horses cleared seven miles of trail; packed 15 animal loads of material; reconstructed a 35-foot bridge, complete with hand rail, nice steps and pathway; and had lunch, all in an 8-hour day – with NO wrecks – and returned to camp for a great dinner. It sounds simple but, without the knowledge and dedication of everyone this project wouldn’t have gone as smoothly as it did.

This is the second Forest Service walk bridge we have constructed in the Crow Creek drainage in the last 3 years; both times Club members have turned out in full force. The members logged in 381 hours, worked 6,540 hours, donated $770 dollars for material and food for a project total of $16,862.00.
Studies by bear experts found that people using bear spray during grizzly bear encounters are injured far less often than people using firearms.
PRODUCED BY A GRIZZLY BEAR ATTACK SURVIVOR!

"Thanks to God, a friend, and pepper spray, I am still here."

Mark Matheny
President

BE PREPARED!

WISDOM IS BETTER THAN STRENGTH!

Ecc. 9:16

Bear Attack!

Mark Matheny was attacked by a female grizzly bear on a main trail. In less than half a minute the grizzly charged and mauled Mark twice. Mark's partner, Dr. Fred Bahmson, reacted immediately to Mark's condition and treated his wounds. Fortunately Dr. Bahmson got Mark out of the woods and to the emergency room without further incident. Mark suffered extensive bite lacerations to the head and neck, bite lacerations to the right arm, and also to the left anterior chest. This bear attack is what motivated Mark to establish UDAP Industries, Inc.

UDAP Industries Inc., P.O. Box 4872, Butte, MT 59702

Ask for UDAP Pepper Power at your local Sporting Goods Store!

866 BEAR 911 (2327) BearSpray.com

UDAP products are formulated and filled in the USA!
Members of the Mile High Chapter have concentrated their efforts over the last two years in the vast public lands of the Big Hole and local segments of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) and Thompson Park near Butte.

After the 2011 State Convention and the BCHA National Board Meeting in Butte, MHBCH members moved their attention to provide chainsaw, first aid, and packing training for members to help the Forest Service and BLM with trail and weed control projects. In addition to the training, MHBCH acquired pack equipment for member’s private use or on projects until they purchase their own equipment. This has helped recruit new members and help current members train their animals and improve their packing skills.

One new member, J.P. Le Tourneau, sold his dirt bike and changed his leathers to buy a horse and has since vigorously embraced the mission of BCH. He got his saw certification this spring and cut his teeth clearing trail in the back country of the East Pioneers on National Trails Day. He got both his horses trained to pack using the chapter equipment on his many day trips, always with a pack horse in tow. When the Wise River Ranger District asked Mile High to provide packing support for Montana Conservation Corp crews working on the CDNST in the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness, J.P. was there with three veteran packers: Charlie O’Leary, Pete Madison, and Darrel McDaniel, eager to lend a hand and his horses. New members and packers like J.P. are the lifeblood of BCH chapters and our mission.

Providing member training and equipment allows us to increase trail maintenance and weed control activities across the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and Butte Field Office of the BLM. MHBCH adopted sections of the CDNST from Elk Park to the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area. Over the past two years nearly 25 miles of trail have been constructed along the East Ridge to Our Lady of the Rockies, and from Elk Park to Champion Pass near Butte. In addition, the Forest Service and City-County of Butte-Silver Bow recently completed rehabilitation of Thompson Park, a 3,500 acre municipal recreation area that offers over 25 miles of new trails that provide connections to the CDNST.

BCH provided packing support to other volunteer groups to reconstruct many of the trails in the Park that provides a back country experience minutes from Butte. MHBCH helps to maintain over 80 miles of the CDNST, Thompson Park, and the Pioneer Mountains trails, which is a challenge to keep clear due to the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation.

