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The Backcountry News

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FALL 2025



NEW LEADERS TAKE THE REINS

MEET DOUG DOLLARHIDE, 2026 BCHC PRESIDENT ELECT

Howdy, BCHC members,

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Doug Dollarhide and I am your new State President and a member of the Mid Valley Unit. After being pestered for two years and lots of prayer on my part, I decided to throw my name in the hat. Well, my name was the only one in the hat.

Let me tell you a little about myself. I was raised in Escalon, California, where my wife Cathy and I still live. We have three married adult children: Carmen Olson and her husband Magnus live in Kingsburg, California, and are members of the San Joaquin Sierra Unit. They will be having their first child in March 2026 and it's a boy. Next, we have Corrie Whitesitt and her husband Jon. They have three kids, live in Turlock, and are members of Mid Valley Unit. Then there is Garrett and his wife Ashley. They have two boys and a baby due in November 2025. They also belong to the Mid Valley Unit. All three of our kids have been on the MJC Pack Team in Bishop. Along with Carl Perry and Dave Rumsey, I have been involved in coaching MJC pack teams for Bishop for at least 10 years. Horses and mules have been an important part of mine and Cathy's lives and our family's, too. I can promise you that our grandchildren will know how to enjoy trail riding and spending time in the back country as we introduce this to them while they are young.

I have been blessed with a job working for the City of Ripon. It has allowed me the finances and time to participate in things I enjoy like mission trips with our church, family gatherings, overnight trail rides, pack trips, and work parties. Cathy and I have ridden in the Crater Lake area of Oregon, and it is gorgeous with clear trails and many lakes. If you ever have a chance to make it up there, it



See **DOLLARHIDE**, continued on Page 5

The Backcountry News

An internal publication of the Backcountry Horsemen of California, Inc.

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Who is BCHC? The Backcountry Horsemen of California, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of California, March 13, 1990, with a 501(c)4 education foundation established in 2007. The Backcountry Horsemen of California, Inc., reserves the right to refuse any articles and/or advertisements that are not consistent with the Backcountry Horsemen of California's Objectives and Purpose statement. Other material will be printed at the Editor's discretion.

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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>Edition</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Winter 2026 Edition	January 15, 2026
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Summer 2026 Edition	July 15, 2026
Fall 2026 Edition	October 15, 2026

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Full Page	\$150.00	\$142.50	\$135.00	\$127.50	
Half Page (h/v)	\$100.00	\$95.00	\$90.00	\$85.00	
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Here's the QR Code for BCHC's website. Check out all of the information and resources available to members and units! Just open the built-in camera on your cell phone or tablet. Point the camera at the QR code. Tap the banner that appears and you'll be at bchcalifornia.org

PRESIDENT'S PAGE



**BCHC President
Mike Hughes**

PASSING OF THE BATON

Well, it is that time of year again. Yep, the mountains are becoming dusted with snow and the passes are filling up. Of course, this drives the critters down off the mountain and into the lowlands including us two-legged creatures. We are now focusing more on getting out the brushes, rags, saddle soap and cleaning up the tack before putting it away for the winter. Also, we are getting the trailers prepped for winter hibernation. This leaves some of us also concentrating on

putting firewood up for the oncoming cold weather and sitting by the fireplace on those Jack Frost evenings. Well, you get the picture.

This time of year will also present us with the opportunity to catch up on our paperwork, especially that having to do with moving the BCHC organization forward. My thoughts are thus directed back to the October State Board meeting held recently in Hilmar where we had an election of new officers. My replacement as President will be Doug Dollarhide from the Mid Valley Unit. I have gotten to know Doug over the past few years and I must say I am very impressed with his intelligence, dedication, skill set and moral compass. In my humble opinion, I feel this organization could not be placed in better hands for the foreseeable future. Doug undoubtedly will have somewhat of a learning curve. Subsequently, he and I have already begun the transition and mentoring process through meetings and phone conversations.

At the recent State Board meeting held at “the Perry’s Party Barn” (thank you Carl and Julie), Doug was able to observe the presidential appointment process in person as I had the privilege of appointing our new Vice President of Public Lands, Anna Baglione, to replace our long-term V.P. Troy Patton. Thank you to both of these fine people for their long-term contributions to BCHC, back through the years and into the future. Agendas were covered, motions were made, discussions were held with bylaws and policies passed. That is how a democratic organization works and moves us forward in a positive way. The slate of officers also included Lynn Joiner as Treasurer, with board approval for an extended term, Ruth Heuer and Denise Robinson, Co-VPs of Education, and Terry Jorgensen as BCHA National Director. This slate of officers passed overwhelmingly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Executive Committee and ancillary officers, who I had the privilege and pleasure to work with during my term as President. I deeply appreciate you and thank you for keeping me away from many of the pitfalls that could have negatively

impacted my presidency, thus this fine organization.

Concurrently, I would like to thank Larry Shuman for his time as BCHA National Director. Unfortunately, Larry had to step down for personal reasons, however his impact on BCHC is deep and long lasting. Thank you, Larry, for your service and volunteerism.

In conclusion, I would like to state an old western adage, “Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway.” Well, that pretty much sums up the feeling I had when presented with the opportunity to become your president in 2022 and leading BCHC into the future. It definitely led to some soul searching and deep discussions with family and friends, which led to the decision to take on this new life challenge. After some reflection, I brought forth the same motto I had used in my previous 30 years of volunteerism covering multiple organizations: “Leave it better than you found it.” Each and every decision I made had this as its foundation. Would my actions make BCHC better now and into the future? Even when presented with difficult challenges if the answer was “yes” then I chose to proceed forward. When looking back over the myriad changes through bylaws, policies, financial decisions, personnel, and other impactful decisions, I believe that Doug Dollarhide, the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors and BCHC’s general membership will inherit an organization that is better now than it was four years ago - at least in my humble opinion.

Just saying.

Mike Hughes
President
Backcountry Horsemen of California

DEADLINE FOR WINTER 2026 EDITION

of the Backcountry News is: **January 15, 2026**

Send submissions to:

BCHC Editor at

BCHC_Newsletter@bchcalifornia.org

Remember to let the Editor know, by the newsletter deadline, if you would like extra copies of the paper printed to distribute at upcoming events/activities. Send the number of papers you would like and the mailing address of the person to whom they should be sent.

BCHC NEWS



BCHC Editor
Carol Jo Hargreaves

HAPPINESS EQUALS BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN

I recently listened to Dr. Moran Cerf, neuroscientist and professor of business at Columbia University, speak about factors contributing to happiness. As I was listening, it was easy to see how all these factors may be gained by membership in Backcountry Horsemen.

According to Dr. Cerf, there are five factors that contribute to one's happiness.

In reverse order of importance:

5. **Volunteering**, especially doing something for others.
4. **Exercising** that makes nutrients work and releases chemicals, like dopamine and endorphins, that make you feel good.
3. **Being spiritual**; knowing that life has purpose or meaning.
2. **Social interactions** because our brains love communication, whether positive or negative.
1. **Sleep**, in quality not quantity, during which one reflects, creates, escapes his mind, rests, and recalibrates both body and mind.

As a member of a BCHC unit, you are encouraged to volunteer your time on work parties and trailhead or campground clean-ups, to educate other members and the public on Leave No Trace, to participate in fundraisers, and to serve in a leadership capacity. All these activities result in doing something for others,

BCHC work parties provide exercise operating a saw, a shovel, a rock bar, loppers, or other tools, as well as riding your equine to and from the work site, camping out at the trailhead and fetching water. On a trail ride you can improve your horseback skills and school your equine (and pack string if you have one). Exercise makes you feel good even though it makes you tired.

When you're in the backcountry on a work party or campout, you are strengthening your spiritual fitness, even boosting your immune system. "Nature bathing," as the Japanese call spending time outdoors, can decrease stress, lower your heart rate and your blood pressure. It keeps brain cells nourished and healthy, improves memory and mental well-being, and increases positive mood by releasing endorphins.

As a member of BCHC, you have many possibilities for social interactions at unit meetings, holiday parties, committee meetings, state board meetings, Rendezvous, trail rides and work parties. Over the years many members become fast friends and look forward to opportunities to work and play together.

All these factors lead to better quality sleep by reducing anxiety, fighting depression, and increasing overall well-being.



BCHC Secretary
Susie Patton

RECAP OF OCTOBER STATE BOARD MEETING

BCHC's fall State Board meeting was hosted by Carl and Julie Perry in Hilmar, CA. The Perrys have a beautiful building they allowed us to use, and we thank them for their gracious hospitality. Five units were unable to attend but did give their proxies to other Directors. Some of the highlights of the meeting were as follows:

Education is preparing a Wolf informational flyer that will be available on BCHC's website. It needs a little more work but watch for it. Education is working to improve communication on the Leave No Trace Pin Program at Rendezvous and looks forward to more participation at the 2026 Rendezvous. The Leadership Trainings for Unit Officers will be held in 2026:

Northern Units - January 10 in Oroville

Central Units - January 24 in Visalia

Southern Units - January 31 in Murietta

All unit officers should plan to attend for the latest information on doing your best job in these key positions. More details will follow.

Public Lands is proposing that a representative of BCHC attend the "Hike the Hill" event in March 2026 in Washington, D.C. This event is where representatives of nonprofit organizations get an opportunity to meet with national legislators and their staff to inform them about their programs and the important work they do. Troy Patton reminded the units to submit an entry for the Ann Lange Public Lands Award by February 1, 2026.

Discussion was held about the new website that CJ Hargreaves and Chip Herzig have been working on. Societ, a company with 30+ years helping nonprofits, was hired to redesign BCHC's website, add user-friendly features, and move the site from a hard coded one to one that is more easily maintained by a volunteer.

Lucy Badenhoop reported that we do not have enough pledges at this time to apply for grants to fund a Forest Service Intern for 2026. Some units committed during the meeting, but we need more pledges by October 28.

The 2026 Rendezvous will be held March 20-22 in Ceres. The committee, headed by Lloyd Erlandson of Mid Valley Unit, with help from Mother Lode Unit, is busy planning for the event. Please save the date and plan to attend.

See **RECAP**, continued on Page 5

See? Backcountry Horsemen = HAPPINESS!

