



BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF IDAHO
P. O. BOX 513
SALMON, IDAHO, 83467-0513

Thank you

Past Board Members and Welcome New Board Members!!
I also want to thank all the chapters that sent articles.
Lorelei Hamon

View From the Chairman's Saddle
By
Mark Bogar



Howdy All,

This chairmen position has been quite a ride. Over the last two years we have been a dynamic organization.

* I did the first chairmen of the convention officially as the co-chair just a few weeks after open heart surgery...that meeting was a bit foggy.

* The first year as chairmen we went to video conferencing which presented numerous challenges and a return to regular meetings again.

* Then we moved from fall conventions back to spring conventions, with the first one taking place in Coeur d' Alene.

* The next change happened as we moved from three meetings a year to two meetings a year, another first for BCHI.

We have seen many changes over the last couple of years with the BCHI and their processes. Much of this having been fueled by the economy and making financial sense.

Our BCHI is in good financial postioning due to the calendar sales and I feel is on good solid ground. I believe our state organization is overall healthy, even though there have been some chapter issues, they appear to be working out.

I hope everything goes smoothly for the next BCHI officers and I encourage each of you to give them all your support.

I am honored to have been your BCHI chairmen. I am a firm believer in this organization and will continue to be active with in it.

Hope to see you on the trail,
Mark Bogar
Chairmen

2012 BCHI Calendar Drawing Monthly Winners

2012 BCHI Calendar Drawing

Monthly Winners - \$500:

January - Janice Shepherd, Buhl, ID

February - Doug Jones, Eagle, ID

March - Rod Clugston, Coeur d'Alene

April - Camille Glenn, Filer, ID

May - Mike and Maureen Becker, Dalton Gardens, ID

June - Marilyn Rylaarsdam-Schoo, Grangeville, ID

July - Sharon McEvers, Newport, WA

August - Paul Smith, Priest River, ID

Sept - Patricia Hull, North Fork, ID

October - Tyson Stowers, Prescott, WA

Nov - Carolyn Jochem-Vanessa Hendricks, Parma, ID

GRAND PRIZE!

\$6,000 Value

Shirley Glemser, Council, ID



Joy (left) with Shirley the Grand Prize Winner

Heartland Back Country Horsemen of Idaho's Shirley Glemser is the 2012 year end winner of the \$6,000 BCHI calendar prize. Shirley and her husband Fred have been long time residents of Council, Idaho where they own and operate Adams County Real Estate. They have several horses at their ranch on Hornet Creek road where they raise their own hay as well. Shirley's trusy mount, Stitch is a Blazer who has carried her on many of the trails in the mountains of the Heartland of Idaho. She has ridden the Weiser River Trail most of the way as well as riding many trails in the Payette National Forest. In 2012 Shirley and Stitch joined the Heartland Riders drill team to carry the U.S. flag at the Adams County Rodeo. Shirley has found Stitch to be a trustworthy pal that does his job for her no matter what she asks of him. Congratulations Shirley! Keep carrying the flag for us as we stand in salute while you gallop by...

2013 BCHI CONVENTION

A ROOTIN' TOOTIN'
IMPORTANT VOTIN'
GAVEL FALLIN'



GOOD TIME!



PLEASE JOIN SQUAW BUTTE AT THE RIVERSIDE HOTEL IN BOISE
MARCH 16, 2013. **MEET** OLD AND MAKE NEW **FRIENDS**,
VOTE ON ISSUES IMPORTANT TO YOU AND THE FUTURE OF BCHI,
LAUGH ALONGSIDE OUR COWBOY POET AND **BID ON** SOME
HELLACEOUSLY COOL STUFF

GO TO [HTTP://WWW.BCHI.ORG](http://www.bchi.org)
FOR YOUR REGISTRATION FORM
PHOTO CONTEST & CHAPTER DISPLAY INFO

It's *YOUR* Convention!

By Robbin Schindele

The 2013 BCHI convention is shaping up to be an exciting event. We in the Squaw Butte Chapter have been working for the past few months to make your visit to Boise in March memorable in many ways. We have a great place to stay with excellent food, a fine and interesting roster of interesting speakers, great auction items and singer, songwriter, poet and musician, Sam Mattise (Idaho Cowboy Poets' singer of the year in 2006) to entertain you. I pretty much guarantee it'll be a fun and informative good time. I hope to see old friends and make new ones that weekend but that's not the reason I'm writing this article. The reason is in the title...it's *your* convention... you the individual members of BCHI.

While the laughter and lies that get told during the social part of the annual event is important to us all, it's what happens Saturday morning during the business session that will determine whether we stay a strong and viable organization. It is during that meeting that our future is determined, our policies are made and our true voice is heard. I don't know how many people remember or understand how BCHI is governed. I know many members believe that it is the state board of directors that make the decisions about what we do as an organization. That is not true.

The board meets twice a year and looks at all issues, good and bad, we feel a need to address. Sometimes we act on things like having the chairman write a letter to support or oppose something happening on our public lands; sometimes we make small budget decisions. But these are by and large decisions that need to be addressed quickly and can't wait 'til the next convention. But the BOD DOES NOT create the policies by which the organization is governed. The BOD DOES NOT determine how your National Directors represent Idaho at the BCHA annual board meeting. Those things, those important things, are, and can only be, done by you. And where do they get done, at *YOUR* convention. Because it is the members of BCHI who make our policies; it is the membership who determines our path forward; it is the membership that decides where we stand on the issues of the day and on what actions we do or do not take as an organization.

