



Decker Dispatch



Take nothing but photographs and leave only footprints

By Deborah Schatz, Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead

This year has been different in so many ways. The most significant change I've seen is the dramatic increase in people using Montana's back country for recreation.

This move to the outdoors is surely a positive thing for the health and well-being of everyone during the pandemic, but what is happening to our back country resources?

I have never seen so much resource damage and litter as I've seen this summer. In the Bob Marshall Wilderness, I saw huge amounts of toilet paper, fire rings left with litter, and trees damaged by tying horses. Yes, the damage is not only from backpackers, but horsemen, too.

Sadly, this scenario is playing out across the country. Photos of resource damage are all over social media.

As Back Country Horsemen mem-

bers, we have a duty to help educate new users. When we see folks in the backcountry, let's get the message of leave no trace out there.

Remind folks of the seven principles of leave no trace:

- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly. This includes toilet paper!
- Leave what you find.
- Minimize campfire impacts (and be careful with fire).
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.

And also, very importantly, we should encourage people to know the regulations of the area they are visiting.

Photo by Kari Schiffman, Bitter Root BCH

OUR PURPOSES

- To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country, roadless back country and wilderness areas.
- To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
- To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
- To educate, encourage and solicit active participation by the general public in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resource by horses and people commensurate with our heritage.
- To foster and encourage formation of new state Back Country Horsemen organizations.
- To seek out opportunities to enhance existing areas of recreation for stock users.



Toilet paper, exposed tree roots from pawing stock, and fire ring with furniture at Schafer horse camp.



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On Confidence

By Elle Eberts, Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead

In the spring of 2019, I was lucky enough to receive a scholarship from the Backcountry Horsemen of Montana that allowed me to go to Mack and Connie Long's multi-day packing clinic based out of the North Fork of the Blackfoot. I'd gone to a few weekend packing clinics in the past, done a few short trips, and while I knew how to take care of my horses, I lacked practice and confidence in the backcountry.

The Long's camp was daunting, but both Mack and Connie (and their lovely team of wranglers) seemed to know just what I needed. They invited me to bring my riding horse, June, and newly acquired veteran backcountry mule, Shirley. We loaded up our gear and headed to the trailhead, where we spent a day going over the basics and practicing loads.

The next day we headed into the wilderness. The Longs showed us how they set up camp and manage over 20 head of stock in the backcountry. Due to the early season and a heavily used camp from last season, the wranglers brought in hay. Mack helped me find a clearing in the doghair trees near camp to highline my two horses to keep them safe and comfortable while their stock was loose.

We spent time rehabbing the camp and learning about Leave-No-Trace, as the previous occupants had left a lot of examples of what not to do. Mack led us on two day-rides where we practiced leading a string through water and on steep trails.

I was incredibly nervous about managing my two equines in the midst of such a large group of stock. Would there be enough grass? Would my mare panic when she heard the thundering hooves and bells of mules galloping by? Could my mare handle riding in such a big group? The Longs not only gave me a safe place to gain confidence in my horses but also in myself. I made sure that my stock didn't go hungry and created a spot where my equines could relax away from the group, both with the help of Mack and Connie. When it came time to hit the trail, I chose to be at the end of the line where I felt most confident.

I'm going to be honest, in 2018 and early 2019 I would nearly barf before I took my horses on a pack trip. There was so much that I just didn't know how to manage. There is still an awful lot I don't know how to manage, but after the camp it started to get better. I had gained enough confidence that I spent another four weeks in the wilderness with my stock last season, including being a packer for BCHMT's youth camp, which I have to say was incredibly fun.



After taking the winter season off, I worried that I would forget and take steps back in the confidence I had gained during 2019. However, I didn't have time to worry. Last minute, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation needed a packer and asked if I could help. I didn't even get queasy when I loaded up. I've spent a good chunk of the summer now doing packing projects for them, mostly with help from a few lovely mentors that add in their own stock. Now they aren't just helping me, I get to help them occasionally, too.