BCHC NEWS

RECAP, continued from Page 4

Revisions were made to BCHC’s 501(c) 4 Bylaws. Each unit President and Secretary will be receiving the updated copy soon. The major change was the due date for Volunteer Hours Reports. Due to BCHC requesting reports earlier, the new due date is January 1.

Officer elections were held for 2026. The new officers are President – Doug Dollarhide, Mid Valley; Treasurer - Lynn Joiner, Kern Sierra; Co VPs of Education – Ruthie Heuer, High Sierra and Denise Robinson, Sierra Freepackers; BCHC National Director – Terry Jorgensen, Manzanita Riders. Mike Hughes appointed Anna Baglione, Eastern Sierra Unit to fulfill a one-year term as Vice President of Public Lands ending December 2026. BCHC is still looking for a State Secretary.

The next Board of Directors meeting will again be held in Hilmar, February 6 and 7, 2026.

PHOTOS TAKEN AT THE STATE BOARD MEETING IN HILMAR, OCTOBER 4, 2025:



DOLLARHIDE, continued from Page 1

is a nice place to ride.

Somewhere around 18 years ago Cathy and I found time on a weekend to take the horses up to the hills. Our girls were in high school and Garrett was around 8 years old, so they stayed with my parents. We arrived at Pine Valley, high lined the horses, threw an air mattress on a tarp and settled in for the night. There was one other campsite occupied with some older folks that were keeping a close eye on us. The next morning we got ready for our ride with the other party still watching us. One of the men from the other site kept walking past our campsite checking us out. When we returned from a nice ride the people were waiting to get over to us and introduce themselves and tell us about the Backcountry Horsemen organization, their unit in particular. They were from the Mid Valley Unit, sold us a trail book and invited us to their next meeting. They were very friendly. If I remember correctly, the President’s last name was De Oliveria and CJ Hargreaves was the Secretary. After our first year as members, I have been on our unit’s Board in one capacity or another. I have served from Parade Chair to Education Chair, and Cathy and I organized the Columbia All-Equestrian Christmas Parade for eight years. I was also Unit President for two 2-year terms.

The reason Cathy and I thoroughly enjoy the Mid Valley Unit is because of the very friendly, open arms feeling that we received when we joined. And ‘til this day, when I talk to new members, they typically comment on how welcoming our people are. We look out for each other whether it is on a ride or someone is stranded on the side of the road, the list could go on.

The reason I am your president is really pretty simple - there was no one else! The position of President scares folks to death. I think the thought of having this responsibility puts people into fear mode. Imagine if there was no president...there would be no one to run the meetings, no one making sure the Executive Committee stays on track with their responsibilities, no one keeping tabs on all of our state’s units and the overall welfare of them. How about the preservation of our public lands? We would lack the leadership needed to keep this organization together and functioning in a healthy manner. The hub would be missing and the wheel would fall apart and, therefore, cease to move forward.

I need to be involved in my newfound position before I can list some goals for BCHC. I think the direction will find itself based on future decisions that will be made for the welfare of our organization. In closing, I would like to leave you with two action words that we can apply not only to our own lives but to our units and our state organization. Those two words would be UNITY and COMMITMENT. Our Mid Valley Bishop Pack Team took those words to heart. They went from knowing basically nothing to winning the World Championship. They had a common goal that they believed in, committing themselves

BCHC NEWS

***DOLLARHIDE**, continued from Page 5*

to each other as a team and ultimately winning the prize. If I have any goals for our units and state organization, it would be to come together, be involved and make a difference in our stated mission.

Blessings,
Doug Dollarhide, BCHC President Elect
Romans 8:28,29



ANNA BAGLIONE, APPOINTED VP OF PUBLIC LANDS FOR 1-YEAR TERM

I'm originally from Escalon, a small farming/ranching town in California's Central Valley. Born and raised in an Italian Catholic farming family where we still farm to this day. I fell in love with mules and packing when I was 16 when I became

a member of Backcountry Horsemen of California, Mid Valley Unit. I attended Modesto Junior College and received my BS in Geology from the University of California Davis.

I began working for Rock Creek Pack Station when I was 18 and I've worked almost every summer since then, but I'm more part-time now. During my time at Rock Creek, I've covered most of the Sierra's Eastern Slope on the back of a horse or mule from Horseshoe Meadows north to Sonora Pass. I have an intimate knowledge of the wilderness from my years of working and living there. I'm very involved with Bishop Mule Days Celebration, participating in the inaugural Collegiate Packing Contest in 2013 and founding the Modesto JC Interscholastic Team in 2014 with support from Mid Valley Unit. I currently compete on Rock Creek's commercial packing team. We were the World Champions in 2023 and Reserve World Champions in 2024 and 2025. I've represented BCHC and packers on the national scale by being named to Cowgirl Magazine's 2021 class of 30 Under 30 recipients. I was recognized for significant contributions to the western industry as a woman under the age of 30 for my packing, volunteer work and participation in Bishop Mule Days.

I am currently serving as the president of the Eastern Sierra Unit and my younger sister is currently serving as the president of Mid Valley Unit. I think it's safe to say our dedication to BCHC is a family tradition

and it just makes sense to give back to an organization that has always uplifted and supported us. I am passionate about building community through the organization I love, connecting with the outside world and maintaining access to public lands for people of all ages and abilities.

I live near Bishop, California, and work full-time as a Utility Forester for our local utility company. During my time in this position, I have come to understand the nuances of my local government agencies and land managers. I volunteered for the position of Vice President of Public Lands because I am eager to learn more and continue building partnerships with agencies wherever I can. It's on us to be good stewards and step up to be a strong voice for packing and access to our public lands. As the incoming VP of Public Lands, I think there are many opportunities for BCHC to be present at the table and build partnerships with other outdoors organizations who have the same shared goals. I plan to take advantage of these opportunities and keep building our community up.



TERRY JORGENSEN NEW NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Terry Jorgensen joined BCHS's San Diego Unit in the early 1990s, shortly after moving to Ramona with her human and equine family. Within the first year or two, at the annual election of officers, it was clear the unit needed someone in the Public Lands position. While she had no real idea of what that entailed, Terry volunteered and served in that role for about 20 years, thanks to wonderful mentors in BCHC.

Terry began to serve as BCHC's Alternate National Director in 2022 and that spring stepped up to complete Robert Anderson's term as National Director. Subsequently, Terry returned to the Alternate position where she has served until her October election to fill the National Director position vacated by Larry Shuman. Terry has led the Manzanita Riders Unit as President since its founding in 2023.

IN ADDITION:

Lynn Joiner, Kern Sierra Unit, was elected Treasurer with Board approval for an extended term.

Ruthie Heuer, High Sierra Unit, and **Denise Robinson**, Sierra Freepackers Unit, will continue as Co-VPs of Education.

BCHC is still looking for a State Secretary.

EDUCATION



BCHC Co-VP of Education
Ruthie Heuer



BCHC Co-VP of Education
Denise Robinson

ATTENTION ALL UNITS! REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING COMING IN JANUARY

Everyone who has taken the responsibility of an elected position in their unit should attend these meetings. We offer this only every other year. Your unit will be better and stronger after you have attended.

Time is 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Your host will have coffee and sweets in the morning. For lunch, your host may feed you at a nominal price or supply a list of nearby restaurants.

Northern part of state: Sutter Buttes Unit is hosting January 10 at the Eagles Club in Oroville.

Central part of state: High Sierra Unit is hosting January 24 at the Farm Bureau office in Visalia.

Southern part of state: Redshank Riders Unit is hosting January 31 at Tractor Supply in Murrietta.

Please RSVP TO REGION HOST. For directions or more information, contact the host unit of the region in which you choose to attend the training.

ATTENTION UNIT PRESIDENTS: You have your unit's copy of the "BCHC Leadership and Training Resource Manual". You should copy and deliver the appropriate section to each of your unit's officers as soon as possible! Each officer should bring this copy to the Leadership Training.

RENDEZVOUS PIN PROGRAM

If you are a front country rider, camper, hiker, biker, trail runner or backcountry user/packer, this education program is for you. All of us should continue to learn every year. None of us knows everything. The basic building blocks of Leave No Trace (LNT) are offered each year at the Rendezvous. In addition, classes are offered that fall under those building blocks.

You will find a sign-off page and list of qualifying classes in your Rendezvous Program. Have the presenter/host of each class you attend sign off, then hand this page in at the State Booth where your points will be counted and recorded in BCHC's database. If you have attended five approved classes (that is only five classes over Rendezvous weekend) you will receive a beautiful new pin to wear proudly on your hat, shirt, or collar (or to just collect!) It is round with a green background and a blue boot – sharp looking!

LNT MASTER/WILDERNESS RIDER COURSE

The Leave No Trace Master course will be offered April 6 - 10, 2026, in the northern part of the state at Bowerman Barn with the Center of Excellence. This location is north of Weaverville. Cost is \$750. You will be introduced in depth to the Leave No Trace Principles which are the ethics of proper wild lands responsibility. You will be given ways and means to teach others these principles as well as options to choose from.

BCHC's goal is to have at least one LNT Master/Wilderness Rider in every unit in the state. As a Wilderness Rider you have a responsibility to your unit, community, and agencies you represent. We hope you decide to accept this position. Contact: Ruthie if you are interested in attending: (559) 560-6161

ATTENTION, ALL VIDEOGRAPHERS!

The BCHC Education Committee is hosting a friendly competition for a 1-minute, 2-minute and 3-minute video, sharing what Backcountry Horsemen of California is about in your unit. It can be about LNT, an educational topic, work project, food, etc. - you get the picture. Have FUN with it but follow safety guidelines. Add a catchy title and add music! Our goal is to make something that younger generations would watch to attract them to our organization.

Winners will be announced at Rendezvous in Ceres, March 20-22.

