As everyone knows, we have had a devastating wildfire summer in western Montana, which affected many lives and properties. Many BCH projects had to be postponed or cancelled, and probably a lot of recreational use was effected as will be the upcoming hunting season.

There are several issues that are impacting horsemen in a negative manner across the country, such as not being able to haul certain types of feed into the back country, having to camp with your horse some distance from water, and some national forests are also creating no “off trail” travel. These are only some of the things that horsemen are going to be confronted with in the future, and we need to keep our eyes and ears open for these various issues and try to head them off before they become etched in stone.

The new National Trails Classification is out, and we need to examine this closely and make comments where needed to the Forest Service.

The Right to Ride bill is not proceeding as we would hope. As our immediate past national chairman, Merlyn Huso, stated, it is actually “stumbling” due to the fact that the bill cannot get co-sponsors or senators to sign onto this bill. Any contacts or letter writings to senators would certainly be helpful.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, which will run from the Mexican border through Montana to the Canadian border, is looking for comments concerning hikers, horsemen, and bikers using this trail. October 12th is the deadline to comment concerning these three user groups whether they be pro or con. Send your comments to: Greg Warren, CDNST Administrator, US Forest Service, 740 Simms St., Golden, CO 80401-4720, gwarren@fs.fed.us, http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt.

There are many other issues which have been on hold or have
Chairman, continued from page 1

not seen any progress for the past many months, such as the Gates Park bridge, the association with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, etc. Some of these, your local state board of directors have probably already passed on to your local chapters.

The one real bright topic is the completed version of the DVD entitled "Back Country Hosemen of Montana - Who Are We?". We have sent all of the chapters copies which can be reproduced on computers for DVD burning, and these DVDs will be sent to all our congressmen, Forest Service personnel, local officials, etc. These DVDs are not only educational but help promote what BCH stands for. This fine production was put together by Bonnie and Scott Kiser of the Mission Valley chapter, who have done an outstanding job and donated an extreme amount of time and effort toward this end.

The Boy Scout Camporee held in Helena in June was a resounding success, and a big hand goes to Dave Crawford for heading up this project and showing the Boy Scouts our Leave No Trace ethics, etc.

The upcoming BCH convention in March in Great Falls is coming along well, and raffle tickets are being sold at your local chapters for a rifle, TV, and camcorder.

WNV: Montana, California Leading Country in Equine Cases

by: Erin Ryder, TheHorse.com News Editor
TheHorse.com
September 19, 2007 Article # 10445

As of September 11, Montana and California had reported the highest number of equine West Nile virus (WNV) cases so far this year with 24 and 19, respectively. The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service tracks equine arboviruses through the National Animal Health Surveillance System (NAHSS).

Other states reporting numerous cases included:
- Colorado (16)
- Texas (16)
- Missouri (13)
- New Mexico (11)

Reports detailing the incidence of cases down to the county level are available on the NAHSS Web site, http://ui.constantcontact.com/visualeditor/

Thank you Scott and Bonnie Kiser for your time and effort in the creation of the great BCH of MT DVD. Scott and Bonnie are members of the Mission Valley BCH.
The idea came to Chick Hale, our club’s self appointed trail administrator, on a particularly hot day while reworking a trail with three other old timers, Larry the foreman, Wally the supervisor and Ernie, the hiker turned trail worker. Their combined ages totaling approximately 284 years, while their horses total 65 years and one pack horse making 75 hoof years.

Their work consists of digging existing trails by bringing the work up to trail specifications, tedious and slow-going. They tire more easily than past years and manage less work in more time. Chick was concerned about these “over the hill” members not being able to complete the work. He concluded that if they could enlist community service people with an age better suited to do these jobs, then they need to be found. He went to the Law and Justice Center and inquired, but found Workman’s Compensation to be a problem. The BCH would have to provide and that was out! Then Chick read in the local paper about the Adolescent Resource Center taking young people, 18 years and under, putting in their hours of community service to pay their debt of punishment. He contacted the ARC and they were interested. They had work crews, their van for transportation, their tools, and their supervisor (mandatory). Horses could not be used for safety reasons, thereby work would be on trails not far in from the trail head. Their packhorse carried all tools, lunches, water, rain gear, etc.

