

**CONSTITUTION OF THE
BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF AMERICA
27 April 1997**

PREAMBLE

The organization of Back Country Horsemen was formed in January 1973 with a three-fold purpose: Service to the back country, the education of horsemen, and representation in land use planning and management. These basic precepts have been the reason for our growth, strength, and effectiveness, and this growth has forced the formation of a national organization. The national organization is charged with the responsibility of furthering these same basic precepts on a national scale to the benefit of all member clubs, horsemen, and the back country resource we love.

**ARTICLE I
Name**

The name of this organization shall be Back Country Horsemen of America, hereinafter referred to as BCHA, and shall be incorporated under the laws of the state of Montana as a non-profit educational corporation. The executive body of BCHA shall be named the National Board of Directors, herein after referred to as NBD.

**ARTICLE II
Objectives and Purposes**

1. To perpetuate the commonsense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and Wilderness areas.
2. To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
3. To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
4. To educate, encourage, and solicit active participation in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.
5. To foster and encourage the formation of new state back country horsemen's organizations.

**ARTICLE III
Membership**

Section 1. Any state organization which subscribes to the purposes and objectives of BCHA as stated in Article II is eligible for membership. An individual club in a state without a state organization, which subscribes to the purpose and objectives of BCHA as stated in Article II is eligible for affiliate membership status. Affiliate status shall be on an interim basis pending formation of a state organization. Individuals who belong to a state or affiliate member organization and are members in good standing, are BCHA members.

Section 2. Each member organization shall have "Back Country Horsemen" as part of its name. The use of the term "association" as part of a state or affiliate name is not permitted or accepted.

Section 3. Membership must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of NBD assembled at a regular or special meeting.

Section 4. Individual clubs which are not affiliated with a state Back Country Horsemen's organization when one exists in that state, shall be denied membership in BCHA.

Section 5. The NBD may revoke the membership of a member state organization or affiliate member organization for violation of the BCHA Constitution, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all directors assembled at a regular meeting. This action must be ratified by three-fourths (3/4) of the state organizations.

ARTICLE IV Powers

Section 1. The authority of BCHA shall be in its assembled National Directors. The NBD shall execute this authority and shall follow the direction given them by the member states and shall be responsible to them.

Section 2. The NBD shall have the power to take any action consistent with the law or the BCHA constitution or duly enacted resolution of the NBD.

Section 3. The NBD shall be charged with the duties of distributing pertinent information, providing a clearing house for actions and ideas, and representing the state organizations on a national scale. It shall assist and coordinate the state organizations in their efforts and provide help and direction in organizing.

Section 4. Each state organization shall have equal representation. The National Directors shall decide policy at the NBD meeting. They shall also have the powers and duties contained elsewhere in this Constitution.

Section 5. It shall be agreed that policies and issues may have different effects in different states; for this reason, member state organizations may publicly oppose the position taken by the NBD in regard to controversial issues.

ARTICLE V Annual NBD Meeting

Section 1. The annual NBD meeting of BCHA shall be held at such time and place as it established by the National Directors.

Section 2. Any member in good standing of any member state or affiliate organization may attend any NBD meeting.

Section 3. The NBD shall have the authority to establish the agenda for the NBD meeting. Any state-approved agenda item shall be included.

Section 4. Each National Director must be a member in good standing of a member state organization and show evidence of authorization as a voting Director by said organization.

Section 5. Each National Director may represent only one member state organization.

Section 6. Directors to the NBD meeting shall consist of two Directors from each member state organization. Each state organization shall provide the chair with a list of those Directors prior to the meeting. All Directors shall be entitled to vote on all questions properly brought before the annual NBD meeting. Affiliate members shall have one advisory representative at the annual NBD meeting.

Section 7. Fifty percent of all National Directors shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of Directors in attendance can conduct business.

Section 8. The Chairman of the NBD shall preside over business affairs of all NBD meetings.

Section 9. Member state and affiliate organizations may be assessed BCHA membership dues for the following year as determined and approved at the NBD meeting. Affiliate member organizations shall pay regular annual BCHA dues. This action shall be ratified by three-fourths (3/4) of member state organizations.

Section 10. If a member organization fails to act on a ratification within one year of action of NBD, then a "yes" vote shall be entered for that member state organization.

ARTICLE VI National Board Membership

Section 1. The NBD shall consist of two Directors from each member state organization. Each member state organization shall have an alternate Director(s) to serve in absence of its regular Directors.

Section 2. In the event a regular Director's absence becomes permanent, then the alternate Director shall advance to the permanent position to serve the balance of the replaced Director's term. The affected state shall then provide a new alternate.

Section 3. Members of the NBD and alternates shall be provided by each member state organization to serve staggered two-year terms.