The big key to my confidence growing over the past year and a half is this; If an opportunity to pack comes my way, I take it. Not in an unsafe or unprepared way, I try to get out there with people who are willing to be good mentors as often as possible. These mentors encourage me to try it myself, to stand up for my stock and ideas, and acknowledge there are many ways to successfully pack. My mentors are there for me to ask questions but they aren't instructing my every move. If they did, I might technically know how to pack but I would flounder on my own.

By letting me bring my own stock to camp, Mack and Connie gave me a safe place to become more confident in my stock skills. By having mentors who treat me as an equal, while at the same time lending a hand when needed, I gained the confidence to pack on many more projects than I ever would have on my own.

Editor's note: Elle was recently chosen by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation as their "Packer of the Year" for 2020. Congratulations to Elle, June, Sabyr, Shirley and Quiver! Elle is the youngest person ever to receive this distinguished award.

Letter from the Chair

By Sherri Lionberger, Last Chance Back Country Horsemen Chair, BCH Montana

This very different year of 2020 makes me quite happy to be a member of Back Country Horsemen, where we can easily social distance ourselves in the Montana out-of-doors. Perhaps not always in the large social gatherings and work parties that we've normally done, but in the smaller groups that have been productive throughout the season.

For those chapters that could not get agreements signed with their Forest Service districts, or were uncomfortable gathering safely, I do hope the 2021 season will get us all back on track.

By the time you read this Decker Dispatch, we will have had our second ZOOM state directors meeting. And again I will thank those folks with more computer skills than I have for helping me through it! Fall will be bringing shorter/cooler days, so it is my hope that chapters are able to figure out

ways to meet effectively, perhaps with ZOOM or other means. Meeting outside with masks available isn't likely to work for too much longer. Anything we can do to keep our members engaged in our mission and involved is even more important in these times.

I would also like to thank Nancy Pollman for stepping back in and helping with this last round of the RTP reimbursement process. It is much appreciated by the rest of the committee, as well as those chapters looking for their funds! Laura and Deena have done a great job staying on top of the (somewhat onerous) requirements for this grant and I want to thank them as well.

Happy trails.

Sherri

Contact Sherri at lionsden01@mt.net



Last Chance Back Country Horsemen National Trails Day Project

By Darlene Horne, Last Chance Back Country Horsemen

What a terrific accomplishment! Friday, June 5th, fourteen members traveled to Eagle Guard Station trailhead to set up camp, have a great dinner, and settle in for the night. Morning comes early, 4:30am to start the fires, make the coffee, breakfast, and lunches. Horses and mules saddled and loaded with 24 sight posts and all the tools needed for the day. We were on the trail by 7:30am with ten riders, eight animals packed, and a plan to complete the project by 3:00pm.

Two navigators, flagging the location to install the posts, two packers with two assistants dropping the 4x4 posts in place and four skilled hole diggers installing the posts.

When all the posts were distributed then all hands helped set the remaining posts.

After 18.4 miles the entire job completed, and all were back to camp safe. Other members cleared two short trail sections and two walkers cleared the lower trails above Eagle Guard Station. Two cooks stayed in camp and had dinner ready.

When all stock was cared for and

everyone was ready to relax around the fire and ready for dinner, the storm hit with heavy rain and high winds. The big club tent survived, but four of the bunny hugger tents didn't make it.

Our camp consisted of 16 grown-ups (2 cute little girls), 15 horses, 8 mules, 14 dogs, 9 horse trailers, 1 camper, 12 trucks, 1 flat trailer (with the out-house), and 5 tents.

Some headed home in the rain and some spent the night in their trucks and improvised. The plan was to sleep in Sunday morning, but when daylight started to break and no sleep, we started to pack up and we were loaded and leaving by 9:00am.

Thanks to all the members for making this project an enormous success. Special thanks to two members who contributed but could not attend, Debbie Tomaskie "the spaghetti chef" and Ed "the wood man" Darfler. We also need to recognize the four members who packed in and camped for two days to make sure the trail was cleared so the packing and setting crews could get the job done, Bob Tomaskie, Fred Benson, Mike Cannon and Don Kristenson.



