

Back Country Horsemen of America
National Directors Report
Fort Worden, WA
April, 2009
By
Jim and Gayle Higgs
BCHA National Directors AZ

There were 14 states and 2 affiliates represented at the week long National Board Meeting.

Mike Reedy, Chair gave his State of the BCHA address.

Raenette Didier was the Facilitator for the entire National Board Meeting.

Guest speakers were from The Wilderness Society, US Forest Service, American Hiking Society, American Horse Council and Olympic National Park.

A resolution from Alabama was passed stating: BCHA is the national leader for advocacy of private recreational pack and saddle stock use on all public lands and the stewardship of those lands; that BCHA pursue recognition as “The national equine public lands trail organization” BCHA to become the primary provider of low impact training of stock use nationally.

Ben Pendergrass from the American Horse Council discussed the Right to Ride bill and the need to get a prominent Democrat to sponsor the bill and that possibly it could be slipped into a large spending bill and get passed that way. There are 160 horse organizations that belong to the AHC. He stressed the importance of horses as agriculture, they must be considered livestock. There have been numerous studies on the horse’s benefit to the economy. He urged everyone to sign up for the Congressional Calvary Program. You will be put on an e-mail, fax or mailing list so you can be contacted quickly for grassroots lobbying on industry related issues.

The Wilderness Society came with 3 speakers. They went over the Wilderness Act introduced and promoted by Sand County Almanac author, Aldo Leopold and the development of wilderness studies. Wilderness areas promote outdoor recreation. They gave us the history behind the Wilderness

Act. One of the drafters was naturalist Mardy Murie “Grandmother of the Conservation Movement” who died before the Wilderness Act was passed. She said “the environment is not made for man, they all fit in or fight it”. Protecting the wilderness is essential to inspire all Americans to be responsible.

BCHA is the first organization that the Wilderness Society has reached out to for their Wilderness Society-Recreation Program Plan. The team that came to our meeting is the designated dialog team to take back ideas to the Wilderness Society to partner with BCHA so we all can have a louder voice. They also suggested all BCHA members join the Wilderness Society in your local areas. Special note – all three had horses in their families and one was a member of a BCHA chapter.

Randy Rasmussen, Recreation Policy Specialist, with the American Hiking Society basically said the same thing. If we partner, we will all have more clout. We all use the same trails and working together we can have a greater impact.

Both the WS and the AHS want to put a bill together with BCHA so that the Right to Ride bill would not be just an equestrian bill.

Joel Holtrop, USFS Deputy Chief out of Washington, DC spoke to us. Forest Service to get 1.15 billion from the Economic Stimulus. Their annual budget is 4.5 billion. 650 million is designated for building and repairing campgrounds. FS is looking at what will create the most jobs and where is the most need. They want to create a job that will build toward the future and support FS goals. 15 million will be used for recreation. FS has more to do with less people and is stretched thin. All hands on deck he said we need our partnership’s help.

Steve Didier, past BCHA Chair and retired FS packer stated that BCHA can do trail work for 1/10th the cost of the FS.

Olympic National Park Recreation Ranger welcomed us and told us about the park and the horse/mule friendly conditions.

Reports:

Applications for State/Affiliate Organizations were given by Al Sammons (WY) Expansion Chair.

The following affiliates were approved: Fort Harrod KY, Red River KY, Iron Mountain VA, Big South Fork TN, Pigeon River & Beyond MI.

Virginia was accepted as a state organization of BCHA.

Executive Secretary, Peg Greive reported her activities.

Policy Manual Updated, Peg Greive

Treasurer, Yvette Rollins (IN) reviewed both the 2008 and 2009 (4/15/09) Actual to Budget report.

Director of Development, Kandee Hartel reviewed her activities and copies of all press releases were in our NBM binders. She asked that when BCHA press released come out that we give them to our local newspapers and if local chapters get press to forward to her. Partner on local and state levels with as many organizations as you can, good for the organization and great for BCHA.

Media, Alliason Schottenhaml (MO)

1. Reviewed web site, site has been updated and is great and getting better, web master is Bob Badgley who is a volunteer.
2. Start work updating green tri-fold brochure
3. Newsletter continues same advertising rates, but charge \$50 for ad links.
4. Youth, apply for grant from BCHA Education Foundation to produce youth activity book \$2000. State BCH organizations can purchase them. Develop an area on our web site for kids
5. Packing clinic CD
6. Idaho BCH poster for bike shops, what a horse sees, put on web with cover letter to send to bike shops that can be personalized.
7. Ways and Means combined with Media Marketing. This action to be reviewed each year.

Volunteer Hours Report, Nick Martinez (NM), 2008 total hours is 286,153 with a volunteer value of \$6,613,643.

