

Backcountry Horsemen

of

California

Wilderness Riders



Agency

Contact

Packet

To Whom it May Concern;

Thank you for your interest in the Wilderness Rider Program. The following information will explain the Programs Goals and Purposes.

Our Wilderness Riders (WR) are committed volunteers and members of Backcountry Horsemen of California. Each WR member has completed a five-day Wilderness Rider training that was established by the Sierra Nevada Wilderness Education Project as a partnership and outreach program of the Forest Service, Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC).

Our Wilderness Riders receive extensive training in conveying the many values of wilderness and the nuts and bolts of minimum impact travel with stock. Each WR is charged with educating others about the importance of wild places and in caring for them. This is done in a variety of ways: through public contact made while riding in participating public lands of California and by setting up workshops and presentations in their community.

Backcountry Horsemen of California

Who We Are and What We Do!

Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) is a group of dedicated men and women working to preserve the historic use of trails with recreational pack and saddle stock. BCHC members perform public service activities for numerous land management agencies and are continually working to educate other members and the general public on how to be "Gentle Users."

Backcountry Horsemen of California works in cooperation with government agencies to help clear trails, maintain historic sites, construct new facilities, sponsor educational seminars and clinics, and assist with service projects as requested.

BCHC focuses its efforts in three key areas:

- Service Projects
- Education
- Public Lands Issues

Agency Contact Job Description

As an Agency Contact for the Wilderness Rider Program you serve as a liaison between the Wilderness Riders and your Forest, Park, or Resource Area.

Your Duties Include:

- **Scheduling** Wilderness Riders who contact you to conduct their riding time in your area. This may include completion of volunteer agreements, radio check out and training in area protocols.

- **Contacting** Wilderness Riders to patrol in your area or deliver an educational program if you have a specific need for their services.
- **Keeping Abreast** of the latest developments in the expanding Wilderness Rider partnership. Meeting notes and updates will be sent to you. Attendance at the annual Wilderness Rider Meeting at the Backcountry Horsemen Rendezvous is encouraged. In addition, you are encouraged to be in other aspects of the program such as training, curriculum development, ect.
- **Nominating** outstanding Wilderness Riders for the annual "Wilderness Rider of the year" award. This takes place in February of each year.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE WILDERNESS RIDER PROGRAM

What is the Wilderness Rider Program?

The Wilderness Rider program is a partnership between Backcountry Horsemen of California, the National Park Service, the USDA Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Wilderness Riders are trained stock users who have made a commitment to educating others about the value of wild lands and the importance of Leave No Trace/Gentle Use Skills (LNT/GU).

What is the Wilderness Rider Job Description?

Wilderness Riders represent the BCHC, the Park Service, Forest Service and BLM. Their duties are weighted equally between work in the field and workshop presentations.

The Wilderness Riders are mounted volunteers who ride high use areas educating stock users and others about the value of wilderness and the importance of LNT/GU Skills. They may also be called upon to monitor trail maintenance needs, maintain trails, conduct on site restoration, trailhead education, field based LNT/GU instruction and other duties as requested by the agency contact.

Wilderness Riders schedule and deliver educational sessions on how to practice LNT/GU Skills in or out of doors, and could involve hands on demonstrations, skits, slides, videos, and other multi-media presentation tools.

The Wilderness Rider must be able to maintain relationships with the agency partners and community members, schedule their own trips and educational sessions.

What are the Wilderness Rider Job Requirements?

- Must be committed to practicing and teaching LNT/GU techniques.
- Must possess demonstrated skills in public speaking; including the ability to interact with individuals, groups, and diverse audiences.
- Must possess demonstrated skills in riding and stock management and within two years of completing course demonstrate packing abilities.
- Must be 18 years of age or older.
- Must provide own stock.
- Must be accepted into and successfully complete a five day Wilderness Rider training course.
- Must annually submit project report forms

- Must perform two mounted field sessions, trailhead education, or backcountry LNT/GU training.
- Must fulfill two LNT/GU speaking/teaching workshops per year.
- Must be able to schedule and deliver workshops on LNT/GU Skills.
- Must be able to establish and maintain a working relationship with contacts from the agency partners.
- Must attend a refresher course, once every two years.

WILDERNESS RIDER CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Wilderness Riders are governed by the Wilderness Rider Steering Committee that insures each member adhere to the Code of Conduct.