Each chapter can bring up to eight voting delegates to the convention. If a chapter strongly supports something the best thing they can do for themselves is make sure they have eight votes at the meeting. The upcoming 2013 convention has a couple issues that are sure to raise strong feelings among many of you. Last year at the BCHA national BOD meeting, the board voted to raise the annual national dues \$5.00 per member. I have heard strong arguments both for and against this from state board members. The national board also voted in favor of using the BCHA membership list as an incentive to companies willing to pay BCHA \$10,000.00 or more in sponsorship money. Strong is too weak a word to describe some folks opinion of that idea. But when Rod Parks and I go to Rapid City in April we are going to vote on these issues according to the wishes of the BCHI membership NOT the wishes of the state BOD. The Squaw Butte chapter is bringing a resolution to the meeting that BCHI Idaho cease printing "*Broomtales*" and make it an online only newsletter.

If you have feelings about these or other issues you can make your voice heard and you can make a difference with your vote at *YOUR* convention. Remember the old saying, "Vote and the choice is yours. Don't vote and the choice is theirs."

So get on your computer, download your registration form at: http://www.bchi.org/documents/2013convention_files/convention_reg_form.pdf;

fill it out and send it in.

BCHI is your organization and only you can determine its future and you can only do it at *YOUR* convention. And have a good time to boot!

PHOTOS FOR BCHI CALENDAR 2014

Submit 25 - 50 photos on a CD, DVD or thumb drive (which I will mail back to you). Photos need to be in JPEG Format.

Please follow your camera's user guide and set your images to the largest file size or highest resolution. While this will give the sharpest images, it will also reduce the total number of photos your camera will hold.

Photo selection criteria for the calendar is as follows:

Photos in ID take precedence over out of state.

Photos must have a horse/mule in the shot, unless it's of a work project.

Heads and faces preferred over tails and backs.

Photos are placed by seasons - winter, spring, summer and fall.

Include all winter, kids, trail riding, packing, and work project photos. Nature photos will be used as needed.

Please do not resubmit photos that have been used in previous calendars.

Print all information legible.

List the file name for each photo.

PHOTOS ARE DUE AT THE MARCH 16, 2013 BCHI CONVENTION IN Boise.

If you only have a few photos or no way to burn them to CD, you can e-mail them direct to me.

Please print as many of the second sheets you need to go with your submissions.

Thanks for your help and submissions,

Debbie

Debbie Samovar, 9176 E Soaring Hawk Lane, Saint Maries, ID 83861, 208-245-3041, dsamovar@gmail.com

Chapter Name _____

Contact Person: _____
(Name, phone number, email address)

Photo file name	Location Trail name, park/wilderness name and state.	Identify names of people in the photo List names : Left to Right	Photographer, including phone and email



Val Johnson retired this past spring from being a National Director (BCHA) for the state of Idaho for many years. BCHI gave a jacket to him.

High Desert BCH Weather June Snow Storm:

No Stopping Them From Trail Work or Fun
Bill VanLente



Kathy Kerley (red coat) on Dillon, Monty and Darlene Kiser on the left and Norm McGuire on his horse

To say that the High Desert BCH is a hardy bunch would be an understatement. When leaving the valley headed for their annual clearing of the Rimview Trail (South Hills in Sawtooth National Forest) in early June, it looked like they were in for a pleasant day. Arriving at the trailhead, however, the brisk wind and heavy cloud cover gave a different, rather ominous look. Not to be deterred, the gang saddled and bundled up, gathered their bushwhacking and other trail clearing tools, and headed down the trail. It wasn't long before the snow began to fall, blanketing the hillsides and filling the trees with that fluffy white, and of course cold and wet stuff, turning a drab spring day back into a winter wonderland. Clearing low hanging branches and fallen trees across the trail along the way, the group made steady progress as the snow kept coming down. Snipping branches laden with snow without getting dumped on as the branch fell to the ground became a new skill for steed or rider.

It is debatable whether progress was slowed or speeded up by the weather conditions, and some determined folks stuck it out longer than others. Regardless, the work got done and the upper wooded portion of the trail got cleared of deadfall and overgrowth. Coincidentally, as the snow continued falling and wind began howling, no one had difficulty getting their four legged friends back in their trailers for the trip down the mountain. It was

more a matter of getting trailer doors open fast enough and getting out of their way.

The plan then became to head to lower elevation for the ceremonial picnic and hotdog roast around a campfire. The weather started out much more pleasant at the Third Fork trailhead campground, sun shining, quiet calm with patchy clouds. Yet, by the time the hardiest of the crew rolled in from above, it seemed the storm came with them. It didn't matter, this group had their work done, it was time to celebrate, and the picnic went on, though with more wood added to the fire for warmth than was needed to roast the wieners. As usual, there was no shortage of food and conversation, and the storm merely added another topic for friendly sharing of the day's developments.

Trail clearing and picnicking in a snowstorm seemed to bring out better the camaraderie among the group, like a group of kids celebrating the first (or in this case last) snowstorm of the season. Clearly, the High Desert BCH group knows how to enjoy working and playing hard together, whether mother nature with her weather conditions cooperates or not.