The club’s old guys found these young people to be willing to learn and had a ‘stick-to-it’ attitude. They knew nothing about trail maintenance or how trail specifications were used in their job, but they learned and gained a few blisters in the process. They were terrific kids and the club was gaining by enlisting the help needed. Most important, these young folks liked the work and were able to use their hours in the outdoors by creating. At the end of the year the supervisors asked them which of all their work jobs did they like the best and everyone agreed that the trail work with the Backcountry Horsemen was the best.

Unfortunately, after two years we did not need them anymore as all trails were completed near the trailheads. The club work was successful.

Other clubs might want to investigate this option. It worked for us, it could work for you. Everyone benefits and such a feeling of satisfaction for all involved. These young people enjoyed working with these “over the hill” guys; the young and old respected each other. These adolescents will never forget what they accomplished and what they learned and it may stick with them the rest of their lives when they, too, get “over the hill.”
Avoiding Colic in the Back Country
Submitted by Ron Stuber

Colic is probably the most common malady of horses. Often it is brought on by human error in managing horse activity and feeding programs. The colic situation in horses may begin when you leave your stable on route to your destination, be it change in feed, lack of water, nervousness of the individual in the trailer, in addition to other factors. Fortunately, many horses adapt to altered diets with no ill effects. Other horses have a more fragile gastrointestinal system due to excessive fermentation in the bowels with gas accumulation or impactions which all lead to a painful horse. Some guidelines that may help your horse cope with this away from home and change in diet:

1. Don't suddenly switch to a different type of hay such as grass hay at home to alfalfa on a trip. Although alfalfa hay provides a good source of calcium and protein, your horse may not adjust to this sudden change. If you are going to change to alfalfa, spend at least two weeks getting the horse's GI system accustomed to it.

2. If you normally feed grass hay and must purchase hay during your travels, try to find a compatible quality hay as you have at home. Try to steer clear of stemmy or coarse hay as it can be irritating to the intestines and lead to impaction colic. If your grass hay is very leafy it can also be highly fermentable like alfalfa. If you must buy a new source of hay on the road, try to initially mix it half and half with your regular hay from home.

3. If your horse has been solely on pasture and will suddenly change to a dry hay, this will also greatly affect his intestines. Spring and early summer pasture is very high in water content. The stresses of transportation and trail exertion will place a great demand on your horse for water intake. Just when your horse needs "moist" feeds the most, you are switching him to dried out grasses in the form of hay while at the same time, creating increased physical demands. You can prepare for this by introducing grass hay at home at least two weeks before you head into the back country so that his intestines become accustomed to processing the drier feed.

4. Conversely, a horse that is used to hay only should have a limited access to grazing at a camp site. If your horse over indulges in certain grasses, they can create increased fermentation in the bowel and lead to gas colic.

5. If you feed concentrates, such as molasses feed or pelleted feed, these require a lot of intestinal water for proper digestion - A hard working horse will dehydrate over the miles, blood flow will be diverted away from the digestive tract to the working muscles, and water loss will occur in the form of sweat. Excessive fermentation of feed leads to gas production while inadequate intestinal water for digestion leads to impactions. Distention of the intestines will lead to pain, cramping, and colic. The potential will now exist for intestinal displacements or twists which will require surgical intervention to save the horse's life. This is another reason why it is always imperative to let your horse drink at any possible water crossing you would encounter.

6. Do not feed large quantities of dry food to a horse that is hot, exhausted, or fatigued. This is due to the fact that the blood will continue to be diverted from the intestines to the skin and muscles. Reduced intestinal circulation can lead to more trouble. Cool the horse out first, offer water or a soupy mash of pelleted feed. Soaking the hay will also benefit. This way you can get water into the gut when the horse refuses to drink on his own.