In the performance of duty as members of the Wilderness Riders, volunteers should:

1. Be polite at all times when dealing with the public, agency contact and the media;
2. Treat other volunteers, agency employees and other organizations with courtesy and sensitivity;
3. Through proper risk management practices ensure that the activity being undertaken is suitable for the age, experience and ability of the individual and educate them as to their responsibilities in contributing to a safe environment;
4. Take the personal initiative to learn, respect, communicate and adhere to the rules of the agency contact.

Personal Behavior

Wilderness Riders agree to:

1. Consistently display high personal standards and project a favorable image of the program;
2. Strive to achieve the highest quality, effectiveness and dignity in both the process and products of volunteer work without promoting self-interests;
3. Refrain from public criticism of fellow volunteers, management committee or users;
4. Abstain from the use of alcohol products while on duty;
5. Not abuse alcohol or drugs;
6. Refrain from the use of profane, insulting, harassing or otherwise offensive language in the conduct of any duties;
7. Avoid harm to others;
8. Be honest and trustworthy;
9. Respect the privacy and opinions of others;
10. Regularly seek ways of increasing professional development and self-awareness;
11. Be passionate about the program and become an advocate in their community.

Volunteers Must:

1. Ensure the safety of the people with whom they work.
2. Ensure that they do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.
3. Respect the dignity of others; verbal or physical behaviors that constitute harassment or abuse are unacceptable.

Public Comment

While in uniform and/or performing volunteer duties they are in effect representatives of the federal land management agencies and the Backcountry Horsemen. As such they should not offer personal opinions or publicly criticize government policies or other organizations and must respect information given in confidence. As interested citizens Wilderness Riders should feel free to comment orally or in writing on public land management issues, but should do so as citizens, not as representatives of the Wilderness Rider program.

Insurance

The Wilderness Riders are covered by Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) insurance through each local BCHC Unit. BCHC insurance is 3rd party liability only which means the member and their horse are not covered, only the non member folks around them. Current membership in BCHC is required.

We also have the option with our insurance to buy what is called a Public Day. This is where we can have non members present in BCHC activities. It takes a 10 day advance notice to our carrier and costs an extra \$51.00 per day.

The insurance is very strict about non members being involved with BCHC functions.

Wilderness Rider History

Backcountry Horsemen of California created an education program known as "Gentle Use" around 1992 to encourage its membership to accept, promote and follow the ideals and principles of wilderness ethics described as Gentle Use (GU) while enjoying their time in the wilderness areas of this great state.

In 1996, the Sequoia National Forest and Yosemite National Park hired a young college graduate by the name of Barb Miranda to the position of Wilderness Education Project Director. She was requested to promote the Leave No Trace (LNT) principles to two important users of the wilderness: the Boy Scouts of America and anyone riding a horse. She was looking for a partnership and found a horseman contact by the name of Larry Difani, the State Education chair of BCHC. The LNT program was accepted by the agencies and BCHC saw a great opportunity for the future partnership.

In the early part '96, it was decided to have three members of BCHC attend a Stock LNT Master Course and create a similar course for members of our organization who wanted to encourage others to actively use the LNT/GU principles. Those individuals were: Larry Difani, Tom Stovall and Bob Olin (who would also be the Forest Service Representative). These men held the first "Ghost Rider" course in Yosemite National Park in the fall of 1996. This name was chosen by Barb but was soon changed because of copyright claims by another volunteer group. The existing group of 10 with the instructors decided on the name "Wilderness Riders".

The following spring a Wilderness Rider by the name of Ruthie Heuer would be the fourth Stock Master of LNT and was to evaluate the BCHC course compared to the LNT Master course, suggest any improvements and bring more teaching ideas to the program. It was at this LNT Master Course that Ken Graves was also a participant and would join BCHC in a few years as the Forest Service LNT Coordinator for the Pacific Southwest Region.

Federal Agency personnel and Wilderness Rider Steering Committee of BCHC met in December of 2008 for a review and evaluation of the program. Both entities believed this program is one of the most successful partnerships involving volunteers in the state and will continue this important education program.

Now in 2011, seven of our members have completed the LNT Masters Course and the last two classes of Wilderness Rider Graduates have been Certified as LNT Trainers.

To register as a listed Agency with Wilderness Rider Program, please submit your contact information to;

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If you have any Questions about the Wilderness Rider Program, Wilderness Rider responsibilities or Agency Contact responsibilities, please feel free to contact our;

Wilderness Rider Forest Service Representatives

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