Perry Vance and Mighty Mouse



Perry Vance with chainsaw and Jack Stewart



Storm coming in at Rimview

Panhandle Back Country Horsemen Report



Heyburn State Park—Ranger Don West

September 8th was our annual Steak Ride put on by the Linscott family at their ranch on the Coeur d'Alene River by Kinston, Id. Was a beautiful warm sunny day with 41 riders plus a few that come just for the meal. Parts of the ride over looked the Coeur d'Alene River and Silver Mtn Ski Area. We rode for 3 hrs and returned to BBQ steaks, potatos, salads and desert. It was one left hungry, it was great.

October 14th 20 riders trailered to a new trailhead at Heyburn State Park for a 12 mile ride led by Don West, a ranger with the park. It's a new trail system and will be around 18 miles when finished. Lots of ups and downs and would be fairly difficult for some inexperienced riders. The group we had didn't have any trouble except for being a little tired (some horse and riders). The trail took us to a great view point where we had

lunch and took a group picture before heading back on a different route. There were a few stops along the way to tighten saddles and had one quick dismount after a horse got a rope burn under his tail. No rain and a lovely day. On October 18th Jim and Karen Kimball and Bob and Linda Funke pack in 400 lbs of fertilizer to up the Marie Creek trail to Burton Meadow. We fertilized the meadow and picked up garbage and broken glass and packed it out. It was a sunny day so we rode up to Skitwhich Creek and had lunch before heading out.

December 8th was our Christmas Party at Avondale Club House. At this annual event with 41 attending Marilyn Rousher was presented an engraved vase for outgoing President and Debbie Samovar received an engraved plaque with photo for her many years of service as secretary and newsletter publisher. Joni Lueck and Les Erickson received awards for Horsewoman and Horseman of the year. The new officers were introduced. George Miller, Byron Miller and Bob Williams were presented engraved spatulas for their "chefs extraordinaire" Dutch Oven cooking. Certificates of Appreciation were given to the 2012 Officers and Directors and Trail Boss Certificated were given to everyone who organized and /or led an event or ride. The night was finished with a gift exchange and lots of fun. Kay Bradley did a great job this year as Christmas Party Trail Boss.



Marilyn Rousher receiving a gift for her great job and hard work as president



Debbie Samovar receiving her plaque for many years of service as secretary and doing the newsletter



Heyburn State Park Trail Ride



Jim Kimball fertilizing Burton Meadow St Maries Creek



Joni Lueck, Horsewoman of the Year



Les Erickson, Horseman of the Year

McConnell Mountain Trail Project Aug 2-6, 2012



Jim White was our trail boss for this project. He did a fantastic job co-coordinating and working out the logistics to make this a very enjoyable and productive project. We were a little apprehensive on how dinners were going to work as a different person was in charge of the food and cooking each dinner meal. Bill Correll was worried about the cooks' abilities, so he was looking over everyone's shoulder and offering advice every meal. Well, as usual we had way more delicious food than we could eat and learned that anyone can cook if they want to eat. Eleven members from 16 to 86 years of age were involved in this pack in project. The youngest, Aspen White lost her balance while she was sitting on her horse and fell off. The oldest, Bill Correll was so happy to get to Fish Lake that his celebration spooked his horse and he got dumped. Their prides were hurt way worse than any physical harm. The first night, we went part way and camped. We used eleven riding stock and nine pack animals to get our gear, food and tools to the camping areas. The second day we arrived at base camp at the big meadow just beyond Fish Lake. The work was logging out Trail #211 from

Fish Lake Cabin to McConnell Mountain and cleaning water bars. This project is in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. This area burned several years back. The trees are predominately Lodgepole Pine and they are at the point where many are coming down every year. After camp was setup, a few went out and started working on the trail to get an idea as to how much work there was going to be. The third day we split into two groups with the first group out in front cutting only the smaller trees with hand saws unless we could not get around a big tree and then we got out the crosscut. After about three hours, we started cutting everything, as we could not believe that the back crew had not caught up with us. We ate a nice lunch in the shade of one of the remaining groves of unburned trees, took a little knap and started to think something had happened to the other crew. As we just started cutting again, they showed up and appeared to be dragging their butts. They yelled at us for leaving so many trees and we yelled at them for being so slow with the freshly sharpened crosscut. Then we joined in and started working together until it was time to ride back to camp for the night. What a miserable ride back. The trail was unbelievably dusty and the breeze was carrying the dust at the same speed that we were riding, so you could not get out of the dust. Fresh showers and a great dinner rejuvenated us and the usual stories around the campfire were flowing until everyone went to bed. The next day, some of our unlucky members had to go back to town to work. Well, as all of us know, animals also can tell when people are leaving. Lots of grass had them feeling good and when Dan Flanagan and Matt Bake when to catch their animals they could not find them. Down the trail they went looking for them as the rest of us headed out to work. Well, I must say, I have never seen this happen before. As we headed out, we looked over in the meadow and the lost animals were in one of the portable corrals eating grass. We all hollered that we found them, just as the riders on foot came into the meadow. Seems their stock made a big loop and went right back to where they started the morning. We got through the burned area about where the trail used to go to California Lake. It was cooler due to the shade, there were bigger trees across the trail, but way fewer of them. The next day, most headed home. Bill Correll, Rod Parks, and Bob Hough rode over to Two Lakes and spent a couple days fishing and clearing the trail down to the lower lake. What a wonderful trip. Our chapter is hoping to go back in 2013 and clear and brush the trail from Two Lakes to Fish Lake Saddle.