7. Don't suddenly start giving supplements to your

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Colic, continued on page 5
horse before or during a trip if he isn't normally on such a diet. This not only includes grain products but also vitamin and mineral supplements. Electrolytes are an exception because you are attempting to replace those lost in sweat due to prolonged exercise. Electrolyte supplements may be necessary particularly during hot and humid conditions. There are electrolyte pastes on the market which are good, but the horse needs to have a sufficient water intake prior to giving him the electrolyte paste. This is not on most labels. There are also some new products available in powder form that come in small packets that can fit into your pocket or saddle bag and can be added to a bucket of water. These come in several different flavors, such as apple, which induces the horse to drink more because of the flavoring.

8. Keep it simple - Proper conditioning, consistent water intake, feed as you would at home, or have made the adjustment over a couple of weeks, these will all help in preventing most colics.

How horses keep warm
Reprinted from “Backcountry HoofBeats”
BCH of the Flathead newsletter
November 2005

The horse’s body is well equipped to deal with temperatures way below the human comfort zone. Often horse owners will arrive at the barn, bundled up in layers of clothing to find their horses frolicking in the snow quite oblivious of the sub-zero temperatures.

The most obvious concession to the season is the horse’s winter coat, which can start growing in around late August in some northern areas. As the days shorten, the “hair factor” kicks in. In addition, sudden cold temperatures such as a cold front will prompt the horse’s body to start producing his winter coat. The horse’s winter coat differs from the summer coat in that the hairs are longer and coarser. The horse is able to fluff up his coat, the individual hairs standing out, rather than laying flat against the skin, trapping air close to his body and thereby insulating him from the cold. The additional grease which accumulates in this thicker coat, especially in pastured horses, gives additional insulation.

Nature has designed the horse to withstand the cold from the inside too. Horses are grazing animals that fare best if there is a small amount of food constantly being processed by the digestive system (hence the old adage “feed little and often”). As the gut digests the fiber in the diet, heat is generated, contributing to the horse’s body warmth, even in freezing temperatures. One of the most natural ways to help a horse

quality hay.

Today’s domesticated horses are more prone to impaction colics in the winter. This is due to the fact that they are often confined to stables in inclement weather and receive less turnout and exercise, while still receiving a full grain ration. The fact that horses often drink less in winter when the water is at or near freezing, increases the chances of a colic.

Horseman’s Dictionary

Head Toss = A bonde-haired woman who wears fashion boots while working in the barn.

Manure spreader = Horse traders

Withers = The reason you’ll seldom see a man riding bareback

Hobbies = Describes the walking gait of a horse owner after his/her foot has been stepped on by his/her horse

Youngstock = A general term used for all equines old enough to bite, kick or run you over, but not yet old enough to dump you on the ground

“Protect the value of your land, the health of your livestock, and the beauty of Montana.”
Governor Brian Schweitzer

For a list of producers, go to www.agr.mt.gov
Boy Scouts of America celebrated their 97th anniversary June 14th through June 17th 2007. The National Guard was on hand to assist with approximately 100 scout troops in getting this project organized.

The scouts started their mornings with a color guard presentation of the flags. After the morning ceremonies, the scouts were off to earn their merit badges. Back Country Horsemen were one of the many stations set up for the scouts to participate toward receiving these badges. The scout groups throughout the day walked around to the different groups, listening and learning at each demonstration. At the conclusion they were to have completed and have signatures from six stations. BCH consisted of three stations including backcountry stock packing ethics (horses supplied by David and Laurie Crawford); multiple types of campfire equipment and the proper usage for each area and seven principals of Leave No Trace camping.

Our LNT trainers enjoyed teaching so many of the youth and were thankful for the opportunity to reach out and set a good example of outdoor camping ethics through the Leave No Trace program.

