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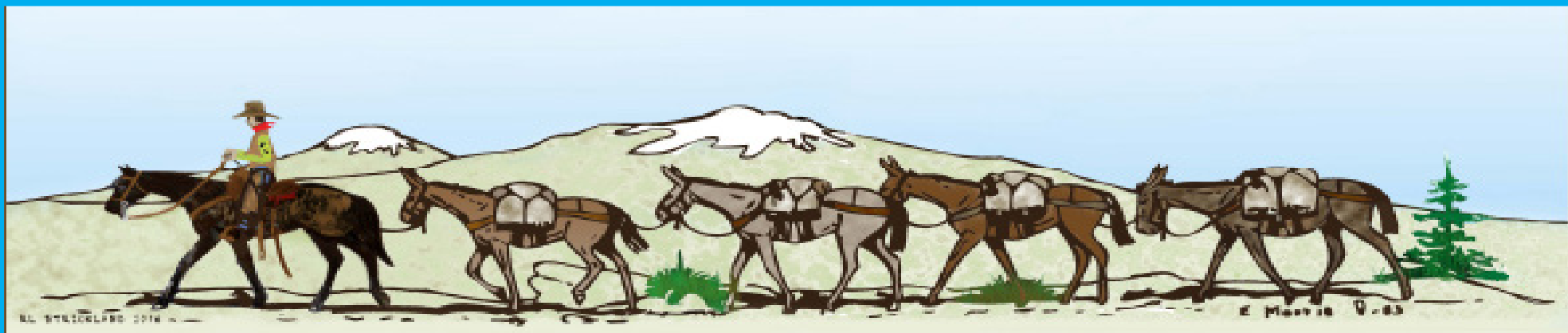
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The Backcountry News

Volume 38, Issue 2

The Official Publication of Backcountry Horsemen of California

SPRING 2026



THANK YOU, TROY AND SUSIE!

At our Rendezvous this year I missed out on a great opportunity to acknowledge two special folks devoted to BCHC, Troy and Susie Patton.

Troy was the VP of Public Lands for many years. He spent countless hours, phone calls, and emails back and forth with many public agencies finding out what was going on with California's public lands and how the state's trails and grazing lands would be affected.

Susie, as most people know, has been the lifeline to our whole state BCHC organization. She has been the first "go to" when information is needed and it took two volunteers to fill her Secretary position.

Troy and Susie remain a great asset to BCHC's local units and state with the wealth of information, experience, and contacts they have. Troy and Susie have been members of the Eastern Sierra Unit since 2012. Before moving to Olancho, California, they lived in Norco, California. They have been on the BCHC Executive Committee since 2016. They have accomplished so much for our organization.

A big thank you to Troy and Susie Patton for their many years of service, their devotion to Backcountry Horsemen of California, and the model of volunteerism they set for all of us!

Doug Dollarhide, BCHC President



The Backcountry News

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

Editor Carol Jo Hargreaves

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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.

Disclaimer: Articles and advertisements that appear in The Backcountry News do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of BCHC or its officers and members. Nor does publication of said articles and advertisements constitute endorsement of the views or of the goods or services offered therein that they may express. Accuracy of all material is the sole responsibility of the authors. BCHC is not responsible for unsolicited material of any kind.

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> | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--|--|--|
| Summer 2026 Edition | July 15, 2026 | | | |
| Fall 2026 Edition | October 15, 2026 | | | |
| Winter 2027 Edition | January 15, 2027 | | | |
| Spring 2026 Edition | April 15, 2027 | | | |

Advertising Rates per Issue: Rates effective January 2012. All ads must be paid in advance.

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

Advertising: All ads must include all fonts and images used in artwork. Ads must be at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch at the actual size used in the artwork. Mail payment to the BCHC Treasurer. Checks returned from the bank will have a \$25 return check fee. No advertising will be accepted from advertisers with outstanding balances. Liability by The Backcountry News shall not exceed the space occupied by the error. Never shall The Backcountry News be liable for any general, special or consequential damages. All claims for adjustments must be made within 30 days of the first publication of said ad.

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

In April 2026, BCHC Executive Committee members, Coordinators and Committee Chairs voted to return to using their personal email addresses to conduct BCHC business. Please refer to the list above for current email addresses.

PRESIDENT'S PAGE



**BCHC President
Doug Dollarhide**

Howdy, members, I hope this message finds you all high and dry wherever you live in the state of California. Here in Escalon, we've had tornado warnings, hail, thunder, and lightning, not to mention 1-1/8 inch of rain. Life, as well as weather, is unpredictable.

Rendezvous has come and gone and those of you that were not able to attend missed out on a grand time. Diamond Bar Arena has proven to be a super venue to hold the only fundraiser that supports BCHC for the year. There are round pens, a trail obstacle course, and plenty of stalls to keep our stock in for events. That means we

don't have to rent panels and increase the cost of our stay. There is a large, covered arena where we can have vendors, auction, and Friday and Saturday night dinners. There is also one large main arena where Steve Bauher held a clinic on one side while the Intercollegiate Packing Contests were held on the other side. There is plenty of RV parking with hook ups and plenty of area for dry camping. The cost of all of this is very affordable. So, that said, it is the southern units' turn to hold Rendezvous next year. Diamond Bar is available but would need plenty of notice if it was going to be used for 2027.

On April 14, Michael Murphy from North Bay Unit and I attended a California Trails and Greenways Symposium in San Ramon, California. The purpose of the meeting was to bring hikers, cyclists, and equestrians together to provide opportunities for education and discussion. The state and local multi-use trails are heavily used, so trail safety and maintenance was a focus. Michael lead a class on the seventh principle of Leave No Trace, "Getting Along with Fellow Park Visitors from an Equine Point of View."

At this writing, May is only three weeks away and the Interscholastic Packing teams are practicing diligently to win World Champion buckles at Bishop Mule Days. This is one of the main events that I really enjoy. There is a lot of packing competition, both fun and exciting to watch. This year is extra special because the Mule Days Committee announced BCHC will receive the Best Friend of the Packers award. This award is voted on by packers themselves. The reason BCHC was chosen is because of how we work on trails for *all* to use. BCHC is big on education; we promote Leave No Trace principles, hold pack clinics and conduct the Intern Program with Region 5 Pack Stock Center of Excellence. Some of BCHC's Executive Committee members will be riding on Mid Valley Unit member Dennis Serpa's mule drawn wagon, including Dr. Jamie Wilson, Terry Jorgensen and Cathy Dollarhide. Lynn Joiner and I will be riding in front of the wagon on horse and mule. Michael Hughes (BCHC's Immediate Past President) will ride with the One Spade Youth Packers that BCHC proudly sponsors. Anna Baglione will be riding with her commercial pack team. As you can see, BCHC is very active and represents many areas of our state.

In closing, I want to leave you with the thought of membership. BCHC's membership has dropped from 1,700 to just above 1,600 current members.

Every one of us needs to invite new folks to join our units, so they can realize how rewarding and vital it is to be a part of keeping trails and wild lands accessible to all. You don't have to have a horse, just a love and appreciation for public lands and good fresh mountain air. The fewer members BCHC has, the less effective we are with the agencies we work with. I'll get off my soapbox now until next time.

Blessings,
Doug Dollarhide, BCHC President
Proverbs 3:27-28



PLAN TO ATTEND THE 56th ANNUAL BISHOP MULE DAYS CELEBRATION WHERE BCHC WILL BE HONORED AS BEST FRIEND OF THE PACKERS

Every Memorial Day weekend since 1970 the town of Bishop has hosted its Mule Days Celebration. What began as an informal gathering of outfitters' and packers' skills tests to start off the packing season, combined with a way for the community to draw vacationers to the Owens Valley, has morphed into a fun-filled, world-class event.

The six-day Mule Days event is held on the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop, California, Tuesday through Sunday before Memorial Day. There are 14 shows featuring as many as 400 mules with their trainers, riders, and packers. Over 30,000 fans come to spectate and visit the exhibitions.

Go to Bishop and find out why they say, "Anything a good horse can do, a mule can do better!"

See muledays.org for more information.



BCHC NEWS



**BCHC Editor
Carol Jo Hargreaves**

I HAD A BLAST!

What a tremendous experience it was to attend Rendezvous 2026! I connected with so many BCHC friends that I haven't seen for years – “superman” Sam Burrows; Garry Stauber; Mike Hughes, Kammi Montanero and Barbara Riner (in person!), longtime Mid Valley Unit buddies, and MORE! Diamond Bar was the perfect venue with plenty of room for all events and convenient RV parking. My only complaint would be about the PA system in the covered arena – speakers' voices were muffled and difficult to understand.

voices were muffled and difficult to understand.

WARNING! BE AWARE OF EMAIL SCAMS! I wrote about the dangers of gift card scams in the Summer 2024 edition. It seems the number and frequency of scams increases every day. Be vigilant! None of us is immune to hackers. A good practice is to hover your cursor over the sender's email address and verify that it is correct and familiar. If not, don't open the message. Just yesterday, BCHC Treasurer Lynn Joiner asked me to help her set up a Zelle account to expedite payment for board expenses. At first, I thought the request was legitimate but then I noticed strange use of capital letters plus incorrect grammar and punctuation, so I got suspicious. I hovered my cursor over the email address and quickly saw it wasn't remotely close to Lynn's.

There are many helpful videos about scams and phishing on YouTube. If you get a phishing email or text message, report it. The information you give helps fight scammers.

- ☐ If you got a phishing email, forward it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group at reportphishing@apwg.org.
- ☐ If you got a phishing text message, forward it to SPAM (7726).
- ☐ Report the phishing attempt to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

Recognize and report! Don't let a scammer take advantage of you!

The pages of this newsletter are chockful of Rendezvous follow up information, contest results, BCHC award winners, and as many photos as I could fit in. Relax and enjoy!

P.S. Thank you, Mid Valley Unit, for the Top Hand award! What a nice surprise!

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 Co-Secretary
Cathy Dollarhide**

Hello to all units in California!

Just a note to thank all of you for supporting Backcountry Horsemen of California. This organization exists because of all the work and support that you give it. Last month was BCHC Rendezvous 2026 at Diamond Bar Arena in Ceres. This is one of BCHC's main fundraisers for the year, so this is an important event for us. I was strategically planted in the state trailer with Susie Patton (past State Secretary), where the registration was done. I can

hardly begin to explain all that Susie does and has done for BCHC. She has faithfully served in our organization for many years, and it is now time for Susie and her husband Troy (past VP of Public Lands) to retire.

Most of us don't realize what goes on “behind the scenes” to run a non-profit - the work is endless! Anna Baglione has graciously taken over the Secretary position and is doing an awesome job. I am assisting as needed but Anna is carrying the weight of the position. Much of my time is spent helping our current state President, my husband Doug, as his private secretary and technology support!

One last note, we frequently mention volunteerism because that is how BCHC exists. We always need more volunteers to help carry on the mission of BCHC as our older members are phasing out and need to be replaced. Please consider filling an upcoming vacancy on the BCHC Executive Committee so we can keep our organization going. Call Doug if you are interested at (209) 605-2403.

Take care all,
~ Cathy

Notice a change in paper and size of this edition of the Backcountry News?

Our printing company, the Manteca Bulletin, did not receive its customary paper delivery and ran out of hibrte paper. Therefore, they had to substitute regular newsprint this time. Hibrte is exceptionally durable, bright and white, whereas newsprint is soft, highly ink absorbent, and has a light gray or yellowish tone. Not only is the paper different quality this edition, it is also one-half inch shorter than our usual format. Hopefully, this situation will resolve itself before the Summer edition of the paper is printed.

Thank you for your understanding!

BCHC NEWS

MEMBERSHIP



**BCHC VP of Membership
Chip Herzig**

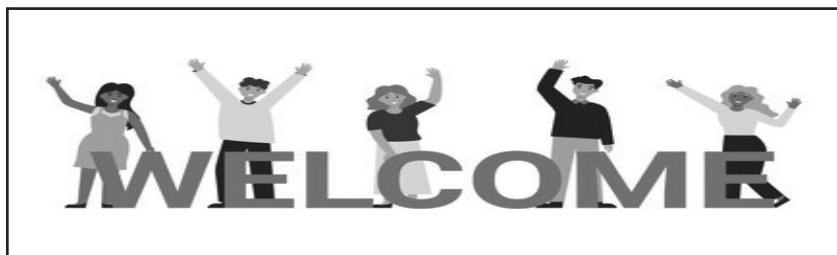
I was deeply concerned about BCHC's membership losses in December and January but the losses in those two months turned out to be a precursor of a continuing trend. As of early April, BCHC membership has continued in a downward slide to the total shown in the table at right.

