

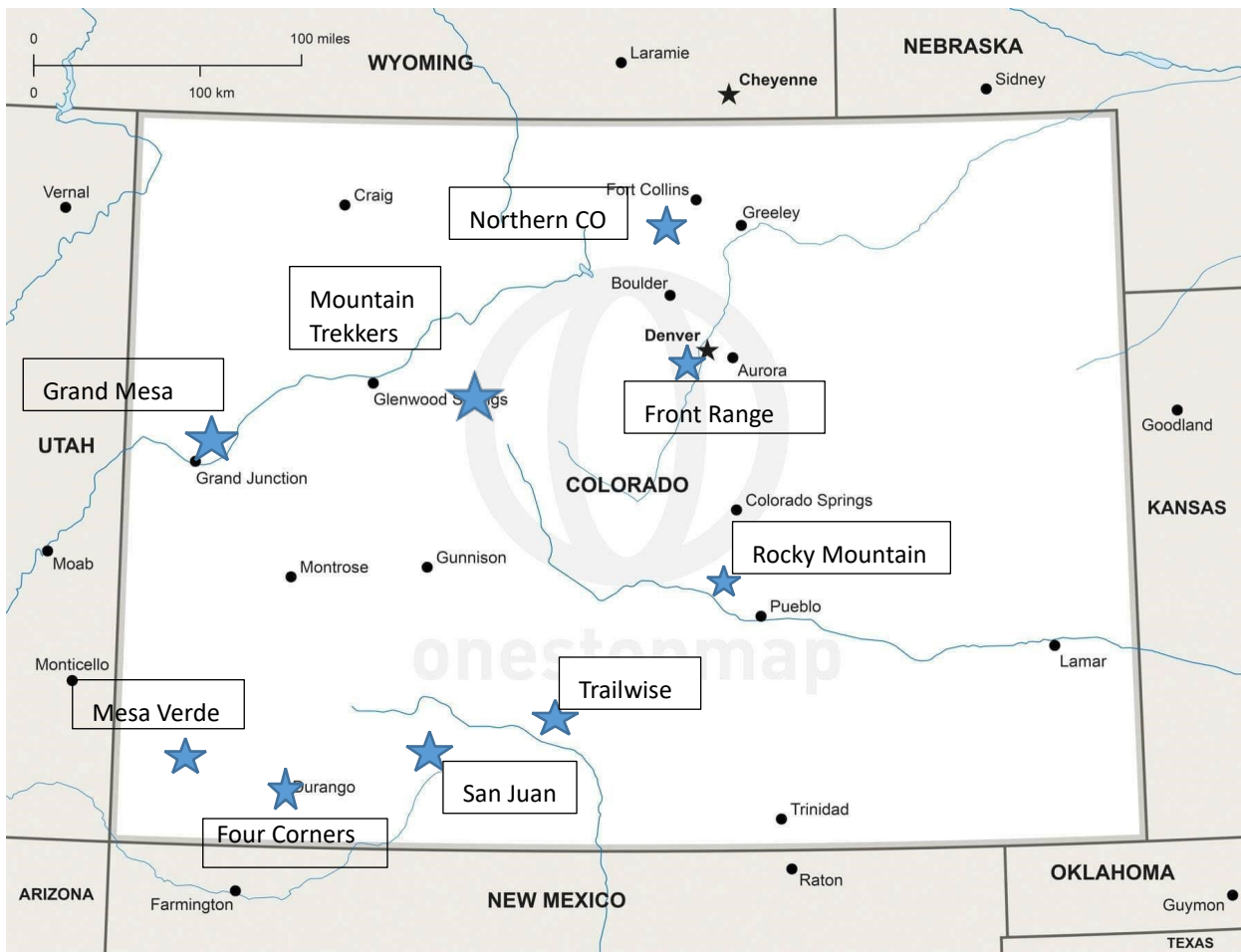
# BCH of Colorado Report

Back Country Horsemen of America

National Board Meeting

Casper, WY

March 25-27, 2024



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**\*\*No report Grand Mesa**

## STATE REPORT

# Back Country Horsemen of Colorado (BCHCO)

### Purpose and Mission Statement

- ★ Perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's backcountry and Wilderness areas.
- ★ Work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
- ★ Assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resources.
- ★ Educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise and sustaining use of the backcountry resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.
- ★ Foster and encourage the formation of new Back Country Horsemen Chapters within Colorado

### Organization & Outreach

- ★ We continue to have nine chapters, several report struggling with membership recruitment and retention and participation.
- ★ We struggle with participation statewide. We only had two annual meetings instead of the usual three and both were held virtually, not all chapters participated. They were held in March and November 2023.
- ★ Four of our nine chapters are a c(3); state is a c(4).