Throughout the weekend of teaching, our group was rewarded by wonderful Dutch oven meals prepared by Laurie Crawford and Don Bohne.

Listening to the different teaching approach of each Master Trainer was a great leaning experience; not only did the scouts learn awareness to protect the great outdoors, but this was a great way to unite our state trainers in the education mission.

The BCH Master LNT trainers that took part were David Crawford from Mission Valley, Harry Boughton from Charlie Russell, Smoke Elser from Flathead, John Chepulis, Paul Roccaforte and Ernie Strum from Beartooth.
Greater Yellowstone BCH
2007 Poker Ride
By: Connie & Daren Brown

On June 2, GYBCH held its 4th annual poker ride at Rapelje, MT. It was a perfect day for a ride in the rolling hills and farm fields; partly cloudy with a light breeze.

The ride started at 11:00 am in the town of Rapelje, proceeded northeast, then made a loop to the northwest and back to the southeast to town traveling about 11 miles total. There were two pop stops along the route where riders could get something to drink and draw a card for their poker hand. We played a form of Texas Hold’em poker to win prizes. The riders registered at the Stockman Café in town before beginning the ride.

When returning to town, they checked in at the café to put their two cards with five common cards that everyone shared. The best four hands won prizes. The best hand had choice of a MT Silversmith belt buckle, a hand made wooden saddle rack, a leather headstall with bit and reins, and a western quilted wall hanging. The next three best hands then chose in order from the remaining prizes.

Lunch was served at the Stockman Café after the ride. There were 40 riders with 46 poker hands and 50 lunches sold. There were door prizes for most of the riders. This was our best year to date and we would like to thank the Stockman Café and the town of Rapelje for their support! We would also like to thank club members who helped the day of the ride and contributed door prizes.

“A man, a horse and a dog never get weary of each other’s company.”

….anonymous

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We started the year with new officers, and the outgoing officers kindly trained and assisted with our smooth and comfortable transition.

We spent the early part of the year planning activities and signing operating plans with the Forest Service. Before long, we were preparing for our Montana Back Country Horsemen State Convention. Last Chance had six delegates in attendance and presented two of the resolutions. Our first resolution was to thank Montana Senator Max Baucus for his continued support in protecting the Rocky Mountain Front; the second resolution was requesting a wilderness designation for the Rocky Mountain Front. Both resolutions were approved by the MTBCH convention delegation. We were thrilled to be in attendance at what turned out to be a wonderful, successful convention. We commend our Lewistown members for all of their hard work.

In April the LCBCH chapter cleared trails at Hunters Gulch and other trails in the Gates of the Mountain wilderness, at which time Helenanne Cannon presented the Defensive Horsemanship review class. We packed in a new set of signage to commemorate the 13 smokejumpers killed in the Mann Gulch Fire on May 20, 1947.

In August we packed in fencing materials to the Black Hall Meadows for and at the request of the Montana Conservation Corps.

Club members were a part of a review of wildlife and trail allocations along the Continental Divide between Anaconda-Pintler and the Scapegoat Wilderness, Flint Creek Range and nearby public lands.

We held our annual Freeze Branding event. It was a very busy event; first, two U.S. Forest Service employees presented training on weed control, use of sprayers mounted on pack animals, and certification of operators. Next the club freeze branded several horses and mules. Finally, we conducted training on the use of bear spray. We used practice canisters and watched a training video explaining proper use of the spray. The event was followed by a well-planned pot luck dinner.

On June 23, LCBCH had a very successful weed spraying work session. We utilized sprayers mounted on pack animals, back pack sprayers, and smaller two gallon handheld sprayers. In total, 35 acres in the Hunters Gulch trail head area were sprayed.