Each unit should look at their losses/Expired Members and reach out to get them back into the fold. Please. If you need ideas, BCHC produced a helpful PowerPoint presentation about Membership Development and Retention. You can find the file on the BCHC website at bchcalifornia.org/Documents & Forms/Membership. Here

is a list of ideas from the presentation that you might try in your unit:

- Everyone seeks a like-minded community. Make all feel acknowledged and valued.
- Create and hand deliver or mail a "Welcome New Member Packet" to each new member.
- Contact each new member personally or by phone with a "questionnaire" to learn their individual interests, expectations, preferences to get to know them.
- Educate and explain how your BCH chapter/unit is organized and functions.
- Provide contact information for those who may have a question later.
- Keep all membership aware of planned events – social and work events.
- Personally introduce new members during a unit meeting.

Another significant impact of this loss of members is that the cost of our insurance has gone up to over \$12 per member per year. This will need to be paid by raising the deduction of the membership dues to \$6 per member. We have a standing action item from several years back where the Board agreed to pay half the insurance cost from the members' dues while the State pays the other half. So, effective immediately, the rebate to units will drop by a \$1 per member. Sorry for all this bad news.

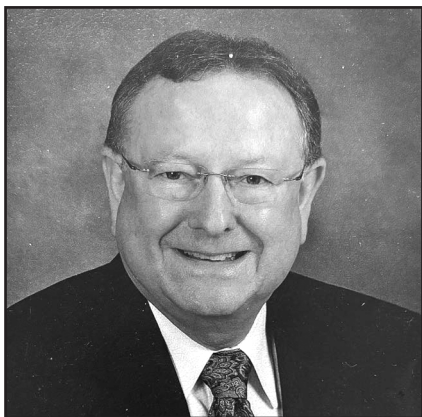


| Unit | Members |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Antelope Valley | 64 |
| Eastern Sierra | 43 |
| High Country | 40 |
| High Sierra | 82 |
| Kern River Valley | 24 |
| Kern Sierra | 40 |
| Los Padres | 101 |
| Manzanita Riders | 35 |
| Mid Valley | 297 |
| Mother Lode | 182 |
| North Bay | 90 |
| Redshank Riders | 59 |
| Redwood | 123 |
| San Joaquin Sierra | 127 |
| Santa Ana River | 52 |
| Sequoia | 41 |
| Shasta Trinity | 114 |
| Sierra Freepackers | 32 |
| Sutter Buttes | 41 |
| Top of the State | 85 |
| Totals | 1672 |

Here are some other things you might try from *memberclicks.com*:

- Reach out to lapsed members - Members lapse for a variety of reasons, but sometimes they just need a reminder that they can still rejoin your organization. Re-engaged these once-active members with a targeted campaign of email marketing, direct mailers, and/or phone calls.
- Call prospective members - Get on the phone with a list of prospective members to discuss the benefits of joining your association. This old-fashioned way of chatting can feel more personalized than other digital means, like emails or social media posts.
- New members want to feel welcomed, acknowledged, and valued. One of the best ways to do this is with a welcome program. You could:
 - Send a welcome letter, email, or card
 - Send a welcome package with everything new members need to know
 - Host a welcome event for new members
 - Spotlight new members on your website or in your newsletter
 - Give new members a chance to introduce themselves at your next meeting
- Create a recruitment committee made up of members who are enthusiastic and have great ideas. Prospective members will be much more likely to join if they hear from a peer, and recruitment committee members will enjoy a special role and a deeper connection to your unit.
- Members, both new and old, enjoy a little bit of free swag. You can offer new member items like branded gifts (pens, T-shirts, stationery, water bottles, etc., with the BCHC or your unit's logo).

PUBLIC LANDS



**VP of Public Lands
Richard (Dick) Cochran**

GETTING TO KNOW RICHARD COCHRAN, VP OF PUBLIC LANDS

I went on my first pack trip in 1949 when I was six years old. I have been going on pack trips ever since then.

Dena and I have been married for 55 years, and have two daughters, Claire and Courtney, and three grandchildren. Claire lives in San Francisco and Courtney lives in Healdsburg which is where Dena and I live. Dena rode jumping horses for

many years and collected numerous ribbons at horse shows around the state of California. Dena, Claire, and Courtney have been on numerous pack trips, and two of our three grandchildren have been on one pack trip. I am preparing the youngest granddaughter for her first pack trip.

I practiced law in Visalia, California, for 40 years at the same law firm: Ruddell, Cochran, Stanton, Smith, and Bixler. We held countless Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) High Sierra Unit meetings at my office. In the early years, Lynn Joiner attended many of those meetings as a member of the Public Lands Committee.

My father, Max Cochran, had an idea about forming an organization to represent the interests of stock users in matters related to our use of public lands. I went on numerous back country trips with my father, and whenever we encountered other stock users, he would discuss the need for such an organization. With the help of numerous other stock users, the High Sierra Stock Users' Association (HSSUA) was born. Later, after hosting Lloyd Fagerland from Montana and Ken Wilcox from Washington, both of whom were active in their state organizations, we changed the name to Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) and became part of the Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA).

I was the first chair of the BCHC Public Lands Committee. I believe I held the position for about six years. The current title of the position is Vice President of Public Lands. After we became BCHC I served as a National Director for BCHC for five years in the mid 1990's. I am not certain how I was able to support my family because I spent so much time on BCHC matters.

I served as President of my High Sierra Unit and served as chair of our unit's Public Lands Committee for numerous years until I retired from the practice of law in 2017 and moved to Healdsburg. I continue to serve on the High Sierra Unit Public Lands Committee and to participate in its meetings by phone.

I have had the pleasure of going on pack trips all over the Central Sierra

Nevada Mountains with Glenn and Sherry Dooley, Everett and Susan Welch, and my wife. These trips ended abruptly in about 1997 when, along with past BCHC President Ralph Graves, we bought a beautiful 40-acre parcel in the Sierra National Forest called Statham Meadow which is at about 8,200 feet in elevation. Half meadow and half timber, with a stream running through it, Statham Meadow is a slice of paradise. Partner Everett Welch is also a past BCHC President. We reach Statham Meadow by horseback or by hiking about five miles from the trailhead.

The first battle the HSSUA faced was a massive Back Country Management Plan (BCMP) and Stock Use and Meadow Management Plan (SU&MMP) promulgated by Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI). SEKI had been working on the plan for a very long time, and when they furnished four lengthy documents to us on March 13, 1984, the cover letter said we had until March 31, 1984, to furnish formal comments about the plan to SEKI.

We had no idea where to start. We had no idea how to comment appropriately. Our congressman secured a 30-day extension for us to comment. However, one of our Public Lands Committee members, Jack Rogers from Wasco, California, knew the Secretary of the Interior, William Clark. Secretary Clark gave us a one-year extension to comment. (It isn't always about what you know. Sometimes it is about who you know.)

Everett Welch, Charley Morgan, and I flew to Davis, California, and had a meeting with the Director of the National Parks Service, William Penn Mott, about the proposed plans (BCMP and SU&MMP). A new park superintendent, Jack Davis, was appointed, and we conveyed to him our concerns about the plans.

The BCMP and the SU&MMP had more closures, grazing restrictions, and restrictions on stock use than all previous management plans combined according to Charley Morgan, who studied the issue thoroughly. When the BCMP and SU&MMP eventually went into effect they were more palatable than when they were first published.

I have had a long journey working on public lands matters for the HSSUA and BCHC. I volunteered for this position of Vice President of Public Lands because I was afraid no one else would do it.

Right now, I do not have any specific goals in mind for the Public Lands Committee. Like new President Doug Dollarhide, I need some time in the position to get a grasp of what I feel needs to be done. I want to thank Troy Patton for his steady work over the years. BCHC could not continue and thrive without the efforts of leaders like Troy.

I am encouraged about the future of BCHC after speaking on the phone with President Dollarhide and reading about Doug and his extended family and their participation in BCHC activities. I am forever impressed with the work of the Mid Valley Unit of BCHC, and with the leaders that unit provides to BCHC.

PUBLIC LANDS

HIKE THE HILL OPPORTUNITY COMING

By Dick Cochran, VP of Public Lands

The BCHC Board of Directors is supporting a proposal originally made by BCHC 1st Vice President Jamie Wilson, DVM, to financially support a BCHC member to participate in the annual lobbying effort by BCHA in support of public lands.

Each year BCHA Director of Public Lands and Recreation, Randy Rasmussen, usually accompanied by the BCHA Chair, travels to Washington, D.C., to meet with elected officials and congressional staffers to promote the goals of BCHA.

The BCHC Board of Directors has voted twice in support of having a BCHC member participate in the BCHA Hike the Hill effort, and a committee is working to finalize the cost reimbursement package as well as criteria for participation and an application form.

Randy Rasmussen has agreed to mentor our selected candidate as well as lead the way in Washington, D.C.

The dates for the next Hike the Hill event are expected to be February 28-March 4, 2027. More information about this event will be forthcoming in the future.

“Hike the Hill” is an annual advocacy event held in Washington, D.C., in the early part of the year, that brings together trail organizations, advocates, and partners for in-person meetings with Congress and federal agency leaders (NPS, USFS and BLM). Jointly hosted by the American Hiking Society and the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS), the purpose of this event is to advocate for the sustainability and protection of America’s trails by advancing shared priorities such as trail funding, public land management, conservation, and the reauthorization of the Legacy Restoration Fund.

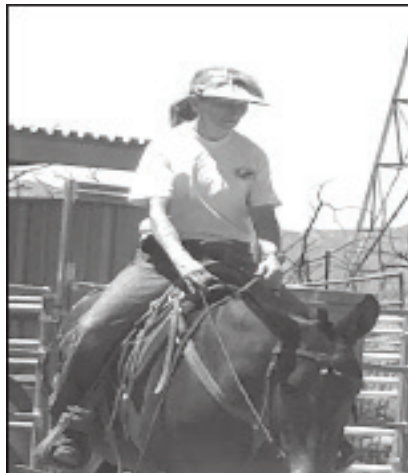
NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

Saturday, June 6, is National Trails Day. BCHA encourages you and your unit to continue raising the public visibility of BCHA nationwide by hosting your own National Trails Day event, or by joining an existing event near you.

National Trails Day (NTD) is the only nationally coordinated event designed to unite all trail users with the goal of connecting more people to trails. Each year, on the first Saturday in June, American Hiking Society (AHS) and the trails community invite Americans of all ages and abilities to find their own adventure at one of the thousands of events hosted in every state.

Event registration is now open. Go to: americanhiking.org/national-trails-day

INSURANCE



**BCHC Vice President
Jamie Wilson, DVM**

Greetings, BCHC!

Spring has sprung, and there have been a lot of events around the state. Our insurance agent has been great at getting our certificates back to us quickly so the events can be covered. To all of you who have requested certificates, you are doing a great job getting me the information needed to submit requests!

Of course, there’s always a little bad news: when our policy renewed April 1st, the cost increased. Our policy costs just over \$20,000 for the year.

That covers all the unit events and Rendezvous. At our current membership count, it costs about \$12 per member for the year. Half of the cost is paid by the State BCH general fund, and half comes out of the rebates that all units receive from their membership fees. Chip Herzig recently calculated this year’s rebate deductions for the units and sent a worksheet to all unit Presidents.

In the past three years, we have not had to pay any extra fees for coverage for specific events, but that may not be the case going forward. Recently a unit had to pay a \$50 fee for a certificate to cover a dutch oven demonstration that was open to the public. Based on comments from the underwriter, it is likely that some public events will require payment for coverage. Something to think about when a unit is budgeting an event.