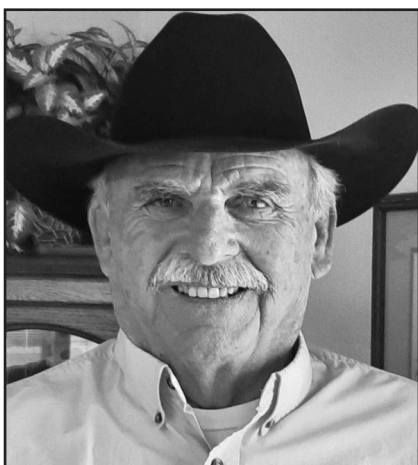
Prizes: \$50 to 1-minute, 2-minute
and 3-minute winners

Send videos to trailpeople1@yahoo.com

Deadline is February 1, 2026



PUBLIC LANDS



**BCHC VP of Public Lands
Troy Patton**

PUBLIC LANDS UPDATE

I would like to introduce Anna Baglione as the new Vice President of Public Lands. Although Anna has been a member of BCHC for many years, I first met her when she joined the Eastern Sierra Unit several years ago. She accepted the job of Education Chair and began working with other unit members to start the weekly kids' iron mule packing class.

These were featured in an article in this newsletter. She began to organize other activities that built up our treasury and our membership. When she was

elected Unit President, Anna continued to work with the new Ed Chair to make the unit bigger and better. I will be stepping down from the Public Lands position on December 31, 2025, and I will be working with Anna to show her how I have been doing things and help her make a smooth transition into the job. I am asking all the Public Lands Unit Chairs to help and support her as she takes on this new job. Remember, it is your job to relay information about issues in your area. She cannot help if she is not aware of the issues. I have several items to finish before the end of the year when Anna will be jumping for the stirrup and picking up the reins!

At the October 4 State Board meeting I gave each Unit President and Public Lands Chair a packet. The packet contained two letters to the Department of Agriculture regarding the Department reorganization which includes changes to the Forest Service. One that Susie and I wrote, and one written by Randy Rasmussen, Public Land and Recreation Chair for BCHA, and signed by Craig Ferdig, BCHA Chairman. In our BCHC letter we stressed the importance of the Center of Excellence programs, the Intern Program, the Saw Program and suggested a Center of Excellence be created to train fire crews. We also stressed the importance of keeping trails open and well maintained and marked for the safety of fire crews. These trails must be open and maintained so fire crews can move quickly, and the Forest Service packers can supply them with tools, food, clothing and any other equipment they may need. When the smoke gets too heavy and the aircraft are grounded, pack strings are the lifeline for these fire fighters.

The next two letters were about the Balch Park Pack Station and Cal Fire removing the cabin they had used for years from their lease so Cal Fire could use it for housing. In the letter from BCHC we wrote about the importance of the cabin to the pack station and that it was never built for year-round use, and that it was needed for safe food storage, safe food preparation and showers. The other letter on this subject was from Bob Herrick of the High Sierra Unit, making a case for allowing

the Balch Pack Station to retain the use of the cabin. Dr. Jamie Wilson reported that Cal Fire had offered a new lease to the Balch Pack Station that included the use of the cabin! We won this battle!

In closing, I would like to thank a lot of people who helped me over the years. When I first joined BCHC, Barbara Ferguson was the VP of Public Lands. She always put out an agenda, a time frame to discuss items and looked at the facts (not opinions). She kept everyone on track and moving in the same direction. I feel she was the best and I tried to pattern myself after her!

Ann Lange was an inspiration to anyone who met her. Ann would show up at a meeting carrying two grips of loose-leaf folders so big, I would not ask a pack mule to carry them. When the Forest Service was attempting to remove trails from their inventory, Ann fought to keep every one of them open. Some of these are trails many of us ride today, because Ann Lange fought to keep them. When Ann passed, I went to the Executive Committee and asked to create the Ann Lange Public Lands Award. Barbara and Ann are no longer with us and I am sure they are packing for the Lord!

I would also like to thank some good friends whom I have come to rely on for advice, history and information:

Marilyn Reese, an Ann Lange Award winner, has always been there when I needed advice on the best way to approach an issue or the best way to conduct myself. Thank you so much.

Randy Hackbarth, BCHA National Director, has been a great source of information from BCHA to horse clubs and organizations. She always listens and has great information to share. Thank you for always listening and for the great conversations.

To Cindy McMurray from High Country and Terry Jorgensen from Manzanita Riders, I thank you for helping me judge the Ann Lange Award submissions. Cindy from the North, Terry from the South, and me in the middle always gave us a statewide perspective.

Once again, I thank you all.

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2026 INTERN PROGRAM IN JEOPARDY!

SHORTFALL OF UNIT PLEDGES

By Lucy Badenhoop, BCHC Grant Writer

The Training Need: Farmers and ranchers are mechanizing their operations and equine stock are fading from the agricultural scene, which was the traditional training ground for stock handlers. Simultaneously, the concerns over protecting the environment and providing recreational escapes from urbanization have gained momentum such that protecting park and trail systems plays an ever-increasing role in our daily lives.

BCHC Intern Program Purpose: The Intern Program was created to perpetuate the disappearing stock packing skills needed to support parks and trails by training the next generation of public land managers to see the value of pack stock in the park systems. The BCHC funded intern selection process targets those candidates who plan to enter the workforce managing the public lands of the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, or any other similar agency.

Program Impact: The application and selection process reaches beyond the single BCHC funded intern because each spring, it provides a ranked list of qualified candidates to any interested park agency or commercial packer. It is critical that BCHC fund its intern each year to set the process in motion, which allows others to select/train multiple additional younger packers. Additionally, the success of the BCHC Intern Program is being investigated by other organizations nationwide.

Since 2023, the Intern Program has depended on grants to supplement the donations by BCHC units and individual members. Our costs have been \$16,400 the last two years, but I expect a 10 percent increase in 2026 to about \$18,200.

A second factor affecting our funding is the federal freeze that started with DOGE about a year ago. Four of the five grants I found that fund intern-type programs are backed by the USFS/Dept. of Agriculture partnering with nonprofits who administer the grants (National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, National Trails System, etc.). These grant resources are frozen.

The one known grant that is privately funded is from the Rose Foundation with an annual limit of \$10,000. We have applied twice asking for the maximum but received \$6,000 in 2024 and \$6,500 in 2025, so we should expect the same limit in the future. The Rose application deadlines are quarterly, but only two work for the intern schedule: August 15 and October 28. In 2025, BCHC was not able to apply for a 2026 grant due to the lack of adequate unit pledges in time for the grant deadlines.

Despite three reminder emails to the units in June, August, and early October, as of October 14, we have \$10,750 in unit pledges. If I assume a successful grant for \$6,500, that's a total of \$17,250 when

\$18,200 is needed (a \$950 shortfall). Unfortunately, by the time you read this, the last Rose grant deadline will be past, so BCHC would need to fund the entire \$18,200 amount by January 15, 2026, to initiate the 2026 intern selection process.

Here's the intern process schedule:

Apr 1–July 31	Units vote & email next year pledges to badenhoop@comcast.net
Aug 1	Intern partners confirm next year's costs
Aug 1- Nov 30	Apply for next year grants.
Sep 30	USFS provide packer work statistics
Sep 30	Intern's letter regarding the summer's experiences/pictures
Oct 31	Close current year grants; submit final report
Jan 1-15	Units pay pledges; BCHC prepare flyer and social media posts
Jan 15	Publish flyer for intern applications (if fully funded)
Mar 15	Candidate application deadline
Apr 1	Intern announcement (other agencies/commercial packers hire, too)
June–Sept	Intern does 16 weeks of work

BOTTOM LINE: ALL UNITS SHOULD RESPOND TO THE FIRST PLEDGE REQUEST EVERY YEAR BY JULY 31.

As of this writing (October 15, the newsletter deadline), my only hope to fund the 2026 intern is that individual donations and/or additional unit pledges will magically appear a week before the October 28 grant application deadline, so I have time to submit the grant request.

SAW PROGRAM UPDATES

From Dan Chartier's report to the Education Committee Meeting
October 4, 2025:

There will be no changes to what is taught in the class. The only changes will be to who can sign off on the card. Only USFS employees can sign and make the card valid.

There is a lot of trail work going on throughout the state. There were no reported injuries.

Saw class updates will be coming out for fall and spring. Instructors will contact units with the dates.

UPCOMING DEADLINES

January 5 - Register for Leave No Trace Master course to be held April 6-10, 2026

January 15 - Volunteer Service Hours Reports due to Volunteer Service Hours Coordinator Cindy McMurry (mcmurrywycindy@gmail.com)

February 1 - Education Video Contest entries due to trailpeople1@yahoo.com

February 1 - Individual and Unit Education Award nominations due to Ruthie Heuer or Denise Robinson. Forms and criteria posted on bchcalifornia.org under Documents & Forms/501(c)3/Other Useful Materials.

February 1 -Max & Irene Cochran Journalism Award entries due to CJ Hargreaves, Editor. Mail paper copies to: 2526 Carpenter Rd SE, Olympia, WA 98503

February 1 - Ann Lange Public Lands Award and Ben York Trailblazer Award nominations due to VP of Public Lands Anna Baglione. See letter sent to unit presidents.

February 1 - Unit Presidents, send your choice for Top Hand Award to BCHC Treasurer Lynn Joiner

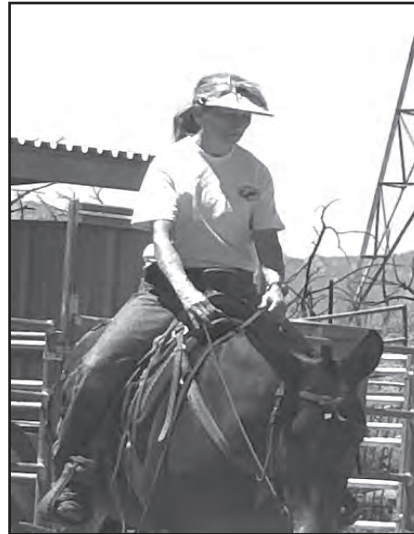
February 28 - Unit Financial Statement due to BCHC Treasurer Lynn Joiner. Form posted on bchcalifornia.org under Documents & Forms/Units.

February 28 -Yearly Unit Report (Strategic Plan report) due to BCHC Secretary. Form posted on bchcalifornia.org under Documents & Forms/Units.

REMEMBER

Send your membership renewals to VP of Membership Chip Herzig. **DO NOT SEND THEM TO BCHA.** Sending to the wrong place will delay payment and cause your membership to show as "Expired" so you cannot participate in unit events.

