



Backcountry Horsemen of California

STARTING A NEW BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN UNIT

CONCERNED MEN AND WOMEN DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF
CALIFORNIA TRAILS, PUBLIC LANDS AND BACKCOUNTRY

? WHO ARE BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN?

The name Backcountry Horsemen identifies an organization that promotes safe and responsible use of the backcountry throughout the United States. The members of Backcountry Horsemen of California are expected to practice "Leave No Trace" principles when using public lands and to be knowledgeable of the regulations that apply to activities conducted on public lands.

The use of the name Backcountry Horsemen carries with it an obligation to adhere to the objectives of Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) and practice the ethics of Leave No Trace. The name BCHC or its logos must never be used for purposes other than to promote the goals of the organization in a responsible manner and in accordance with the policies established by the State Board of Directors. Any questions of propriety should be addressed to the Executive Committee and/or the State Board prior to the use of name, logos, or letterhead on any communication that is addressed to any other organizations or individuals.

All communications shall be in accord with the mission and purpose of BCHC and fall into the pillars of their Strategic Plan.

? WHY FORM A NEW BCHC UNIT?

- ✓ To organize people of like interests who do not have a close local unit they could join.
- ✓ Organized volunteer service projects, trail rides and social events
- ✓ Learn new skills such as packing, dutch oven cooking, and trail maintenance.
- ✓ Opportunities for leadership and personal growth
- ✓ Opportunities to educate youth in the importance and respectful use of public lands.
- ✓ Partner with other BCHC Units to share information and ideas.
- ✓ Join with other Units to increase our voice to lobby to support and/or oppose local, state, and federal legislation.

? HOW TO TAKE THE NEXT STEPS TO FORM A NEW BCHC UNIT

1. Recognize the need for an organized group of horsemen and women who want to make a commitment to the backcountry, preserve trails and lend support to an organization that will move these ideas forward.
2. Check to find where the closest current Unit of BCHC is in relation to your location. Determine if you should join that organization or if the distance is too great, do you have enough interest in your area to form a new Unit.
3. Plan an informal organizational meeting. Ask everyone to invite another person who shares your interests. Invite a guest speaker from the nearest Unit or someone from the State Executive Committee to explain the goals and objectives of BCHC.
4. Hold your informal organizational meeting to determine if you have enough people to form a new Unit of BCHC.
5. If you have the interest of at least 10 people who are willing to become new members of BCHC, complete the form "Intent to Form a New Unit" which can be found on the BCHC website.
6. Return the form to the President of BCHC for approval by the Executive Committee to move forward.

CONGRATULATIONS! You are on your way to establishing a new Unit of BCHC - What to do next?

1. Time to hold a second meeting inviting everyone from the first meeting as well as any friends they may want to bring with them. Advertise the meeting where you can attract the attention of like-minded people. Flyers, posters, newspaper, etc. To reach people at other horse organizations, post at stables, feed stores or horse events.
2. Give them a phone number or email to contact with questions.
3. Chose a place with will fit everyone comfortably. Free rooms may be available at schools, libraries, churches, businesses, or public community buildings. Prepare a presentation for 25 to 40 people. Serve refreshments. Print handouts from the BCHC website that may be of interest. Contact the

BCHC Newsletter Editor to see if you can acquire some BCHC newsletters. Have the BCHC State bylaws available as well as BCHC policies which you can obtain from the State BCHC Secretary.

4. Wear name tags, create some social time to interact prior to the presentation. Handout membership applications.
5. Create an agenda for the meeting which should include:
 - ✓ Purpose of the meeting
 - ✓ Discussing the mission and objectives of BCHC
 - ✓ Completing the requirements to become a functioning BCHC Unit:
 - a. Chose a Unit name that reflects your area or purpose.
 - b. Select an address to use for the Unit.
 - c. Elect interim officers and state how long they will serve.
 - d. Appoint a committee to begin the process of writing bylaws. Samples are available upon request to the BCHC State Secretary. All unit bylaws must comply with the State Bylaws.
 - e. Decide when to open a bank account and accept any donations toward the initial operating costs.
 - f. Collect membership applications and money for dues to be sent to BCHC Vice President of Membership (You need at least 10 members to join).
6. Upon completion of the bylaws, hold your first official meeting to adopt the bylaws. Elect permanent officers (in accordance with the bylaws). Establish committees & chairpersons. Complete a Unit directory with names phone numbers and email addresses. Decide on a schedule for future meetings.
7. Continue to solicit new members.
8. Write a letter to the President of BCHC requesting that your new Unit be approved at the next Board of Directors meeting (these are held in February and October). Attach your bylaws, your roster of officers with contact information, the minutes of the meeting where you held elections and approved the bylaws and if you have a logo or letterhead include that also.

? WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT AS A BCHC UNIT?

Your Responsibilities -

- ✓ Your unit officers will be expected to relay any information received from the State organization to all your members.
- ✓ Hold meetings to keep your members informed and involved.
- ✓ Your elected State Director is expected to attend meetings and vote as directed by your membership.
- ✓ Your officers will be expected to comply with any deadlines outlined in the State Bylaws regarding yearly reports.
- ✓ You are expected to accurately complete your insurance forms on time each year.
- ✓ Your officers are expected to attend Officers Training events when offered by the State.
- ✓ Provide financial support and if possible attend the yearly Rendezvous

BCHC Responsibilities -

- ✓ The BCHC Vice President of Membership will send you monthly reports of your unit member count and their membership status (renewed, expired, etc.)
- ✓ The BCHC Vice President of Public Lands will communicate with your unit on legislative issues and ask your members to write/call to support or oppose various issues. They will also assist you with local public lands issues.
- ✓ The State BCHC Secretary will communicate various informational issues and notify your State Director and President of upcoming State Meetings or email voting.
- ✓ The Vice President of Education will keep your unit informed about educational opportunities and Officer Trainings.
- ✓ The 1st Vice President will be contacting your Unit about insurance issues and yearly renewals.
- ✓ The 2nd Vice President will be contacting your Unit about turning in your volunteer hours each year.
- ✓ The Vice President of Youth Education will assist you in conducting youth activities and how to comply with our Youth Volunteer Program.