2011 Butte, MT NBM was attended by Julie Chaney and Larry Zauberis

2012 Eugene, OR NBM was attended by Julie Chaney and Larry Zauberis

2013 Rapid City, ND NBM was attended by Julie Chaney and Larry Zauberis

2014 Chattanooga, TN NBM was attended by Julie Chaney and Larry Zauberis

2015 Sacramento, CA NBM was attended by Jan Potterveld and Larry Zauberis

2016 Las Vegas, NV NBM was attended by Jan Potterveld and Larry Zauberis

2017 Great Falls, MT NBM was attended by Jan Potterveld and Larry Zauberis

2018 Spokane, WA NBM was attended by Larry Zauberis and Tif Rodriguez

2019 Asheville, NC NBM was attended by Tif Rodriguez (MVBCH) and Monica Falk (TWBCH)

2020 Virtual Via Zoom was attended by Tif Rodriguez (MVBCH), Barbara Tigyer (RMBCH)

2021 Virtual Via Zoom was attended by Tif Rodriguez (MVBCH), Barbara Tigyer (RMBCH)

2022 Kansas City, MO NBM was attended by Tif Rodriguez (MVBCH), Barbara Tigyer (RMBCH)

2023 Kalispell, MT NBM was attended by Tif Rodriguez (MVBCH), Nancy McDonald (NCBCH)

### Issues & Problems

- ★ Participation and recruiting younger members is a recurring theme within chapters.
- ★ Educating folks on the value of state and national, why we are here and what we do; national should be taking a larger role in helping states.
- ★ Unity of chapters within state; we are all a part of the same organization but factions seem to be an issue.
- ★ Communication- making sure important information coming from state and national reaches our chapter members and boots on the ground.
- ★ Engagement of members statewide throughout the year.
- ★ Ensuring that leaders in chapters understand BCH is a bipartisan organization and when representing BCH personal agendas shouldn't lead.

## STATE REPORT: BCHCO (Continued)

### Projects & Plans

- ★ Revitalizing state committees. Need to find committed chairs that follow through. Improving connections with chapters statewide is still a goal; enable the success of new folks coming on and long-term success of the operation and viability of state is also a goal.
- ★ Engaging all state directors so that work doesn't fall on a few.
- ★ Revitalizing education and incorporating BCHA's webinars into our statewide Leadership Symposium.
- ★ We always plan on having another statewide rendezvous but it has not come to fruition the last couple years.
- ★ Continuing to set up best practices to pass down to newly placed officers; focus on mentoring and successor training, so new folks coming on are ready.

### Organization Details

#### 2023 Executive Committee:

Chair – John Case (FRBCH)

Vice Chair – Jay McDonald (NCBCH)

Secretary – Vacant

Treasurer – Larry Zuberis (4CBCH)

Volunteer Hours – Larry Zuberis (4CBCH)

National Directors – Tif Rodriguez (MVBCH) and Nancy McDonald (NCBCH); John Case (FRBCH, alt.)

#### Chapter Directors (Current):

4CBCH- Larry Zuberis; (no second); (no alternate)

FRBCH – John Case; Julie Chaney; Courtney Cowgill (alternate)

NCBCH- Nancy McDonald; L Jay McDonald; Vicki Buchanan (alternate)

SJBCH – Ron Toland; (no second); John Nelson (alternate)

TWBCH – Monica Falk; Lisa McClure; Nina Smart (alternate)

RMBCH- Barb Tigyer; Leslie Miller; Hillary Leeman (alternate)

GMBCH – Lyndsay Kennedy; Laurie Kollasch; Andrea Byrne (alternate)

MVBCH- Tif Rodriguez; Alice Pierson; Lisa Akers (alternate)

MTBCH – Rika Moore; Sarah Crawford; Debra Dupree Batten (alternate)

Committees: Education, Expansion/Networking, Public Lands – Chairs needed for all committees