Mile High Back Country Horsemen

By Casey Waldrop

If we are nothing else, Back Country Horsemen are resourceful. Just give us some bailing twine, a gum-wrapper, and a horse and we will show you how to thrive in the back-country! Although Covid-related restrictions have challenged all of us on nearly every level, we are thriving. Our Mile High Back Country Horsemen chapter adopted the recommended protocols for social distancing and limiting the spread of the disease while looking to our own growing membership as a resource for teaching and learning. Like all chapters, we experienced cancelled rides and events, but we also found ways to teach and share with each other. We are fortunate to count two veterinarians, many skilled equestrians and trainers, and experienced farriers in membership and we put them to work!

Before Covid-19, we were invited to bring horses to a local rehabilitation center and were excited at the prospect of visiting the residents and sharing our horses with them. In the face of the pandemic, the center feared they would have to cancel, but we found a way to follow the rules and give residents a chance to interact with the equines: we simply brought horses and panels into the center's courtyard and kept a watchful eye on the horses from a safe distance.

In May, we held an event that combined a packing lesson, equine first-aid and acupuncture demonstration, and a ground-work fundamentals introduction. It was good to get together even while keeping six feet apart.

In June, we hosted our first group ride and at the end of the month, members hosted our annual Obstacle Day. Once again, turning to our membership for additional resources, we were delighted to find a skilled and creative obstacle-builder in our ranks. This year, we added a Tack-Swap that provided a percentage of sales as a donation to the group.

In July, our president, Matt Pederson, led group rides and a camping trip and led our recent service project: clearing the trail from Thunderbolt Trailhead to Cottonwood Lake. We also hosted Erika of ELN Equine Massage as a guest speaker for our July meeting.

Digging through our membership's resumes, we found our vice-president, riding-therapy certified instructor, and experienced packer, Joan Heinz, to lead a pack-in trip in late August.

Out of the saddle, we've been at work! We tapped a member with web development skills and launched a new website that features an easily updated Google calendar and regularly updated photos and events posts. Our president ensures our active presence on social media platforms and calls our membership to remind them of upcoming events, greatly increasing participation. A new committee was formed to provide scholarships to local high school graduates pursuing a career in an equine-related field. We are proud of the six new members who have joined us this year!

Change is inevitable, but growth is optional. MHBC is committed to growth, even in this socially hostile environment. Sharing our strengths, filling in gaps in our own knowledge, learning from each other, and providing a strong foothold for our association in our community is the scaffolding on which we are building a better MHBC.





National Director's Column

By John Chepulis, Beartooth Back Country Horsemen
National Director, BCH Montana

As many of you know, there have been changes in Back Country Horsemen of America since our National Convention held last April. Because of Covid-19 most all meetings have been held via Zoom, including our last National Convention. This has been working fairly well, but I hope things get better soon. BCHA has terminated their contract with Erica Fearn and Mainspring LLC. That contract ended on August 31. The contract with YM ended on August 28. BCHA has now contracted with Innovative Bookkeeping for financial management under the direction of our Treasurer, Mark Himmel. Dana Chambers, our new Membership Data Coordinator will manage all membership data, and Michelle Wade, our new Executive Administrator, will handle general administration and communications. The total cost of all three contracts will be considerably less than our previous contract with Mainspring LLC. If anyone needs to contact any of the above people, please contact Mark Himmel or myself.

The BCHA Legacy Fund now has over \$100,000 in it. The new goal is one million dollars. The interest from this fund cannot be used until \$500,000 has been reached. Please consider donations to the fund or consider a bequest in your will or estate plan to "Keep Trails Open for Future Generations". You may contact fundraising@bcha.org or visit our website at bcha.org, if you have questions.