- ✓ The BCHC State Treasurer will send you your portion of your membership due each month. The State Treasurer will also accept donations made to your Unit which require a tax write off.

COMMUNICATIONS

Your unit should hold regular meetings to keep your members informed. Agendas and minutes should be kept providing an official record of Unit business. All unit records should be kept for at least 6 years and passed on to new officers when elected. A unit calendar, unit newsletter and unit webpage are high recommended. Unit Facebook pages can entice new members and allow you to advertise what your Unit is doing. One caution, you must have someone who must review each Facebook post, to make sure there is nothing inappropriate or in conflict with BCHC's mission being posted. "Keep it Positive".

NOTES & QUESTIONS

Sample Unit Bylaws

This is sample language to give your bylaws committee a starting point. Please see the current State bylaws and any other sample bylaws you can review to create the best bylaws for your unit.

BYLAWS FOR _____ UNIT OF BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN

ARTICLE I

The name of this unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California shall be:

ARTICLE II

Objectives and Purpose (*Sample Language*)

To promote care and conservation of backcountry trails, campsites, streams and meadows.

To foster the use of back country trails by horsemen and women in the National Parks and Forests, State Parks, BLM Lands and other public entities.

To keep the unit's membership informed of regulations that effect stock use on public lands, and to inform the member ship of any pending regulations that might affect that use. To promote public awareness of the historical aspects of stock use in the backcountry.

To keep the public administrators aware of the works and interests of the unit.

ARTICLE III

Officers

The _____ unit shall have a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The management of the affairs, property, business, and control of

policy is vested in the officers of the _____ Unit. Each officer shall perform all usual and customary duties for that office, or as designated by the State BCHC Bylaws.

Section 1. - Standing Committees shall be: (*highly suggested*) Membership, Public Lands, Volunteer Hours, and Education. *Other may include: Insurance, Trail Work, Trail Boss, Newsletter.*

Section 2. - Election Procedures

You will need to state terms of office and how they will be selected: election or appointment.

The term of service for each office shall be one year with elections being held in _____ of each year.

Section 3. - Vacancies shall be filled by a vote of the members at its regular next meeting. *Or can be by president appointment until end of term.*

ARTICLE IV

Membership

Section 1. Membership Types - Individual or Family Membership in the Backcountry Horse men of California is open to any person/family interested in the goals and purposes of the organization.

Types of Membership are:

1. Individual Membership - Defined as one person over the age of 18. Shall have one vote in affairs submitted to the general membership.
2. Family Membership - Defined as individuals in one family residing at a single residence. Family members shall have two votes in matters submitted to the general membership.
3. Young Adult Membership - Defined as young adults from 18 to 24 years of age. These members shall have one vote in matters submitted to the general membership.
4. Youth Membership shall be defined as non-voting individual members between the ages of 12-17 years. This membership requires parent/guardian written permission to participate in BCHC events and the appropriate signed release forms.

5. Benefactor membership is defined as a family unit. One vote per adult member, maximum of two votes. Each Benefactor membership will receive a letter of appreciation and be recognized in the State Newsletter.
6. Patron membership is defined as a family unit. One vote per adult members, maximum of two votes. Each Patron membership will receive a letter of appreciation and be recognized in the State Newsletter.
7. Mt. Whitney is defined as a family unit. One vote per adult member, maximum of two votes. Each Mt. Whitney membership will receive a letter of appreciation and be recognized in the State Newsletter.
8. Lifetime membership is a way for the unit to recognize an honor their members. The type of membership will be determined by the individual unit who commit to pay the designated dues for the person(s) named for their lifetime.
9. Associate Membership is defined as a person or family unit who belongs to one unit but wished to be affiliated simultaneously with another unit. Associate members may only hold office or vote in their primary unit. Associate members do not count toward a unit's total number of members for purposes of determining representation on the State Board of Directors.

Section 2. Dues: The amount of annual dues is determined by the BCHC State Board of Directors. One-half of dues collected by the State Board is returned to the unit to which the member belongs.

Section 3. Meetings: There shall be at least two annual general membership meetings and any other meetings deemed necessary by the Unit Officers.

Section 3. Removal - Members may be removed or denied membership by following guidelines set out in the State BCHC Bylaws.

Article V

Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Board of Directors by a two-thirds vote of members present.

**INTENT TO FORM A NEW
BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN UNIT**

TO: President of Backcountry Horsemen of California

The following people would like to form a new Unit of BCHC:

Name	Phone	email	City & County of Residence
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_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

The reason we feel we need a new Unit in our area is:

The closest Unit to our area is: _____

We agree to conform to the bylaws, mission, and objectives of Backcountry Horsemen of California. We agree to sign up a minimum of 10 new members prior to final approval.

Received by President BCHC _____ Approved by Executive Committee _____

Approval Notice sent _____