A Long Day On The Trail

Earl F. Dodds

The trip took place in the 60' or 70's

This pack trip started out as part of one of my long term goals in managing the Big Creek Ranger District--learning the geography of the country first hand. All new rangers are expected to spend considerable time in getting to "know their district." On most ranger districts, which in these days are pretty well roaded, this involves a lot of driving in the standard vehicle of the Forest Service, a half ton pickup truck. Indeed, most new rangers can acquire a fair working knowledge of their districts in a matter of a few weeks. But on a backcountry district with few roads, like the almost 900,000 acre Big Creek District, this translates into a lot of miles on horseback or pounding the trails with a backpack and can take years.



Pack String at Rush Creek Point

I really liked this aspect of the job, and in my 25 years on the Big Creek District, I was always anxious to take in new country. Over the years, I managed to visit a lot of hard to get to locations that I bet my successors will be hard pressed to duplicate. I put horse tracks on Shellrock Peak near the southeastern corner of the district and on Little Sheepeater and at Little Sheepeater Lake near the northwestern corner. I set out on horseback on two different occasions from Cold Meadows for the old abandoned lookout on Cottonwood Butte and never quite made it. So after I retired, I did a backpack hike to this quite spectacular mountain top near the northeast corner of the district on the Salmon/ Payette NF boundary. Also, I climbed to the brass caps on Rainbow Peak and, The Pinnacle, two of the highest mountains on the district.

One of my biggest disappointments in this regard was that I never quite made it to the brass cap on the summit of Mormon Mountain, the highest point on the Payette National Forest. On a backpack hike from Thunder Mountain to the Taylor Ranch, the hiking group skirted around the east side of the peak and only a few hundred feet of climbing would have taken us to the summit, but I couldn't persuade anyone to go with me.

I got a little side tracked, but now for the background behind this particular pack trip.

The Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association meet twice each year to discuss business matters and their relationship with the Forest Service. As the Forest Service is the agency responsible for managing the land on which most outfitting activities take place in Idaho, most of the rangers who had outfitting activities on their districts attended these meetings on a regular basis.

It was at one of these meetings that an outfitter, whom I was not particularly fond of as I thought he was a know-it-all, became very vocal about conditions at one of his assigned campsites in the Marble Creek area. Marble Creek is a large drainage that heads near Thunder Mountain and runs in a southeasterly direction to its mouth on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. The lower portion of the drainage is on the Boise National Forest while the upper end is on the Big Creek District, Payette National Forest. This particular outfitter conducted most of his operation on the Boise NF but did have one assigned campsite along Marble Creek near the mouth of Little Cottonwood Creek, a few miles in side the Payette NF and in an extremely remote and seldom visited location.

So I decided to take a pack trip to learn more about the country on the southeastern side of the district and with the primary objective of checking on the status of the outfitting camp that was supposed to be at Little Cottonwood Creek.

My companion on this trip was Gary Miller, a young fellow who had been a seasonal employee on the district for several seasons. Gary was one of my favorites out of all the many young fellows who worked on the district during my 25 year tenure, largely because he took such an upbeat approach to everything. (I have several interesting little stories to relate about Gary Miller's escapades that I plan to document in a separate write-up.)

As I recall, this pack trip took place about mid-October when the big game hunting season was still open, but the big rush of opening season hunters had left the backcountry. The aspen had turned bright yellow, the days were getting shorter, and the air had a little bite to it in the early morning--a great time to be on a horseback trip in the Idaho backcountry!

We rode up the Lick Creek Trail to Cougar Basin, camped for the night, then to the old abandoned McCoy Ranch on Monumental Creek for the second night, then to Roosevelt Lake and up Mule Creek to the abandoned Sunnyside Mine on Thunder Mountain for the third night where we stayed in one of the old cabins. The next day we decided to leave our camp gear at the Sunnyside and ride down Marble Creek to the district boundary and return to the mine for a second night's stay. The trail down from Thunder Mountain to the bottom of Marble Creek was in good shape, and things went fairly routinely until we started downstream on the so-called Marble Creek Trail.

Similar to most of the tributaries to the Middle Fork of the Salmon, Marble Creek flows in a steep sided V shaped canyon with a narrow flood plain in the bottom. As is the case with many of the drainages that originate in the general area of Thunder Mountain, Marble Creek obviously has a history of instability and high erosion. From my limited knowledge of geology, I believe that this is linked to Thunder Mountain being part of a caldera. One of the most famous calderas is Crater Lake in Oregon with Wizard Island near the center of the lake. As I understand it, Thunder Mountain is similar to Wizard Island from a geologic standpoint, and most of the rim of the caldera eroded away eons ago. However, geologists are able to identify remnants of the rim in several locations. This entire area is definitely not part of the massive Idaho batholith that is the major geologic feature for much of central Idaho. It is noticeably different from the surrounding area in that the trees are stunted, ground cover by grasses and forbs is sparse, and there is considerable bare ground and evidence of erosion. Many of the drainages have names that indicate instability: Mud Creek, Chalk Creek, Paint Creek, Milk Creek, and Slide Creek. Also to be considered is that there are sizable areas that have eroded somewhat similar to Bryce Canyon in Utah. Then there is the Monument for which Monumental Creek is named. This approximately 75 feet high hoodoo topped with a large boulder is testimony to the extensive amount of erosion that has taken place in the past.