Section 4. The past chairman is an ex-officio member of the National Board of Directors for the following year only.

ARTICLE VII Officers and Operation of NBD

Section 1. The officers of the NBD shall consist of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and/or Treasurer, and such other officers as the assembled NBD shall create from time-to-time. The Officers shall be elected by and from the NBD for a term of one year. Officers and directors shall assume office at the conclusion of the annual NBD meeting. The state organization to which the Chairman belongs shall advance its alternate Director and shall provide a new alternate Director.

Section 2. Duties:

- a. The duties of the Chairman of the NBD shall be to chair all meetings of the NBD; to keep the NBD informed by letter or other appropriate means of events, issues, or other matters of interest to BCHA which affect horse use, or trails, or involve land management.
- b. The Vice Chairman shall assist the Chairman and shall assume the duties of Chairman when the Chairman is absent.
- c. The Secretary shall take and file minutes of all NBD meetings and furnish a copy of these minutes to all state organizations; shall serve as Secretary to all meetings of the NBD and shall furnish a copy of the minutes to all directors. The Secretary shall have the responsibility of keeping the Constitution current and shall furnish a copy of the Constitution and any changes to all members of the NBD and each state organization. The Secretary shall also perform the other duties normal to the office of Secretary.
- d. The Treasurer shall keep and safeguard all moneys relative to BCHA; shall include a Treasurer's report as part of all NBD meeting; and perform the other duties normal to the office of Treasurer. The Treasurer's signature must appear on all checks along with that of either the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

e. The National Directors shall represent their state organizations and be responsible to them. They shall serve as a liaison between their state organization and the NBD and shall inform both on actions taken or requests made. They shall provide state input to the NBD and provide information from the NBD to their state organization. They shall keep the Chairman informed by letter or other appropriate means of events, issues, or other matters of interest to the NBD.

Section 3. Each National Director shall have one (1) vote with the exception that the Chairman will vote only in case of a tie.

Section 4. The NBD may take action by mail or phone, provided that each Director is notified of the proposal.

Section 5. The NBD shall meet at least once a year but may meet as often as necessary to properly conduct business of BCHA. Written notice of these meetings shall be sent to the National Directors at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting date except in case of emergency. These notices shall contain the business agenda so that the National Directors can confer with their state organizations. Special meetings must be approved by the majority of the NBD.

Section 6. Only members of the NBD shall have the right to voice and vote. National Directors may request voice privilege for a member of a state organization.

Section 7. No NBD Officer shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same position.

ARTICLE VIII Finances

Section 1. All expenses of the National Directors shall be borne by their state organization at rates set by said group.

Section 2. The expenses of the Chairman of the National Board and conducting business of the National Board shall be borne by the Treasury of BCHA.

Section 3. All expenditures from the Treasury shall be approved by the NBD.

Section 4. The Treasury of BCHA shall be borne by all member state and affiliated organizations in a manner established at the NBD meeting and shall be ratified by three-fourths (3/4) of state organizations.

Section 5. The NBD has the right to accept or reject any or all moneys.

ARTICLE IX Removal of Officers or Directors

Section 1. Officers of the NBD may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all Directors.

Section 2. A National Director may be removed by that Director's state at any time. The Alternate Director shall finish the removed Director's term. A notification of removal and the name of the new Alternate shall be furnished to the NBD immediately following such action.

ARTICLE X Constitutional Changes

Section 1. A vote to enact, repeal, or amend the constitution must be passed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the NBD, and ratification by three-fourths (3/4) of the member state organizations.

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Section 2. All member state organizations shall be notified in writing sixty (60) days prior to the meeting at which the Constitution is to be changed.

ARTICLE XI
Conduct of Business

All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with *Roberts Rules of Order* unless in conflict with this Constitution.

ARTICLE XII
Ratification

This constitution will go into effect when ratified in writing by three-fourths (3/4) of states with existing state BCH organizations (Montana, Idaho, Washington, and California).

Ratified by: Montana, March 23, 1987
 Idaho, March 14, 1987
 Washington, March 8, 1987
 California, March 22, 1987

ARTICLE XIII
Savings Clause

In the event portions of this constitution are found to be inconsistent with state or federal law by a court of competent jurisdiction, such portions to the extent that they violate the law shall be deemed deleted and of no force and effect.

Changes incorporated at the NBD meeting on March 16, 1990, Missoula, Montana.
Ratified by all four member states in 1990 and 1991.
Editorial changes incorporated by the NBD March 8, 1991 and reprinted.
Changes incorporated the NBD meeting in April 1996, Kalispell, Montana.
Ratified by member states in 1996 and 1997.
Editorial changes incorporated by the NBD April 27, 1997 and reprinted.
Ratified by member states in 2008 at Elko NV NBM.