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The BackCountry News



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FALL 2017

Youth Wilderness Experience Program

By Kathryn Matthews, Top of the State Unit

Top of the State Unit's Youth Wilderness Experience was held July 19 - 21, 2017, at the Carter Meadow Group Campsite. Ted McArthur, Ranger at the Scott River Ranger District, reserved the group camp for this youth activity.

We started the program Tuesday afternoon by setting up camp. Barbara Schuyler, Virgil and Linda Hardy, Robert and Laurie Robustellini, John and Gail Lyons and Ed Matthews arrived to set up camp. Caralee Scala was planning to show up a little later than expected so everyone left assuming Caralee would be here shortly. I told myself, "I am not worried. I am a big girl and can spend the night at camp alone." Boy, was I relieved when she finally arrived. We finished setting up the kitchen, ate dinner and got settled since night was setting in.

Wednesday started bright and early. Pam Wells-Boughton was also planning to camp with us so she arrived early and got her camp settled. There would be four adults staying for the entire event. Jackie Zediker showed up before 9 a.m. with her five 4-H seventh graders. They set up their camp and were eager to start the day. At 10, Sam Cuenca, USFS,



In the Youth Wilderness Experience Program scavenger hunt, youth followed the animal trail and answered questions along the way. While doing the scavenger hunt they also cleared the trail and picked up garbage along the way.

See YOUTH WILDERNESS page 5

The Backcountry News

An internal publication of the Backcountry Horsemen of California

Editor · Carol Jo Hargreaves
news@bchcalifornia.org

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Reader Submission: The Backcountry News welcomes reader contributions, event and calendar dates, and Unit news. These will be printed on a space-available basis. Submissions should be sent in a Microsoft Word format to include author and photo credits. Longer articles are subject to edit for space at the discretion of the Editor. Photos may not be returned.

Deadlines: Advertising, announcements, pictures and other copy must be received at The Backcountry News by the deadlines listed below.

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Publication Date</u>		
Jan. 15, 2018	Jan. 2018	Winter	
March 31, 2018	April 2018	Spring	
July 15, 2018	July 2018	Summer	
Oct. 15, 2018	Oct. 2018	Fall	

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<u>Number of Issues:</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	Cost per Issue
Full Page	\$150.00	\$142.50	\$135.00	\$127.50	
Half Page (h/v)	\$100.00	\$95.00	\$90.00	\$85.00	
Quarter Page (h/v)	\$80.00	\$76.00	\$72.00	\$68.00	
Bus. Card (h/v)	\$25.00	\$23.75	\$22.50	\$21.25	

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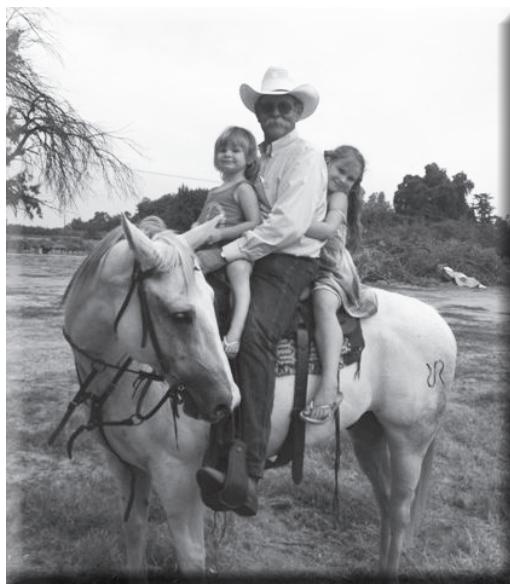
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For more BCHC information, see our website: bchcalifornia.org

President's Page



I have just returned from one of the most enjoyable camping trips that I have been on in a long time. Mid Valley Unit had a campout at Montaña De Oro State Park, just south of Morro Bay. It was good friends, good food, good riding and good weather. When all that comes together in one place, you have to say thank you to all the people who were there and who made it possible. I would also like to thank the Los Padres Unit for the work they do in that park. I know the hitch posts near the museum have their name on them.

We just had the state semi-annual meeting in Santa Nella, California. I hope each unit representatives reported back to his /her respective unit. We discussed many issues that are a concern for the whole state and some that may be more local issues. As president of BCHC, I know that I'm having a hard time keeping up with what is happening.

The Public Lands Committee brought up several legislative issues that we should all be aware of. I'm going to list a few here that could use your attention in the coming year:

- HR 1349 (To amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, and game carts is not prohibited in Wilderness Areas, and for other purposes.) came up earlier this year from a congressman I thought wouldn't sign on to something like this. Bikes in the Wilderness is a bill that would allow wheeled vehicles to be in the wilderness. I do believe that this would be a real safety issue. Just imagine meeting a bike coming downhill out of Caribou Lakes on the section that's called "The Chute". It would not be pretty. We need to let our congressmen know that we are against this.
- HR 2936 is called the Resilient Federal Forests Act. It was passed by the Natural Resources Committee in June 2017. It would give the Forest Service and other agencies the ability to deal with the aftermath of large fires and other natural disasters. This one is not just a wilderness issue, but could help improve many things in our national forests.
- One more that I will mention is the National Monuments Review. We feel this issue does not directly affect the mission of BCHC, but it is important to keep informed as to what is being done and where. Five California monuments will be reviewed: Berryessa Snow Mountain, Carrizo Plain, Giant Sequoia, Mojave Trails and San Gabriel Mountains. A sixth monument, Sand to Snow, has been reviewed and no changes were recommended.

The Education Committee has a new chairman: Stacy Kuhns, from the Redshank Riders Unit. She has willingly volunteered to step into that position after Dan Horn decided to step back. Stacy has done an outstanding job learning and organizing all the different programs we do. Thank you, Stacy.