The Volunteer Hours Committee has met and I see changes coming in the near future. They mostly will be for consolidation of the Volunteer Hours Form, but I feel a lot of information and values will be lost by doing this. If any Chapter has a nomination for the Double Diamond Award, please contact me as soon as possible. There will be no changes to the way Montana reports for this year. All reports are due by the end of September. Contact me with any questions at barcdiamond@gmail.com.

Our Director of Public Lands, Randy Rasmussen, has been busy this past summer with issues on using e-bikes on our public lands. Working together, BCHA and our partners were able to secure a win to keep e-bikes off non-motorized trails in the Tahoe National Forest. Randy is now working on issues with e-bike use on Department of Interior and BLM lands.

As most of you know The Great American Outdoors Act has passed. You can see the project list for Fiscal Year 2021 on the Region 1 website. The link to their website and project list is as follows: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/r1/home/?cid=fseprd796790&width=full>

Stay safe, and have a great fall.

John

Contact John at barcdiamond@gmail.com.

Photographers:

Remember to take photos at the highest resolution possible. Then, attach your photos to your email as separate .jpg files. Do not imbed your photos within your Word documents. Thank you!

Schedule for chapters' news article submissions

E-mail to: deborah.bcha@gmail.com

Winter Issue: articles due January 5th

Beartooth, Bitter Root, Cabinet, Mission Valley, Three Rivers, Upper Clark Fork, Wild Horse Plains, and convention hosting chapter.

Spring Issue: articles due May 5th

Charlie Russell, East Slope, Flathead, Gallatin, and Judith Basin.

Fall issue: articles due September 5th

Last Chance, Mile High, Missoula, Northwest Montana, Selway-Pintler Wilderness, and Trout Creek.

Four-Legged Friends and Your Estate

“What if I cross the rainbow bridge first?”

By Peg Brownlee

What would happen to your animals if you suddenly died?

An accident or sudden illness can take us when we think we still have plenty of time to “get our affairs in order”. While our spouses and children are able to eventually readjust their lives without us, our pets and livestock cannot...without some forethought and a bit of our planning on their behalf.

As a horse rescue volunteer, I have received many heartbreaking calls for help in what to do with the horses of a spouse or family member who has passed away. While that owner was alive, they loved their horses dearly. Now that they are gone, it is almost as if the horses are in limbo. This would be devastating to the owner, and yet they never took the time to plan for their pets or horses. It causes a great deal of stress for the surviving spouse, family members and friends as they scramble to find a solution.

Spouses and grown children often do not have the means, living situation, desire or patience to adopt your animals. Dogs and cats often end up in shelters. Like their owners, they may be elderly and in need of special care. They may have quirks that you are aware of, yet would make them hard to place with another owner, such as fear of one gender or the other, or aggression toward children or other animals. They might have special dietary or medical needs. They might have hearing loss, which can be misunderstood as disobedience. These “problems”, if not known beforehand, might lead to the animal being returned to a shelter, which is in itself traumatic. Dogs, and sometimes cats, form strong bonds with their owners and are known to grieve for them when they pass away. They need kind and safe homes to live out their lives.

Horses are put in an even more precarious position when an owner dies without planning for their welfare. Horse rescues and sanctuaries receive many heartbreaking requests to take or “re-home” horses after an owner has died. The surviving spouse or grown children of an elderly descendent who leaves horses behind are often at a to-

tal loss as to what to do with them. They do not have the desire, health, knowledge or means to carry on with the care of the horses. They often do not know the age, history or training of the horse. Many times, these left-behind horses have not been ridden or even worked with for years or ever, yet they were beloved and cared for until the owner died. Not only does this make it more difficult to place the horses, but it could put rescue personnel in danger if a horse is not amenable to being caught or handled.

Livestock such as sheep, goats, cattle and such are a little bit easier to deal with, since they generally are not pets. Yet their outcomes deserve planning, too. Your local 4-H or FFA can be contacted for advice.