# STATE REPORT: BCHCO (Continued)

## 2023 Volunteer Hours

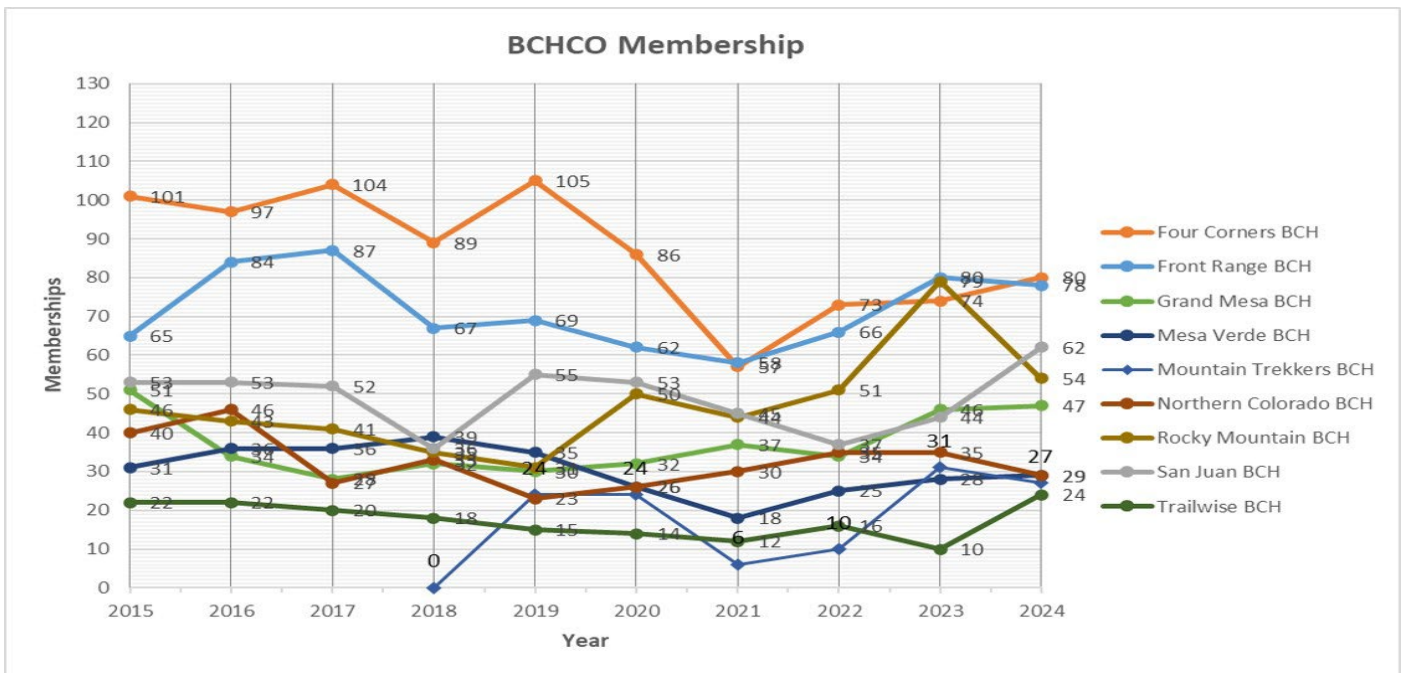
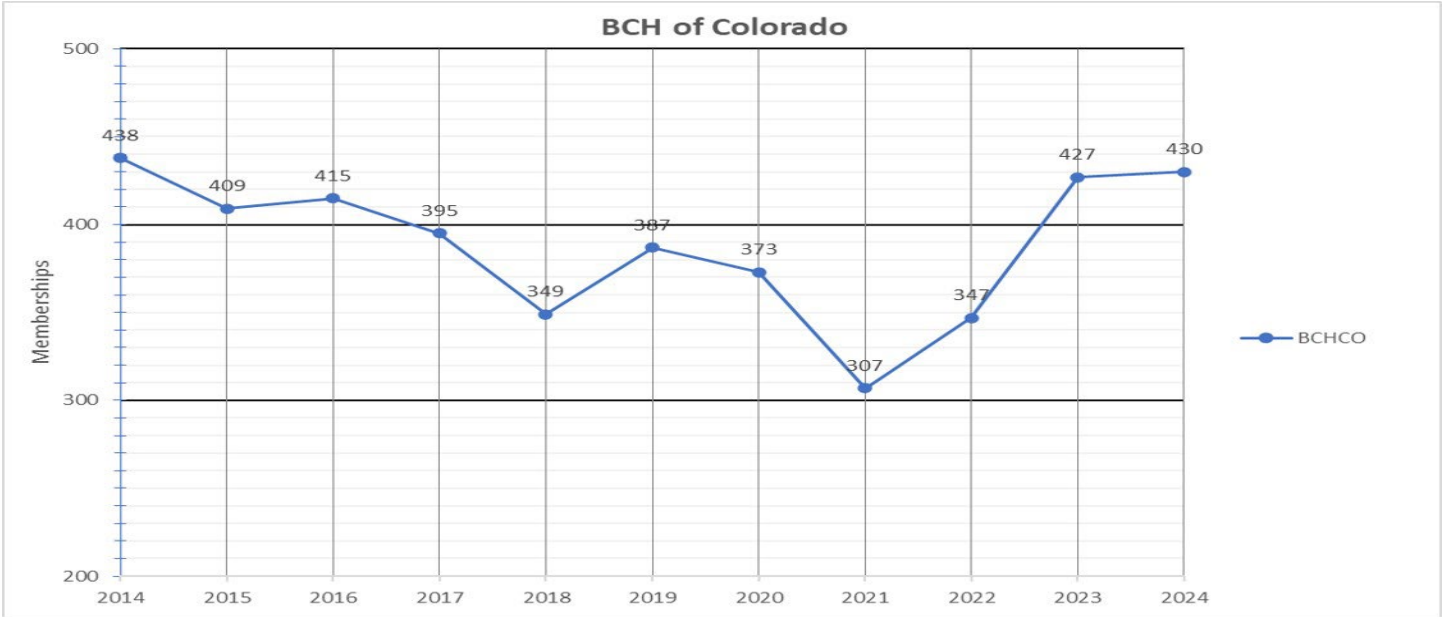
<b>Backcountry Horsemen of America</b>				
<b>Volunteer Hours Report</b>				
January/1/2023-December/31/2023				
Back Country Horsemen of Colorado				
	P1 Totals	Rate per hour/mile/day	Total Value	
Total Basic Hours	1565	\$31.80	<b>\$49,751.10</b>	Calculated per hour
Total Skilled Hours	596	\$47.70	<b>\$28,429.20</b>	Calculated per hour
Total Trail Recon Hours	307	\$31.80	<b>\$9,762.60</b>	Calculated per hour
Total LNT - Education	90	\$31.80	<b>\$2,862.00</b>	Calculated per hour
Total Public Meetings	152	\$31.80	<b>\$4,833.60</b>	Calculated per hour
Total Administrative Service	1972	\$31.80	<b>\$62,709.60</b>	Calculated per hour
Total Travel Time	1261	\$31.80	<b>\$40,098.21</b>	Calculated per hour
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>5942.45</b>			
Wilderness Trail Miles	65			
Other Trail Miles	119			
<b>Total Trail Miles</b>	<b>184</b>			
Personal Vehicle	5442	\$0.62	<b>\$3,374.04</b>	Calculated per mile
Stock Hauling	30519	\$1.35	<b>\$41,200.65</b>	Calculated per mile
<b>Total Travel Miles</b>	<b>35961</b>			
Power Equipment	88	\$30.00	<b>\$2,640.00</b>	Calculated per hour
Heavy Equipment	12	\$110.00	<b>\$1,320.00</b>	Calculated per hour
<b>Total Equipment Hours</b>	<b>100</b>			