My heart goes out to all who were affected by the fires in and around the North Bay Unit and Lake-Mendo Unit in early October. What a tragedy that was. I hope those affected can recover and eventually get back to what should be a normal life. Also, I would like to thank all who helped haul animals, or boarded them, or sent money or prayed for those who needed it.

One more thing I need to mention. Rendezvous 2018 has been in limbo for the last couple of months, but I think we are making headway. We should be signing papers soon with the Mid State Fair at Paso Robles. It's not a done deal yet but should be soon. This is going to take a lot of work from those in the Los Padres Unit's area. It will also take the rest of us to support and attend the affair. Wish us all luck.

I would like to say thank you to all the Directors who attended the Fall State Board Meeting. Coming from one end of this state to the other is a major undertaking. It takes a lot of time and commitment from a lot of dedicated people to make this organization function.

I ended up with the short straw at this meeting and was elected president. Thank you for trusting me to be your leader for one more year, I think. I will do my best to represent all of you in a manner that I hope will make you proud to be a Backcountry Horseman. If anyone has questions about what I do or could suggest a better way to do anything, please feel free to call or write.

Happy trails,
Lloyd

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BCHC NEWS

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT



2018 BCHC RENDEZVOUS April 13-15, 2018

A big thanks to the
Los Padres Unit
for stepping up!

Event will be at
Paso Robles Event Center
Hearst Equestrian Center
Paso Robles, California

Volunteers will be needed.
Please contact
Shirley Rasmussen
shirleyjras@gmail.com

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
AND PLAN TO ATTEND!**

The annual BCHC Rendezvous is a primary fundraiser for our organization. It helps pay for day-to-day operational expenses such as production and distribution of this newsletter.

MORE GOOD NEWS

STEWART HORSE CAMP TO REMAIN WITH CONCESSIONER THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SPOKE UP!

By Carol Jo Hargreaves, Editor, The Backcountry News

Equestrians were asked to show support of the popular Stewart Horse Camp near Point Reyes National Seashore, and they did. Thanks to all who wrote and called! The 10-year contract with current concessioner, Amanda, to operate Stewart Horse Camp ends in March 2018. The National Park Service can decide to extend the contract for one year up to five times. A Prospective Package is currently being developed that will consider the value of the current use of the property and whether the National Park Service wants to continue to allow the concession. Some speculated the horse camp would be turned into a general campground that would generate more revenue. The Park Service would set up a bid for the concession if they chose to proceed.

Equestrians were asked to express support of Amanda by contacting both Cicely Muldoon, current Superintendent of the Park, and Michael T. Reynolds, Acting Director of the National Park Service (who has ultimate authority for making the decision).

October 19, Kevin McKay of the National Park Service, announced in writing the NPS *intends* "to offer an extension of the existing contract." Two weeks later, John Dell'Osso of the National Park Service, confirmed the NPS intention in writing: "The term of the concession contract for Stewart Horse Camp is due to expire in March of 2018, after 10 years, as is standard for NPS Concession Contracts. This is part of normal business practices for the National Park Service. In order to facilitate horseback visitation at Point Reyes National Seashore, the park will offer an extension of the existing contract to the current Concessioner while working on the development of a new business prospectus for this operation."

In an email to BCHC President Lloyd Erlandson dated November 2, Mid Valley Unit member Bob Cooper promised to talk to Amanda to get her ideas and resolve issues that need to be addressed before the contract renewal process begins again next year. The end goal, according to Cooper, would be to get the Park to realize the horse camp should remain because it allows horse people to enjoy the park and they love it. The horse camp makes the park look good. Cooper promised to keep BCHC informed and is likely reach out to BCHC for help and support next year.

The deadline for submissions for the
WINTER 2018 EDITION

of the Backcountry News is: **January 15, 2018**

Submissions to:
BCHC Editor
news@bchcalifornia.org

UNIT NEWS

YOUTH WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE, continued from page 1

arrived with Joey Russell, USFS Consultant, to welcome the youth, give a brief history of the Forest Service and to teach the art of identifying birds. We walked the meadow nearby with binoculars to get a close up view. It was exciting to find a baby grouse in its nest and we learned to be very careful not to disturb the nest. After lunch, everyone hiked to Hidden Lake for a swim. There was a breeze and the water was very cold but when you're young, who notices? Pam brought her horse up to the lake, carrying plenty of water and snack food. By the time we hiked back to the camp it was time to start dinner. While dinner was being prepared by Caralee, Barbara Schuyler and Linda Hardy, Jackie was teaching the youth how to put together their first aid kits, then practiced bandaging head wounds and applying splints. Dinner was barbecued chicken legs, zucchini casserole and potato salad.

Thursday was a much slower morning with eggs and pancakes. The pancakes were cooked over an open fire; the smoke was a bit much but the food was good. Then the star of the show showed up. Ken Smith put together a packing demonstration using Pam's horse. He demonstrated the use of pack boxes and how to pack coolers in panniers using the box hitch. While Ken worked with half the youth packing on the metal mule, Ed, Pam and I taught the other half of the youth how to brush, clean hooves and saddle a horse. Afterward we went on a short trail ride. The youth had a very busy morning and thoroughly enjoyed working with the animals (even the medal one). After lunch, Ed demonstrated the art of using a compass and map reading. Then Kelly York, her mom Judy, and sister Stacy put on a scavenger hunt. The youth were supposed to follow the animal trail and answer questions along the way. While doing the scavenger hunt they were also to clear the trail and pick up garbage along the way. At the end of the hunt, a surprise was waiting for them in the form of Big Foot (Stacy). They loved it. While Caralee, Susan and Linda were getting dinner ready (glazed pork, coleslaw and roasted corn), Ian Nelson and his wife Amy came to talk about the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and supplied maps of our area of the PCT which is called Big Bend. Two youth showed an interest in hiking the PCT one day, so Ian was a big help in encouraging them to go for it. Right after dinner (while Pam did the dishes), Jackie taught us how to make bracelets out of parachute cord. Mine was hot pink in color.