Gary and I started down the trail only to find that there was no trail after a few hundred yards as the stream had washed it out. We looked around and we could see a short section of trail on the opposite side of the stream. So we crossed over to the other side, and after a short distance, no more trail, and back across the creek we go. After this happened about 5 or 6 times, we just stayed in the creek as the water level was low this time of the year. Although the going was a little rough and slow, we made fairly good progress.

What I really wanted to do was to ride down Marble Creek to the forest boundary if for no other reason than just to be able to say that I had been there. (Sort of like the mountain climber and his reason for climbing a high peak: "Because it's there!") Recognizing the

actual boundary proved to be considerably more difficult than one might think. The boundary line on the map looks plain enough, but finding it while riding down a narrow V bottom canyon, with limited vision looking up slope on either side, is another thing. There were no signs on the side drainages and I have to admit that I don't know if we actually reached the boundary, but I was satisfied that there had been no outfitting activity in this area in recent years so we turned around and went back to the Sunnyside. (The fact that one can get lost, or at least confused as to exact location, is one of the charms about the Idaho backcountry. There are not very many places left in the US that are wild to the extent that this is possible.)

This made for a long day on the trail but nothing like what was coming up the next day. We left the Sunnyside, and rode out the ridge to the north toward Lookout Mountain some 12 miles away on a much better trail than the day before. Also, in contrast to the day before, we were up on a ridge top and could see the country for miles around. About noon, it was quite obvious that we were in for a major change in the weather. The sky to the southwest behind Rainbow Peak was turning dark, the wind began to blow on our backsides, and the tails of the horses and mules were blowing up between their back legs. In October this means Snow! We got to the lookout that was closed for the season in late afternoon and had to make a decision. We could stay there and have a nice tight roof over our heads, but the horses and mules would never stay up there in a snow storm. From the lookout we could look down in the West Fork of Rush Creek to a nice campsite we frequently used at a much lower elevation which was somewhat protected from the impending storm. We knew that we had left tent poles and firewood there on a previous trip. So we decided to go on. After all it was only about 4 or 5 miles and we had a little daylight left, so let's do it!

The lookout, of course, is on the high point, and we dropped down to the Milk Creek Saddle with little difficulty. This saddle is on the divide between Monumental Creek and Rush Creek and the site of a four way junction in the trail. One can continue on the ridge to the north toward Routeson Peak and eventually down into Big Creek at the Dewey Moore Ranch, drop down Milk Creek to the west to Monumental Creek, or down to the east toward the West Fork of Rush Creek.

Almost immediately after leaving the saddle, we came across the first of many down trees blocking the trail. However, we had a power saw; in the days before wilderness classification, we seldom left the station without one. We cut the tree in good Forest Service trail crew manner, making the cuts well away from the trail so that there was no danger of the mules snagging their packs, and put the saw back on the mule, using one of Jack Higby's saw boxes that made for easy on and off of the saw. However, it soon became apparent that there had been a freak wind storm, possibly a microburst, in this area. There were so many down trees across the trail that it was better to stay dismounted and carry the saw from one log blocking the trail to the next. Then it started to get dark. Out came our flashlights and we backed off on doing such a good job, finally settling for stepping and jumping the string over everything we could and just making one cut in the middle of the trail if the ends would drop and allow passage. Next the batteries in the flashlights started to fail, but no big deal. We had a Coleman lantern in a little wooden box specially made for packing on a mule. We got this out of the load, and for awhile we had the woods well lit up and were in fat city.

But this didn't last long. By this time the leading edge of the storm was upon us, and as is the usual case, this was the most active part of the storm with strong winds driving sheets of snow. Gary was carrying the power saw in one hand and the lantern in his other hand. When he got to the next log that required cutting, he set the lantern on the ground in order to operate the saw. Only he didn't get the lantern placed very well. It fell over, hitting a rock and breaking the glass globe. *Whoosh*, a gust of wind immediately blew out the mantles leaving us in the dark in the middle of the night on a trail blocked with fallen timber and in a snow storm. Our only recourse was to go back to using the dim flashlights, and we started more or less feeling our way along the trail.

About this time, a little incident took place that made a lasting impression on me. My job was to lead the string and keep up with Gary, who was using the power saw and doing all the real work, yet not get so close that I was interfering with the log cutting. After a while I became aware that the string was not moving along as they should have. I made my way back along the trail, dodging the bulky side packs on the mules and almost getting pushed off the narrow trail, to see what was causing the trouble. One of the mules had stepped over his lead rope and was standing on the rope with his head bowed down. So I got down on my knees in the dark and tried to get him to lift his hoof off the rope. He soon got the idea but when the hoof came up, it caught the under side of my somewhat prominent nose with what the boxers call an upper cut: HURT—I was in a world of it!

Now, I don't want to give the impression that old Nip Mule did this with the intention of hurting me. In fact, the exact opposite was undoubtedly the case in that he was doing exactly what I had asked him to do. Over the years, I have been on a number of trips where things didn't go very well, and the pack mules seemed to sense this and took a very patient and cooperative attitude as though they didn't want to cause any additional trouble. It's as though they were thinking "Let's be part of the solution here and not add to the problem!" I hope someone will do a little write-up on Salmon River pack mules; they are really marvelous creatures, and I can fully understand why the old time rangers became so attached to them. (I remember one little story of an early day Idaho ranger being transferred to Alaska and complaining: "There are millions of acres of National Forest lands up here, in fact, the largest National Forests in the whole Forest Service system, and not a mule on any of it!") Thanks to the efforts and interests of my predecessor rangers, the Big Creek District had some of the best mules in the Idaho backcountry.