Since our successful spraying effort, the weather and our excessive high temperatures have prevented further activity. First the temperatures rose dramatically in early July, rendering weed spraying ineffective because of temperatures well above 80 degrees. Then, tragically, the Merriweather Forest fire started and burned all of the area we had planned to work in at a later date. We are now changing our efforts to weed control in other areas and expect to start again with cooler weather and fall rains forecasted, and will begin again when it is safe to go back into the mountains.
Whitetail Cabin
Ashland, MT
Submitted by: Connie & Daren Brown

In the month of June, Greater Yellowstone Back Country Horsemen spent two weekends working on corrals and fences at the Whitetail Cabin in the Ashland Ranger District of the Custer National Forest. To get to Ashland, go east from Billings on I-90 to Crow Agency where you exit and take Highway 212 east to Ashland. The Forest Service Office is on the right on the east end of town. From here, it is 5 miles east on Highway 212 and turn left onto East Fork Otter Creek Road (FR 423) for 12 miles.

There were six people that came to work on June 16 and 17. At the Whitetail cabin there was an old post and pole corral and a steel post and wire corral. We did some repairs on the old corral and gates. Then we removed the wire and old posts from the other corral. In rebuilding this corral, we had to dig out the old posts and put new ones in the same holes and replace the wire with poles that the Forest Service fire crew had cut. There was an old wire fence that we removed and used some of the posts to make a couple of hitch rails.

On June 23 and 24, six of us returned to the cabin to finish some gate repairs and clean up around the cabin area. All of the old wood was piled next to the fire pit and the wire and other metal was hauled away.

The Whitetail Cabin is a historical site that was built by the CCC crews. The cabin is two rooms with one room having two sets of bunk beds and the other room being a kitchen with an electric stove, refrigerator, table and wood stove for heat. The site has an out house and another building for storage. There is no running water at the cabin but there is a well that could be developed for water. There is a pasture that is fenced for stock grazing around the cabin and another pasture that can also be used for grazing. This cabin is on the forest rental list.

There is also a developed campground about 1/4 of a mile from the cabin (Holiday Campground) with 3 camp sties and an outhouse.

How many Back Country Horsemen does it take to level a pole?
We started off the year in January with our ‘After-Christmas’ party which included dinner, a White Elephant Gift Exchange, and election of officers for 2007. This is always a fun event and a good mixer.

**Annual Freeze Branding, Pepper Spray and Weed Spray Demos**

Our annual freeze branding in May was expanded to include a pepper spray demonstration. After watching a video about grizzly bears and the effectiveness of using bear spray defensively, members were instructed in the proper and safe handling and aiming of the canisters with an opportunity to practice discharging them. The group was also given a demonstration by two members of the National Forest Service regarding effective spraying of noxious weeds. This also afforded members a chance to practice spray patterns with water only and to become acquainted with the handling of the spraying equipment and calibration of spray mixes. Fifteen members were certified. A barbeque followed.

In late June, a group of LCBCH members arrived at the Hunter’s Gulch trailhead at the Gates of the Mountains where a defensive horsemanship refresher course was presented. Afterward, we were able to spray about 30 acres of noxious weeds in and around the trailhead. At the end of the day, we had our ‘July’ meeting followed by a pot luck dinner. A plan to continue spraying up the trail at a later date was postponed due to extremely hot, dry weather and fire conditions.

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Last Chance continued on page 11
Last Chance continued from page 10

Spraying by hand

Mann Gulch Assistance

Jeff Brandt and Kerry Bartlett packed tools, cement, and a sign that described the 1949 ordeal of the Smokejumpers into the Mann Gulch area of the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Much has been done to restore the area and memorialize those who lost their lives there.

Kerry Bartlett unloading supplies

Uniting on the Divide

Leaders of nine southwest Montana outdoor and conservation organizations, including Last Chance and Mile High Backcountry Horsemen chapters have been meeting to review maps, listen and develop a shared approach to conserve backcountry areas and quiet mountain trails along the Continental Divide between the Anaconda-Pintler and Scapegoat Wilderness areas, and the Little Blackfoot/Electric Peak areas.

The aim is to build an outdoor partnership based on shared values and common interest in conservation, enjoyment, wise use, and management of our public lands and quiet mountain trails for equestrians, bicyclists, and hikers.