Pine beetle mortality has devastated the majority of the lodgepole pine in the area, creating hazardous conditions for riders. Clearing trail has become a predictable task as we ride the many miles of trails in southwest Montana. Most of our volunteer hours are now spent clearing the downfall throughout the year; therefore making sure our members have the necessary training and equipment is a priority to help keep trails open and safe for BCH members and the public.
A few years ago Mile High adopted a piece of public access road through state land that leads into the BLM Humbug Spires Wilderness Study Area southwest of Butte near Divide. The road is a key access route for hunting and a nice place to day ride on state and federal lands, but it is plagued with knapweed and houndstongue. Each year we coordinate with the BLM to supply the backpacks and chemicals for a spray day supervised by members who have pesticide certifications. This makes for a good late spring volunteer project we can do before the high country loses its snow.

But, if you think all we do is work, be assured MHBCH made time to have some fun and learn a few things. Thanks to new members the Bares/Bruce’s, who led a two-day ride to the Upper Ruby Valley at Cottonwood Camp and Three Forks Cow Camp. For most, this was the first venture to the area. We also revisited some favorite areas including the CDNST-Whitetail Reservoir in Elk Park and Little Basin Creek southwest of Butte.

MHBCH contracted with trainer/cowboy poet Randy Rieman from Dillon to provide two clinics for members. This was a great opportunity for everyone and their horse to learn a little better behavior and trust.

As we wind down 2012 and look to 2013, we know there’s a lot of work and play waiting for us.
Join us in celebrating

Where It All Began

Back Country Horsemen of Montana

2013 State Convention & 40th Anniversary Celebration

April 5, 6 and 7, 2013

at the Red Lion Inn in Kalispell, Montana

Friday afternoon

• Are You Ready to take your horse in the backcountry?
  - free horse training seminar with Kathy Valentine
• Packing demonstrations
• Plan a trip in the “Bob”
• History and artifacts of the “Bob”
• Maps and navigation
• Backcountry first aid
• Rope splicing
• Dutch oven cooking

Friday evening

• Social hour followed by bluegrass music with Roy Wilhelm and friends

Saturday

• History of BCH
• Panel discussion by BCH charter members
• Afternoon seminars

Saturday evening

• Banquet and keynote speaker, Rick Potts
• Live and silent auctions
• Dance to country music by Roy Wilhelm and the Ashley Creek Ramblers

Hosted by the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead - we are the original chapter, formed right here in Columbia Falls in 1973.

We want to make our 40th anniversary celebration a special event and we want you to be a part of it.

Enjoy three full days of free exhibits and seminars.

For more information, visit us at:
www.bchmt.org/flatbch
or call Andy Brelend at 261.1109

Coming soon!

40 Years commemorative western shirts, T-shirts and caps

Raffle tickets - win a pack saddle, gun safe, set of tires, pair of White boots, or a framed 1899 map of the future Bob Marshall Wilderness
This type of packsaddle originated in Central Idaho in the country around Buffalo Hump and during the mining boom that occurred in that country from 1898 to 1900. Old man McDaniels, an old-time Aparajo packer from Oregon and California, was the originator of the idea for the tree and half-breed (as it is called) Aparajo cover, which greatly resembles the Aparajo. Several brothers named Decker saw the practicality of the idea and adopted it, making some improvements. They applied for a patent on the tree and rigging but I believe the patent was never allowed. Anyway this is where the saddle gets its name. Old man McDaniels was quite an eccentric character, about one of the best packers that ever coiled a sling rope. The way he moved tonnage on his half-breed rigging was an eye opener to the natives in the Salmon River country and old "Mac" soon became a well-known character among packers and miners. He could do more with a green mule in less time than anyone else around the country.

Forest officers soon saw the utility of this rigging and took it over bodily. The latest refinements in the tree and rigging are largely due to improvements made by Forest officers and packers working with them. The tree as now made is the product of O. P. Robinette, a blacksmith long employed on the Selway Forest. The present Decker saddle is considered by all old-timers who have used it as being far superior to either the cross tree or sawbuck or the old Army Aparajo in usableness, especially for one-man packing in the mountains. These saddles have stood the gaff of packing every conceivable thing that could be used in either a mining camp or a logging camp, and that with the least amount of damage to the mule.