Friday was the end of the outing. It had been so much fun, it was sad knowing this was the last day. Breakfast was a busy time of getting food on the table before the day started. (Note for next year: there was no coffee prepared). Caralee put me in charge of baking biscuits in a dutch oven. Even though I had some idea how they needed to be cooked, I was really looking forward to 'picking Lori Ludden's brain' on Dutch Oven Cooking. The biscuits didn't turn out half bad! Wish I could remember what I did right. Then Jo Peterson and Carmen Kinch of Search & Rescue arrived and set up a tracking demo. The youth had to identify the shoe pattern and follow it step by step. It was a time-consuming process but after Jo and Carmen left, the youth were examining the bottom of their shoes. Great demonstration.

After lunch, with a little free time thrown in, Jackie set up and taught

a compass course. After learning the course, the youth had to demonstrate to the adults what they learned. Then Lori Ludden showed up and the fun began. Put Lori and five youth with tomato sauce together and you're not sure what you're going to get. Dinner for the parents was enchiladas with peach cobbler. Everyone left very full and satisfied with the meal. Now we came to a problem . . . everyone left. It was such a fun and rewarding time, I wasn't ready for it to end. But . . . Barbara Schuyler, Virgil and Linda Hardy, Robert and Laurie Robustellini, John and Gail Lyons all came for dinner and after everyone left they started breaking down camp. We had Caralee's vehicle loaded and ready to go in minutes. Happily, Ed and I didn't break our camp because we were staying a few extra days to clear the trail to Trail Gulch Lake and have fun riding other trails. I can't wait for next year! I would also like to acknowledge members behind the scenes who helped plan but could not attend the event: Shari Kaufner, Mary Kleaver and Laurie Knispel.



Ken Smith demonstrated the use of pack boxes and how to pack coolers in panniers using the box hitch. While Ken worked with half the youth packing on the metal mule, the other half of the youth were taught how to brush, clean hooves and saddle a horse.



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BCHC FALL STATE BOARD MEETING

BCHC STATE BOARD MEETING REPORT

Submitted by Troy Patton, Eastern Sierra Unit Director

The State Board meeting for Backcountry Horsemen of California was held October 13 and 14 at Pea Soup Andersen's restaurant in Santa Nella, California.

EDUCATION

Rendezvous in Bishop was a financial success. We made over \$12,000 profit. The down side was that only 1/3 of BCHC members attended the event. Thank you to everyone who helped make 2017 Rendezvous in Bishop a success.

We are looking to have Rendezvous in Paso Robles in April 2018 and, hopefully, more members will attend. If we do not make money on Rendezvous, each Unit will have to be responsible for paying their own annual insurance premium. Please support Rendezvous.

The Directors were reminded that it is the time of year of year to elect new Unit officers and for those new officers to attend BCHC Officer Training. There will be three trainings held after the first of the year, in the South, Central and Northern regions. Directors were also reminded that Unit reports are due to the Secretary and that Volunteer Hours are due February 1st. If any of you worked on a trail project, worked at Rendezvous, or did any community service with/for BCHC, you need to go to the BCHC website, click on Forms and complete the Volunteer Hours form.

PUBLIC LANDS

Troy Patton and Thor Bodtker, Co-Vice Presidents of Public Lands discussed some items that BCHC will be working on:

HR 1349 – Amend the Wilderness Act to allow bikes, strollers, wheelchairs, and carts. This has been proposed by Tom McClintock from Bakersfield. It is beginning to gain momentum, however there is a lot of resistance from BCHC and BCHA as well as many hiking and equestrian groups. We really need members to write a short letter to Kamala Harris, Dianne Feinstein and Paul Cook, asking them to oppose this measure. It is important to describe any issues you may have had with bikes on the trails. BCHC feels that this is a huge safety issue and that bikes have plenty of trails to ride without being in the wilderness. A fact sheet is available with more information to use when writing your letter.

We had two guest speakers: Bruce DeMott and Randy Rasmussen who spoke about public land issues.

The possible sale of public lands was also discussed. The Congressman who proposed this sale has since resigned from Congress and the bill died. However, we remain vigilant watching for other bills that may come up in this area.

We also discussed a new policy by California Department of Fish and Wildlife which is requiring Land Passes in many new areas. More information can be found at www.wildlife.ca.gov/licensing/Lands-Pass. There are no new passes required in Inyo County, but Canebrake Ecological Preserve in Kern County and Hope Valley Watershed in Alpine County were added. The full list is on the website.

INSURANCE

During the Board of Directors reports, we had a lengthy discussion about insurance. BCHC has had some issues in this area and there are different ideas out there about what insurance covers. Here is the **official word**:

- BCHC provides third party insurance – it only protects a third party not the BCHC member. It is wise to have your own insurance to cover you. Example: if your horse gets loose and kicks someone's car at the trailhead, and the outing is an official BCHC event, it will cover the other person's car. If your horse kicks your car, you are not covered.
- There is no coverage once the sun goes down. The BCHC policy is only in effect from dawn to dusk. Example – if that horse gets loose during the night and damages someone's car, it is on you.
- Our insurance does not cover minors unless they are with parents who are members with a BCHC Family Membership.
- You must use a free day (also known as a Public Day) if members of the public are going to attend a BCHC event.
- Horse rides, wagon rides, double riding are not covered
- You should notify the insurance company even if you are just setting up a booth at an event. Example – you are at a fair with your Unit booth and the table suddenly falls on someone's foot and breaks a toe. Insurance needs to know you were there and what you were doing.

The other important thing is that insurance renewal is due next month. Each Unit must complete a form about what kind of events they expect to host in 2018.