Double Diamond awarded to our chapter BCHCAZ for our Wupatki Packing project. Go Central AZ chapter, 2nd time for this award in the last 3 years!!!!!!

Expansion Committee, Al Sammons – membership has slight increase of approx 326 new members. BCHA in 25 states, 16 state organizations, 11 affiliates totaling approximately 13,360 members.

Affiliation Committee: Alan Hill (CA), BCHA to remain members in 5 organizations

1. American Horse Council
2. Coalition for Recreational Trails
3. American Trails
4. Partnership for National Trails System
5. National Recreational Trails Training Partnership

Cost to BCHA is a total of \$2217 for membership in these organizations.

Public Liaison, Alan Hill (CA), Emphasized advocacy and increased efforts at local level to attend and participate in local events, show the BCHA face at every opportunity. BCHA continues to participate at national level land management agencies in Washington, DC (USFS, NPS, BLM and USF&W)

Education Committee, Jerry Ledbetter (CA) – BCHA to become the primary provider of low impact training of stock use nationally.

1. LNT Bob Wagner, MO – recruit, coordinate, report
2. TMO Julie Chaney CO – Trail Management Objectives (National Directors, Public Land chairs (state), Members certify TMO/Trail classifications)
3. Saw Certification Trygve Culp, WA – Crosscut/Chainsaw certification: BCHA will certify its volunteers in accordance with Land Management Agency.
4. Horsemanship Dave Crawford, MT develop national program to promote and train stock users in a. Defensive horsemanship and b. packing

Public Lands, Steve Didier (ID)

BCH California Road Parking Resolution was not passed but recommendation was made to write a letter to the Forest Service to request they use their discretionary authority to allow a dispersed camping offset as outlined in the Forest Service Manual, Section 7715.

1. Chapters become more pro-active in FS Travel planning process and are involved in the yearly travel plan.
2. FS should include all prospective stakeholders to disclose potential effects to recreationists. (Send to Washington, DC and Regional Offices)
3. Request support of Montana Wilderness resolution, committee recommends that we support this resolution but recognize that it is in contravention with last year's vote.
4. Washington BCH, mechanized tool use on Suiattle Bridge project, committee recommends that we adopt and send a letter stating to the FS before end of the Public Comment period which is end of day 4/27/09. (Faxed letter and resolution on 4/25/09 to Darrington Ranger District, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF regarding the Suiattle River bridge)
5. Recommend video taken during this years meeting be available on the website.
6. Kern Sierra court settlement, recommend that Legal Funds be made available to California BCH to complete the court settlement process.
7. Committee recommends that we continue to explore our options and relationship with The Wilderness Society, the American Horse Council and the American Hiking Society.
8. Recommend that the Board continue with the proposed Public Lands Training project presented last year (5 year program brought to states and chapters (\$25,000))
9. Public Lands committee has appointed a three person subcommittee whose task it is to compile a list of resources and research papers that address the varied impacts of stock on trails and Wildlife. Once gathered and compiled the information would be passed to the appropriate committee for dissemination to our members. Request \$1000.
10. Request \$4000 2009/10 public lands budget.

Visions – Val Johnson (ID) BCHA to create the position of Executive Director of Issues and Policy and Dennis Dailey our Wilderness Consultant was hired for \$25,000 per year with a \$10,000 travel budget. This will give Dennis the ability to represent BCHA full time and speak in Washington, D.C. What a powerful statement to the Congress, FS, BLM, NPS and all

other public lands agencies to have an expert voice supporting livestock in the backcountry.

2010 Lands Seminar – Dennis Dailey (ED) This would include BCHA ND's and other invited groups for the entire day (Tuesday of NBM) informational seminar.

Election of Officers – paper ballots, Vice Chair position must get over 50% of the votes on the first ballot to win or there would be a runoff between the top two candidates. Officers Elected: Chair: Terry Morrison; Vice Chair: Allison Schottenhaml; Treasurer: Yvette Rollins

2009-2010 Executive Committee elected: Al Sanders (AL), Jim Higgs (AZ), Larry Zauberis (CO), Phil Hufstader (OR)

Tuesday, the day before the NBM, there was a mandatory Trails training for all National Directors. It was presented by Jamie Schmidt with the FS. She is in charge of training the FS employees too.

The National Trail Classification Training Package was given to the Education Committee to work up an easy training document so that the National Directors could lead the training in their respective states. To date this has not happened.

Trail Classification: Designed use objectives, Trail class and Managed use. All trails should have a TMO (Trail Management Objective) when it goes into the system.

Respectfully submitted by
Jim and Gayle Higgs, National Directors AZ