INSURANCE



BCHC Vice President
Jamie Wilson, DVM

Howdy, BCHC!

As packing season winds down, I want to thank all of you for ridin' safe out there! Lots of units have had rides and play days and work projects all over the state.

The insurance agent has been very prompt in returning our certificates for the events. Thanks to all of you who have requested certificates and included all the needed information. You make my job easier!

Many units will participate in Christmas parades, host clinics, and have holiday parties over the coming months. Let's continue to focus on safety.

Happy holidays!

MEMBERSHIP



BCHC VP of Membership
Chip Herzig

We are slightly ahead for the last few months when comparing our strong summer membership totals to our late fall membership totals. **This is good news!** I compared June 2025 to October 2025, noting that North Bay Unit has made exceptional growth (31 new members!) Congratulations!

We normally lose folks across the winter months...don't ask me why but it happens every year. Then we grow back in the late spring/summer months.

We have had a net gain of five members in the last four months, which may seem small but for this time of year is unusually good. So, we are doing good and I thank all the unit Membership leaders!

BCHA: DEDICATED TO KEEPING TRAILS OPEN FOR EVERYONE



Submitted by Randy Hackbarth, BCHA National Director

There are three items currently going on with the Back Country Horsemen of America: Hike the Hill, National Board Meeting and Forest Service Museum.

HIKE THE HILL

Every year there is a function called Hike the Hill, whereat representatives from a coalition of nonprofit trail groups converge on Washington, D.C. These representatives go around to various committees, congressmen and senators promoting what is done by volunteers on the trails.

At the October 4 BCHC Board of Directors meeting, a motion was presented to sponsor a portion of the cost for a BCHC member interested in attending Hike the Hill with BCHA Director of Public Lands and Recreation Randy Rasmussen. The date will be March 1-5, 2026.



NATIONAL BOARD MEETING

SAVE THE DATES:

2026 BCHA National Board Meeting
Embassy Suites, Kansas City, Missouri
April 12–15, 2026

FOREST SERVICE MUSEUM

Museum Sponsor Fundraiser

Back Country Horsemen of America has been given an incredible opportunity to forever be part of the National Forest Museum. BCHA has been approached to donate \$15,000 to the museum, and in return BCHA will have an interactive exhibit in this museum with an expected 50,000 visitors per year. This has enormous potential to show people who we are and what we do for decades to come, benefitting our members and organization nationwide. National membership, interactive exhibits, exposure – the benefits are amazing. Please help BCHA raise funds to accomplish this incredible goal and to get us on our way to losing the best kept secret title! Campaign ends December 31, 2025.



Watch the progress of the museum here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WFSbFtEKEM

To make this incredible exhibit a reality, we need to raise \$15,000.

Please help us reach this goal! Every dollar you donate gets BCHA closer to securing our place in this vital museum.

Donate today and help us tell the BCHA story:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?campaign_id=6DVUMVK7SHU6Q...

Learn more about the museum and its mission: <https://forestservicemuseum.org/>

Editor’s Note:
EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

The transcribed minutes of the October 4 Ed Committee meeting were too long to print in this newsletter. They will be emailed out to units.

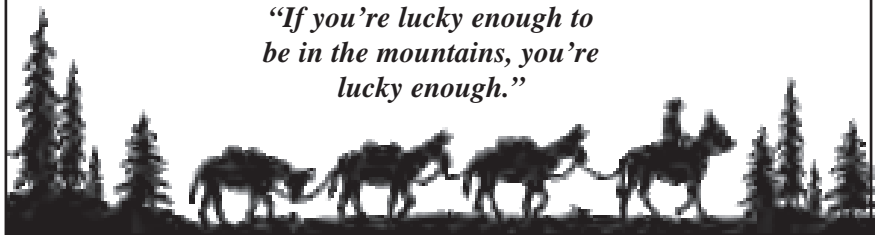
THANK YOU, 2025 RENDEZVOUS SPONSORS!

BCHC sincerely thanks the following 2025 Rendezvous sponsors for their generous support.
Please visit and support these businesses when you have the opportunity.

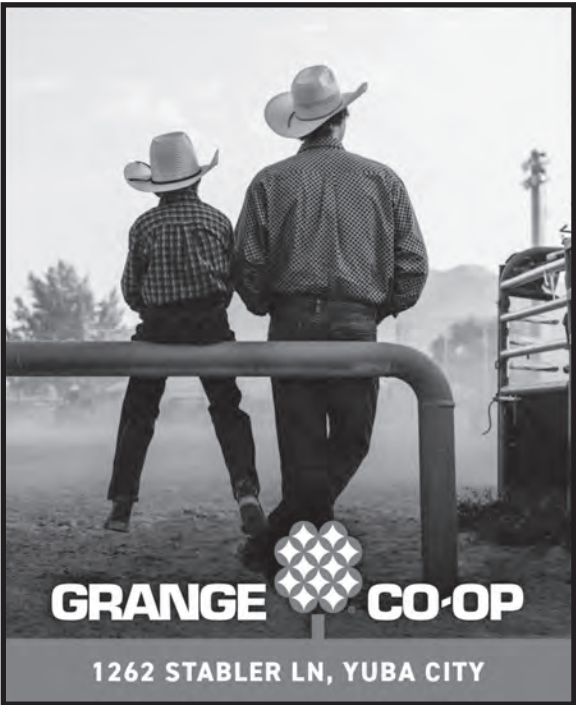
\$1,000 Silver Sponsors

Thank you for \$1,000 sponsorship from Terri Arington in memory of her late husband, Ron Arington. Ron was a longtime Ag teacher at Sonora High School. He was passionate about the back country, his horses and mules, his students and his wife.

*“If you’re lucky enough to
be in the mountains, you’re
lucky enough.”*



\$250 Aluminum Sponsors

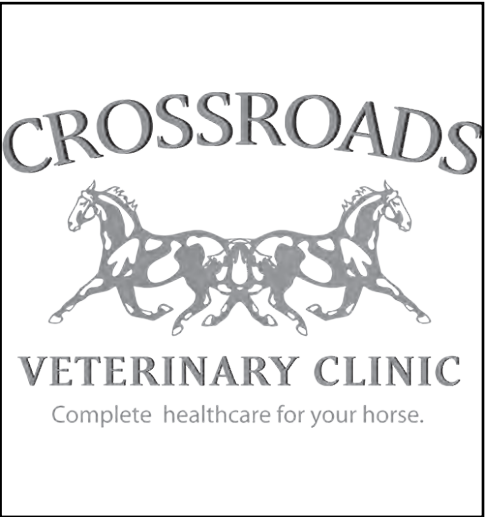


\$750 Bronze Sponsors

Trinity Equine Veterinary Clinics:



(530) 221-7004
10302 Old Oregon Trail
Redding, CA 96003



(530) 365-3685
6563 Deschutes Road
Anderson, CA 96007

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Mid Valley Unit

FORSETH ENTERPRISES

\$100 Sponsors



2026 RENDEZVOUS COMING UP!

RENDEZVOUS 2026

Diamond Bar, Ceres, CA
March 20-22, 2026



Just wanted to remind everybody that next year's Rendezvous will be where we had it in 2024. This facility is in the middle of the state so the north state and south state have the same distance to drive. Everyone is invited to come to the Central Valley and enjoy the early spring weather, which could be rain and wind or sunny and comfortable. The facility has room for dry camping with RVs or tents and lots of room for horses with stalls, open or covered. There are also about 20 RV hook-ups with water and electric.

The theme of Rendezvous 2026 is "Volunteerism" to highlight the work that we all do. I guess you could say we are patting ourselves on the back. But all of us do a lot for the betterment of our trails and forests and we should be proud of that.

Planning is moving along, and I think we'll be ready when the time comes, so mark your calendar and make plans to visit the Central Valley next spring to enjoy the camaraderie, contests, and – maybe - interesting classes. Who knows, you may learn something new.

Any questions, call me, Lloyd Erlandson, General Chair at (209) 761-3942



2026 RENDEZVOUS THOUGHTS

By Michael King

Greetings, faithful Backcountry Horsemen members!

As you may have heard by now, Rendezvous 2026 will be returning to the Diamond Bar Arena in Ceres, California (just west of Highway 99 between Modesto and Turlock) in March 2026.

Ceres, being in central California, makes access from northern, southern or the coastal areas of California very convenient. The Rendezvous venue, Diamond Bar Arena, nestled in the middle of quiet almond orchards, is a location with lots of room in which everyone can relax. By Rendezvous time the almond blossoming period will be over, and the trees will be leafing out with new foliage, giving everyone a sense of rebirth and freshness to the land.

Rendezvous is a time to reconnect with friends who may live far enough away so that we don't get the opportunity to meet up regularly. That alone is a great reason to plan to attend. Sitting around the campfire on Saturday after dinner is an ideal opportunity to catch up with old friends. Bring a friend and/or a prospective member with you so they can see what BCHC is all about.

Now, here are some thoughts and observations. Rendezvous provides all of us a tremendous opportunity to hear what other BCHC units in California are doing to keep the back country and even the public front country lands open and accessible to all. You may discover some other unit has a great idea that your unit might incorporate into its activities. Come and participate, we really want to see you attend. You will be glad you did.

BCHC, each unit's parent organization, has annual expenses that need to be met to reliably function. Rendezvous is the only fundraising opportunity for BCHC, and your attendance and participation is vital to the success of our statewide financial well-being.

We realize that everyday living expenses are going up for every household, and that attending Rendezvous requires spending household resources. But it is an investment well worth the outlay to protect our right and ability to access and use local, state, and national public lands. Planning, by socking away funds each month, helps with the affordability six months from now. I must do that in my own household, so I don't find myself in a cash crunch when my trip is planned!