NEW STATE OFFICERS FOR BCHC - 2018

Lloyd Erlandson – President
Ernie Coe - 1st VP (Insurance)
Tammy Bozarth - 2nd VP (Service/Volunteer Hours)
Stacy Kuhns & Tom Firth - Co-VPs of Education
Susie Patton, Secretary
Lynn Joiner, Treasurer
Troy Patton & Thor Bodtker – Co VPs of Public Lands
Dennis Serpa & Bob Magee – BCHA National Directors
Alan Hill – BCHA Alternate Director
Website– Jacque Murphy
Newsletter – Nancy Vaughn

BCHA: Dedicated to keeping America's trails open for all.



OPPOSE HR 1349

Submitted by Bob Magee

We ask that you please spend a little of your time keeping bikes out of the wilderness. Below is a sample letter that needs to be sent to your congressmen as soon as possible. This bill is up for vote in the House of Representatives. Take action now and send this letter.

I am writing to respectfully request that you not support HR 1349. The bill represents an attack on the cultural heritage perpetuated by Backcountry Horsemen and would create significant danger for persons using horses and pack stock within congressionally-designated wilderness.

HR 1349 if enacted into law, would forever alter what has for centuries been known as “the wilderness experience.” That is, the relatively slow, contemplative mode of travel that can be provided on foot, horseback or via canoe. Authorizing mountain bike use in wilderness, as proposed in HR 1349, would be problematic for the following reasons:

- *The rapid speeds at which mountain bikes are capable of traveling, combined with their often silent approach, would create significant safety hazards for hikers and horsemen on steep, narrow or winding trails.*
- *Worse still would be safety hazards for persons leading a pack string, where a bike startling the least-trained horse or mule among the pack string could bolt and/or endanger the entire party.*
- *Solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreational experience, as defined in the Wilderness ACT, would be lost if hikers and horsemen were forced to constantly scan the trail ahead and over their shoulder for rapidly approaching bikes.*

I ask that you please do not support HR 1349. It represents a clear and significant danger to our safety as hikers and our traditional use of horses and pack stock in the wilderness.

*Sincerely,
[Your name and address]*

You can find your member of Congress' address at:

<https://whoismyrepresentative.com/>

At this website you can find out who represents you in Congress by searching the database by your Zip Code or state.

BCHA with Wilderness Society, American Hiking Society, National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance and Pacific Crest Trail Association published an informative HR 1349 Fact Sheet. The document may be found on page 9 of this newsletter.

You will find additional information about this issue on the BCHA website, bcha.org

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A donation in the amount of your choice is tax deductible. You can now donate easily and quickly, using a major credit card or PayPal. Simply go to the BCHC website (bchcalifornia.org), Scroll down to the bottom of any page, press the DONATE button and help us in our many efforts. THANK YOU!

PUBLIC LANDS

PUBLIC LANDS REPORT

By Troy Patton and Thor Bodker, Co-Vice Presidents of Public Lands

There are so many issues in the Public Lands arena right now, it is difficult to keep up unless you sit in front of your computer all day. Here is the latest information on some of the major issues:

HR 1349, “Wheels over Wilderness” – Amends the Wilderness Act to allow bikes, wheelchairs, strollers and wheeled game carts in Wilderness areas. This bill was proposed by Tom McClintock (R-CA). BCHC and BCHA are in opposition to this bill and have sent letters stating this. Please, every member needs to **CALL YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS TODAY.**

(202) 244-3121. We must defeat this bill to insure the safety of ourselves and our livestock in the Wilderness.

NATIONAL PARK FEE RATE INCREASE

The National Parks are proposing a fee increase for 17 National Parks. The rates would be substantially higher and increase to even higher fees during peak season. There is more information including a list of the 17 parks and how much the fees would be raised at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/proposed-peaksseasonfeerates>. There is also a way to comment on this at the same website. Comments need to be in by **November 23, 2017**, so act quickly!

CALIFORNIA FISH & WILDLIFE PASS PROGRAM

Fish and Wildlife is expanding their Lands Pass Program to include 43 Wildlife Areas and Ecological Preserves. This means that you will need to purchase a pass to access these areas. The new areas are listed on the website at www.wildlife.ca.gov/licensing/Lands-Pass.

HR 2936 Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017 and S 1991 Wildfires Act of 2017

These are two new bills introduced after the devastating California wildfires. We urge you to look them up, read about them and comment as you see fit. Now, neither BCHC nor BCHA has taken an official stand on these bills, but there seems to be a lot of support out there.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS

There has been a lot of discussion about this subject and we just became aware of **HR 3990 – National Monument Creation and Protection Act** proposed by Rob Bishop (R-UT) on October 6, that was moved out of the Natural Resources Committee to the House in a matter of five days which is scary fast. Tom McClintock is a co-sponsor of this bill. They have not published a summary, nor have we seen the “mark-up” that came out of committee, but from what we can find out, it restricts the size of monuments, allows the President to eliminate existing national monuments and puts responsibility on States to evaluate environmental impact. Since the deadline for this newsletter was looming large, we wanted to make you aware of this issue as quickly as possible, so you can check it out. We will get more information out as it becomes available.