Planning for the fate and future of your much-loved pets and horses is not difficult. It just takes sitting down and writing out the following:

--The animal’s name and description (colorings, markings). Be sure to include the year it was born, or the age on such and such a date. For dogs, a copy of the license is helpful. For horses, a bill of sale or brand inspection paper is essential for transport and transfer of

ownership. Any pedigree or registration papers should be included.

--Give a brief description of the personality of the animal - is it friendly, shy, aggressive, etc. Be sure to include any red flags or “Do’s and Don’ts”. The more honest you are, the better. You want your animal to be loved and understood. If it has bad habits, it is better for the new or prospective owner to be aware.

--Describe any training or activity that the animal has had, and how recently it occurred. If, say, a horse has not been ridden in 10 years, that is an important thing to note.

--Give a brief run-down of the animal’s daily routine and feeding. What brand of dog/cat food? Is the dog okay alone in the home? What and how often is the horse fed? Does it go out into pasture, or has it foundered in the past and needs a dry corral?

--Be sure to list your veterinarian’s information and also any medications your animal takes. With horses, it is important to note the hoof care routine, de-worming, and vaccination schedules. The horse’s farrier (one who shoes and trims horses’ hooves) can be helpful in adding information, so list their

Note from Peg:

I am a volunteer with Western Montana Equine Rescue and Rehabilitation, wmerr.org, and take all of the phone calls. I often receive sad calls from people who have horses they no longer need, want or can care for.

Often, this is because the owner has died and has not left a plan for the care of their horses (and other pets), should the owner pass away.

The horses are left for family or friends to figure out what to do with them. Hence, I get the call to “please take them.”

After one too many heartbreaking calls (we cannot possibly take in all the horses, but do our best to help re-home them), I decided to write the attached article. With a little effort, we can all be assured that we did not leave the fate of our dear horses to chance.

I would appreciate you helping me to get the word out. You are welcome to use my article in your newsletter, on your website or on Facebook. I would also like to get this information to all of your chapters, nationwide. If you have anecdotes, feedback or suggestions, please contact me.

Thanks for your consideration and time.

“May the HORSE be with you.”

Peg Brownlee
pegster153@hotmail.com

name and number.

--Most importantly, describe how, where and by whom you want your animal to be provided for, if you should pass before they do. It is imperative to talk to your family and/or friends and make SURE they are aware of your wishes. Think about and research who might be approached to take the animal(s). Then, talk with that person so that it is not a big surprise to them if the time comes. Make sure this is someone you can entirely trust to follow your wishes. If they are at all unsure, don't leave the matter unsettled.

--As with any important papers, all of this information should be included and stored with your important personal papers such as your will. Your lawyer, if you have one, should be informed of your wishes in order to settle your estate. With horses, it is very helpful to designate funds for their care in the disbursement of your estate, naming the person or organization that will take possession and providing contact information. Horses are very expensive to feed and maintain, and for this reason, horses are often "discarded" by those who cannot or will not care for them and end up at the livestock auction where they will most likely go to slaughter in Mexico or Canada. This is not the fate you want for your horse.

--Go back and review and update the information from time to time.

If you love your animals, as we all do, you will take the time to plan for their care. They are totally dependent on you, and in return, give unconditional love. Planning is key!

Karen Hedges, Rowdy and Montana enjoy the views along Chair Mountain in the Bob Marshall Wilderness.



Nonprofit Bookkeeping

By Carey Monson, Treasurer, NorthWest Montana Back Country Horsemen

Congratulations! You are the new treasurer of your Back Country Horsemen (BCH) Chapter.

Many organizations make bookkeeping for nonprofits more difficult than it really needs to be. When you implement a few simple tips and tricks to your strategies, nonprofit bookkeeping becomes much more manageable.

So, what are these tips and tricks? Let us dig a little deeper.

Create and maintain lines of communication between all committees

Clear, effective communication is key for a well-run nonprofit organization. Without communication between various committees, how is your nonprofit board supposed to pass final decisions about next steps? How will your fundraising committee know what goals to reach for?