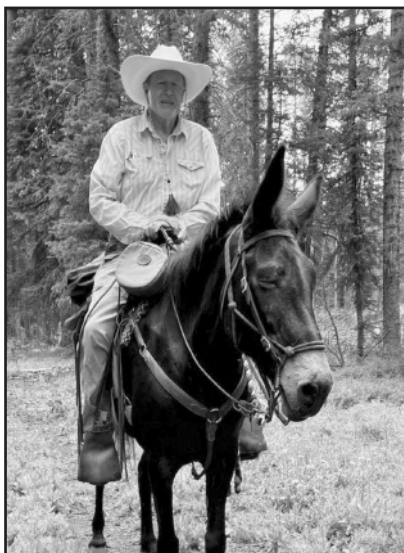
Overall, though, the news is good - easy submission, fast turnaround, and NO CLAIMS! Great job being safe! That’s what it’s all about! Keep up the good work!

WATCH FOR BCHC’S NEW WEBSITE ONLINE IN MAY

Chip Herzig and C.J. Hargreaves have been working with representatives from Societ/Partner Web, a Montreal-based website development company, to create a new, easier to update and maintain BCHC website. The online donation system has been successfully in use since late 2025; finishing touches are being put on the customized membership system, and final review of the website’s appearance and functionality will be completed before the end of April. We hope you find the modern look of BCHC’s new website appealing and appreciate its improved security, back-ups and monitoring features as well as simplification of the site’s maintenance and updating functions.

BCHC NEWS

Within the past six months, BCHC and its Los Padres Unit have lost two influential members, Richard Waller and Greg Feinberg. The following obituaries and photos were borrowed, with permission, from the Los Padres Unit newsletter.



IN MEMORY OF RICHARD WALLER

September 17, 1951 - March 8, 2026

We lost another back country friend when Richard Waller passed away suddenly March 8 at his home in New Mexico. Richard served as President of Los Padres Unit and as President of Backcountry Horsemen of California. During Richard's tenure as BCHC President, the first Strategic Plan was developed. He was an adventurous historian, horseman, sawyer, llama packer and dedicated volunteer.

Richard utilized his packing skills to support BCH partnership projects with Los Padres Forest Association and Ventana Wilderness Alliance trail crews throughout the Los Padres and other trail work efforts further afield.

In 2014-15, Richard researched, organized and led a 1,200-mile trek along the Old Spanish Trail that connects Los Angeles with Santa Fe, New Mexico. And his knowledge of trails and their histories spanned the desert southwest, with books penned about the mountains and special places of Nevada, the people of Grand Prairie, Texas, and guides to the Old Spanish Trail.

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.

REMINDER:

If you are using **PayPal** to pay for a membership that is not your own, notify the VP of Membership at time of payment. (**PayPal** does not have an option to attach a message when units or individuals pay for someone else's membership.)



IN MEMORY OF GREG FEINBERG

April 23, 1951 - October 3, 2025

Greg joined Backcountry Horsemen in 2012. He held many positions throughout the years and was President of the Los Padres Unit from 2022 until his passing. He was elected as BCHC's VP of Education, effective January 1, 2024, but did not complete his term. Many remember him as a Certified Instructor for the BCHC Sawyer Program.

Greg was a firefighter with the City of Riverside for 30 years. There he served with Task Force 6, a FEMA-affiliated urban search and rescue team composed of skilled personnel from various agencies throughout southern California. The team deployed for major disasters like earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods to perform complex rescue operations, stabilize structures, and manage incidents. Greg was deployed at 9/11 Twin Towers and Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana.

Greg loved dutch oven cooking, was a skilled fiddle player, and one of his favorite hobbies was ham radio operation. He truly loved trail riding, cutting, packing and sorting. He will be dearly missed.

MICHAEL MURPHY

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EDUCATION

BCHC STATE EDUCATION MEETING

February 7, 2026

Called to order by: Ruthie Heuer and Denise Robinson

Time: 0925

Secretary's minutes approved as printed

1st motion: Anna Baglione **2nd motion:** Lynn Joiner

OLD BUSINESS:

Rendezvous: Is coming along well. Vendors are a little slow to respond to coming, but that happened last year as well. All money and reservations need to be in by the due date to reserve your dinner slot. Dinner tickets will not be sold at the door this year.

Volunteer Hours: Hours should have been sent by the 1st of January. If you have not sent yours in, do it asap BCHA needs them. BCHC needs someone to take over the volunteer hours position.

Mule Days: There will be an outreach booth for the kids. There will be some cool hand-outs as well. The booth will be attached to the state booth. If anyone would like to help out, please let Kammi and/or Terry know.

Saw Program: We need to increase the number of cardholders. One issue that continues to come up is the financial burden. This training takes about 1 week and is covered by the person undergoing it. We need ideas on how to increase our numbers and reduce the financial burden.

Pin Program: We have new pins this year. The form for the pins will be in the Rendezvous program. Gail Inman will be there to distribute them.

Youth Program: Parents/guardians will need to be with kids at all times.

Educational clip competition: Clips were due on the 1st of February, but we only received a few, so there is still a little more time to send more in. This will be an ongoing thing, and we hope to have more next year.

Education Awards: Unit and Individual Ed. Awards nominations were due on Feb 1st.

Grants/Intern Program: 2026 pledges will need to be in by August September. Lucy is going to a different grant this year. This grant will help us be on

track to get up and running earlier. The application will be available on our website and will be a fillable form. Lucy needs to know when money has come in and who has paid. Units should either send the checks to Lucy directly or email her when they have been sent in.

Wolf Flyer: Has been sent to the BOD and will be voted on later during the general meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Leadership Training/Handbook: Training was in January. Each one had a pretty good turnout. Each President for each unit should have a physical copy, but you can also get an electronic copy on the website.

Education Steering Committee: The Co. VPs need four people to volunteer to learn how to run the Education Committee. Ruthie and Denise will be stepping down by the end of 2026. There are three spots still open; the committee had one person volunteer at the meeting.

Ideas for new educational flyers: (1) Anna has volunteered to write up an educational flyer on stock grazing, but she will need help from others to do some research and send it to her. (2) Kammi volunteered to write up a flyer for a vehicle/trailer safety checklist. Please send any research and/or thoughts to her as well. (3) If anyone has any other ideas, please email Ruthie and Denise

Master/Wilderness Rider Course: Class will be in Weaverville from April 6th to the 10th. It is now \$650. Ken, Katie, Ruthie, and Denise will be the trainers.

Meeting Adjourned @ 1152

1st Motion: Jim **2nd Motion:** Susan

MASTER LEAVE NO TRACE STOCK and WILDERNESS RIDER COURSE 2026

Backcountry Horsemen of California is the provider for the only stock course in the nation. We promote the principles of LNT throughout our educational program. This year's course was held at the historic Bowerman Barn located in the Trinity Alps where BCHC partnered with the Center of Excellence. Two instructors were BCHC Master Level II and two were USFS Master Level II instructors. Our teamwork proved how smoothly the course went when adapting to imminent weather adjustments (Plan Ahead and Prepare). Our participants were well prepared in their presentations, questions and teaching examples were explained, and the sharing of experiences gave all a new insight to many ideas and views. Congratulations to each and every one! We are proud of your achievement.

BCHC Masters and Wilderness Riders are: Anna Baglione, SJ Rodrigues, Lee Smith and Jamie Wilson.

USFS Masters are: Matt Alloway (past Intern), Kira Olson and Tim Wolfbrandt.

EDUCATION

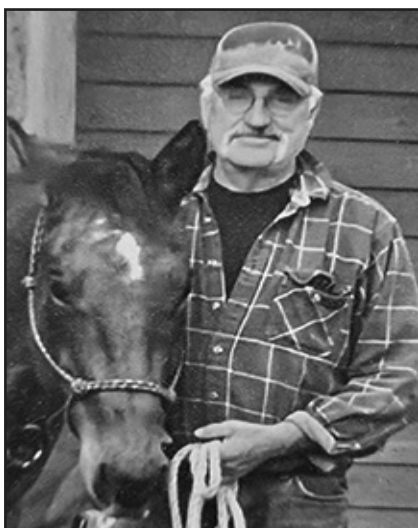
ATTENTION WILDERNESS RIDERS

Be sure to keep track of your donated hours! These are important to each of the following: Your Unit (credit for unit), a copy to the representing agency (record of volunteers) AND one is sent to Ruthie. Ruthie's copy is for Wilderness Rider of the Year Award and Ken Graves needs to have the complete numbers for USFS, NPS, FW, BLM to realize how important this program is.

Notify Ruthie if contact information has changed.

We thank those Wilderness Riders who have retired and have donated their vests back to the program!

SAW PROGRAM UPDATES



**BCHC Saw Program Manager
Dan Chartier**

From February 27 through March 1, the Shasta Trinity Unit hosted a three-day BCHC/USFS Crosscut Saw Certification Class in Weaverville, California. **EVERYTHING WAS ABOUT SAFETY!** Some attendees earned their "A" card, some earned their "B" card, and others earned their "C" card. This class was the largest class the Weaverville USFS has hosted for Crosscut Training with attendees from all over the North State.

BCHC thanks and congratulates USFS Erik Rademacher, the new USFS Region 5 Crosscut Lead. Thanks to Erik (USFS Evaluator) for letting us use his classroom and USFS cut site. The

class was evaluated by Erik along with Dan Chartier, BCHC Crosscut Evaluator, with assistance from Sam Burrows (Shasta Trinity Unit) and Dennis Halligan (Redwood Unit) both of whom are C crosscut sawyers working toward the Evaluator level. Members of five BCHC units participated - three from Redwood Unit, 10 from Shasta Trinity, two from Top of the State, one from High Country, and one from North Bay Unit. This was a great group to work with!

Two weeks later, on March 14-15, the Shasta Trinity Unit hosted a

BCHC Chainsaw Certification Class. The classroom portion was held March 14, and the Field Day Training portion was held the next day at the BLM Cloverdale Trailhead near Redding. Seven BCHC units participated in this training - one from Redwood Unit, two from Sutter Buttes, 10 from Shasta Trinity, one from Top of the State, one from High Country, one from Los Padres, and one from Kern River Valley Unit. Jason Murieen, USFS Saw Program Lead for Region 5, also attended the Field Day and was impressed with the class. Thank you, Jason! After Jason watched the BCHC Saw Instructors teach, he signed for John Gleason (Los Padres), Sam Burrows (Shasta Trinity), Dennis Halligan (Redwood) and Patrick Shreffler (Kern River Valley) as "C" Chainsaw Bucking Evaluators. Congratulations to all of them. Each has been dedicated to this program. Patrick and John have been working toward this for over six years and Sam and Dennis for over four years. BCHC's Mike Lewis (C faller, Bucker Evaluator Crosscut) and Dave Moser, (thanks for the great crosscut booth at the Rendezvous), you both deserve a BIG THANK YOU for the ongoing efforts to make this BCHC program happen!

Thank you to the Shasta Trinity Unit for contributing \$200 toward the cost of food for the Chainsaw Class.

All told, between the Crosscut Class and the Chainsaw Class, there were 30+ USDA/BCHC certifications earned.

Jason and Erik are considering and would like to make plans for both a chainsaw and a crosscut USFS certification class to be held in Southern California this fall or in spring 2027. This collaboration of USFS and BCHC will target more C buckers and Evaluators for both USFS and BCHC. Any BCHC member that holds a current USFS or PCTA "B" card or better in either crosscut or chainsaw is invited. Once the dates and location have been selected, I will be getting that information out.