Troy was contacted by BCHA regarding an issue concerning the PCT in the area called Middle Knob in the Mojave Desert. This is a rugged area known for off-highway recreation and some equestrian use. The issue is that the

OHV trails are impacting a section of the Pacific Crest Trail where OHV trails are Y-ing into the PCT. This results in OHVs crossing and driving on the PCT to access other trails. BCHC was asked to sign on as an interested stakeholder to designate part of this area non-motorized. After consideration from BCHC Executive Board, it was agreed that BCHC should join California Wilderness Coalition, BLM, and Wilderness Society in this project. BCHC sent a letter supporting this Non-Motorized area. Troy was then invited to make a fly-over of the area. Troy was joined on the flight by a member of the Audubon Society, a member of the California Wilderness Coalition who arranged the flight, a botanist, and a concerned land owner and resident of the area. This group is not anti-OHV, but has many concerns about the number of legal and illegal trails, and the damage being done to the environment of the area. Our major area of concern is the impact on the PCT. After this adventure, Troy was invited to a round table discussion hosted by the BLM in Ridgecrest and attended by the Wilderness Society, OHV groups, and some other interested parties. BCHC was well received by the group and they were glad to have the equestrian viewpoint represented. Troy was asked to be the equestrian representative on the round table group. We will see where this goes and will attend their next meeting in December.

CALL YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS TODAY,
(202) 244-3121.

BCHC and BCHA OPPOSE HR 1349

“Wheels over Wilderness”

**PLEASE CALL YOUR
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
TODAY TO OPPOSE THE
BILL!**

(202) 244-3121

We MUST defeat this bill to insure our safety and the safety of our livestock in the Wilderness.

More information on pages 7 and 9.

PUBLIC LANDS

HR 1349 FACT SHEET

Editor's Note: To fit the text of the Fact Sheet on one page, the photographs and case studies have been removed.

H.R. 1349, the “Wheels Over Wilderness” bill, introduced by Congressman Tom McClintock (R-CA), carves a gaping loophole in the 1964 Wilderness Act, which has stood for a half-century as one of America’s bedrock conservation laws. The bill would open America’s 110 million acres of wilderness areas to mountain bikes, an unprecedented assault on wilderness areas across the country.

The Wilderness Act Prohibits Mountain Bike Use in Wilderness

The Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motorized vehicles, motorboats, and “other forms of mechanized transport” in wilderness areas.

For five decades Congress has resisted efforts to undermine the Wilderness Act by opening wilderness areas to uses that are currently prohibited. These efforts have failed due to strong public support for wilderness. This latest effort deserves to fail as well.

America’s Public Lands – Room For Everyone

America’s public lands are national treasures and every year hundreds of millions of people visit these lands to hike, camp, bike, fish, ride horseback, and paddle. Spanning over 600 million acres of forest, desert, mountains, rivers, prairie, and grassland, our public lands retain plenty of room for all types of recreation.

Just one-sixth of our public lands are designated as wilderness areas. Excluding Alaska, just one-eighth of public lands are designated as wilderness. When considering all lands, less than three percent of the land in the lower 48 states is wilderness. With less than 3% of the land in the continental United States designated as wilderness, there are plenty of lands—including public lands—that remain open to mountain bicycles outside wilderness.

Mountain Bikes Do Not Belong in Wilderness

Mountain bicycling is a wonderful form of outdoor recreation. But like some other recreational pursuits, it is not suitable for wilderness. The primitive and unconfined recreational experience provided by wilderness would be lost should hikers and horsemen be forced to constantly scan the trail ahead and over their shoulder for rapidly approaching bikes. As a form of mechanized transport, mountain bicycling is the type of mechanization the National Wilderness Preservation System was established to exclude in order to protect wilderness’s rustic and primitive character. In short, wilderness is meant for forms of transport—foot, horseback, and canoe—that are compatible with an experience based on solitude, tranquility, and compatibility with the wilderness environment.

Places like the Montana’s Bob Marshall Wilderness, the John Muir and Ansel Adams wilderness areas of California’s Sierra Nevada Mountains, and the Shenandoah Wilderness along the Appalachian Trail have long been enjoyed by hikers and equestrians. These experiences would be indelibly altered by mechanization along the same trails that have been non-mechanized for hundreds of years.

H.R. 1349 also attempts to use wheelchair access as a reason for amending the Wilderness Act. Section 507 of the Americans with Disabilities Act already makes clear that wheelchairs are permitted in wilderness.

There Are Better Approaches to Enhancing Mountain Biking Opportunities

Across the country, wilderness advocates and mountain bike organizations have worked together to develop legislative proposals that preserve access to important mountain bike trails and protect adjacent areas as wilderness. Efforts like the Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection Act in Colorado and the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act in Montana have been widely celebrated and serve as models for building successful partnerships between stakeholders and land managers.

These efforts have secured the support of wilderness advocates and mountain bikers. This collaborative approach is the best way to address public land management issues.

H.R. 1349 is yet another attack on our public lands that undermines one of our nation’s bedrock conservation laws, jeopardizes America’s wilderness and won’t advance mountain biking. The legislation is opposed by conservation organizations, sportsmen, equestrians, outfitters, and others who support retaining that small percent of our nation’s rustic outdoor heritage that remains as wilderness.

For more information please contact:

*Michael Carroll, The Wilderness Society, Michael_carroll@tws.org,
970-946-9043*

*Randy Rasmussen, Back Country Horsemen of America,
WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org, 541-602-0713*

Uphold the Integrity of the Wilderness Act:

Voice Your Opposition to H.R. 1349

We need your help to ensure bikes will NOT be allowed in the Wilderness. Please contact your member of Congress today to say they should NOT support H.R. 1349. You can find your member of Congress’ address at: <https://whoismyrepresentative.com/>

Backcountry Horsemen, we need your help! Please educate your member of Congress on why mountain bikes in Wilderness is a bad idea.

UNIT NEWS

Pacific Crest Trail Trial and Clinic at Gray Stone Ranch, Phelan, California

By Diane Pitzler

Six clinicians and 39 riders from across Southern California and Arizona met September 23-24, to work together on improving skills of riders and horses on 25+ permanent obstacles spread out over 20 acres.

Clinicians/judges were Trish Demers, Kris Keeler, Jean Graham, Victor Penner, Jan Grogan and Matt Sheridan. Riders spent most of Saturday going from obstacle group to obstacle group, meeting with each of the clinicians. The next day, Sunday, riders placed themselves into five different levels of classes: Advanced, Intermediate, Pairs, In Hand and Beginners.