Not only that, but different committees within nonprofits tend to bookkeep differently. For instance, your fundraising committee uses the cash-basis accounting while budget committees tend to use accrual. This can lead to discrepancies in records between those committees.

We recommend taking a few important tips to maintain clear lines of communication:

- **Stay organized.** Organization is the backbone of effective bookkeeping for nonprofits. When you have a complete and correct general ledger with all the information you need for specific reports, you can feel comfortable pulling those reports whenever you have a need for them. The best way to accomplish this task is to use effective nonprofit bookkeeping software to store data and automatically generate the reports you need.

- **Set up regular meetings.** The last thing we want during the day is more meetings. It is incredibly important to have regular communication.

- **Make sure your nonprofit sets some important policies and guidelines to communicate important information.** For instance, informing the committees about grant reporting requirements or pledge campaigns in a timely manner will help during audits.

Create internal controls for everything financial management

Fraud is a topic that no one really wants to talk about. We do not like to think about anyone taking advantage of our organizations and we do not like to think about people committing fraudulent behavior on purpose. It is disappointing and unpleasant.

Implementing internal controls and policies, your nonprofit can take the first step to protect itself against fraud.

Why is this important? 10.1% of fraud victim organizations have been nonprofits that reported a median loss of \$100,000. This can sometimes be fatal to organizations. If donors or supporters do not think you are handling their money responsibly, they will likely choose not to donate at your nonprofit anymore.

The most prominent organizational weakness that contributed to fraud was the lack of internal controls.

Internal controls act as a system of “checks and balances” for staff, board members, and outside vendors.

Start with a code of ethics for your organization as a part of your movement to keep your nonprofit bookkeeping records safe. Then, start creating internal controls that will help you monitor, enforce, and update these policies.

Maintain realistic operating expenses and fundraising forecasts

Your nonprofit creates (or should create) an annual budget. However, we all have a tendency towards optimism in our budgeting. We want to do all

sorts of important tasks with the money, so we will squeeze our expenses to try to fit everything in.

This tends to be an unrealistic approach to budgeting that will lead to overspending during the year.

When your organization implements effective bookkeeping for nonprofits, you will be able to better predict your operating and fundraising expenses for a more accurate budget in the future. Therefore, be sure your nonprofit bookkeeping software allows you to store past budgets with planned and real expenditures for future reference.

The same is true with fundraising forecasts. Nonprofits who track their past fundraising metrics can better predict their fundraising forecasts for the future, resulting in more effective budgeting.

Note: Do not cut operating expenses too thin. While the overhead controversy explains how tempting it can be for nonprofits to cut these expenses as much as possible, be sure you keep in mind that you cannot grow without some overhead expenses.

In the next issue of the Decker Dispatch, we will continue our discussion with a schedule of tasks to keep you organized and on top of your bookkeeping responsibilities.

Carey Monson holds a B.S. degree in Accounting and works at JCCS in Whitefish. If you have questions, you can contact Carey at cmonson@live.com.



In the News

USDA Forest Service Issues Proposed Guidance to Manage E-Bike Use on National Forests and Grasslands

Press Office (202) 205-1134 | Washington | SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service is requesting public input on proposed updates to the agency's internal directives on how e-bikes are managed on national forests and grasslands. These proposed updates are in alignment with the Secretary of Agriculture's direction to increase access to national forests and grasslands, and would provide needed guidance for line officers to expand e-bike access while protecting natural resources and other forest uses.

"Serving our customers and honoring our multiple-use mission is at the heart of how we propose to manage e-bike use," said Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen. "Developing consistent, straightforward guidance on this increasingly popular recreational activity will protect resources, promote safety, and increase access to national

forests and grasslands for a wider range of users."

The Forest Service currently manages approximately 159,000 miles of trails across the United States for a variety of recreational uses. An estimated 60,000 miles of those trails – about 38% – are open for e-bike use. Other land management agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service, also allow for e-bike use on a combined 34,000 miles of trails.