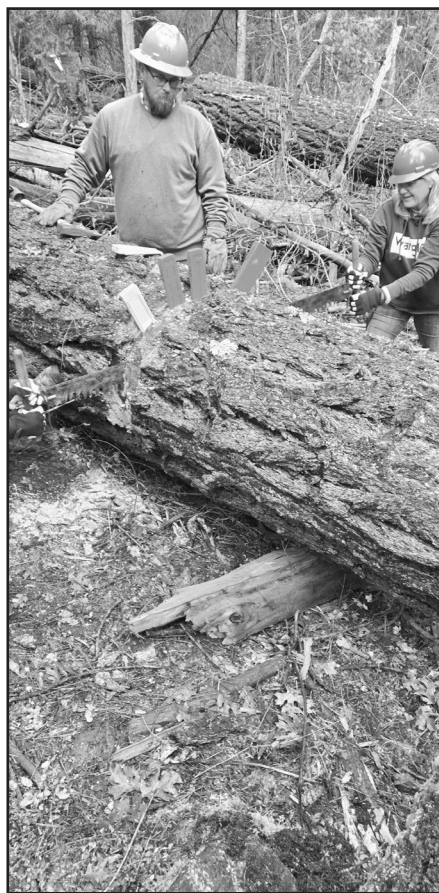
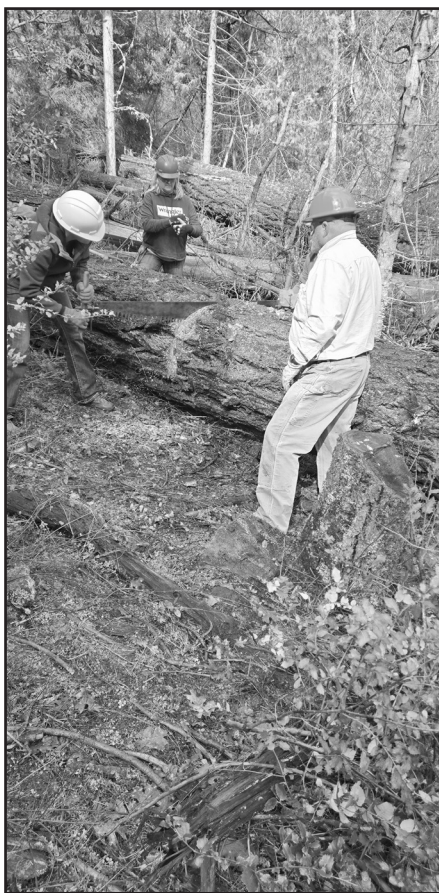
Chainsaw Group (Back row, left to right) John Gleason, Frank & Sara Medina, Wendy Bates, Dan Chartier, Richard & Beth Ford, Gerry Hendrick, Sarah Mattina, Julie Sisneros, Shannon Ryan. (Kneeling) Sam Burrows, Diana Greene, and Dennis Halligan. Not shown: Kyle Atkins, Cindy McMurray, Patrick Shreffler and Jason Murieen.

EDUCATION

SAW, continued from Page 9



Crosscut Group (left to right): Frank Medina, Dan Chartier, Sara Medina, Wendy Bates, Dennis Halligan, Larry Shuman, Rochell Halligan, Cindy McMurray, Mary Moore, Diana Greene, Webster Marquez, Sam Burrows, Kyle Adkins, Shannon Ryan, Ashly Adkins, Julie Sisneros and Gerry Hendrick.



The Weaverville USFS recently hosted its largest certifying class for crosscut saw. Seventeen attendees from five northern BCHC units attended.

2025 TOP HAND AWARDS

Every year each unit President selects an individual that provided the greatest service to the President and to his/her Unit.

CONGRATULATIONS!

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Antelope Valley | Patty Rankin |
| Eastern Sierra | Jan Huffstutler |
| High Country | Mo Buddy Rudy |
| High Sierra | Crystal Gifford |
| Kern River Valley | Ed Pounds |
| Kern Sierra | Curtis Harms |
| Los Padres | John Gleason |
| Manzanita Riders | Honni Young |
| Mid Valley | Carol Jo Hargreaves |
| Mother Lode | Kevin Dollison |
| North Bay | Kelly Strode |
| Redshank Riders | Greg Bruce |
| Redwood | Dennis Holligan |
| San Joaquin Sierra | Lois Patten |
| Santa Ana River | Linda Ruggieri |
| Sequoia | Rex Caudle, Cody Walker |
| Shasta Trinity | Larry Shuman, Sam Burrows |
| Sierra Freepackers | Gloria Garland |
| Sutter Buttes | |
| Top of the State | Jime Essex |

2025 UNIT VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS HIGHEST DOLLAR VALUE

- 1st Shasta Trinity with overall hours of 9,409
- 2nd Eastern Sierra with overall hours of 4,411
- 3rd San Joaquin Sierra with overall hours of 3,526

HIGHEST DOLLAR VALUE PER CAPITA

- 1st Eastern Sierra with 92 hours per capita
- 2nd Shasta Trinity with 82 hours per capita
- 3rd Santa Ana River with 38 hours per capita

2025 VOLUNTEER HOURS REPORT

By Cindy McMurry, Volunteer Hours Coordinator

First, let me thank all of you for getting your hours in to me. We had 100% of our units reporting this year. I am pleased to report that the value of your work exceeded 2024's totals by quite a bit:

2024 - \$883,416

2025 - \$2,603,266

I don't know whether we kept better records or we did more work, but congratulations are in order no matter which!

Keep up the good work and have a safe and fun summer.

INTERN PROGRAM

BCHC'S 2026 PACK STOCK INTERN:



RANE SHIM CLARK

Submitted by Lucy Badenhoop, BCHC Intern Committee Chair

My name is Rane Shim Clark. I'm a fourth year Animal Science major at University of California Davis with a specialty in equine. I've had a love for horses from the age of nine when I started taking lessons at a local barn. Since then, I have continued volunteering and working at many facilities to increase my knowledge in the equine industry. Once I started college, I competed on the UCD Interscholastic Mule Packing team at Bishop Mule Days and have continued throughout college. The last two summers I worked at Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit as a packer in the Eastern Sierras. Here I gained more practical experience packing on the trail when taking out campers/hikers, weekly Forest Service drops, and overnight trips. Both on the packing team and at Mammoth I found a passion for packing and working with these long-eared equids. My career path after graduation is not yet solidified. However, I know it will be within the equestrian field. I look forward to being an intern with BCHC this summer and taking advantage of the opportunities and connections I will get to help investigate future career options.

DEADLINE FOR SUMMER 2026 EDITION

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

Send submissions to:

BCHC Editor at

BCHC_Newsletter@bchcalifornia.org

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE INTERN PROGRAM!

By Lucy Badenhoop

Now that we've selected our 2026 Intern, collected the associated unit pledges, and received the \$8,000 grant from Rose Foundation, BCHC can start planning for the 2027 Intern Program. *All BCHC Intern business should use the email address specifically designated in the announcement.*

FUNDING REPORTS: I was sometimes left out of the information loop on what pledges had been made and/or paid so my reports at the semi-annual state meetings were outdated. Last February, I was given permission to contact the unit Treasurers/Presidents to collect the most current pledge/payment information. Future reports should have more accurate data.

SCHEDULE: As discussed at the February State Board Meeting, the November grant awards are arriving later and are not in place for the January intern application announcement, so I need to back up my grant application(s) to the prior quarter cycle that starts in August. That means our schedule for the intern program must be adjusted to the following:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| May 1 to July 31 | Unit boards pledge for next year's intern and send an email to the designated email address. |
| August 1 to January 1 | BCHC submit multiple grant applications |
| January 1-15 | Units send pledge payments to the BCHC Treasurer (or advise Chip to move funds from the unit's Ed Fund). Send an info email to the designated email address. |
| January 15 | Announce the internship opportunity via BCHC website, social media, etc. |
| March 15 | Deadline for applications; BCHC to score and rank for interviews |
| April 1 | USFS complete interviews and make offer |
| April 15 | Announce selection in BCHC newsletter |

APPLICATION PROCESS: The Intern Committee made several improvements this year. We will continue to improve the process through lessons learned.

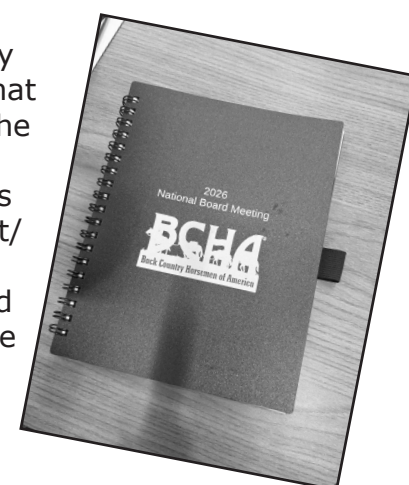
Website: In the past we have used the Eastern Sierra Conservation Corps (ESCC) application form and website. Thanks to the BCHC Webmaster (CJ Hargreaves), we were able to use our own website and a special email to keep the process in house. There were a few hiccups, but it worked!

Forms/Scoring: The USFS had special requirements that were not being addressed on the application screening. The BCHC Intern Committee developed a new application form and corresponding scoring sheet approved by the USFS and used to screen the 2026 applicants. Once scored, a ranking list was given to USFS with the recommendation that the top five be interviewed. The top-ranked 2026 BCHC candidate was selected by USFS.

BCHA: DEDICATED TO KEEPING TRAILS OPEN FOR EVERYONE



Anderson, she admitted she was better prepared this year and really learned a lot more. Terry shared that she was somewhat comforted by the fact that it seems many state BCH organizations have the same issues as we do in BCHC. Even at the unit/chapter level some of the issues are the same. She also felt assured that BCHA is in good hands and the organization is strong from the top to the bottom and the bottom to the top, despite any differences or other concerns.



By Terry Jorgensen, BCHC National Director

On Sunday, April 12, Backcountry Horsemen from across the nation began arriving in Kansas City, specifically at the Embassy Suites Hotel. National Directors, two from each state chapter, came together with the Executive Committee of Back Country Horsemen of America for the annual National Board Meeting. Terry Jorgensen and Randy Hackbarth represented BCHC.

As we began three days of information sharing, updates regarding various land managers, and BCH policy and programs, we all put forth the time and effort to learn, revise what needed to be changed, and strengthen our organization. This effort was led by a great Executive Committee team, and as current BCHA Chairman Craig Ferdig commented, "We celebrated our 50th year anniversary a few years ago and we want to plan for and build BCHA for having our 100th year anniversary too."

While this article is somewhat short and lacking specific information and data, all of that is/will be available on the BCHA website. In addition, National Directors will pass down what's most important to each state and local unit.

While we worked hard on many issues, passing a balanced budget for one, it was not all work and no play. We're Backcountry Horsemen, remember! We sat together after meetings and shared a meal and swapped stories of our latest adventures. Some even tried out a crosscut saw! Old friends got reacquainted and many new friends were made. The banquet and live auction were especially entertaining, as the saying goes, "A good time was had by all." So, until April 2027, happy trails to everyone until we meet again.


Editor's Note: Although Terry attended a National Board Meeting at the last minute in 2022 to fill in for Robert



THANK YOU, 2026 RENDEZVOUS SPONSORS!

BCHC sincerely thanks the following 2026 Rendezvous sponsors for their generous support.
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From Terri Arington in memory of her late husband, Ron Arington.

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TCH

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“SALUTING VOLUNTEERISM”

ANN LANGE AWARD PRESENTED TO DENNIS SERPA AND JOE KAMINSKI AT RENDEZVOUS

By Dick Cochran, BCHC VP of Public Lands

The Ann Lange Award, which is awarded to a BCHC member who goes above and beyond in the arena of public lands, and has consistently worked on public lands, improving trails, meeting with agency personnel, and advocating for trails, was awarded to two individuals who met and exceeded these requirements at the recent Rendezvous in Ceres, California. The award was presented to both Dennis Serpa and to Joe Kaminski. Sadly, Joe Kaminski passed away on November 21, 2024.



Joe Kaminski was involved with BCHC for over 30 years. He started riding the Sierras in the Shaver Lake area east of Fresno and developed a love of riding the trails in this area. While riding these trails he developed an appreciation for the beauty and splendor of the area, and he wanted to do what he could to keep the areas accessible to equestrians for generations to come.

Joe joined the San Joaquin Sierra Unit and started volunteering to maintain trails and then became the Public Lands

Chair. He served as the Public Lands Chair for 15 years. In 2014 Joe became the unit President and State Director and held those positions until 2018.

Joe sought out relationships with equestrian and non-equestrian groups and together they worked on trails in the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests. Joe was also a member of the Fresno Four Wheel Drive Club and through that connection was able to establish connections that facilitated getting supplies and materials brought into projects at Chamberlain Camp and causeway work at Mason Meadow as well as trail work in the area of Spanish Lake.

Almost annually, Joe would run a pack clinic for new members. This included teaching packing, stock handling in camp, camp care, and how to use the meadows for grazing.

As Public Lands Chair, Joe assumed the role of Work Party Coordinator. Joe and his wife, Carol, organized many work parties in the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests as well as collaborating with the BLM for work at the San Joaquin River Gorge.