Winners took home silver buckles while second places garnered horseshoe boot pullers made especially for them by ranch owner Wayne Pitzler. Ribbons were given out for first through sixth places and riders third through sixth selected from an ample trove of donated items to take home with them. Everyone most appreciated the newfound knowledge and information they had taken from each of the clinicians over the weekend.

Thirty-three volunteers helped to make all participants' days better and were much appreciated. Show manager was Diane Pitzler of Gray Stone Ranch, who serves as Pacific Crest Unit secretary. The show committee included Robin Davis, Jennifer Sponsler, Jackie Doss, Jayne Mendez and Nancy Vaughn. Announcer was Wayne Pitzler.



Incoming Santa Ana River Unit president accomplishes the Horse Feathers obstacle.

Kern Sierra, Pacific Crest and Santa Ana River Units Collaborate on Trail Work

Submitted by Diane Pitzler, Pacific Crest Unit

Bright and early Wednesday, November 1, we met 15 members of the Kern Sierra, Pacific Crest and Santa Ana River Backcountry Horsemen units. Our goal for the day was to take down three meadow fence sections for the winter snow and repair or replace damaged wooden fence posts from the season of grazing - about 80 acres of fencing in total. With the crew we accomplished all the fence "downing" and a great deal of repair and replace posts before winter set in.

It turned out to be a beautiful day for the work as unit members leap frogged over each other around each meadow area. The Kern Sierra until left us to work on a water box project in another meadow. News of their accomplishments will have to be gotten from them as we left the area ahead of them. The usefulness and beauty of this area is amazing and should remain that way due to the efforts of volunteers from the three units. The twice a year work party prevents injury or death to hundreds of wildlife traversing the meadow during the snowy winter. "Raising" the fence usually takes place in May, predicated on the road conditions and snow level.

The deadline for submissions for the
WINTER 2018 EDITION
of the Backcountry News is:
January 15, 2018

Submissions to:
BCHC Editor
news@bchcalifornia.org

UNIT NEWS

Mid Valley Unit Holds Popular Pack Clinic

By Carl Perry, Clinic Chairman

The need for a pack clinic was quite evident. The attendance of our members and the participation of other interested people was amazing. Participant numbers grew every day during the pre-registration period. We started with 6, then 12 and 18. Wow! I was getting excited! The last week, calls were coming in every day. 24 to 30 to 40! All I could think of was food and how were we going to feed all these people plus all our staff and spectators.

I called the unit Dutch Oven Chair, Vicki Whisler, to prepare her for the mob. She started making calls for helpers and the response was overwhelming. Cooks started brushing the dust from their Dutch ovens and agreed to make two or even three dishes. We had plenty of food with some to spare. Speaking of spare, as in spare ribs, Dave Rumsey cooked a fourth rack of ribs that was enjoyed by everyone. We were only going to have eight cooks, but I think we ended up with 14 and 25 to 30 dishes including desserts. Thank you to all the cooks. I know everyone is still talking about the great food

We had six live mules from the Perry Hacienda and two iron mules for people to practice on. Trainers were Jerrie Thomas, Dennis Serpa, Karen Lopes, Doug Dollarhide, Dave Moser, Julia Heller and me. On the first round we showed participants how to tie a box hitch. There were intense moments as all the people were quiet and seriously taking in everything we said. I could see that they were dying to get their hands on that rope. By the end of the first round, they were all tying the knots.

A Leave No Trace skit was put on by Karen Lopes, Dennis Serpa and Lloyd Erlandson, enhanced by Dave Moser. It was well received and enjoyed by all.

A second demonstration of packing was done before lunch with loads tied on the mules. Now people got to wrap shovels, pipes, tubs, barrels and, of course, elk horns. It seemed like everyone wanted to tie horns on their mules. The horns were a big hit.

It started getting warm outside and we took a short break to eat dessert. Well, I think that finished off most of the packers. Their tummies were full, it was warm and time for a nap. We lost 2/3 but the diehards stayed until the end. They couldn't get enough. Perfecting the box hitch was on their day's agenda.

One of our purposes in conducting this pack clinic was to recruit an Intercollegiate team to compete at Bishop Mule Days next year. We may have accomplished that goal and much more. I want to thank everyone for their generous offering of their services. I know when Mid Valley Unit pulls together we can turn rocks over. We are one of the best in the nation. Thank you all!



Dave Moser speaks to pack clinic participants.



Hands-on packing.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Volunteer Hours Due February 1

By Stacy Kuhns with help from Larry Zauberis, BCH Volunteer Hours Committee

Volunteerism is one of the most important activities Backcountry Horsemen can use in our effort to perpetuate enjoyable common sense use of pack and saddle stock in the backcountry. A central point of our mission statement is to assist government agencies in maintenance and management of public lands.

By using our time and resources, we help insure that public land remains open to recreational stock use by earning a seat at the table where we can influence the decisions concerning access to public lands by pack and saddle stock users. The value of being able to speak with public lands managers from the position of having provided volunteer service cannot be overstated.

It seems that while our members are more than willing to volunteer their time and energy to maintain trails all across the country, many are reluctant to report the hours and expenses incurred in that effort. The hours and value of volunteer service by Back Country Horsemen is consistently underreported.

It is important to remember that the purpose of our volunteer effort goes far beyond the satisfaction provided by the trail work itself. The hours spent and expenses volunteered add to the credibility of our collective voice in discussions with public land managers whether on the local ranger district or in Washington, D.C.

It is up to us at the unit level to track and report our service. Each unit should appoint a Volunteer Hours Coordinator (VHC) or committee responsible for reporting the hours that members work and other expenses they incur during their service.