Not long after this, things started to improve. The leading edge of the storm had passed and, although it was still snowing, the wind had noticeably died down. And there were fewer and fewer logs across the trail so we put the saw back on the mule and got back on our saddle horses and made our way to the campsite in short order. It didn't take long to unpack, feed the string some oats, install new mantles on the lantern, and set up our wall tent with a little shepherd stove inside to start heating things up and drying us out. (Thank Goodness that our tent poles were still there as we were in no mood to go out in the woods and rustle up a new set.) I got into my personal gear to find my watch—2:00 am —a **Long Day on the Trail!**

The next day we rode up to Bear Trap Saddle and then on to the Rush Creek Point Lookout. Here we were treated to a sight that I will never forget and was right in line with one of my favorite sayings: "When the Lord Made the Earth, He Cared Enough to Make it Beautiful." The Big Creek Canyon below us was filled with puffy white clouds from the aftermath of the storm the night before. The sun was shining on the snow covered high country, including our immediate surroundings, and the sky was a dark blue with a few white clouds floating around. I got out my camera and took a photo of this with the pack string in the foreground trying to rustle a little grass that was sticking out of the snow. I'll try to find this as it would be a good addition to this write-up. This was one of those rare times when it felt so good to be alive and so fortunate to be in the exact location where we were. I was reminded of something that Dan LeVan, former Big Creek Ranger for 26 years, told me once: "When you get a little of that Big Creek snow in your hair, you'll never quite get it all out!"

Earl Dodds (the last of the Big Creek Rangers)

. Earl has lived in McCall his entire career and is still there. He is the "Last of the Big Creek Rangers". Earl worked for the USFS for his entire career and was hired as the Big Creek District Ranger in 1955. Earl was the last District Ranger on a completely back country district and hence his reference to "the last of the Big Creek Rangers". After 30 years with the USFS Earl retired in 1985 (at age

60) and went to work for the Idaho Department of Lands for 10 more years as a part time mineral administrator from 1986-1996. Earl is an accomplished skier and skied at Brundage Mountain every year from the day it opened until Brundage's 50th anniversary! He has llama packed from the Bighorn Crags to Big Creek (50 miles when he was 65). Earl took up whitewater kayaking sometime in his early 60's and boasted about having over 30 days a year on the river. Earl has hiked the Chilcoot trail and is a tireless backcountry traveler. He has been to more parts of the Frank Church Wilderness than most wilderness travelers could ever hope to see.



Breaking New Ground

Forest Service turns to private groups to fill in gaps left by dwindling dollars for work on trails
By Eric Barker of the Lewiston Tribune

Emerald LaFortune spent the summer working on trails in two Idaho wilderness areas, tucking away a few bucks for college and gaining real-world experience.

In years past, the Moscow resident might have been employed by the U.S. Forest Service working with other young people on one of its many trail crews. Instead LaFortune, a senior at the University of Montana, worked for the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation. The nonprofit organization raises and spends private money to maintain public trails in central Idaho wilderness areas. With federal budgets shrinking and backcountry recreation far from the government's top priority, more and more miles of trails are falling into disrepair. To compensate, the Forest Service is increasingly relying on partnerships with groups like the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation to keep trails open.

The group, using its paid field staff of 10 full-time wilderness rangers and stewards, nine full-time interns like LaFortune and marshaling volunteers from several different organizations, worked on nearly 250 miles of trails last summer along with other projects. It had a budget of \$500,000 and received another \$300,000 in donated labor from volunteers.

By contrast, in 2012 the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest had a trail budget of \$1.5 million. The two forests, covering 4 million acres, have about 5,000 miles of trails and a large percentage of those, perhaps half, are estimated to be behind schedule for routine maintenance. An estimated 400 miles have not seen a trail crew in 10 years and many have fallen into some degree of disrepair.

Backlog stats more than 20 years old

Both locally and nationally, nobody knows just how bad the trail maintenance backlog is. A 1989 audit by the Government Accountability Office, now more than 20 years old, estimated the agency faced a \$200 million maintenance backlog that resulted in the loss of 5,000 miles of trail. Since that time, Forest Service budgets and the agency's workforce have shrunk, recreation demand has grown and wildfires that exacerbate the problem have grown in size and intensity.

The GAO is in the midst of updating its 1989 audit at the request of Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, Rep. Jim Moran, D-Va., and Rep. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo. In the meantime nongovernmental organizations are picking up the slack.

Rob Mason, director of the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, said partnering with people and groups who care about trails is the most pragmatic solution.

"We have to find a way to maintain trails and stewardship of wilderness areas," he said. "I think that means bringing private resources and dollars to bear to take care of the public good. That is what we are trying to do, create a new avenue to take care of trails in wilderness."

Carol Hennessey, trails program manager for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, said the agency tries to get crews on about 2,000 of the 5,000-mile trail system each year to perform routine maintenance like trail clearing and erosion control. But the agency doesn't have the budget or the workforce to always reach that target. So it concentrates on making sure the most popular trails are kept open. She estimates 500 to 800 miles of secondary trail on the Clearwater are in dire need of maintenance and as many as 1,200 on the Nez Perce.

"We don't know how many of those miles are absolutely not usable but many of those have not been maintained in over 10 years," she said.