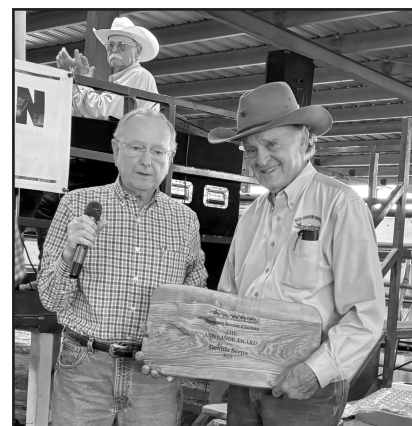
In addition, Joe was instrumental in negotiating with the USFS for management of both the Chamberlain Camp in Sierra National Forest and the Big Meadows Horse Camp in Sequoia National Forest. Both projects were monumental undertakings especially the matter of coming up with a Memorandum of Understanding that everyone could live with.

Joe also guided his unit through the evaluations and implementation of

management plans for both the Sierra and Sequoia National forests and he also participated in the review of the grazing restrictions and stock use restrictions on public lands.

Joe was also a member of the Dinkey Collaborative while he was Public Lands Chair and contributed to it on concerns of stock users as the Collaborative planned areas for restoration goals through Good Neighbor Authority grants and agreements.

Joe passed away on November 21, 2024. He leaves behind 26 grandchildren to continue his legacy of service.



Dennis Serpa's passion for the backcountry began many decades ago through his love of hunting, riding horses (and eventually mules), and camping. Around 1988 Dennis discovered BCHC at Bishop Mule Days.

Dennis immediately got involved with work projects. It was important to him to take care of the trails he enjoyed over the years. Dennis made a connection with the Stanislaus National Forest office and started initiating and organizing projects with it. Dennis' work was

influenced by Dr. Ben York, DVM., a past President of BCHC, who rode the entire Pacific Crest Trail after he retired.

Dennis has served as a member of his unit Board of Directors for over 30 years. He served as President of his unit in 1997 and was a representative to the State Board. As a representative to the State Board of Directors he learned a great deal about the mission of BCHC.

In 2011, Dennis served as state President of BCHC, a position he held for three years. He later became a National Director for BCHC to the BCHA National Board of Directors. In 2015 Dennis helped coordinate the BCHA National Board of Directors meeting held in Sacramento.

A joint program with the Forest Service Center of Excellence, that Dennis had a hand in initiating, is the BCHC Intern Program which serves to further the BCHC philosophy and purpose of training young people in the commonsense use of horses and mules and packing to secure the future of America's backcountry and wilderness.

On January 2, 2017, Dennis was privileged to ride in the Rose Parade in Pasadena with the Mid Valley Unit and to further spread the message of protecting our trails for future generations. He rode and packed five mules that he bred and raised.

Dennis and his wife, Loretta, have been married for 60 years. They have four children (and their spouses), 11 grandchildren (and several of their spouses) and eight great grandchildren.

Editor's Note: Jim Laber from the San Joaquin Sierra Unit accepted the award on behalf of Carol Kaminski, the surviving spouse of Joe Kaminski.

“SALUTING VOLUNTEERISM”

RAFFLE WINNERS

CONGRATULATIONS to the two lucky ticket holders!

Greg Bruce, Redshank Riders Unit - Henry Silver Eagle .22 Rifle

Sam Burrows, Shasta Trinity Unit - \$500 Bass Pro Shops Gift Card

TABLE DECORATION WINNER

ANTELOPE VALLEY UNIT

This awesome centerpiece revolved when plugged in! Amazing!



Sisters Jamie Wilson and Jan Walker made sure the BCHC State Booth ran efficiently (above)



DUTCH OVEN COOKING COMPETITION RESULTS

By Sheila Bond, Dutch Oven Cooking Competition Coordinator

We had a great turnout for the Dutch Oven Cooking Competition this year at the Rendezvous. Seven teams competed for the Best Main Dish and the Best Dessert. The teams were allowed to cook a main dish, dessert or both. The following people participated:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Ron Akers | Polynesian Chicken and Peach Mango Raspberry Cobbler |
| Mike King | Beef Enchilada Casserole |
| Rudy Dezzani | Polenta |
| Vicki Morales | Spaghetti and Peach Pear Cobbler |
| David and Elaine Mello | Lemon Blueberry Cake |
| David Pritchard | Mountain Man Breakfast Casserole |
| Carl Perry | Chicken/Dumplings and Bread Pudding |

There was public tasting and voting, and the results of the public voting were so close! We had great cooks this year and many people commented that it was difficult to choose the best dish. The winners were:

David Pritchard (Redwood Unit) – Best Main Dish
<<< Mountain Man Breakfast Casserole

David and Elaine Mello (Sequoia Unit) – Best Dessert – Lemon Blueberry Cake >>>

Special thanks to Kathy Zumbrunn (Mid Valley Unit) for sponsoring the Dutch Oven Competition and awarding the awesome, custom-made aprons to the winners. Thank you to the volunteers who helped the cooks serve the public and count the votes!

I want to personally thank all the participants in this competition. It's an honor to work with such great dutch oven cooks!



Crosscut saw practice in Dave Moser's demo area. Did you test your knowledge of saws with Dave's electronic board?>>>



A crew from "GoodDay Sacramento" interviewed General Rendezvous Chair Lloyd Erlandson.

<<<



WESTERN ART SHOW RESULTS

By Norma Kohlbaker

Photography - "No Left Turn" - First Place - Jerry Heitzler
 Fiber Art - Quilt - First Place - Denise Robinson
 Metal Work - Big Bird - First Place - Jon Caudill
 Leatherwork - Custom Canteen - First Place - Lee Owing >>>
 Painting (Charcoal, oil pastel) - First Place - Megan Van Hoogmoed
 Painting (Watercolor) - First Place - Sandra Ballard

Tied for People's Choice Award:

Painting - Team of White Horses - Ranae Rosa
 <<< Fiber Art - Quilt - Denise Robinson



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL AWARD WINNERS!



MAX & IRENE COCHRAN JOURNALISM AWARD

By C.J. Hargreaves

1st Place - Mid Valley Unit - Gail Jamieson, Kathy Zumbrunn and Vicki Morales (above left)

2nd Place - Top of the State Unit - Michele Machado (above right)

3rd Place - Kern Sierra Unit - Marjorie Mayfield (at right)



WILDERNESS RIDER OF THE YEAR

"Our Wilderness Rider of the Year for 2025 is a person who is a dedicated and active participant in the Wilderness Rider program. This person is willing to take on most tasks and those of her own idea. Commitment to Wilderness Riders doesn't seem an issue even with the many hours and miles it takes to perform these activities. She was also a vital part in getting the Manzanita Riders Unit organized and started and it continues to grow. Besides Wilderness Riders she is our State National Director and President of her Unit."

Wilderness Rider of the Year for 2025 is TERRY JORGENSEN

<<<



RENDEZVOUS 2026

THANK YOU!

Rendezvous 2026 is in the books. The theme for this event was "Volunteerism" and that really did show up. There were volunteers everywhere all weekend long as well as six months before. What a crew we had!

I believe everybody had a good time and we raised a little money for the organization. Putting this event on is a love/hate relationship on my part. I'm not the best organizer, planner or delegator, so things like this are hard for me. I try to stay ahead of the game, but things always fall through the cracks. So, that being said, I'm glad that it's over.

The Diamond Bar facility is a wonderful small event area. The large covered arena we could all be in for vendors, socials and dinners makes for a nice gathering. A big thank you goes out to Shane and Kim Parson for letting us use their facility and for also helping by providing support and supplies all weekend long.

From my point of view, most things went off as planned. I didn't get to see much of the Rendezvous because it seems I was always moving around because of some issue or question. To all the vendors, presenters and organizers, thank you. I hope things went as expected for each of you and that you felt the weekend was a success. I think each of us measures success in our own way, whether it be by money made or friendships made or renewed, so I hope everyone came away from the weekend feeling good. I do believe we did good with the food, and I thank Blodgett Catering from Escalon for doing an outstanding job. Fixing, transporting and putting the food on the table fresh and on time is an art, and Blodgett does a fantastic job.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all sponsors and advertisers for their donations of money and goods so this event could be a success. I hope all who can get their hands on a program will read it and support the advertisers in it. And speaking of the program, I'd like to thank Carol Jo Hargreaves and Kathy Zumbrunn for all their hard work and dedication for putting this program together. It takes a lot of time to gather all the information and organize it into a nice-looking program. Well done, ladies! It takes dedicated people to make this event happen and I had lots of them. We had a lot of Mid Valley Unit people working, but several other units really stepped up and helped a lot. There was Mother Lode Unit, who did the Dutch Oven Cooking Contest, trailer parking and wine and beer event organizing. Then Kern Valley Unit did the hospitality booth with the free coffee, water and snacks. Great job. I'm sure there were others, but these two stood out to me.

Financially it takes a while to finalize something like this because there are always late bills and maybe even revenue. But I did get a tally on the silent and live auctions. The silent auction raised \$3,355 and the live auction was \$3,100. The live auction was done by a young local auctioneer by the name of Nick Olvera. I am grateful for his help stepping in at the last minute and doing a fantastic job.

You may have been wondering where the Wild Horse and Burro Adoption went. I was in contact with the BLM in Sacramento last fall and put in the request for them to come to our event. I was told at that time that they were not sure if they were going to have the funds to make the trip. No decision was made till about three weeks before the Rendezvous when I got an email that said they were funded for our event and one in Ferndale. Then a week later I got another email informing me they now had a people problem and didn't have the crew to be able to come. That is where it ended. I called my contact at the corrals in Lichfield, California, and he said he was the only one left at the corrals and he wasn't going anywhere. We're sorry that it didn't happen, but life throws things at us, and we just must move on.

I am pleased to say that we had a successful Rendezvous, and I am honored to have been the chairman of this event. That being said, if it were not for Kathy Zumbrunn, who was my right- and left-hand woman, it wouldn't have been nearly as well done. She kept me on track.

Lloyd Erlandson
Rendezvous 2026 General Chairman

SINCERE APOLOGIES

Before the event starts, we try to make sure all the T's are crossed and the I's dotted. But since I was chairman and with my lack of organizational abilities, all the T's and I's didn't get taken care of. We have been planning Rendezvous for well over six months with a lot being done in the last three months. So, what I'm saying is that I missed some things that I know about now (and I'm sure there are some that I don't know about, too). So, I will address the one big one that I know about first. It was brought to my attention on Thursday of Rendezvous week that we had left Carlena Kellogg and Angela Gentry out of program. Carlena put on the Horsemanship 101 training on Friday and the Obstacle Challenge course on Saturday. Angela assisted Carlena on both events. It was my fault that they were missed. Carlena, being the organized lady that she is, submitted both Angela and her bios early in January and by the time we were getting the program finalized, I forgot they were buried in my emails. I blew it. I really do apologize to Carlena and Angela. Thank you both for being understanding.

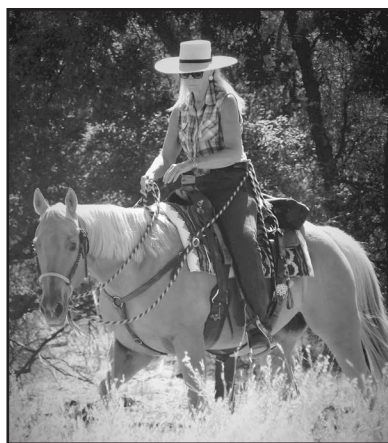
Something else has been working on my brain this past week and that is that this year's event was titled "Volunteerism." Well, I think I blew that too. We didn't stop for a moment after dinner on Friday, when we were giving out the awards for being volunteers, to make a point of thanking everyone there for being volunteers! It should have been front and center but was just kind of left dangling out there somewhere in space and kind of forgotten. We are all volunteers because that's what we do. By being volunteers, we make the world better and maybe make ourselves feel a little better too.

Humbly,
Lloyd

“SALUTING VOLUNTEERISM”

CARLENA KELLOGG

With a lifelong passion for riding, Carlena has evolved from a competitive rodeo rider in her youth to a dedicated riding instructor & adult competitor. In 2011, Carlena and Merlin, her faithful horse, spent the summer as a dude ranch wrangler in Cody, Wy. After retiring as a science teacher, she now dedicates most of her time teaching students the art of riding and horsemanship. Carlena focuses on building confidence in riders, along with helping experienced riders establish a strong riding foundation. Her business program "Journey into Horsemanship" builds the inner strength in people through horsemanship. At the Rendezvous Horsemanship 101 clinics, Carlena will share her expertise on several topics.