Loads for the Decker saddle are cargoed in canvas mantee the same as they are prepared for the Aparajo. They are fastened to the saddle with the regular swing or sling rope. The diamond hitch is not used nor is it needed. In fact, there are many first-class packers now working for the Forest Service who could not throw a diamond hitch on a bet. The advantage of this is that the load on each side of the animal has some "give" to it if the mule accidentally encounters a tree or rock. If the load is displaced in this way it immediately shifts back into place as soon as the obstruction is passed. With the use of the diamond hitch on the Aparajo or cross tree, the load was solid on the animal and the mule went with the load.

The diamond hitch is not used nor is it needed. In fact, there are many first-class packers now working for the Forest Service who could not throw a diamond hitch on a bet.

The boards of the Decker tree are cut and fitted from green cottonwood, the sideboards being fastened together with a 3/4-inch iron loop or fork as it is called. The half-breeds pad consists of two pieces of heavy canvas sewed together around the edges and stuffed with hay, excelsior, or curled hair. The most satisfactory material for this stuffing is bear grass which, when cut green, has been tied in a square knot and allowed to dry that way. After it is thoroughly dry, the knot is untied and the dry grass then has a springy quality, which cannot be equaled for purpose. The pad is fitted to the tree by having two slits cut in it, which fit over the iron forks allowing half of the pad to hang down on each side. Constant use tends to wear holes in the canvas half-breeds, which is comparatively inexpensive to replace. The half-breeds is protected with a piece of heavy canvas, called a mantel, fitted over it. The mantel can be replaced at small cost as they become worn, thus prolonging the life of the half-breed pad.

Some packers use a heavy, oblong saddle pad and single wool blanket next to the mule under the tree. The Forest Service has designed a heavy saddle pad stuffed with deer hair, which has proved to be very satisfactory. The side next to the mule is covered with a heavy ticking, which can be cleaned easily and also sheds the perspiration in place of absorbing it.

With permission from the Forest History Society: http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/region/1/early_days/4/contents.htm

1The modern Decker Pack Saddle tree was perfected by blacksmith/saddle maker, Oliver P. Robinette of Kooskia, Idaho shortly after 1906. Robinette is credited with developing and manufacturing hundreds of the Decker trees and pack saddles for the Decker brothers as well as for local sheepmen and other outfitters and packers of the era. The Decker brothers could foresee a rapid increase in the use of this unique and clearly superior pack saddle and they made a deal with Robinette to market the saddle. It was advertised and sold as the Decker Pack Saddle. In later years, O.P. Robinette built many trees for the Forest Service (the “OPR” style Decker Pack Saddle tree) until his death in 1945 (Research by Charlie O’Leary, Mile High Chapter).
New Faces at US Forest Service Region 1

Backcountry Horsemen of Montana value the great work we accomplish in partnership with the Forest Service. BCHM members will want to be aware of two new people at the Region 1 office, as we are very likely to be collaborating with both in years to come.

In June, 2012, US Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell announced the selection of Faye Krueger as the new Regional Forester for the agency’s Northern Region offices in Missoula. Krueger replaces Leslie Weldon, who moved to the agency’s Washington Office last year to take over the position as the Deputy Chief of the National Forest System. In November, Krueger welcomed George Bain as the new Director of Recreation, Lands, Minerals, Heritage and Wilderness for the Northern Region.

The Northern Region encompasses 25 million acres over five states. Included are 12 National Forests located within the perimeter of northeastern Washington, northern Idaho, and Montana; and the National Grasslands in North Dakota and northwestern South Dakota. The region is home to 16 congressionally designated Wilderness areas, six National Wild and Scenic Rivers, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, 2,539 miles of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and much more.