Public-private collaboration may be 'new normal'

The forest has won awards for its ability to extend its trail system's reach by working with volunteer groups and nongovernmental organizations. Until recently Hennessey said work by groups like the Backcountry Horsemen, Montana Conservation Corps, Great Burn Wilderness Study Group and the Selway-Bitterroot Foundation was additive, meaning it was viewed as a bonus to the work accomplished by Forest Service crews and contractors it hires. Now the volunteer work is counted on just to keep pace.

"The last two to three years those partners have been absolutely critical to helping us make that (2,000-mile) target," she said.

She and others say that might be the new normal. The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 gave the Clearwater a shot in the arm and helped it erase some of the trail maintenance backlog. But with the national budget deficit and debt taking center stage in presidential and congressional elections, those kinds of infusions aren't likely to be repeated and the Forest Service, along with other federal agencies, is expected to have to tighten its belt.

"I don't think anybody can imagine there being an increase in funding for this kind of work," Mason said. "There might be injections here or there, like the stimulus, but I don't imagine in the near future we are going to see any increase of funding for the Forest Service."

Trail work involves routine stuff like clearing out fallen trees and more difficult work like cutting back encroaching brush, maintaining drainage and erosion control and major projects like bridge replacement or the construction of retaining walls. Under an emerging strategy, Hennessey said Forest Service crews are concentrating on the big stuff and leaving the less intensive work to the nongovernmental organizations and volunteer groups. However, both agree volunteers can't do it alone. They need supervision and support and their work needs to be planned and coordinated.

"If you really want to bolster capacity to do work, you really have to have paid staff who know how to do this kind of work and can take people out there week in and week out," Mason said. "A lot of groups can bring people. One of the unique things we bring is the expertise and capacity to lead all of these trips."

More boots on the ground needed

The Backcountry Horsemen of Idaho is a frequent trail partner for the agency. The group uses its love of packing with stock animals to assist the Forest Service with trail projects. But some, like public lands Director Phil Ryan, think the agency is relying too much on their good will and not taking enough responsibility for trails in places like the vast Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area. Wildfires there, some that burned 10, 15, or even 20 years ago, continue to feed dead trees that blow over with each strong

storm, blocking trails, sometimes into thick tangles.

"We cannot, as volunteers, do the job of the U.S. Forest Service. We shouldn't be replacement for their trail crews. We should augment their people," Ryan said.

The group passed a resolution asking the agency to develop a plan to deal with the backlog of trail maintenance in the Frank. They also point out the Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980, which calls for the agency to clear all trails in and adjacent to the wilderness area each year.

"They say 'we don't have the money.' Well the law says that is your job, either jump on Congress to get the money or something has to change."

John McCarthy of the Wilderness Society at Boise agrees the government needs to do more to maintain trails. The Idaho branch of the organization helped found the Idaho Trails Association, another group that works with the Forest Service to increase its trail maintenance footprint by organizing and directing volunteer labor. But he also says there is no substitute for agency trail crews like the one he once worked on in the 1970s. Back then and into the 1990s, it was common for each ranger district to have at least one trail crew comprised of five to six people. Since then ranger districts have been combined and trail crews have shrunk in size and number. For example, today there is a single, two- to four-person trail crew for the North Fork Ranger District. But not so long ago the North Fork was divided into the Kelly, Canyon and North Fork districts and they each had at least one crew of five to six people. "They (volunteers) are going great guns and they are filling a need but I think you can't lose sight of the fact the Forest Service needs to get more people out on the ground," McCarthy said. "We maintain roads and we maintain structures. We need to maintain trails."

Skill sets might be lost

Hennessey fears the agency might be losing some of its capacity for remote trail work. Building and maintaining trails in wilderness areas requires working with primitive tools like crosscut saws, an uncommon skill set. She said it's difficult to recruit people with those skills and it can even be hard to hire contractors.

"We have two really good people on these forests and they are both over 50," Hennessey said. "We don't have anybody coming behind them."

So more and more, backcountry know-how is being shifted to organizations like the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation and the Montana Conservation Corps where they train people how to use primitive tools. It's a heritage Mason is happy to keep alive.

"We are trying to fill that gap by having professional trail crews who are trained and can bring those skills back year after year," he said.

The foundation is also training the next generation of wilderness leaders in modern methods of working together. For example, La-Fortune and the other interns not only learned backcountry skills but also how people and agencies form partnerships to accomplish difficult tasks.

"We weren't fighting the Forest Service, we weren't fighting other interest groups," she said. "I think the (Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation) strives to create bridges among organizations and it felt really good to be part of that, to help the Forest Service and to help the Backcountry Horsemen and to help anyone who values backcountry areas."



Boise Back Country Horsemen Hold Saddle Up For St. Jude Event

In the summer of 2010 I received a call from St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis, TN. They asked me if I would like to put on a horse event for them to make money for the support of the hospital and their cause of curing childhood cancer.

How they got my name, or from where I have never found out. I brought it to the attention of our chapter, Boise Back Country Horseman and we decided to bring it up at our January meeting as fall was soon here. In that meeting we decided to go ahead with it in June. Everyone was in favor of it and knew about the cause. We requested donations from businesses we patronized, some members donated items, and we had a silent auction, raffle and prizes for the poker ride that riders participated in.