ANGELA GENTRY (clinician for Horsemanship 101 clinic) Angela's equestrian journey began at 12 years old with the purchase of her first horse. With comprehensive expertise in Classical Dressage, Western Pleasure, and other disciplines, she has garnered valuable insights from renowned clinicians. As a Certified Cowboy Dressage clinician and Trail Obstacle judge, Angela's instructional approach is rooted in Buck Brannaman's horsemanship principles, along with similar principles of Dennis Reis,

emphasizing foundational groundwork to prepare horses for diverse riding styles and foster a trusting and calm environment for horses and riders alike.

EDUCATION AWARDS

TOP OF THE STATE UNIT received the **2025 UNIT EDUCATION AWARD**. The unit received a \$150 check for going the extra mile in their education efforts. **CONGRATULATIONS!**

VIDEO COMPETITION AWARDS went to Bailey Woods for her 1-minute production, and Kern River Valley and Santa Ana River units for their 2-minute productions. Winners received \$50 checks.



RENDEZVOUS 2027 AND BEYOND

By Doug Dollarhide, BCHC President, and
Lloyd Erlandson, General Chairman Rendezvous 2026

Rendezvous is in the books so now we must move ahead to the years beyond. Rendezvous has been the state's only statewide BCHC fundraiser. This raises funds so that the state can buy insurance and support other programs of importance. That being said, we need to plan for what we are going to do in the years to come. We have had other fundraisers in the past that have been extremely successful. THINK CALENDARS. Despite all the hand ringing and crying, we still have around \$70,000 earned through calendar sales. That is for a legal fund if we ever need to use it. Lawyers are expensive.

Getting back to making money, we need to dream up a new fundraiser, or we can all support the Rendezvous better as the fundraiser. The problem that I see with Rendezvous is we are all getting older and have gone to so many of them that we don't want to go every year. Also, the state of California is so long that it is no fun driving the length of the whole state to go to something that you have already been to many times. So, what do we do?

#1 To handle the long state issue we could hold the Rendezvous at Diamond Bar every year. But that brings up the problem of who is going to organize the event? Mid Valley can't do it every year.

#2 We could do the whole Rendezvous thing every other year instead of every year.

#3 We could divide the state in half and hold one gathering in the south and another one in the north. This event may not need to be a "big" one. To save money on the organization side of things, we could just have an inexpensive campout on some rancher's 100-acre pasture and hold a real "Rendezvous," like the cowboys did. IF we do this, then we need to support each local event with the donations needed to make it both a fun party *and* a fundraiser.

The purpose of this article is to spark some conversation on the subject and see if we can put some new life in this old dog. These are just our ideas; nothing is for certain. The BCHC Executive Committee needs input to make good decisions. Please send your thoughts about what you might like to see to Doug or to Lloyd. Their contact information is on Page 2 of this newspaper. *At this time, there is no Rendezvous scheduled for 2027.*



BCHC NEWS

CALIFORNIA TRAILS & GREENWAYS CONFERENCE 2026

By Michael Murphy, former President North Bay Unit, Wilderness Rider, BCHA

National Director, Equine Environmental Consultant, and Realtor.

The 2026 California Trails & Greenways Conference held April 14 to 17 in San Ramon was a resounding success. Somewhere between 300 and 500 people were in attendance. Most of the attendees were Directors, Park Planners, and State Park Grant Managers. I had lunch with a State Park Manager and his staff. What a great opportunity for making connections with like-minded people advocating for trails and parks all over the state!

Doug Dollarhide and I did a packing demo with two of Doug's mules. We put up a high line connected to the outside lights on the patio of the Marriott in San Ramon. There were about 20 folks watching, asking questions and practicing on the iron mules. The response was astounding! Since we were on the patio, everyone was passing by the animals with hugs and stories about an equine experience.

The second day of the conference I gave a presentation on the Leave No Trace principle #7 - Consideration of Other Park Users. Everyone asked if the mules were coming back but I told them Doug took them home. I showed the attendees the posters from Back Country Horsemen of Idaho. One shows how a horse views a bicycle rider approaching a horse (the rider looks like a mountain lion to the horse.) I expressed the importance of the bike rider saying something like, "Approaching from the rear" or "Is it OK to come around?" or to just stay put but not to hide from the horse. The explanation of how a horse sees differently than people do was surprising to my audience. Most folks did not know that a horse has a rectangular pupil unlike our round ones. Next, I showed the poster of a backpacker approaching the horse and rider and how the same thing occurs. A horse sees a bear standing on its back legs. People began to understand that a horse is afraid of the unknown and needs to know it's OK.

My presentation focused on sharing knowledge, inspiring stewardship, and creating a culture of shared responsibility on the trail from an equestrian point of view. We discussed the importance of being considerate of others and practicing good trail etiquette that helps ensure that everyone enjoys their outdoor visit. All must work together. Any efforts to promote understanding and appreciation between different user groups are important. All user groups must work together to achieve the common goal of "LEAVE NO TRACE." Antagonism between groups only stymies their efforts, as well as their understanding and enjoyment of the outdoor experience.

One thing that was made very clear was that equine representation had been missed at the conferences for many years. I remember past BCHC President Toby Horst and member Bob Gage promoting

attendance years ago but there has not been any in as much as 15 years or more.

A survey is now available to allow trail users, trail professionals and advocates to help improve California trails. (See californiatrailssurvey.com for the survey and more information.) Please fill it out and encourage other equestrians to participate in the survey, too. These surveys are very important because they give the Parks data-driven insights to guide future trail planning, grant programs, and on-the-ground improvements throughout California.

Non-motorized Supervisor - Nicky Lambert, (916) 661-1527, Nicky.Lambert@parks.ca.gov, talked about a new schedule of grants that will be available this fall. She also showed all the projects completed with these grants.

The keynote speaker talked about how, as trail advocates, we are all healers. This doctor talked about the benefits of the outdoor experience that have changed so many lives. It was wonderful to be part of a group of like-minded folks to help heal.

I have told the organizers of the conference that BCHC would participate with live animals next year at the Santa Barbara conference (and every year as long as I am alive!)

SAVE THE DATE

California Trails & Greenways 2027
Join us for our 42nd Annual Event April 19 - 23 at the Hilton
Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort!

CALIFORNIA ADDS THREE NEW STATE PARKS

Governor Gavin Newsom unveiled plans for three new State Parks at an Earth Day event in Fresno. They are Feather River Park, a roughly 1,600-acre site south of Marysville in Yuba County on the Feather River that includes a beach and boat launch; the San Joaquin River Parkway, 874 waterfront acres on Fresno's northern edges along the San Joaquin River; and the Sunset Migratory Labor Camp, a 2-acre property south of Bakersfield that was built in 1937 by the administration of President Franklin Roosevelt to provide housing to hardscrabble farm families who fled the Dust Bowl in Oklahoma and other states seeking a better life in California.



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UNIT NEWS

KERN RIVER VALLEY UNIT:

AS IT WAS, IS NOW AND SOON WILL BE

By Mike Hughes, President, BCHC Kern River Valley Unit

As authors the true goal, if the truth be told, is each time we write an article for the BCHC newsletter it is to dispense facts, disburse knowledge and, if we are lucky, to occasionally disseminate a sprinkling of wisdom for good measure. We should strive to become campfire storytellers, evoking imagery of mutual interest to our readers. This is not an easy task when much of the information that we present is very dry; nonetheless we still try.

Odd as it may seem, my story starts out pre-Rendezvous in Las Vegas, Nevada, during Cowboy Christmas. Cowboy Christmas has become an annual family excursion over the past many years and the year 2025 was no different. While engaging with the massive number of vendors, we contacted THE FREE REIN COFFEE COMPANY, co-founded by Cole Hauser of "Yellowstone" television show fame. My daughter, Laina Garcia, and her husband, Enrique, contacted the company's representatives advising them of the BCHC Rendezvous being held in Ceres, California, in March 2026. The Kern River Valley Unit of BCHC was going to be hosting the Hospitality Booth for hundreds of horse and mule enthusiasts. The coffee company stated they would like to assist by providing the coffee for the BCHC Rendezvous event and, of course, we quickly agreed. Therefore, if you enjoyed a hot cup of java at the Rendezvous Hospitality Booth hosted by the KRV Unit of BCHC, the FREE REIN COFFEE COMPANY deserves your sincere thanks.

Another one of our partners in this hospitality endeavor was the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company of Bakersfield. When Laina and Enrique approached Pepsi for donations, Pepsi readily agreed with donations of cases of sodas and water for the attendees' enjoyment. It just goes to show that not all BCHC's partners wear boots and hats. We would also like to commend the Rendezvous Committee for their excellent placement of our booth. Thanks also goes out to Shane of Diamond Bar Arena for supplying us with additional water and ice when we ran out. The vast array of snacks and treats provided by the Kern River Valley Unit seemed to go over well as we handed out virtually the entirety of our supplies over the three days we set up shop.

Now moving into 2026, the KRV Unit had representatives present at the first two Officers Training sessions in Oroville and Visalia during the month of January. Sessions were exceedingly well presented by Co-VPs of Education Ruthie Heuer and Denise Robinson. The education of new officers and the review for returning officers is always a welcome addition to the BCHC mission and goals. We thank the hosting units for the work put forth to stage such excellent venues.

In February, KRV Unit moved into its fundraising mode. We held our annual gun raffle, membership drive and BCHC educational public relations booth at the Kernville, California, WHISKEY FLATS DAYS. This event typically draws around 50,000 people from throughout central

and Southern California during its three-day run. Fortunately, we were the recipients of much of their generosity in purchasing our raffle tickets. This allows us to go forward with our work projects, donations to ONE SPADE YOUTH PACKERS, the BCHC Intern Program and other worthy ventures we undertake in furtherance of BCHC's visions.

In March, KRV Unit participated in the state Rendezvous as previously mentioned. One of KRV Unit's highlights was as an award winner of the Video Contest hosted by the state Executive Committee. This effort was spearheaded by members Enrique Garcia and Susan Hughes. Great thanks to them for their efforts. Also, participation in the state Leave No Trace Pin Program was well received. Our Top Hand was recognized as unit treasurer Ed Pounds. A job well done is extended to all.

Also of note in March are the meetings with Forest Service personnel on March 24 and 25 to set a calendar of events. In attendance was President Mike Hughes and Public Lands Chair Pat Shreffler. These meetings were to set an outline and agenda for our upcoming work projects in the Greenhorn Ranger District of the Sequoia National Forest. We have had an excellent working relationship with district staff and would like to see it continue under guidance of the new District Tanger.

On April 18, the KRV Unit is holding its spring meeting at the 4H Ranch to set priorities for the coming year. Subjects of discussion will be officers' reports, work projects, fund raising, grants, new members, of which we have three. We will be sure to include those items affecting our interaction with the state BCHC, BCHA, and our other partners, steadfastly promoting the ongoing mission of public lands volunteerism.

So far, we have partially covered the "was" and "is". Now we move boldly into the "what shall be". Coming up in May, at Bishop Mule Days, KRV Unit will partner with THE ONE SPADE YOUTH PACKERS as we have done over the past decade. We have supported them through financial donations and mentoring. Equally important is our position as positive adult role models working in a mutually beneficial role of mule packing, horsemanship, animal care and transportation of stock and equipment. We also participate in the nuances of animal care, camp setup and maintenance. It has been rewarding to see these youth evolve into knowledgeable and, hopefully, responsible adults. This is a worthwhile endeavor which speaks to who we are as animal and human caretakers. In the mentality of BCHC we look and work toward a brighter future with the resources we possess today.

As to high country trail maintenance and saw classes, we have many planned, in the works and soon to be scheduled. With this in mind, we hope to partner with other units within BCHC and other agencies local, county, state and federal. So, until we hopefully see you on the trail, remember - keep the hide toward the sky and the hoofs toward the turf.

UNIT NEWS

REDWOOD UNIT:

AWARDS, TRAINING AND SPRING PLANS

By Dennis Halligan, Redwood Unit President

The Redwood Unit has held monthly general membership meetings and conditioning rides during the January - March quarter.

The Redwood Unit held a packing clinic on February 7 that was attended by members. The clinic was put on by Spencer Butler, a Redwood Unit member and professional packer. A nice potluck lunch was provided to attendees.