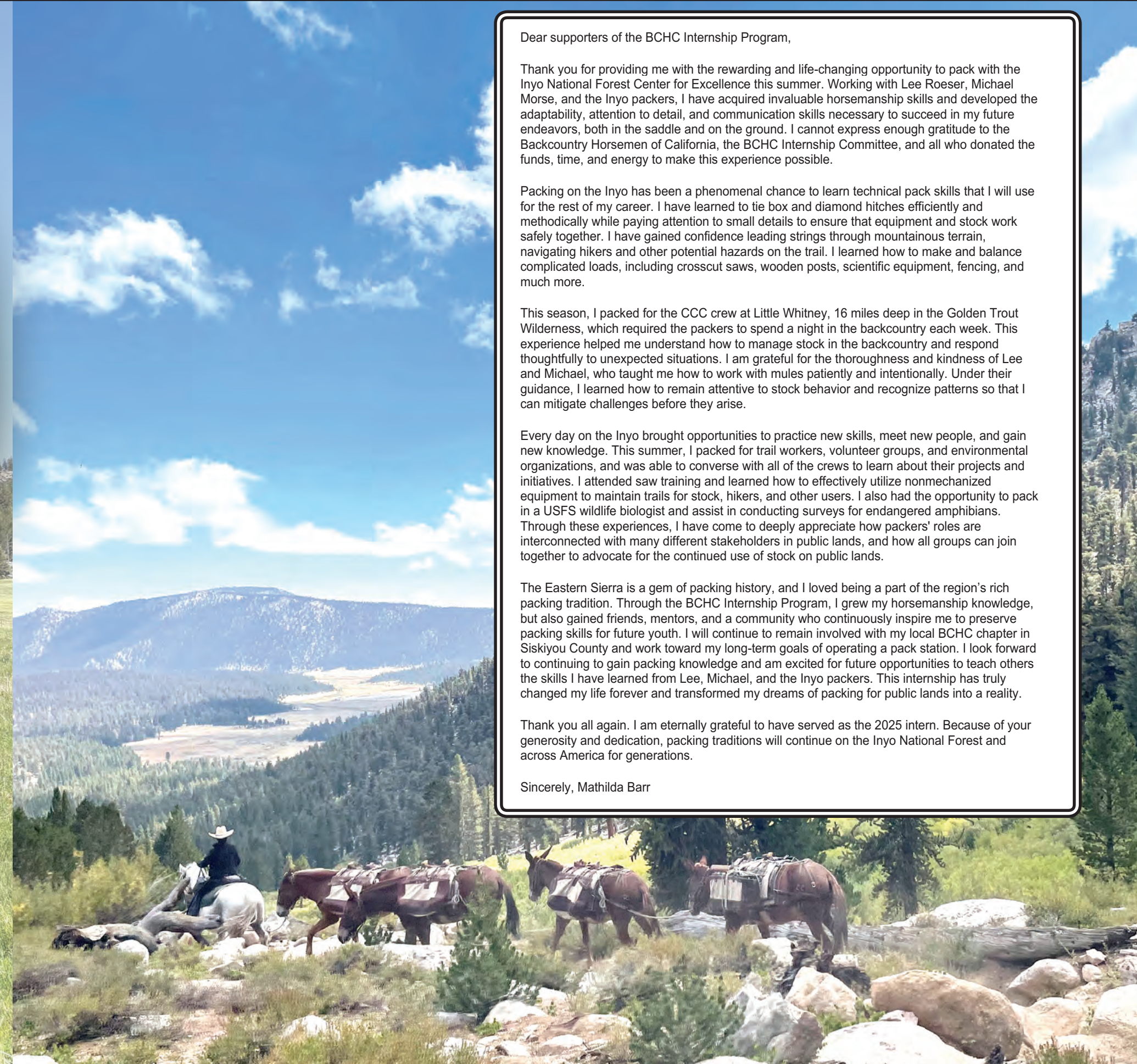
Sometimes life requirements and obligations get in the way of something we want to do. If, for some reason, Rendezvous attendance will not work for you next spring, please consider contributing to 'BCHC, 2026 Rendezvous' to help build the BCHC treasury. It would be greatly appreciated! Your contribution checks may be sent to Lynn Joiner, BCHC Treasurer, 16347 Stephenie Rd., Bakersfield, CA 93314.

Finally, here is one last area where every person and unit in California can help, even from afar. Securing sponsors and business advertising in the program book will help cover expenses and make the Rendezvous profitable. Rendezvous is a statewide event and business sponsorships and ads in the program booklet will be seen by potential customers all up and down the state.

Sponsorship and advertising forms are available by asking for them. Contact Lloyd Erlandson by email at lloyd.erlandson0@gmail.com or by telephone at (209) 761-3942 and he will forward the forms to you. Your assistance in this effort, either by a unit or an individual, would be tremendously appreciated!

Ceres or bust! We look forward to seeing you all next March at Rendezvous. Remember, volunteerism and participation is our strength.

THANK YOU FROM BCHC'S 2025 INTERN



Dear supporters of the BCHC Internship Program,

Thank you for providing me with the rewarding and life-changing opportunity to pack with the Inyo National Forest Center for Excellence this summer. Working with Lee Roeser, Michael Morse, and the Inyo packers, I have acquired invaluable horsemanship skills and developed the adaptability, attention to detail, and communication skills necessary to succeed in my future endeavors, both in the saddle and on the ground. I cannot express enough gratitude to the Backcountry Horsemen of California, the BCHC Internship Committee, and all who donated the funds, time, and energy to make this experience possible.

Packing on the Inyo has been a phenomenal chance to learn technical pack skills that I will use for the rest of my career. I have learned to tie box and diamond hitches efficiently and methodically while paying attention to small details to ensure that equipment and stock work safely together. I have gained confidence leading strings through mountainous terrain, navigating hikers and other potential hazards on the trail. I learned how to make and balance complicated loads, including crosscut saws, wooden posts, scientific equipment, fencing, and much more.

This season, I packed for the CCC crew at Little Whitney, 16 miles deep in the Golden Trout Wilderness, which required the packers to spend a night in the backcountry each week. This experience helped me understand how to manage stock in the backcountry and respond thoughtfully to unexpected situations. I am grateful for the thoroughness and kindness of Lee and Michael, who taught me how to work with mules patiently and intentionally. Under their guidance, I learned how to remain attentive to stock behavior and recognize patterns so that I can mitigate challenges before they arise.

Every day on the Inyo brought opportunities to practice new skills, meet new people, and gain new knowledge. This summer, I packed for trail workers, volunteer groups, and environmental organizations, and was able to converse with all of the crews to learn about their projects and initiatives. I attended saw training and learned how to effectively utilize nonmechanized equipment to maintain trails for stock, hikers, and other users. I also had the opportunity to pack in a USFS wildlife biologist and assist in conducting surveys for endangered amphibians. Through these experiences, I have come to deeply appreciate how packers' roles are interconnected with many different stakeholders in public lands, and how all groups can join together to advocate for the continued use of stock on public lands.

The Eastern Sierra is a gem of packing history, and I loved being a part of the region's rich packing tradition. Through the BCHC Internship Program, I grew my horsemanship knowledge, but also gained friends, mentors, and a community who continuously inspire me to preserve packing skills for future youth. I will continue to remain involved with my local BCHC chapter in Siskiyou County and work toward my long-term goals of operating a pack station. I look forward to continuing to gain packing knowledge and am excited for future opportunities to teach others the skills I have learned from Lee, Michael, and the Inyo packers. This internship has truly changed my life forever and transformed my dreams of packing for public lands into a reality.

Thank you all again. I am eternally grateful to have served as the 2025 intern. Because of your generosity and dedication, packing traditions will continue on the Inyo National Forest and across America for generations.

Sincerely, Mathilda Barr

UNIT NEWS

REDWOOD UNIT:

TRAIL CLEARING TURNED FIRE EVACUATION: CLOSE CALL IN THE MARBLE MOUNTAINS

By Dave Pritchard, President

On August 26, a small group of five Redwood Unit members with five rigs decided to go up to the Marble Mountains to do a little trail clearing. A few of us planned to pack in for a few days. The last of the group got up there about 1:30 in the afternoon, after a four-hour drive. We unloaded the animals and unhooked. The other group had arrived earlier in the day, was already set up and had gone to check water systems.

When everyone was back at camp, we settled down for a cocktail and were listening to the thunder and a little rain. After dinner – about 7:30 - we were still sitting around when a couple of hunters drove up and asked us about a fire. “What fire?” we asked. We walked up the road 100 yards, looked down the mountain and saw the fire burning. It had been started by a lightning strike. It wasn’t there earlier when we came up the mountain. We decided to leave ASAP, since fire burns uphill quite quickly. By 8:30 we were all hooked up again, animals loaded and ready to leave. On the way out we saw a second fire, also started by lightning, burning right next to the road. It was a 9-hour day of driving (for a few it was a 12-hour day) but we all got home safely.

By September 30, the Dillon Fire had burned almost 12,000 acres and was 90% contained. Firefighting efforts were challenged by the steep and rugged terrain, but containment was achieved through a combination of ground crews and air support. By September 30 the fire was 90% contained. No structures had burned as but the fire led to evacuation orders and warnings, road closures, and closures of recreation sites for public safety.



Editor's Note: The orange-yellow sky in this photo is much more dramatic in color!

MID VALLEY UNIT:



COOKING FOR A CAUSE: DUTCH OVEN DELIGHTS RAISE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

By Terri Arington and Kathy Zumbrunn

For many years the Tuolumne County Farm Bureau in Sonora, California, has held its Annual BBQ and Auction Fundraiser at Hurst Ranch, a local feed and supply store combined with wedding/event venue in nearby Jamestown. The setting is amazing - shaded lawn areas, a pond complete with ducks and geese, and a miniature train with rides for young and old. We also hold silent and live auctions with donated items ranging from loads of road base to handcrafted gifts, artwork, and local ag products.

Sonora is a small rural county in the Mother Lode foothills’ Gold Country. For several years Mid Valley Unit Dutch Oven Cooks have been called upon to prepare delectable desserts and they never disappoint in preparing creations for all to devour. The Dutch oven desserts are a main attraction for our event.

This fundraiser is the Farm Bureau’s main way of securing revenue to support the local high school’s scholarship program and other events the Farm Bureau puts on to educate the public of the importance of agriculture. If you live in a house, wear clothes, and consume food, you are directly dependent on agricultural production.

Mid Valley Unit members generously contribute their time, ingredients, and enthusiasm, even in the sweltering heat of late July.