The steady advancement in technology and the continued increase in popularity has led to an uptick in e-bike use on federally-managed land. In response, federal agencies are considering options for expanding access and facilitating their use. The proposed updates to Forest Service directives will generally align with proposed chang-

es at other federal land management agencies.

The proposed directives would categorize e-bikes by class, allowing line officers at the local level to more precisely designate trails for e-bike use in a way that mitigates potential impacts on resources. The proposed directives also include e-bike definitions that are consistent with the Travel Management Rule (36 C.F.R. 212).

The public will have 30 days to comment on the proposed directives. The text of the proposed directives are available in the Federal Register. Instructions on how to comment are available at <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/Reading-Room?project=ORMS-2619>. Members of the public may also contact Penny Wu (penny.wu@usda.gov) to make comments.

Visit www.BCHA.org - your resource center for BCH information

Your access to the BCHA website now works with your e-mail address, linked to Google Drive. It's easier to sign-in and find valuable information.

How to get to BCHA Website:

1. Go to BCHA.org

2. Click on "More About BCHA"

3. Click on Volunteering

4. Scroll down to BCHA Shared Drive Process Request

5. Put in your name, e-mail address, BCH State Organization "Montana," and BCH Chapter

6. Click on "Send Request"

Check your e-mail. You should have permission to get into Google Drive. Click on the link they sent and you're in. You only have to do this one time. Documents will be in Google Drive. If you don't have Gmail, set one up, it's the easiest way to get in.



Getting Youth Involved

By Greg Schatz, Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead

An old horseman Bill Dorance once said, "What you think your horse will do, he will." A horse is a reflection of the person riding it. I don't train horses, I ride horses. When I ride horses I always have a positive mindset that allows the horse to be successful. I've never trained a horse to cross a bridge. When I come to a bridge, I always make sure I'm thinking that my horse will cross that bridge. The second I think my horse won't cross that bridge, he won't. You can fight your horse all you want, but until you change your mind, and are sure that horse will cross that bridge, he won't.

So now you're wondering what this has to do with you. The Back Country Horsemen of Montana has always had a hard time keeping youth involved. I believe the reason for this is that there are way too many of us who have negative thoughts about youth. For over 30 years, I've heard from members that the reason we can't attract youth is because the cost of acquiring and keeping horses is too high, young people can't afford it. This is flat out wrong!! I don't ever want to hear this in BCHMT circles again.

When Deborah and I were in our 20s we joined BCH and we heard those words from members. Darn right, we didn't have the money the old people had. This was our trailer (pictured above), we had five acres with a 380 square foot cabin and an 8' x 10' "barn". But you know what? We rode in the back country.

Regardless of the nay saying members, we rode. Then after a year or two we got a pack horse and a three-horse trailer, more nay saying members, and we didn't listen to them, we packed.

About this time we went on a month long pack trip in the Bob with one pack horse. Man, did the nay saying members come out of the woodwork as we were getting ready to go on our trip. But you know what? We made the trip and had a great time. And since then we have packed somewhere in the neighborhood of 25,000 miles in the Bob.

Today I ride with young people. This past summer, everyone I rode with was under 35. You know what? They

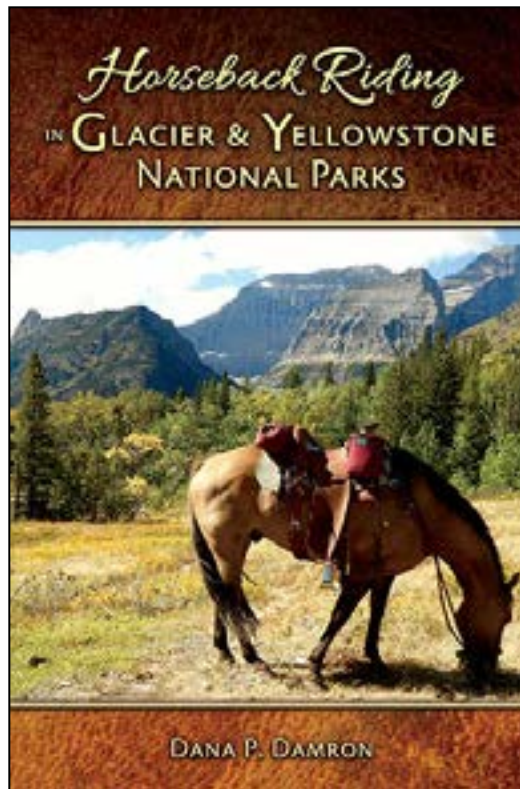
all had horses, a truck and trailer and a place to keep everything. Are the trucks and trailers the same as mine? No. Are their pastures the same as mine? No. Are their living arrangements the same as mine? No. But they ride and pack and they're darn good at it.