Several members of the Redwood Unit attended the 2026 Rendezvous in Ceres. It was a long drive to get there (8 hours), but a great time was had by all. The Redwood Unit had the pleasure of judging the table decorations in the arena. We chose the Antelope Valley Unit's decoration and presented them with a basket full of locally made Humboldt County goods. David Pritchard won the main dish Dutch Oven Cooking Competition with his breakfast casserole. *(See photo in the Rendezvous section of this newspaper.)* Redwood Unit members enjoyed the numerous workshops (map reading and compass use, equine massage, reining, saw demonstration, etc.), trail challenge, and meeting many members from other units.

Three Redwood Unit members attended the February 27–March 1 crosscut saw training in Weaverville and updated their certifications (two “B” buckers and one “C” bucker). One member (Dennis Halligan) also attended and was a co-instructor at the chainsaw training held at Dan and Robin Chartier's place in Cottonwood on March 14 and 15. He became a “C” bucker instructor and evaluator at that session. Thanks to Dan and Robin for their hospitality. *(See photo in the Education/Saw Program section of this newspaper.)*

The unit is currently planning the annual trail challenge that will be held Saturday, April 18, at the Humboldt County Fairgrounds in Ferndale. The event will include a packing clinic, emergency equine first aid, Leave No Trace, dutch oven cooking, raffle, equine chiropractic, and a dozen challenges one might encounter in the backcountry. Please see the Redwood Unit Facebook page for more information.

The unit is also planning the 32nd Half Ass Flat Ride to be held June 26–28 at Capetown, Humboldt County. This event will be fully catered and feature three rides (9, 12, and 15 miles) Saturday and a beach ride Sunday morning. Please check out the Redwood Unit Facebook page for more information.

HIGH COUNTRY UNIT:

HONING PACKING SKILLS

By Cindy McMurry

The High Country Unit hosted a Spring Packers Tune-up clinic on April 11.

The weather was threatening to not cooperate so Sam helped me clear out a big area of the barn to work in and Olivia built a fire pit outside to keep our guests warm.

We had 23 participants from as far away as Reno, Portola and Lewiston signed up and even with the unsettled weather everyone came, dressed warm and prepared to learn.

One of our instructors had to beg off and Larry Shuman from the Shasta Trinity Unit graciously offered to help. He brought his wife, Rose and Olivia Estrada along to assist and we can't thank them enough for all their help. We couldn't have done it without them.

Everyone jumped in and practiced applying hobbles to our patient mustang Ghost who also stood for demonstrating how to properly adjust your pack saddle, britchen and breast collar, and loading panniers.

I think he really enjoyed the attention while everyone practiced tying a Fish Can Hitch and Box Hitch.

By then, it started raining so, we moved into the barn and practiced

putting up a high line and tying hitches on the iron mules. Larry and I demonstrated how to load tools and saws and how to tie on a top load with a double diamond.

With everyone's heads full of new packing ideas and techniques, we adjourned to the front porch for a locally produced farm to table lunch prepared by our neighbor, Barbara Spears and Rose. Barbara used to be a back country cook for a Montana outfitter and, boy, did we eat well! We had locally produced beef, salad, veggies, bread, and ice cream on our brownies. No one went home hungry!

The feedback was great, we gained at least two new members, and the Shasta Trinity Unit gained two. We are already planning next year's event. See you there.



UNIT NEWS

MANZANITA RIDERS UNIT:

RIDERS HELP SAVE VALLECITOS STAGE STATION HISTORY

Article by Terry Jorgensen, photos submitted by Kammi Montanero

The first weekend in March found Manzanita Riders back at the Vallecitos Stage Station working on the sod building. We received a call from Ranger Jake with San Diego County Parks, the land manager, asking if we could help with one more service weekend before the desert temperatures started to climb. Of course! Six of us immediately said YES, so trailers were connected, horses and mules loaded and off we went. After Ranger Jake reviewed the work completed in past service weekends it was decided that the best thing to do next was to completely empty the stage station, clean it out and then make a more accurate assessment of the needed repairs, inside and outside, along with the area immediately around the stage station.

We spent a beautiful day taking all the artifacts out of the building, cataloging each item, washing, drying and wrapping them in bubble wrap, and placing them in clear totes which were stored in another building on site. After cleaning out years of dirt and other debris, the stage station is ready for more restoration work this coming fall. Ranger Jake and San Diego County Parks have made this restoration project a top priority and Manzanita Riders will be there as a partner in this historic project. After the day's work was finished we enjoyed the horse camp and miles of trails in Vallecito Valley.

If any BCHC members would like to spend a sunny fall or winter weekend with us this coming season, we welcome you to join us for future volunteer service work weekends and camping.



After cleaning out years of dirt and other debris, the stage station is ready for more restoration work.

The Vallecito Stage Station holds a pivotal place in California's rich history as a vital stagecoach stop during the mid-19th century. Serving as a key resting point along the Butterfield Overland Mail route, the adobe structure played a crucial role in connecting the east and west coasts of the United States. This historic site stands as a witness to the spirit and perseverance of countless individuals and families who traversed the challenging desert terrain seeking new opportunities in the expanding frontier.



We took all the artifacts out of the building, cataloged each item, washed, dried and wrapped them in bubble wrap, then placed them in clear totes stored in another building on site.

UNIT NEWS

SIERRA FREEPACKERS UNIT:

TRAIL SIGNS INSTALLED AT HENSLEY LAKE

By Lee Smith

Sierra Freepackers Unit has a 100-hour ongoing agreement with Hensley Lake Army Corps of Engineers to help where needed. Recently our unit was asked to help install carbonite trail signs to direct the public. To keep the trails safe, these signs designate where horses, hikers and bikers have access. Michelle Westcoat, our contact ranger at Hensley Lake, provides the specific location of the signage. The rangers then install weatherproof stickers that direct the users allowed on each of the trails in the Buck Ridge Section of the park. Our unit frequently uses these trails, and we were happy to help with the install.

Denise Robertson, Pat Vallentyne, Teri Cook and Lee Smith all participated in the project. We use the Hensley Lake Buck Ridge location for our unit fundraisers which always have a great turnout by the public. We would like to thank Michelle and her crew for the opportunity to help and for their support of our unit's fundraiser!



Sierra Freepackers with Ranger Michelle Westcoat.



Park Ranger Evan Roccasecca assists Lee Smith with sign post installation.

TOP OF THE STATE UNIT:



WORK STARTS EARLY AT GRIDER CREEK

Article by Michele Machado Woods; photo by Alan Woods

In January, I attended the now annual Wilderness & Primitive Trails Summit hosted by the Bigfoot Trail Alliance in Eureka, California. This summit brings together Northern California and Southern Oregon trail stewardship non-profits such as Backcountry Horsemen of California, PCTA, Ascend Wilderness Experience, Siskiyou Mountain Club and more in the same room with representatives from the Forest Service and California Conservation Corps. The conversations and networking are always lively and it's inspiring to hear about the great work being planned by each group.

One of the benefits of attending this meeting is the opportunity to speak to these valuable trail stewardship partners about needed work we can do together. I had one such conversation with Ian Nelson of the PCTA and that chat resulted in our Top of the State Unit sawyers, Alan Woods and Jeff McCabe, joining Regional Trail Stewardship Coordinator, Spencer Valenti, and a crew of about five PCTA trail workers on March 13, to log out and maintain a 4-mile stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail southbound from the Grider Creek campground near Seiad Valley.

This stretch of trail is in a 2014 wildfire burn scar and is notorious for having erosion problems and numerous blowdown trees, with some large ones making the trail dangerous for hikers and stock, alike. Jeff and Alan cleared more than 20 downed trees while Spencer's crew took care of brushing and tread work.

This work, which was in coordination with the Klamath National Forest, shows how valuable our partnerships with the PCTA and other area non-profits are in getting work done, especially this early in the season. The Top of the State Unit has more log-out work planned on the PCT, June 3-8, near the Carter Meadows Equestrian campgrounds.

UNIT NEWS

EASTERN SIERRA UNIT: WILDERNESS RIDER/LEAVE NO TRACE MASTER EDUCATOR COURSE

By Anna Baglione, Eastern Sierra Unit President

The week of April 6-10 I had the distinct pleasure of attending the Wilderness Rider/Leave No Trace Master Educator Course up in Weaverville, California. I've spent a small amount of time in the Weaverville area, but the beauty of that part of California never ceases to amaze me, especially in early springtime.

I had always wanted to take this course after learning about the BCHC Wilderness Riders when I was very young as a member of Mid Valley Unit.

Another thing that interested me about this course was fresh teaching material! I was running out of topics and methods as an educator through my 4-H project as well as my unit education activities. This was my first opportunity to take the course, and I am so glad that I did.

Through my work and time as a packer I have spent a lot of time educating people in a very hands-on way. I've never received direction or taken classes on *how* to educate. This class combined both and I was blown away by how much we learned. I think it is such a unique offering that our organization has, and it is definitely an asset that I wish more people could take advantage of. Not only does this course prove that you have mastered the seven principles of Leave No Trace, but it is also an in-depth, hands-on, "teach the teacher" course that really hammers the points home. In five days, I learned how to grab people's attention educationally, hold it and make sure that they can take this knowledge home with them, whether it's in a public setting or a private setting. Additionally, we learned the importance of partnerships between BCHC and the various land agencies and how they help one another. We also learned the history of the Wilderness Rider Program and how it was founded. I am so grateful to the forward thinking and selfless people that set the stage for BCHC in all aspects.

Before the class, each student is assigned one of the seven LNT principles to present on during the week. We were told that anybody was allowed to apply to take the class and that we'd not know what our audience was for these presentations. It could be backpackers, fishermen, kayakers, or any outdoor user, so we prepared our presentations with that in mind. To my surprise, each of the people taking the course had packing experience, many of them having extensive packing experience. It was such a unique way to spend my week surrounded by so much knowledge. The course educators were an incredible wealth of information, and it became a week filled with knowledge and the sharing of real-life experiences.

This course was invigorating and really reinforced the importance of education when it comes to our way of life. I would encourage anyone interested in taking the steps to become a Wilderness Rider (WR) to do so and to reach out to the various WRs in BCHC to get their perspectives.



“This course was invigorating and really reinforced the importance of education when it comes to our way of life. I would encourage anyone interested in taking the steps to become a Wilderness Rider to do so.”

UNIT NEWS

LOS PADRES UNIT:

BACK IN ACTION!

By Jennifer Best, Los Padres Unit President

BCHC Los Padres Unit is back in action here on the Central Coast! Newly elected and long-time board members have been rejuvenated by embracing a member-led unit model. Combining the power of shared knowledge and embracing member's passion and energy shows in an immediate turnaround. The club calendar is quickly filling with rides, trail work projects, a tack sale and more to come. Meeting attendance is on the rise. We're reconnecting with our Forest Service and other backcountry trails partners. And we've seen an influx of new members and renewals of some who have been out of action for a few years.

President Jennifer Best was elected in January after the unfortunate and unexpected loss of President Greg Feinberg. Greg joined BCH back in 2012 and held many positions throughout the years including the role of Unit President from 2022 until his passing. Many remember him as a certified instructor for the BCHA Sawyer Program.

Vice President John Gleason kept the unit rolling in the interim while also maintaining duties as Trails Director. He and a team of volunteers have been patrolling and doing regular minor maintenance on popular trails, while also putting in the heavy work on larger projects. Together with other trail user groups, our members are helping build the Sapwi Trail at Santa Margarita Lake County Park. In addition, Los Padres Unit volunteers have worked with the park to identify a spot for a picnic table and tie rail. The unit will provide the tie rail and install both items. Volunteers are welcome to join in the trail work on Sapwi most Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and on designated monthly Saturday work parties. Contact John Gleason at jandkspantry2@gmail.com for more information.

We have rekindled our relationships with Los Padres National Forest-Monterey District, Los Padres Forest Association, Ventana Wilderness Alliance and have entered discussion about future pack/trail work support projects. We're jumping right in by providing stock support to the April 11-19 LPFA Pine Mountain Lodge Camp Working Vacation focusing on restoring the Piedra Blanca Trail in Sespe Wilderness.