This year we were blessed with some beautiful weather for Hurst Ranch fundraiser. The weather was cooler than usual (not 105 degrees!) and there was a nice breeze. I think this was the best year for our Dutch oven cooking!

See **MID VALLEY**, continued on Page 17

UNIT NEWS

MID VALLEY, continued from Page 16

Thanks to the fabulous Mid Valley Unit Dutch oven chefs, we had some really great desserts to serve to the hungry crowd. All in all, we had 12 Dutch ovens giving off mouth-watering aromas! Our chefs were: Susan and Lloyd Erlandson (Apple Caramel Cobbler and Double Hot Fudge Pudding Cake), Vicki Morales (Mixed Berry Cobbler), Jerrie Ann Thomas and Larry Souza (Lemon Dump Cake), Roy Jones (Sugar Free Yellow Cake with Chocolate Frosting and German Chocolate Cake), Carl and Julie Perry (Apricot Cobbler and Apricot Pineapple Cobbler), Cathy and Doug Dollarhide (Apple Caramel Cobbler), Stephanie Stott (Chocolate Dump Cake), Ashley and Garrett Dollarhide (Peach Cobbler) and Kathy Zumbrunn (Pineapple Angel Food Cake). Plus, Terri Arrington brought three apple cobblers from the famous Cover's Apple Ranch, and it's a good thing she did! The crowd was a lot bigger than we anticipated and our Dutch oven desserts were gone before the hungry crowd was! Thankfully, Terri was able to feed the rest of the group with the yummy apple cobbler!

All in all, it was a wonderful evening. We were able to cook and visit and not be miserable in the heat! Tuolumne County Farm Bureau is extremely grateful for this amazing group of people, they never disappoint us, and we consider them our friends and neighbors. Thank you, Backcountry Horsemen!

MANZANITA RIDERS UNIT: REGULAR GET-IN-SHAPE RIDES

By Terry Jorgensen

It seems the summer heat has started to loosen its grip on Southern California, finally! Manzanita Riders hit the trail to get us and our trusty horses back in shape. The unit hosts two rides per month, the second Tuesday and the fourth Saturday. This is to accommodate folks who still work during the week and those who may prefer the smaller group on Tuesdays.

This ride was in our local mountains at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. The park has more than 100 miles of trails for multiple user groups within it's 26,000 acres of public land. There's a group horse camp, Los Vaqueros, and an individual camp at Green Valley where BCHC has done trail work for many years.



LOS PADRES UNIT:



TIE RAIL INSTALLED - NO MORE ROPE HOLDING!

By Shirley Rasmussen

Sapwi boat-in campground at Santa Margarita Lake (SML) is a preferred destination of mine. I appreciate the additional mileage provided by the picturesque single-track trail and prefer to take my breaks there, bypassing Khus Campground. I have always envisioned a safe, designated area to secure my horse, but, instead, have been constrained to holding onto his lead rope and having my lunch snorted on!

For this reason, I proposed the tie rail project for Los Padres Unit and received strong endorsement from the board, unit members, and Tim Faes, SML Park Ranger.

John Gleason was instrumental in coordinating the events line-up with Jeremiah Hanson, Park Ranger, and boat skipper.

Cal Coast made a generous donation of the pipe, and Keith Bankston lent his expertise to do the welding.



UNIT NEWS

REDWOOD UNIT:

POKER, PULLED PORK AND PERFECT WEATHER

By David Pritchard, President

September 26-28, 2025, the Redwood Unit held their annual membership ride and campout at Humboldt Redwoods State Park at Cuneo Creek horse camp. We had a great turnout for the weekend. Since I have been trying as president to get more members to attend meetings, I thought what a great chance to have a monthly meeting Friday night after everyone had set up camp. It went great. I love the regular members who attend almost every meeting, but it was nice to see new faces, too.

Saturday night the unit supplied Matt Giacomini's delicious pulled pork and members provided potluck items around the main course. After dinner everyone opened four envelopes containing five playing cards from a poker ride earlier in the day. The winner, Charlotte Beyea riding her beautiful Donkey, won a \$25 gift card from Renner Petroleum with three aces. Afterward there were cornhole and horseshoes games.

It was a beautiful weekend with many members paying their dues for the year. The weather was absolutely perfect (however, not for those staying through the week who had three days of rain off and on!)



SHASTA TRINITY UNIT:



A SUMMER OF COLLABORATION

Submitted by Mike LaRue, President

The weather is cooler, and we have finally had several rain showers. We have also seen an end to our packing trips this year. Hopefully, the summer heat is over. We have had a crew in the mountains every week since May. The number of trails we have cleared and the number of trees we have removed from those trails is staggering. This great result can only be contributed to the hard work of our unit members, to whom I say, "I salute you."

Our members aren't the only ones who work hard to keep our wilderness trails open. The Shasta Trinity Unit has made a very strong effort to unite and work with the following BCHC units: TOP OF THE STATE, HIGH COUNTRY, and REDWOOD. Because of these collaborations, we have seen an inordinate surge in campground work and corral clean up and repair.

These BCHC units aren't the only crews we have been working beside. Our unit has formed strong alliances with groups such as the Big Foot Trail Alliance, the Ascend Wilderness Experience, the U.S. Forest Service, Sierra Buttes Trail Stewards, and the California Conservation Corp. Without working together, we would not have been able to accomplish as much trail maintenance and clearing as we did this year. To all these groups, we can only give a GREAT BIG THANK YOU for your friendship and willingness to work together toward our common goals. I hope these partnerships continue. See you all on the trail next year.



UNIT NEWS

REDSHANK RIDERS UNIT:
EQUINE FIRE EVACUATION CLINIC

By Tina Frey, Riverside County Sherriff Mounted Posse

Saturday, September 20, the Redshank Riders Unit of Backcountry Horsemen of California presented an Equine Evacuation Planning Clinic. Members from the Riverside County Sheriff Mounted Posse, Hemet Station, attended this excellent and highly informative event.

Stacy Kuhns led the session with an overview on how to prepare for fires and other emergencies. She challenged us to evaluate whether we truly have the resources and emergency plans in place to protect our homes, families, and animals should a fire occur. Stacy also emphasized the importance of having a Plan B - a backup plan for when we might be out of town.

One of the most valuable takeaways was ensuring that every horse can load safely into a trailer, that halters are readily available, and that emergency contact information for both horse and owner is clearly posted. Stacy also discussed evacuation procedures for other animals such as dogs, cats, goats, and pigs.

Jack Peckham followed with an overview of the EquiSafe Fire Blanket, his own emergency plans, and additional resources for preparedness. He also discussed critical fire prevention measures such as tree trimming, grass height management, and maintaining clearance around barns and homes.

The clinic concluded with information on useful products from Equestri-Safe, including horse identification tags, stall tags, reflective gear, fireproof paint, and other safety tools.

Two additional guest speakers - one from RivCo Ready and another from Animal Control -shared valuable insights. RivCo Ready introduced a new phone app that provides alerts when a fire is in your area, along with educational materials on fire safety for people and animals. Animal

Control discussed practical items to have on hand during an evacuation, such as crates for dogs and cats, and shaker paddles or hog panels for livestock like pigs and chickens.

Ultimately, the key message was clear: **Have a plan, have a backup plan, and have the necessary resources ready before an emergency happens.** Many of our Posse members have assisted with animal rescues for years, yet realized we hadn't fully applied that same preparedness mindset to our own situations. We all left the clinic with valuable knowledge and a renewed commitment to readiness.

Equestri-Safe's motto says it best: *"You may not think you need to be prepared—until you do."*

A powerful reminder for all of us living in high fire-risk areas.

As Backcountry Horsemen we teach others. This was a fun presentation, and everyone walked away with a little more than they arrived with. ~ Stacy Kuhns, BCHC





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UNIT NEWS

ANTELOPE VALLEY UNIT:

BLUE JEANS AND COUNTRY DREAMS

September 20 parade transcript submitted by Mike Gillett, President

Well, well, well, looky here! Here comes the Backcountry Horsemen of California, Antelope Valley Unit!

The Backcountry Horsemen of California is a group of dedicated men and women working to preserve the historic use of trails in the backcountry with recreational pack and saddle stock. They educate their members to be “Gentle Users” of the land and carry out this tradition in modern times to ensure use of these public lands for generations to come.

Here we have members of the unit mounted, some with their “strings” of mules, ready to head out to the country to camp and have a fun, relaxing time. Of course, they come with their BLUE JEANS on! The string of five, led by Jeff Rankin is made up of Frisbee, Spanky, Chicken Coop, Doc, and Daisy Duke. Mike Gillette, the group’s president, leads his mules, Maddie and Roxy.

THEN, there is TACO! TACO is a miniature donkey, and he has his very own pack saddle, AND his very own personality!! Hope you get to meet TACO – he is too cute!

Let’s have a hand for these beautiful animals and the members of the Backcountry Horsemen of California – Antelope Valley Unit!



UNIT NEWS

SEQUOIA UNIT: AFTER THE FIRE

Submitted by Jamie Wilson, President

The saying is true, “You don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone.” Or until part of it burns down and you realize how easily it all could’ve been lost. After the Castle Fire became the SQF Complex fire in the fall of 2020 and roared through the Golden Trout Wilderness and the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument, the question on everyone’s mind in the BCHC Sequoia Unit was, “Did the Trout Meadow cabin survive the fire?” It was several days before we could confirm the reports we had received from multiple sources that yes, the cabin had survived the fire.

While we were saddened to learn that many historic structures were lost in the fire, we were relieved that the Trout Meadow cabin had survived. For over 20 years, the Sequoia Unit has been maintaining the cabin and its public and administrative pastures and staffing it during the summer and fall to assist hikers and horse packers in the Golden Trout Wilderness. As a Forest Service Guard Station, the cabin, thought to be built around 1912, has long been a landmark on the historic Jordan Trail that once crossed the Sierra between Visalia and Olancho. When decommissioned as a seasonal residence for backcountry rangers, the cabin was “adopted” by Ray Longley, a founding member of the High Sierra Stock Users. Through an agreement with the Sequoia National Forest, Ray kept the pasture fences repaired and staffed the cabin almost every weekend for many years with the help of his friends and family. When the work became too much for 80-something Ray, the Sequoia BCHC Unit stepped in and continues to maintain the facility in partnership with the Sequoia National Forest.