Representatives from LCBCH are Dennis Milburn, Neil and Darlene Horne. Dennis has been an asset to this partnership with his vast knowledge and Forest Service background. He provides the group with valuable information about the areas. Neil is familiar with a lot of the trails and terrain in the proposed wilderness area and can help to find alternate routes for the quiet trails.

Enjoying a potluck at the trailhead after the workday
State Board Meeting Highlights
September 8, 2007
Deer Lodge, MT
Submitted by: Linda Brewer

The “Right to Ride” bill is struggling.

A letter & a copy of the new BCH DVD will be sent to Baucus & Tester & the governor. Ron Stuber will make a follow up phone call to their offices.

BCH of MT will assist the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation pack in logs to build a fence to keep cattle out of the elk range in order for the elk to have grazing in the summer. If anyone would like to participate, please come. The date is October 13 just south of Lolo, MT.

Mountain bike folks are trying to get approval to ride on the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. They are currently banned from wilderness areas, but they want approval to ride on the non-wilderness trails. There was a mixture of comments from the attending BCH members. Some were adamantly opposed to this and some felt that we need to join up with some of the other groups as not to alienate ourselves too much. Jim Brogger made motion that the state BCH oppose mountain bike use on this trail. Motion was opposed with a vote of 16 (oppose) and 13 (for).

Bob Hoverson will do a series of programs on RFDTV. The title of the series is “RFDTV Outdoor Program with Bob Hoverson”. This series is scheduled to begin in October.

A letter will be sent to Baucus and Tester in support of trails fund bill.

Ron Nusbaum from the Beartooth Chapter and Mike Penfold gave a presentation on the Pryor Mountains. A coalition has been formed to try and manage the roads (both legal and illegal) and hopefully close some of the roads to public. This coalition would like for the BCH of MT, individual chapters and individuals to add their names to the website as supporters.

Defensive horsemanship video should be available for preview at the December Board meeting.

Charlie Russell Chapter received an award from the Department of Interior for promoting volunteerism.

It’s time to begin thinking about resolutions for State Convention. Don’t wait till the last minute.

A motion was made to make it a $1.00 donation for the BCH videos. Motion defeated. Smoke Elser moved that we give the DVD’s out as a free item. This is a good source of advertisement for BCH. DVD’s will be given to Forest Service, Chamber of Commerce, Schools, etc.. Each chapter was given 25 copies of this DVD.

Brochures were given out to each chapter with raffle tickets and a description and photos of the items in the raffle. There will only be 2000 raffle tickets. Price is $3.00 each or $30.00 for a book. Convention will be at Holiday Inn in Great Falls. The dates are March 28, 29, 30, 2008.

The next meeting is December 8 at Smoke Elser’s Barn in Missoula.

Meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.
It has been a very busy year here in Central Montana. Our year started off with the final preparations for the 2007 BCH of MT State Convention, held in Lewistown March 30, 31 and April 1. Attendance was great, the meetings ran smoothly and thank you to all who attended and helped make this a very successful convention. A special thank you to Larry Jordan for the wonderful CD of pictures he took throughout the convention.

Our annual “stick horse rodeo” was held January 27 in conjunction with the Montana Winter Fair and over 60 children participated. For those who attended the convention and watched the video, you saw for yourselves how much fun those children had and the adults too. Hats off to Mary and Fred Knerr for all their hard dedicated work in making this rodeo such a success.

Fund raising projects for 2007 included: Spring Equine Shot Clinic held at Horizon Veterinary Clinic with Dr. Greg Carlson on April 14; JBBCH Tack Sale, May 12; and providing manpower at the gates for the Central Montana Fair from July 25 through July 29.