Faye Krueger’s Forest Service career spans a little more than 30 years, giving her a deep understanding for both the local importance of Districts and Forests to rural and small-town economics, as well as the necessity for a collaborative strategy to natural resource management across boundaries and landscapes.

Krueger began her career in 1980 as a forestry technician on the Dakota Prairie Grasslands in Dickinson, North Dakota, working in forestry, oil and gas. She subsequently worked as a forester on the Gallatin National Forest in Montana, and Tongass National Forest in Thorne Bay, Alaska. In 1991 she became a Planner and worked on the Caribou and Payette National Forests, both in Idaho. Krueger became a district ranger in 1998 on the Council District of the Payette National Forest in Idaho. Six years later she was named the Forest Supervisor on the 1.6-million-acre Wasatch-Cache National Forest headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. From this position, Krueger was selected as the Deputy Regional Forester for the Southwestern Region beginning in 2008. Prior to coming to Region 1, Krueger was named as the Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System in August 2011.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in forestry from the University of Montana and is married, with two grown children and one grandchild.

Bain begins his new position at the regional headquarters after serving five years as Forest Supervisor of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests in Georgia. While there, Bain was honored as the 2012 Federal Land Manager of the Year for the Forest Service.

Bain started working in the Forest Service in 1979 as a Forest Technician supervising field crews on the Clearwater National Forest in Kooskia, Idaho. Two years later, he moved to the Salmon River Ranger District of the Nez Perce National Forest in Idaho as a professional forester working in timber management. In 1985, he began managing wilderness, recreation, special uses and minerals on the Kootenai National Forest in Montana. He also served as District Ranger on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest before leaving the region in 2003. “In a way, I feel like I’m coming home,” said Bain. “My experiences working in Western forests are ones that shaped me early in my career.”

Bain is a graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), earning a bachelor of science in forestry and wildlife. Bain plans to reside in Missoula with his wife and teenage son. His daughter attends North Georgia College & State University.

Information provided by Brandan Schulze, USFS Region 1
What’s Going On with the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act?

by Merlyn Huso, BCH of MT representative on CPRMF

It’s been slightly over one year since the introduction of the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act in the US Senate by Senator Max Baucus. So how has it progressed and what are the activities that Back Country Horsemen members can do to further its passage?

As most of you know, the Act comprises three components: 1) It proposes 67,160 acres of wilderness additions to the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, of which approximately 50,449 acres are in the Bob (W. Fork Teton, Our Lake, Deep Creek, and Patrick’s Basin) and 16,711 acres are in the Scapegoat Wilderness (Silver King/Falls Creek); 2) a Conservation Management Area (CMA) designation of approximately 208,112 acres, which permanently bans road building and caps motorized use at the current, restrictive level, and; 3) requires the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (FS) to expand and intensify noxious weed control efforts. Essentially, the CMA designation works to leave the area included in the Act “as it is”.

The Act does not limit grazing or prevent ranchers from passing their leases on to succeeding generations. Assurances have been made that current livestock grazing would not be adversely affected by the legislation.

The Act does not impact leasing, exploration, or development on the Front. No leases exist in the area covered by the Heritage Act and the area is already permanently closed to new leasing and development. Private mineral owners and the State of Montana remain free to develop, hold or sell their mineral rights as they see fit.

The Act does not diminish recreational opportunities and provides protections for future motorized and bicycle use.

Over 300 miles of roads and trails are retained and provisions are included to create new bicycle trails in the future. Access to new wilderness designations will remain at the same level of access as provided over the last 30 years.

Involvement on the Front as Back Country Horsemen will continue as it has in the past. We will still hunt and fish, camp, ride, pack, and complete maintenance projects both on the Front and beyond.

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The Act does not diminish recreational opportunities and provides protections for future motorized and bicycle use.

This is our homeland security legislation.