Of course, a lifetime later, as we are setting into retirement, we have more money to buy more stuff, more horses, more saddles, bigger and more trailers, more trucks, bigger house, more land and a bigger barn. The only reason we were able to get to this point is because we started out with that one janky trailer and a couple of range horses who got us



into the back country. And we didn't listen to the nay saying members.

BCHMT needs to cross that bridge and change the mindset of BCHMT so we never think that we can't attract youth because the costs are too high.



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Bear Spray and Mules and Dogs

By Duane Krown, President, Selway Pintler Wilderness Back Country Horsemen

My first experience with deployed bear spray occurred while on a trail project up Blodgett Creek. I had a canister of bear spray in my canvas saddle bag and tied my trusty mules, one riding, one tool mule, to a tree and was clearing some trail about a quarter of a mile or so down from them.

When I returned twenty or thirty minutes later, my white canvas bag had a splotch of orange on it. When I checked it out, I began coughing and sneezing, and tears were pouring from my eyes. Somehow the canister in the saddle bag on the mule had been crushed enough to break open, spraying inside and through the bag. The only logical explanation for this is that my superior mule was attacked by a bear, and because she was tied and vulnerable, somehow deployed the bear spray, saving her from the attack.

After the ride, I managed to, with a great deal of sneezing and choking, clean the spray from the saddle. The saddle bag was a more difficult project. I tried washing it several times, but even after that, when I got close to it, I had flashbacks of tear gas training in Army boot camp. I finally just burned it.

My next encounter happened while attempting to break up a dog fight. We have two male dogs that have been in our house together for six years and still can't decide who is the alpha male. One, Storm, is a six year old Border Collie Australian Shepherd cross. The other, Kahuna, is a geriatric fourteen year old Pit Bull cross. He is mild as can be most of the time, but when the FIGHT switch turns on, he becomes the incredible hulk. Like true family, they can get along one minute or hate each other the next.

We had just returned from a walk with the dogs (we have four) and I was giving them a treat while taking off leashes. Kahuna flipped his switch and came barreling off the step. The fight was on. My daughter and I tried to separate them, but couldn't keep them apart. Through past experience (I have scars to prove it) I am careful around dogfights, but also hate vet bills, and besides, this could go on until one of them killed the other.



The view from here.

We had purchased two canisters of pepper spray for these occasions. I told my daughter get them. She hosed them down with water. It did nothing. I said, "Get the bear spray."

She turned it on them full blast from a distance of less than two feet, straight into their eyes, mouth, and nose. After several seconds that lasted forever, they finally had enough. I was standing behind them, and got my second bear spray experience. I had lots on my wranglers and work boots.

Storm spent the next twenty minutes rolling the lawn trying to get the stuff off. Kuhuna tried to rub his off on a living room chair. My daughter hooked up a hose and got some soap. They fought the bath, but we were able to remove at least the first layer from the dogs.

They still brought tears to our eyes

when we scratched them for the next couple of weeks. We considered bathing them again. But I found when bathing myself that warm water and bear spray still on my skin, it gives a burning sensation, and I decided not to put the dogs through it again. My boots choked me up when I laced them for the next month. I still get the occasional whiff from them. I threw the wranglers in the garbage.

Bear spray works---sort of. I think I'll still pack a pistol on the trail for backup.



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