All this history was foremost in our minds as we began working with the Forest Service to assess the damage to the site. Members rode in while stumps were still smoldering to find the pasture fences and corral had been severely burned, the outhouses were piles of ash, and there was a pile of tool blades and burnt bolts where the small tool shed had stood. But the crown jewel of the site was untouched, with its shake roof and walls, largely due to the cleared area around the cabin and the hitching rail. Trail camera footage of the actual fire showed the fire approaching from the meadow and going around the cabin, scorching the trees but sparing the structure. Luckily, members had been staffing the cabin just two weeks before the fire and had raked the dirt clean around the cabin. Sometimes small tasks work small miracles!

Then began the long road of planning, making equipment lists, and packing in new tools. It didn’t help that Covid-19 restrictions made it difficult to meet with Forest Service personnel, and atmospheric rivers dumped rain and snow on the roads and trails we used to access the wilderness. We finally began rebuilding the fence in the public pasture in the summer of 2023, and completed it this past summer. It’s not a lot of fun to dig post holes and string wire, but working near a beautiful meadow with a babbling brook does have its good

points. Several members came in multiple times and put blisters on top of blisters to get the pasture restored. Working in the wilderness means everything is done by hand, with nothing but hand-powered tools, and fence-builders get really hungry, so some of the members came along to feed the volunteers. Thankfully, the owners of the adjoining private property in the meadow graciously allowed us to use their stock pastures for our animals. That allowed us to spend all our time on fence construction.

Five years after the fire, it was very satisfying to be able to report that the Trout Meadow Public Pasture was complete and useable. The next phase of the project is to replace one of the outhouses at the site. We have the walls built and plan to put the outhouse together next summer. This winter we are planning to work on a tool shed and assemble the fencing materials to repair the administrative pasture fence. It’s safe to say that there will be plenty of work projects at Trout Meadow for the next few years.

As much as we have always cherished and appreciated this cabin, we value it so much more now that we came so close to losing it. The peripheral things can be replaced, but the charm and character of the hand-hewn beams and the cast iron stove are one-of-a-kind. Every time the flag is raised on the Ponderosa-log flagpole, we know we are carrying on a tradition of service and preservation on public lands. We appreciate the Sequoia National Forest for allowing us to continue these traditions, and to protect the Trout Meadow Guard Station for another century.



UNIT NEWS

CALIFORNIA TRAILS & GREENWAYS CONFERENCE APRIL 14-17, 2026, AT THE SAN RAMON MARRIOTT

By Michael Murphy, former President North Bay Unit, Wilderness Rider, BCHA National Director, Environmental Equine Consultant, and Realtor

I was invited to attend the planning meeting of the 2026 California Trails & Greenways Conference after visiting a trail update at Trione-Annadel State Park in Santa Rosa. This park is 5,000 acres donated by Henry Trione, a wealthy equestrian, polo player and trail rider. I was shocked when the rangers' survey showed that equestrian use in the park was calculated to be .5%! I asked when this survey was conducted and they said last week! Well, I said that equestrian use has diminished since e-bikes have taken over the park. The ranger said e-bikes are not legal in the park, but it was difficult to enforce.

After complaining about e-Bikes in the State Park, I got an invitation to the planning of next year's Trails & Greenways Conference. The room had no cowboy hats except mine. All cycling enthusiasts. When it was my time to introduce myself, I said that I am keeping my hat on to remind all the cyclists in the room that horseback riding is still an active part of outdoor trail activities.

The mission of the now-40-year-old California Trails & Greenways Conference is to inspire recreational trail stewardship. Learn more about this at: www.californiatrailconference.org.

We horse-loving outdoor enthusiasts need to be heard. It is essential that we make our presence known. Proposals for half-day or day-long hands-on workshops at the conference are due **October 31, 2025**. Proposals for sessions are due **December 5, 2025**.

Here are the proposed conference themes discussed at the planning meeting:

Together on the Trail: Access, Respect, Stewardship
Common Ground: Trails for All
Trails we Share and the Futures we Build
One Trail, Many Users: Challenges, Collaboration & Change

I like the Common Ground one. I have volunteered to do a "Leave No Trace" workshop and the group would love to see a packing demonstration. As a BCHA National Director representing BCHC for years, I think it's time to share the good work we do with the public. **Our voices and presence at these events is essential.** Please get involved! **The trails in our state need the horses.**

SIERRA FREEPACKERS UNIT: WHEN TRAILS CROSS: MEETING ABRAM AT CLOVER MEADOW

By Denise Robinson, Sierra Freepackers Unit

During my summer at Clover Meadow, I continued my hosting duties for the Bass Lake Ranger District. I was stationed in the meadow corner this summer due a tree falling on the Ranger Office last winter and it not allowed to be used. We had set up the kiosk near the office with some information related to the area. When visitors lingered around the abandoned office I would approach to assist with additional information; campground information; open trails, water sources and sometimes directions.



During the latter part of July my BCHC unit, Sierra Freepackers, gathered and camped to do some trail clearing. The California Riding and Hiking Trail passes through Clover Meadow going to the Fernandez Trailhead. Clearing and reestablishing this section of trail was our task. On the last day of work we encountered Abram, a young man hiking by. Inviting him in to rest, there were questions about where he came from and where he was headed. We shared our dinner meal and campfire. Abram shared with us that he was on his way to Glacier Point in Yosemite coming from Mt. Whitney, travelling the Theodore Solomons Trail. He would be returning to Mt. Whitney on the same route. He called it a "yoyo" trip. Abram had travelled from his home state of Missouri to hike this trail. He had a return plane ticket for home in mid-September.

Abram is a very interesting fella. Visiting his website at ABRAMWASHERE.com he has a long list of all his travels including photos. He has hiked many trails in California, especially in the high Sierra but I believe this was his first time on the Theodore Solomons Trail. I asked of the trail conditions - the burned areas particularly were difficult with lots of dead and down trees and overgrowth adding to the challenge. I would say Abram was pretty successful, considering. I think it's in his blood as he mentioned he is a descendant of Daniel Boone's brother Samuel.

While stopping at my camp Abram expressed that his backpack was becoming uncomfortable since it was one from his youth. Because there is cell service at Clover Meadow, he was able to purchase a new backpack that he had express delivered to my home address. So, while he continued to Glacier Point to pick up his resupply and come back through Clover Meadow, I had gone home for my own resupply and received delivery of his "new" backpack. He came back into camp the evening of my return, so he had the better fitting backpack for the remainder of his trip. I mailed his other backpack to his home.

I really enjoy meeting many interesting people during my summers acting as a "host" for the forest; some just stand out and leave a cool impression!

UNIT NEWS

SHASTA TRINITY UNIT: TEENS, TRAIL CREWS, AND TOUGH WORK IN THE TRINITY ALPS

Submitted by Sam Burrows

In 2023, the lightning strike Deep Fire burned in the Stuart Fork basin and, for the most part, was stopped at the Stuart Fork Trail. From the trailhead to Morris Meadows is a little over 10 miles. Emerald Lake is 4 miles past Morris Meadows.

In 2024, members of Shasta Trinity Unit cleared 16 logs off the Stuart Fork Trail in two days.

The winter of 2024/2025 brought heavy rains and extreme winds. We got reports that the trail was impassable because there were so many logs down; many of them damaged by the 2023 Deep Fire.

Early last summer, we spent 12 days cutting over 120 logs out of the trail to Emerald Lake. This was all done with crosscut saws and rock bars along with a *lot* of people power!

There is no feed for stock for the first 10 miles of the Stuart Fork trail, so we had to pack 450 lbs. of feed for our stock along with tools to do trail work. (Three trips x four days each trip.). We were a diverse group: Larry Shuman, Sam Burrows, Axel Drake (a 15- year-old Board member of Shasta Trinity Unit); Olivia Estrada (another 15-year-old member of the unit) and several USFS personnel who joined us in between assignments (some of them “volunteered” their time to help us get this trail open and their help was essential).

In the process of clearing the logs we discovered that a 30-foot section of the trail had been destroyed by an avalanche/rockslide approximately ½-mile below Emerald Lake.

At end of July we hosted the Catered Pack Trip, won by Kelly Rowell (Mother Lode Unit) in a BCHC raffle. Kelly and her sister Stacey Rowell along with Larry Shuman, Paul Archer and Sam Burrows packed into Morris Meadows for a four-day/three-night stay. Good company, good food and beautiful scenery!

During the trip, we rode to the rockslide and tied our stock off the trail. The ladies hiked past the rockslide to explore Emerald and Sapphire Lakes. Larry, Paul, and Sam went to work on the rockslide with rock bars and a polaski, moving over 3 tons of boulders, rocks, and gravel to repair the trail.

The Stuart Fork Log Out was *just the beginning* of very busy and productive summer!



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

**We look forward
to meeting you!**

**The following 41 new members joined BCHC from
7/17/2025 through 10/13/2025**

Antelope Valley	Dana Pope
Eastern Sierra	Laura Fullilove-Hill & Thom Hill
High Country	Jessica, David, Ryan & Emily Burns
High Sierra	Joshua Cropper & Nicole Rolison
	Shealynn Lee
	Makayla Sa
Mid Valley	Vicki Gilton
Mother Lode	Roni Jennings
	Kathryn Krahn & Jeffrey Willingham
	Phil & Judy Morris
	Laurel Rhodes
North Bay	Dana Adams & Jonny Huss
	Katherine & Amy Apodaca
	Angelina Beck
	Katie & John Charlson
	Michelle Cleverdon
	Darlene Elmore
	Rachel Goyette
	Hilary Hansen
	Elizabeth "Calamity" Paul
	Cheryl & Micah Phillips
	Ali & John Sagaria
	Bill Tittle & Lisa Apodaca
	Jordan Wathen
Redshank Riders	Morgan & Jupiter Bentley
	Gina Cox
	Sydney & Eric Najduch
Redwood	Shari Naylor
San Joaquin Sierra	Kent Kinney
	Jamielyn & Kristofer Shwetzter
Santa Ana River	Roni Hicks
	Jeanne Sesky
Sequoia	Jessica Black
Shasta Trinity	Mark Budke & Ann Captan
	Stephenie Gregory
Sutter Buttes	Sasha Hadcock
Top of the State	Pam & Chance Baiza
	Mathilda Barr
	Craig Coggins
	Aysha & Eric Falconer
	Brian, Charley & Wylie Hayes

**WOW! 13 new members!
Way to go, North Bay Unit!**

WHY JOIN BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN OF CALIFORNIA?