On July 14, JBBCH held a Defensive Horsemanship Clinic at Arrowhead Arena with instructors Dave Schilz and Tom Higberger. The clinic was very well attended even with the 100 degree temperatures. A ride in the afternoon followed a potluck dinner at Paul Huff’s and Tom Wojtowicks’. The following day, a pack clinic was held with Dave Schilz and Tom Higberger as the instructors. The clinic included packing demonstrations, hands on training, followed by a ride and lunch in Upper Spring Creek Coulee. Thank you to Dave and Tom for sharing their knowledge and expertise with us.

Work projects for the year thus far have been:

- June 2, National Trails Day—Limekiln Trails in the Judith Mountains with the BLM, clearing and cleaning trails
- July 7 & 11, Upper Spring Creek Coulee area—State land clearing and cleaning trails
- July 8, Half Moon Pass, Snowy Mountains—Judith District Forest Service clearing and cleaning trails
- August 4, East Fork Cottonwood Trail, Snowy Mountains—Judith District Forest Service clearing and cleaning trails
- August 16, Limekiln Trail, Judith Mountains—BLM clearing and cleaning trails.

Continued planning with the Forest Service is ongoing for proposed Crystal Lake Parking area for horse/stock trailers.

In January, the BLM formed a subgroup committee of the RAC for Travel Management Planning for the Judith Mountains and North and South Moccasin Mountains. This subgroup committee has representation from the BLM, DNR, mountain bikers, hikers, motorcyclists, 4 wheelers, equine/stock users and adjacent landowners. Karen Johnson from JBBCH was appointed to represent equine/stock use. Field trips to each of the areas have been completed followed with lengthy discussions and redrawing of maps regarding areas to remain open or to close to recreationalist. With two meetings left, September and October, final decisions will be made and recommendations will be presented to the RAC in November.

Besides all the fund raising, holding a convention, work parties, and meetings, JBBCH members have also had a lot of fun and relaxing rides, potluck dinners and packing/riding trips to many areas close and far away. Members have traveled to the High Wood Mountains, Castle Mountains, Little Belt Mountains, mountains in Canada, Beartooth/Absaroka Wilderness areas, North Wyoming areas, and the Highline of Montana. We are so “centrally” located, it is easy to get most anywhere.

Our membership keeps growing and we are over the 70 member mark. Our monthly meetings are held the first Monday of each month. Preceding the meetings, there is a 30 minute education/training session. Present officers for 2007 are: Gene Couch, President; Keith Ream, Vice-President; Tom Wojtowock, Secretary/Treasurer.
A recent study investigated 3 different methods of water supply on drinking preference and behavior in a group of horses (S Nyman and K Dahlborn; Effects of Water Supply Method and Flow Rate on Drinking Behavior and Fluid Balance in Horses; Physiol Behav 2001 May;73(1-2):1-8). The water sources were buckets, pressure valve bowl (where the horse has to push on the apparatus to receive water) and float valve bowl (the waterer is refilled when it gets below a certain level). All methods were of the type recommended for horses. The horses were fully accustomed to drinking from all three methods before the testing period commenced. In an initial test of the pressure valve bowl, it was found that horses drank more at a flow rate of 8 liters/minute than 3 or 16 liters/minute. A preference test was then performed to compare water intake from a bucket, a pressure valve bowl set at 8 liters/minute and a float valve bowl, which could only be set to 3 liters/minute due to technical problems. Horses showed a clear preference for drinking from the bucket and there was no significant difference between the 2 automatic bowls. According to the researcher, some possible reasons for this are the ease of getting water from the bucket, the greater diameter and depth of water suitable to the horse’s natural drinking habit. Further studies may be warranted to improve these characteristics in automatic watering systems for horses.