There are fun and games and downright social opportunities, too, with spring camp-and-rides in Huasna (April 9-12) and American Canyon (May 7-10), the BCHC Los Padres Unit Spring Tack Sale (a public event April 18 in Nipomo), a drone clinic (July 12), and three field trips to the Sierra. Members participated in and supported the Cal Poly Interscholastic Packing Clinic and Competition with presentations by Inyo National Forest Packers Lee Roeser and Mike Morse. A long-time tradition, lost in recent years, will also return with the Fall Camp 'n Ride and Membership Appreciation BBQ, and a holiday shindig is in the works. We are also promoting other units' trail work as "working

vacations," a way to see the rest of the state while also serving.

With members from Ventura County to Monterey County, Los Padres has also begun alternating its monthly meetings between northern San Luis Obispo County and southern locales.



Shown (left to right): John Lawson, Tony Esperidion, Los Padres Unit Secretary Melody Fountain, and Unit Vice President John Gleason prepare for work on the Grey Pine Trail at Santa Margarita Lake. They spent a sunny day filling holes in the trail that developed over the wet season and caused the trail to be closed for safety.



Jennifer Best was elected President of the Los Padres Unit in January and has taken a member-led approach. She is also known for her effort in establishing San Luis Obispo County's first-ever 4-H Horse & Mule Packing Project, now in its second year. (See *Spring 2025 Backcountry News*, pages 18-19, for an article describing this project.)

UNIT NEWS

SHASTA TRINITY UNIT:

2025 BCHC SHASTA TRINITY PACKER INTERNSHIP

By Matt Alloway

Starting out I would like to say thank you to the Shasta Trinity and Top of the State Units of Backcountry Horsemen of California, the CCC Foundation, and the United States Forest Service Shasta-Trinity packing team for yet another memorable season. This season came with more responsibility and challenges that tested me and made me more confident with my ability to pack mules in any condition thanks to the great team I work with.

This season I had the opportunity to work in four different wilderness areas, ranging from Northern California to Southern Oregon: Trinity Alps, Yolla Bolly, South Warner, and Steens Mountain. I also worked on four different national forests (Shasta-Trinity, Klamath, Mendocino, and Modoc) and the Burns BLM District. I helped teach the USFS packing demonstration and competed in the crosscut saw competition at the annual BCHC Rendezvous. I also rode in the Weaverville 4th of July parade representing the USFS mule packing team. I gave three presentations about mules and packing to local youth groups. Finally, I was tasked with supporting our CCC backcountry cook and grocery shopper to help make their season more efficient with respect to the packing operations.

What made this season so unique for me was the variety of pack trips I took part in. We started the season with many trips to the New River and Swift Creek area in order to open trails for future pack trips. Heading into the summer season we supplied a CCC back country crew in the Trinity Alps. Additionally, in the Alps we supported the California Department of Water Resources by packing back important equipment for them to study the snow pack for future water resources. On the Modoc National Forest I helped support the Student Conservation Alliance with trail maintenance operations. On the Mendocino I also helped support the Big Foot Volunteer trail crew with trail maintenance. I must say the biggest highlight of my season was getting the opportunity to travel to the Steens Mountain Wilderness in southern Oregon. This was a six-day backcountry trip to help the Bureau of Land Management with their range program by fixing and repairing over 35 miles of fenceline that only horse and mule can access.

This season was yet another great experience for me in pursuing my lifelong goal of becoming a professional mule packer. Thanks to Katy Bartzokis and Erik Cordtz for teaching and mentoring me to become a better packer and muleskinner. This was another successful season with life lasting memories.

Pictures include: Trinity Alps CCC crew resupply, DWR snow pillow, fixing fence in the Steens, CCC pack out, trail maintenance in the Alps, packing for SCA on the Modoc, Trinity Alps CCC resupplies.



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

**We look forward
to meeting you!**

**The following 50 new members joined BCHC from
1/15/2026 through 4/17/2026**

Antelope Valley

Vicki & Ron
Digirolamo
Laura Flamenco
Cynthia Landis
Geoffrey & Jamie
Lite
Tiffany Pimm
John & Shanda
Turner

San Joaquin Sierra,
continued

Emma Lanser
Odette Mancebo
Jessica Maroon
Harley McCorkle
Alexus McNutt
Corrina Sanestraro
Ally Sorenson
Jay & Debra Stella
Christian Toovey
LeeAnn Beals
Elizabeth Francis-
Eubanks
Sarah Mattina
Michele Stover
Freddy Wilcox &
Shyanne Fields

High Country
High Sierra

Michael Garibotti
Lori Lackey
Alex Ocampo
Maria Pinetree
Sierra Smith
Daphne Capaldi &
Mason Wages
Judy Aron
Lily Baglin-Bunod
Madeleine Chin
Luke & Chantelle
Krenkell

Sequoia
Shasta Trinity

Kern Sierra

Kelly & Aaron
McTaggart
Joy LaMons
Fred & Debbie
Padilla
Tom & Krista Smith
Brandon Vandercook

Los Padres

Mid Valley

Juliet Armendanz
Portia Chaney
Juliana Geiger
Adan Hurtado
Kirish Raaj
Kareem Sedahi
Karen A Smart
Annabelle Steel
Caitlin Vella

Redshank Riders

Jacqueline Davis &
Rodrigo Rivadeneira
David Bowman
Payton Cooley
Samuel Encinia
Maile Everly
Stephanie Laera

San Joaquin Sierra

**WAY TO GO,
SAN JOAQUIN
SIERRA UNIT!**

14 NEW MEMBERS

GREAT WORK!



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: **BCHC**

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.

3. Pay with your PayPal account.

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

1/15/2026 through 4/17/2026

BENEFACTOR (\$100)

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Antelope Valley | Marge Biehl Rayen Richmond |
| Eastern Sierra | Craig London Troy Patton |
| High Country | Lorene Guffey |
| High Sierra | Ruth Gerson Trish Pendegraft |
| Kern Sierra | Mylon Filkins, DVM Lynn Joiner Larry Mumford Roger Whitaker |
| Los Padres | Kaye Bruns Robin Cederlof William Chaides Eve Devine |
| 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 | Cosumnes River Horsemens Assn. Donna Jones Furlow Helen McDermott |
| North Bay | Lynn Cominsky Tim Holliday |
| Redwood | Gary Alves James Biteman Carole & Darrel Polasek Erin Zulliger |
| San Joaquin Sierra | John Cunningham, High Sierra Pack Station Larry Nishma, Knapp-Yosemite Trls Pack Station James Laber Stephen Naylon |
| Shasta Trinity | Lori Henderson |
| Sutter Buttes | Hetty Dutra |

PATRON (\$250)

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Eastern Sierra | Bill Carter Donald Moire Lynn Saunders Claire Cochran Richard Cochran Jacob Hamstra Karl Pendegraft Christopher Shepard |
| High Country | |
| High Sierra | |
| Mid Valley | Karen Barindelli Lloyd Erlandson Debra Lewis Dennis M. Serpa John Young |
| Mother Lode | Stephanie Williams |
| Sequoia | Kathryn C. Bennett Steve Ladrigan Jamie Wilson, DVM |
| Shasta Trinity | Doug Maxfield Bruce McGowan |
| Sutter Buttes | Kay Walters |

MT. WHITNEY (\$500)

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Antelope Valley | Laurie Henry |
| 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

PO Box 84
Valyermo, CA 93563
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/328687220552083/>
Mike Gillett
(661) 373-3378
ghorsecrazy@gmail.com

EASTERN SIERRA

17 Unit B Sunny Slope Rd
Crawley Lake, CA 93546
Anna Baglione
(209) 918-1210
easternsierrabch@gmail.com

HIGH COUNTRY

PO Box 161
Milford, CA 96104
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/170146466736818>
Cindy McMurry
(530) 640-0429
mcmurrycindy@gmail.com

HIGH SIERRA

PO Box 6632
Visalia, CA 93290
www.highsierraunit.org
Dan Baumgardner
(559) 334-7731
danbdraffhorse@yahoo.com

KERN RIVER VALLEY

PO Box 9507
Lake Isabella, CA 93240
Mike Hughes
(760) 223-0608
4hranch@earthlink.net

KERN SIERRA

16347 Stephenie Rd
Bakersfield, CA 93314-9669
Curtis Harms
(661) 817-5452
mulerider2020@icloud.com

LOS PADRES

7395 El Camino Real PMB #472
Atascadero, CA 93422
www.bchc-lpunit.org
Jennifer Best
(805) 345-9066
jenpete@aol.com

MANZANITA RIDERS

PO Box 3130
Ramona, CA 92065-0954
Facebook: Backcountry Horsemen
of California Manzanita Riders Unit
Terry Jorgensen
(760) 789-5185
tlh9749@yahoo.com

MID VALLEY

PO Box 1709
Modesto, CA 95353
www.bchcmidvalley.org
Barbara Baglione-Riner
(209) 402-4473
bbaglione@gmail.com

MOTHER LODGE

PO Box 702
North Highlands, CA 95660
www.bchcmlo.org
Kelly Rowell
(916) 719-1975
kellacious1987@yahoo.com

NORTH BAY

PO Box 9435
Santa Rosa, CA 95405
www.northbayunit.com
Dan Horn
(707) 953-4903
bearstrap@msn.com

REDSHANK RIDERS

PO Box 383
Aguanga, CA 92536-0383
www.redshankriders.com
Stacy Kuhns
(909) 633-1705
stacykuhns@aol.com

REDWOOD

PO Box 6023
Eureka, CA 95502-6023
www.redwoodunit.com
Dennis Halligan
(707) 407-7287
dennis@stillwatersci.com

SAN JOAQUIN SIERRA

PO Box 25693
Fresno, CA 93729-5693
www.bchcsjsu.org
Jim Laber
(559) 250-7906
jim@visaliaidea.com

SANTA ANA RIVER

PO Box 306
Norco, CA 92860
<http://www.sarubchc.org/>
Carol Kelly
(951) 288-0394
thecorral@gmail.com

SEQUOIA

PO Box 1298
Lindsay CA 93247
www.bchc-sequoia.org
Jamie Wilson, DVM
(559) 202-7216
drjamie91@gmail.com

SHASTA TRINITY

18870 Oakwood Heights Dr
Cottonwood, CA 96022
www.bchcshastatrinity.org
Sam Burrows
(530) 646-7336
sburrows@frontier.com

SIERRA FREEPACKERS

PO Box 64
Oakhurst, CA 93644-0064
www.sierrafreepackers.com
Lee Smith
(408) 515-0066
specialtytextures@gmail.com

SUTTER BUTTES

2568 Lake Hills Dr
Butte Valley, CA 95965
<https://www.facebook.com/people/Backcountry-Horsemen-of-California-Sutter-Buttes-Unit/61567898064171/>
Gary Paul
(530) 693-0420
muleguy54@gmail.com

TOP OF THE STATE

PO Box 461
Etna, CA 96027-0461
<https://www.tos-bchc.com/home.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/2273753019542490/posts/d41d8cd9/2686922421558879/>
Robert Robustellini
(530) 468-5636
muletrackstoo@gmail.com

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The unit names and addresses listed here are taken directly from the 2026 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. Thank you!

REMEMBER!

The BCHC Executive Committee no longer sends out membership renewal verification "green slips" via regular mail. Each unit president and membership chair will be sent their unit's data.

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 |

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



“SALUTING VOLUNTEERISM”



PACKING COMPETITION RESULTS

By Carl Perry

ODD LOAD PACKING (TEAM)

- #1 – Ethan Greves & Maile Everly, Fresno State (Time 1:31.10)
- #2 – Cheyenne Mason & Jesse Freitas, Modesto Jr. College
- #3 – Janessa Galardo & Corinna Senestraro
- #4 – Ally Sorenson & Alexis McNutt

ADULT/INTERSCHOLASTIC BOX HITCH (INDIVIDUAL)

- #1 – Ethan Greves, Fresno State (Time :49.11)
- #2 – Jess Freitas, Modesto Jr. College
- #3 – Maile Everly
- #4 – Paytan Cooley
- #5 – Cheyenne Mason

ADULT/INTERSCHOLASTIC DIAMOND HITCH (INDIVIDUAL)

- #1 – Christin Toovey, Reedley College (Time :40.05)
- #2 – Harley McCorkle, Reedley College
- #3 – Ethan Greves, Fresno State
- #4 – Alexis McNutt
- #5 - Ally Sorenson