As a member, you'll:

- Get to participate in state and unit activities
- Learn valuable backcountry skills and outdoor ethics
- Gain new friends from among our wonderful members
- Receive the BCHC newsletter
- Be kept up to date on public lands issues

...and more!

Even if you don't ride or aren't an active member, your dues contribute to our cause! You'll be helping pay for work projects, educational materials, training and insurances. Help support our efforts to keep trails open to stock users on public lands!

TO JOIN OR RENEW BY MAIL

1. Fill out the MEMBERSHIP FORM, make a copy for your records. IMPORTANT: Youth Memberships MUST also print, sign, and mail these forms. Youth memberships will NOT be valid until the forms are received.

2. Mail the completed form(s) and check* to:

Chip Herzig
BCHC Membership
1280 State Rte 208
Yerington, NV 89447

*Please make checks payable to
Backcountry Horsemen of California

TO JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE

1. Fill out the ONLINE MEMBERSHIP FORM, save it and print a copy for your records.

2. Submit the online form. A copy will be sent to Chip Herzig, VP of Membership. IMPORTANT: Youth Memberships MUST also print, sign, and mail these forms. Youth memberships will NOT be valid until the forms are received.

3. Pay with your Paypal

Recognition of Special Individuals

Benefactor funds are used in a variety of ways to support BCHC’s Public Lands activities. Uses of Benefactor funds may include but are not limited to hiring consultants to perform in-depth reviews, financing special studies and reports, and reducing out-of-pocket travel expenses for those who testify at state and federal hearings.

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS

7/17/2025 through 10/13/2025

BENEFACTOR (\$100)

Antelope Valley	Rayen Richmond
Eastern Sierra	Craig London
	Troy Patton
High Country	Lorene Guffey
High Sierra	Ruth Gerson
	Nancy Hamill
	Trish Pendegraft
Kern Sierra	Mylon Filkins, DVM
	Lynn Joiner
	Larry Mumford
	Roger Whitaker
Los Padres	Kaye Bruns
	Robin Cederlof
	William Chaides
	Eve Devine
	Laurie Henry
	Susie Thielmann
Manzanita Riders	Patricia Achilly
Mid Valley	Tony Alamo
	Jay Barnes
	Gary A. Cain
	Carol Jo Hargreaves
	Rian Hudson
	Jennifer Marshall
	John V. Marshall
	MID VALLEY UNIT
	John Schaapman
Mother Lode	Tom Cooper
	Hetty Dutra
	Donna Jones Furlow
	Helen McDermott
	Annabelle Toothaker
	Stephanie Williams
North Bay	Lynn Cominsky
	Tim Holliday
Redwood	Gary Alves
	James Biteman
	Carole & Darrel Polasek
San Joaquin Sierra	John Cunningham
	Larry Nishma, Knapp-Yosemite Trls Pk Sta

BENEFACTOR (\$100)

San Joaquin Sierra	James Laber
	Stephen Naylor
Santa Ana River	Pat Wolff
Shasta Trinity	Lori Henderson
	Levi Solada

PATRON (\$250)

Eastern Sierra	Bill Carter
	Andrea Walker
High Country	Lynn Saunders
High Sierra	Richard Cochran
	Jacob Hamstra
	Karl Pendegraft
	Sonia Shepard
Kern Sierra	Willi Coeler
Manzanita Riders	Lynda & Michael Sterns
Mid Valley	Karen Barindelli
	Lloyd Erlandson
	Dennis M. Serpa
	John Young
Sequoia	Kathryn C. Bennett
	Steve Ladrigan
	Jamie Wilson, DVM
Shasta Trinity	Doug Maxfield
	Bruce McGowan
Sutter Buttes	Kay Walters

MT. WHITNEY (\$500)

Eastern Sierra	Sarah C. Sheehan
Los Padres	Otis Calef
Mid Valley	Terri Arington
Mother Lode	Catherine McArthur
Redshank Riders	Allison Renck
Shasta Trinity	Dean Angelides

BCHC THANKS ALL
SPECIAL MEMBERS!

BCHC Units Around the State

ANTELOPE VALLEY

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Valyermo, CA 93563
www.bchc-avunit.org
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www.sierrafreepackers.com
Denise Robinson
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Facebook.com/people/Backcountry-Horsemen-of-California-Sutter-Buttes-Unit/61567898064171/
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TOP OF THE STATE

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Facebook.com/2273753019542490/posts/d41d8cd9/2686922421558879/
Michele Machado Woods
(817) 308-0258
meechele418@gmail.com

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The unit names and addresses listed here are taken directly from the 2025 Directory of State and Unit Officers. If your unit's information is incorrect, please contact this Newsletter Editor as soon as possible to report changes.

REMEMBER!

The BCHC Executive Committee no longer sends out membership renewal verification "green slips" via regular mail. Each unit president and membership chair will get their unit's data AND it will be put on the BCHC web page in the password protected section.

Questions? Membership Matters

BCHC VP of Membership is

Chip Herzig.

He will be happy to address your questions or concerns. Chip may be reached Monday through Friday.

By mail: BCHC Membership

1280 State Rt 208

Yerington, NV 89447

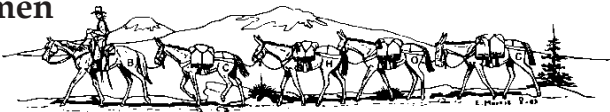
Email: BCHC_Membership@

bchcalifornia.org

Phone: (775)463-3634

Membership

Backcountry Horsemen of California



MAIL TO: BCHC
MEMBERSHIP
1280 State Rt. 208
Yerington, NV 89447

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

A Family & Youth
Oriented Organization
Release 4 2025 (11 Feb 25)

☐ New ☐ Change
☐ Renewal

PARENT UNIT AFFILIATION: (Select and CHECK a Unit as your Affiliation)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antelope Valley | <input type="checkbox"/> Los Padres | <input type="checkbox"/> Redshank Riders | <input type="checkbox"/> Sierra Freepackers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Sierra | <input type="checkbox"/> Manzanita Riders | <input type="checkbox"/> Redwood | <input type="checkbox"/> Sutter Buttes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High Country | <input type="checkbox"/> Mid Valley | <input type="checkbox"/> San Joaquín Sierra | <input type="checkbox"/> Top of the State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High Sierra | <input type="checkbox"/> Mother Lode | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Ana River | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kern River Valley | <input type="checkbox"/> North Bay | <input type="checkbox"/> Sequoia | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kern Sierra | | <input type="checkbox"/> Shasta Trinity | |

DCTR (Your Membership Number): _____

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: _____

Email Address: _____

Donation to BCHC Education Fund (Tax deductible) \$ _____ Enclosed: Check No.

Parent Unit Membership Types (Check One)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year Individual \$60 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year Family \$75 | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult (18-25 years old) \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Year Individual \$110 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Year Family \$140 | Include Date of Birth / / | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Year Individual \$160 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Year Family \$205 | | <input type="checkbox"/> Mt. Whitney \$500 |

Associate Membership: An Additional \$15 PER UNIT is added to your Parent Unit Dues
Associate Membership Unit Affiliations MAY NOT BE FOR THE SAME UNIT AS YOUR PARENT UNIT

Associate Membership for: _____ \$15/Unit
Unit Name (from above list)

Associate Membership for: _____ \$15/Unit
Unit Name (from above list)

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 with a single Local Unit.

**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.

Young Adult Memberships MUST include date of
birth on application. The year you turn 24 is the last year you
may renew under this membership.

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 -

- | | |
|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year Individual | \$60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Year Individual | \$110 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Year Individual | \$160 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year Family | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Year Family | \$140 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Year Family | \$205 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult (18-25 years old) | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mt. Whitney | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On that form, I also requested: | |
| Associate Memberships | |

My Total Remittance:-----
My Check Number: _____
Date Mailed: _____

Verifying BCHC Membership by

- 1) BCHC Unit
President's reports
- 2) BCHC Membership
VP reports
- 3) a self-addressed
stamped envelope
submitted with this
form
- 4) a valid email address

MOTHER LODGE UNIT PACKERS DO DOUBLE DUTY

Article by Lucy Badenhop; photos by Nidal Naser, Erin Greyson and Alexa Rauchfuss

Mother Lode Unit packers supported both the U.S. Forest Service and some recreational packers who had an accident. The USFS originally requested pack support for a trail crew of eight volunteers on a 5-mile one way trip from Upper Blue Lake to Summit City Canyon in the Mokelumne Wilderness Area of Eldorado National Forest. The Evergreen/Camp Irene Trail project effort being supported was successful with 6.5 miles of trail work accomplished which included 64 trees off the trails and 4 miles of brush removal.

Pack support for the trail crew was provided by MLU Crew Chief, Kevin Dollison. He was pleased with the performance of Erin Greyson and her stock, a recent addition to the MLU packer list. He was also appreciative of outrider Alexa Rauchfuss during her introduction to becoming a qualified packer. Our more experienced packer volunteers on this job were Kelly Rowell, Tim Durbin and Cordell Van Rees.

Shortly before the Pack IN on the last Sunday in July, the U.S. Forest Service reported that recreational packers had an accident on a nearby trail that required leaving their gear in the back country and walking the injured animal to safety over very challenging terrain. The two individuals were leading a string down Forestdale Divide trail then upwards to 4th of July Lake when one pack stock fell off the trail.

The U.S. Forest Service retrieved the gear to a spot near the Summit City drop site and then asked if it could be packed out on the return trip after the trail crew gear was delivered. Kevin agreed to inspect the abandoned gear and determine if his packers could accommodate the request.

Upon inspection, Kevin found the donkey-sized pack saddle and cloth panniers were transportable on just two of the five pack stock in the MLU string. The gear owners were waiting at the Blue Lake trailhead and were very appreciative of the help provided by the volunteer packers. The pack OUT on the following Sunday was comparatively uneventful.