It is important to understand that the value of the volunteer service goes beyond trail work hours. It also includes time members devote to engagement in the management planning process. Other reported expenses like travel time, stock and equipment hauling, and donations in kind add to the value of our volunteer service.

BCH also tracks the impact of our volunteer service by tracking the miles of trail maintained, both in Wilderness Areas and on other public lands. These numbers are essential in discussions with legislators and public land managers as they demonstrate the significant influence BCH is having on the maintenance backlog the USFS is experiencing under current budget conditions.

Having been appointed to chair the Volunteer Hours Committee please get your hours to me by February 1. Please communicate with each other in the unit to make sure whoever is taking care of your unit's volunteer hours has your information.

I compile all of the hours and get them off to BCHA. I want to make sure that everyone knows materials are available on the BCH website for units to use to track volunteer hours and expenses. As a committee, we worked hard to update the MS Excel workbook to be more user-friendly.

Please download and use these fresh materials from the BCH website at: <http://www.bchcalifornia.org/forms.html>

There are many ways to assist with the worksheets.

While we will accept Volunteer Hours reports in just about any format, using the form provided on the website greatly aids us in creating a report that clearly expresses the nature of all our volunteer efforts on our public lands.

WILDERNESS RIDERS - please submit your Wilderness Rider hours with your regular hours to the person in your unit collecting hours. ALSO email them separately to me with WILDERNESS RIDER HOURS in the subject line.

Please feel free to contact me (stacykuhns@aol.com or call 909-633-1705) at any time if you have questions concerning reporting your volunteer service.

Thanks so much for all your efforts!



**TURN YOUR VOLUNTEER SERVICE
HOURS IN BY FEBRUARY 1**

EDUCATION

BCHC Saw Program

By Dan Horn, Saw Coordinator

We had a pretty good first season. Our Instructor Crew trained 52 sawyers at several different classes throughout BCHC. The classes were about 50/50 chainsaw vs crosscut.

The BCHC Saw Program has been over four years in the making. The first meeting Chip Herzig and I had with PCT and National Forest on this was at Rendezvous in Red Bluff in 2012. The final step was the approval of the New National Forest Saw Program signed in July 2016. Chip and I had spent almost 11 months developing our BCHC Program and submitted it one week after the National Saw Program was signed. BCHC was about the first in the nation to get approval to start teaching. The main purpose of the BCHC Saw Program is to create an environment where our members can do sawyer work in a safe manner and meet the requirements of the National Forest as mandated by OSHA. I know that many of you, like myself, have been doing saw work for 30 to 40 years, but after getting involved in the program, researching and writing many of our documents, I realized that I did some risky things over the years - cutting by myself, no First Aid equipment present, no chaps or proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). We have all done it at one time or another, but the statistics prove that we were just lucky.

In the beginning, I felt like I didn't need to prove myself to anyone after 40 years of sawyer work. The BCHC Saw Program taught me that I had room for improvement and taught me to be a better sawyer by being a safer sawyer. We all know that a wet blanket is the only thing that makes a good horse. The same applies to the Sawyer Program. Years of experience and practice is what makes a sawyer. The program just wants to make us all better sawyers by making us safer sawyers and prepared sawyers. You wouldn't put a wet blanket on a horse with its saddle tied on with a rope. Most of us would slap somebody upside the head for doing that.

Then there is the Agency and OSHA side of things. Rules change, we all see that with everything we do in life. OSHA is the main driving force for change in the Agency rules and regulations. If we don't change and become safer sawyers, OSHA will force the Agencies to stop letting us do sawyer work. One of my students at a saw class this fall was a logger in his early career (at first impression I thought he was about as stubborn as some of our other old timers). After class I commented how impressed I was with his openness to all the new safety regulation and requirements. His words were "Survival!" After 30 years of being a subcontractor in the corporate world, he learned that if he didn't change, "They would kick me off the job which had a real bad effect on my paycheck."

Our Instructor Crew has grown to 13 total and we are looking to add more. We have developed a new sponsor form and task book to enable adding new instructors and moving our C-Instructors on up the ladder to C-Evaluators. Those wishing to become Instructors need to be a C level or a real strong B Level with experience and understanding of Complexity, Binds, Dynamic Hazards and Safety.

We are still looking for more involvement from the north end of the state. We have Dan Chartier and Ernie Coe, but with Dan being gone on fires most of the summer and Ernie way up in the northeast corner, there is a big hole from Red Bluff to the Oregon border.

We are working on expanding our number of C-Evaluators. Currently we have two Chainsaw (Dan Chartier and Mike Lewis) and two Crosscut (Dave Moser and Mike Lewis). Jerry Heitzler has stepped up to work on getting his Chainsaw C-Evaluator rating. We are still looking for someone on the Crosscut side to work with Dave Moser.

Now that we are heading into the off season, it is time to start planning Saw Classes. Any Unit wanting to hold a Saw Class this off season, please contact the BCHC State Saw Coordinator and we can send Instructors to your unit. Minimum class size is six.