This past year has found the Coalition to Protect the RMF engaged in various activities promoting passage of the Act: Dusty Crary and Karl Rappold, ranchers on the Front, testified in support of the Heritage Act at the Public Lands and Forests subcommittee of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in Washington, DC; great support for the Heritage Act was shown at Congressman Rehberg’s public meeting in Chouteau; A Discovery Tour regarding the Act reached over 300 people in western Montana; several political candidates and others in influential positions were provided over flights of the Front in order to view the significant presence of that wild habitat. Montana Back Country Horsemen, at our annual convention, honored Senator Baucus for his sponsorship of the RMFHA in the Senate.

Presently, Senator Baucus has talked with Republican leaders in Congress about moving the Heritage Act forward, but that Republican ideology has developed marching orders to not let public lands bills move forward. But Senator Baucus has also said that there are many ways to “skin a cat” when it comes to passing the RMFHA.
Finally, he has made it pretty clear that when there are competing priorities he will work hard to pass bills that he hears about from Montanans, “We tend to do what people want us to do-what we hear people talking about”. Therefore, it becomes imperative on the Coalition and the Back Country Horsemens of Montana to keep momentum for the Heritage Act going, into the lame duck session. Please take a minute to drop Max a personal note thanking him for his leadership and encouraging him to move the legislation forward after the election. His email address is: maxbaucus@earthlink.net.

A map showing proposed additions to wilderness and CMA areas may be viewed at: http://www.savethefront.org/legislation.html

“Many of the diverse wildernesses out of which we have hammered America are already gone...No living man will see again the long-grass prairie, where a sea of prairie flowers lapped at the stirrups of the pioneer...”

Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, 1949

with permission
2012 Was an Active Year for the Judith Basin Chapter

by Christina McGiboney, Judith Basin Chapter BCHM

My how time flies! Looking back over this year, our club experienced changes, from elected officers to fund raising activities. In January, we hosted our ninth annual Stick Horse Rodeo at the Central Montana Winter Fair. Our events included steer wrestling, calf roping, cow milking, and barrel racing. Our rodeo royalty were present to crown the king and queen of the Stick Horse Rodeo. The kids had a blast and earned lots of prizes to take home with them.

With winter weather enduring into April, we took advantage of the time not on horseback to have a vaccination fund raiser with Dr. Greg Carlson, who graciously donated a percentage of earnings back to our club.

In May, the weather improved enough for us to schedule our first ride. We rode from Hilger into Maiden Canyon, about four miles, and back. Fifteen members of different abilities participated. Afterward, members met in Lewistown at the Four Aces for lunch. It was a great day to get both horse and rider warmed up for the rest of the season. We also ran a food booth at an auction to raise funds for the club. Some of our members went to classes to be certified in first aid, CPR, and learned to use a chainsaw safely.

In June, ten members participated on a ride on the Shammel Ranch in the Moccasin Mountains north of Lewistown. We enjoyed favorable weather and spent some time hauling hay for the winter months. After working hard to get the horses fed, it was time to have fun.

We had a three day camping trip in the Little Belt Mountains near Utica in July. Members enjoyed riding, eating, visiting, and having fun in the great outdoors. We took advantage of this trip as an opportunity to clear some blocked trails. Many trails can be explored in this area, from trails by the creeks, to higher trails like Arch Coulee and the game range.

Our club’s last fundraiser was held during the Central Montana Fair. The rest of the season was spent doing as much riding as possible before Old Man Winter made an early entrance in October.

With the snow, comes the planning of our annual Christmas party in December. Our members look forward to spending time visiting, eating (too much) delicious food, and enjoying the season. The highlight of the party is the Chinese gift exchange where numbers are drawn by each member. The person holding the lowest number chooses a gift first, but can have it ‘stolen’ by members with higher numbers. However, the person with the lowest number still maintains an advantage, by being the last member to choose from any other gift previously chosen.

At the end of the year, members use the upcoming New Year to resolve to ride more and enjoy the outdoors as much as possible.
Montana Back Country Horsemen State Chapters

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