The researchers also measured the fluid balance and behavior of the horses for all 3 watering methods. Each horse spent a week with each of the different water delivery methods. The horses drank more each day from the buckets than from the pressure valve bowl and the float valve bowl. Two of the horses experienced an overall loss of body water when drinking from the float valve bowl even though they spent more total time drinking than for the other 2 systems. The researchers suggest that this situation could be improved with a higher flow rate for the float valve system, which would allow them to consume more water in the time they spent drinking. The horses also spent more time drinking from the pressure valve bowl than from buckets although they consumed less water in the time they spent drinking, again a higher flow rate may improve this. The horses in this study were at rest throughout the study period and the authors note that the differences in water consumption between the different delivery methods may be highly significant for horses in athletic competition or for lactating mares. If a horse is normally watered using an automatic system, it could be useful to supplement with water from a bucket after intense exercise to ensure the horse is adequately rehydrated. The researchers have shown that there are clear advantages in delivering water to horses in buckets and this could be a significant consideration for horses that have an increased requirement for water. The design of automatic waterers could be further studied to overcome the disadvantages that the researchers found in this study.

Horses Like Drinking from Buckets

This article is reprinted from issue No. 4, 2001 of the rural industries research and development corporation (RIRDC)
Equine Research News

Bear Safety Tips

On the Trail or in the Backcountry:

- Avoid surprising bears at close range. If you are hiking through bear country, make your presence known, particularly where the terrain or vegetation makes it hard to see. Make noise, sing, talk loudly, or wear a bell.
- If possible, travel with a group. Groups are noisier and easier for bears to detect.
- Bears may be active at any time of the day or night, but they tend to be more active at dawn and dusk. Plan your hikes accordingly and stay on established trails.
- There are several indicators that may alert a backcountry traveler that a bear is in the area. Some of the most easily identifiable clues include rub trees, diggings, scat, and tracks. Identifying these clues may help to prevent an encounter.
- One myth is that bears are attracted to the scent of a menstruating woman. Bear experts say that is rumor, not fact.
- Leave your dog at home. Pets and bears don't mix.
- Learn and obey the rules and regulations of the wilderness and other areas you're hiking in.
About Your Newsletter

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The newsletter has three main emphasis areas: (1) issues, (2) club activities/volunteer projects, (3) light material (i.e. Humor, history, etc.). Please submit a copy that is typewritten or legible handwritten copy is acceptable. Photos should be prints only (no negatives or proofs). Black & white or color is acceptable. Please do not cut or write directly on the photos.

Submit articles, photos, and advertising to Linda Brewer, PO Box 31837, Billings, MT 59107. Phone: (406) 698-5880 e-mail: lbrewer@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:

**May 10**  
Beartooth, Bitterroot, Cabinet & CMR, East Slope, Flathead

**September 10**  
Gallatin, Greater Yellowstone, Hi-Line, Judith Basin & Last Chance, Mile High

**January 10**  
Mission Valley, Missoula, Selway/Pintler Wilderness, Three Rivers, Upper Clark Fork, Wild Horse Plains

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**Advertising Rates**

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

A 25% commission will be paid to individuals or chapters.

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PO Box 614
Absarokee, MT 59001

Bitter Root
PO Box 1083
Hamilton, MT 59840

Cabinet
PO Box 949
Libby, MT 59923

Charlie Russell
PO Box 3563
Great Falls, MT 59404

East Slope
307 N Main
Conrad, MT 59425

Flathead
PO Box 1192
Columbia Falls, MT 59912

Gallatin Valley
PO Box 3232
Bozeman, MT 59772

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PO Box 294
Billings, MT 59103

Hi-Line
PO Box 1418
Cut Bank, MT 59427

Last Chance
PO Box 4008
Helena, MT 59601

Judith Basin
PO Box 93
Levistown, MT 59457

Mile High
PO Box 286
Butte, MT 59703

Mission Valley
PO Box 604
Ronan, MT 59864

Missoula
PO Box 2121
Missoula, MT 59806

Selway/Pintler Wilderness
2059 Walking Mule Ln
Corvallis, MT 59828

Three Rivers
PO Box 251
Dillon, MT 59725

Upper Clark Fork
PO Box 725
Deer Lodge, MT 59722

Wild Horse Plains
PO Box 398
Plain, MT 59859

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