The event was held in historic Idaho City, our first State capital, where we got permission to use the city rodeo grounds. That was perfect because a friend, Bill Sterling owned the Cowboy Campgrounds right adjacent to it. He has thirteen individual corrals, each

accompanied by a camping spot, plus a round pen and graveled riding arena. From the campground riders have access to unlimited forest service trails. We flagged two trails, a shorter one about three miles and a longer one about six miles for distance riders who preferred a longer ride. Upon their return lunch (hamburgers, hotdogs, pop and snacks) was available to them and the prizes were awarded.

Since it was the first year it was a little tense, as it was a new event for the chapter but things came together very well. Then the surprise!

All of a sudden in early spring some local horses were exposed to an equine virus at a cutting horse competition in Las Vegas and one local horse died from it. A quarantine was put on all equine events in the area and many events were cancelled. Not knowing what to do we kept the event scheduled and on the Wednesday before the Saturday of the poker ride the quarantine was lifted. The ride went off without a major hitch and we made about three thousand dollars for the children's hospital. That was a big relief to all of us. Everything worked out quite smoothly and we felt good about giving a little help to those children who were less fortunate.

If you have an interest in your chapter to get together for a very good cause, have a good time, and support children's fight against cancer check the St. Jude's website for a Saddle Up for St. Jude's Children's event.

After the first year's event we decided to follow it up with another Saddle Up for St. Jude's ride last June in conjunction with Idaho City's Frontier Day's celebration. With no equine virus to be concerned about and one event under our belt the charity ride the second year was much easier. We had twice as many riders, twice the fun and half the work, with great pot lucks, bonfires in the evenings, and a lot of camaraderie. Join us if you can this May 4th, or even better you may want to put on a Saddle Up event in your chapter.

This year's saddle up event will be held at Wilson Creek South of Nampa in the Owyhee Mountains on May 4th. Our plans are in place again for some great trail riding, food, auction, and prizes. Hope to see you there!!



Remembering Howard Spaletta

Howard Spaletta moved on to better trails on October 16, 2012. He was many things during his eighty-two years; student, soldier, engineer, family man, horseman and activist.

Howard was born July 10, 1930 in Reno, Nevada, graduated from high school there and went on to serve in the Korean War. He then earned an engineering degree in Metallurgy, and moved his family to Idaho Falls, Idaho from Sacramento, California in 1972 when transferred by Aerojet General Corporation. In Idaho Falls he learned to ride horses with his friend Bill Kelly.

Horses were soon a passion for him. He became a skilled packer, planning exactly what was needed for each trip, setting up a great camp. Howard was popular with hunting friends such as Bill. He didn't like to hunt, but he loved to go along, usually to the Frank Church Wilderness, to tend camp and cook. He was rewarded with a share of the harvest.



During the "seventies" Howard learned of a group of horsemen who rode, packed and cleared trails together called the Back Country Horsemen. The nearest group was in Salmon, Idaho, one hundred-fifty miles away, so he decided to form a chapter in SE Idaho. Thus the Eagle Rock chapter was started. A large group of people showed up for the first meeting. Howard served as President and was Trail Boss on numerous trail maintenance parties. And he stumped for public access to the National Forests for people, their horses and pack stock. He even traveled to Washington D.C. to get his message across. He was opinionated, decisive, a "black or white" kind of guy. He didn't back down from anyone, and not everyone agreed with him, but he was respected. His friends think back fondly of great outings with him.

Ed Turner remembers being on Indian Creek near Palisades Reservoir when he tied Howard's horse to a tree, unaware that the tree was playing host to a swarm of yellow jackets. The tiny bombers soon descended on the horse, stinging it mercilessly. Ed struggled to free the horse as they included him in their assault. Every time he would get some slack in the rope the horse would jerk back, tightening the knot again. Somehow the horse was eventually freed, and LaRene Smith came to the rescue with her first aid for horse and man. But the excitement wasn't over.

Riding back down the trail they encountered a sheep herder who was in distress. In broken English he conveyed the need for first aid for his Great Pyrenees dogs. Their faces, including their tongues were covered with porcupine quills. From the festering and swelling it appeared that the attack had taken place a couple of days earlier. Howard, Vern and LaRene Smith and Ed took turns pulling quills with a Leatherman tool while the others held the whimpering dogs. The dogs seemed to understand what they were doing. Howard, like most horsemen, really loved animals. And he passed his love of animals and the back country on to his family.

Andrea Burnell, Howard's granddaughter, has fond memories of pack trips to high blue mountain lakes with Grandpa and his Labrador. She sometimes worried though, about grizzly bears. So, to ease her fears on a trip to the Tetons he promised that there would not be any grizzlies. But when they arrived at the trailhead they were greeted with a sign warning of "Grizzlies in the area". She slept with her bear spray on that trip. But he always had a wonderful camp. Complete with a shower. They would spend the day fishing together, cook and eat the fish, and sleep under a big tarp.

In the spring Howard will take his final ride up one of his favorite trails where his family will scatter his ashes in the mountains that he loved. He was a man who made a difference and he will be missed.

Eagle Rock
By Phebe Pelot
02-05-2013



Friday afternoon

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

Friday evening

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

Saturday

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

Saturday evening

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

Join us in celebrating Where It All Began

Back Country Horsemen of Montana

2013 State Convention & 40th Anniversary Celebration April 5, 6 and 7, 2013 at the Red Lion Inn in Kalispell, Montana

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

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

Enjoy three full days of free exhibits and seminars.

For more information, visit us at:
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