BCHC Saw Coordinator:
Dan Horn - North Bay

Chainsaw "C" Evaluators:
Dan Chartier - Shasta Trinity
Mike Lewis - Redshank Riders

Crosscut "C" Evaluators:
Dave Moser - Mid Valley
Mike Lewis - Redshank Riders

Instructors:
Ted Fisher - San Joaquin Sierra
Thor Bodtke - North Bay
Bob Gage - Sutter Buttes
Jerry Heitzler - Mother Lode
Chris Vallerga - Lake Mendo
Patrick Scheffler - Kern River Valley
Bill Chaides - Los Padres
Ernie Coe - High Country
Chip Herzig - BCH Nevada

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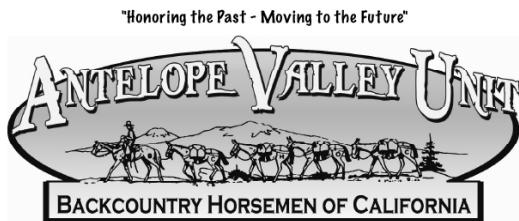
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If there is no unit in your area and you are interested in starting one, contact BCHC Secretary Susie Patton for more information. bludog60@hughes.net



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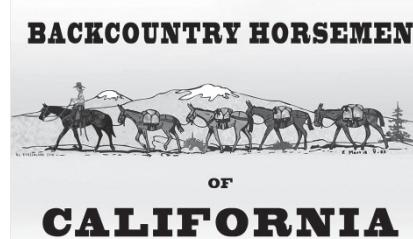
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Mother Lode

North Bay
Pacific Crest
Redshank Riders
Redwood
San Diego
San Joaquin Sierra

Santa Ana River
Sequoia
Shasta Trinity
Sierra Freepackers
Sutter Buttes
Top of the State

DCTR (your Membership

MEMBER'S NAME – No Business Names, Print Clearly SPOUSE/Co-MEMBER'S NAME – MUST SHARE SAME ADDRESS

Street Address/PO Box

City _____ State _____ Zip Code (full 9 digits if known) _____ Area Code _____ Phone number _____

Email Address: _____ (please print legibly)

Donation to BCHC Education Fund (tax deductible) \$_____

Total Enclosed: \$_____ Check No. _____

Parent Unit Membership Types (Check one)

Individual \$50 Family \$60 2 Year Individual \$90 2 Year Family \$110 3 Year Individual \$125 3 Year Family \$150

Young Adult (18-25 years old) \$15 – Benefactor \$100 – Patron \$250 – Mt. Whitney \$500

Associate Memberships: An Additional \$15 PER UNIT is added to your Parent Unit Dues

Associate Memberships Unit Affiliations MAY NOT BE FOR THE SAME UNIT AS YOUR PARENT UNIT

Associate Membership for: _____ \$15.00/Unit

Unit Name (from above list)

Associate Membership for: _____ \$15.00/Unit

Unit Name (from above list)

Add additional choices here

Please clip form along dashed line and keep the below portion for your records

Parent BCHC Membership Types

Individual, Family, (Shared*), Benefactor, Patron, and Mt. Whitney

A Parent Membership is affiliated with a single Local Unit. BCHC members may NOT hold more than ONE active Parent Membership.

*A SHARED Membership is for two adults with differing last names who share a common address.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS

These special Memberships are only available to persons already holding Parent BCHC Membership. No one may sign up for an Associate Membership without 1) having registered one of the Parent Membership types, and 2) having selected Parent Unit affiliation.

Complete information regarding BCHC Membership is available on the MEMBERSHIP TAB at bchcalifornia.org or call (775) 463-3634

KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS

I submitted an Application Form for a new -

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership	\$ 50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family (Shared) Membership	\$ 60.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult (18-25 years old)	\$ 15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Year Individual	\$ 90.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Year Family	\$110.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Year Individual	\$125.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Year Family	\$150.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor Membership	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron Membership	\$250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Mt. Whitney Membership	\$500.00

On that form, I also requested:

Associate Memberships \$ _____

My Total Remittance: \$ _____

My Check Number: _____

Date Mailed: _____

Verification of BCHC membership is available via (1) BCHC unit president's reports (2) BCHC membership chair reports (3) a self-addressed stamped envelope submitted with this form or (4) a valid email address

DON'T FORGET: The BCHC Executive Committee will no longer send out membership renewal verification "green slips" via regular mail. Instead, each unit president and membership chair will get a personal email from the BCHC Membership Chair (Chip Herzog) with each units' data AND it will be put on the web page in the password protected section.

UNIT NEWS

Redwood Unit Holds 25th Annual Half Ass Flat Ride

By David Pritchard, Redwood Unit

This past June, Redwood Unit, BCHC, hosted their 25th annual Half Ass Flat Ride which is anything but flat. Darrel and Carole Polasek are two of the founding members of the ride. Members at the first organizational meeting came up with the name for the ride which is named after the Polasek's ranch. The ride takes place every June at Capetown, out in the coastal area of Humboldt County.

This year's ride brought 97 riders. In the past there have been as many as 150 riders plus the members that help put this catered ride on every year. This event is separated into three different rides on Saturday: The short ride which is about 10 miles, the medium ride is about 12 miles and the long ride is about 15 miles. All rides gather for barbecued hamburger lunch at a set of corrals up in the hills above the Pacific Ocean.

It takes as many as 30 volunteer members to help put this ride on. From folks to help clear the trails every year by going out the weekend before for up to four days, to leading the three rides. They also prepare, cook and serve the meals.

The ride crosses nine ranches, on beaches which are the westerly most beaches in the Continental United States, plus climbing hills with views that are majestic. Most horses can complete the ride but this last year five horses had to be either reshod or trailered back down to the base camp for various reasons. That's why it is so important to do conditioning rides all the time.

The riders are treated to two meals on Friday and Sunday and three meals on Saturday, with all they can eat. Nobody goes away hungry as the food is great. Live music is provided both Friday and Saturday night. Local rancher Bill McBride entertains the group with his guitar music and singing Friday night and a local band plays for a dance out in the pasture Saturday night. After tri-tip dinner Saturday night a silent auction, Dutch auction and live auction take place. This year's live auction went wild with the bidding for a hand painted vase by local artist and Redwood Unit member Laura Moore. The vase had a picture of the head of a mule and a pack string. The final price was over \$650.



Top and left: Riders enjoy beautiful weather and scenery. Center: Bill McBride (left) and Neal Jensen entertain at the open mike Friday evening. Right: Marty Polasek (left) and Clyde Dalton prepare mountain oyster hors d'oeuvres for Saturday dinner.

Happy Holidays