Total Stock (Pack and Saddle)	409			
<b>Total Stock Days</b>	<b>431</b>	\$100.00	<b>\$43,100.00</b>	Calculated per day
Total Donations	\$1,133.00		<b>\$1,133.00</b>	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$291,214.00</b>	

**Value of Volunteer Labor for 2023: \$ 291,214**

# STATE REPORT: BCHCO (Continued)



## Membership Statistics Statewide



# Chapter Report

## Four Corners Back Country Horsemen (4CBCH)

### Accomplishments

#### Trails & Facilities –

1. East Creek Trail: clearing trail and spraying weeds (8 people plus 2 riders & 2 pack animals)
2. Crater Lake Trail: clearing trail (3 riders & 3 pack animals)
3. Saul's Creek: picking up trash on all trails (8 people)
4. Colorado Trail: pack in and out tools for Colorado Trail Foundation (5 riders & 5 pack animals)

#### Education/Outreach

- ★ Poker Ride event at Saul's Creek
- ★ Tack Sale at La Plata County Fairgrounds
- ★ Cowboy Gathering parade

#### Organization

- ★ Membership meetings January through November with presentations
- ★ Board meetings January through November
- ★ Annual picnic at Bayfield Park
- ★ Annual Christmas party at Florida Grange

### Current and Future Projects

- ★ Continue all of the above plus increasing pack support for USFS, SJMA, CTF, etc.
- ★ Supporting the 4-H while we transfer the Tack Sale over to them.

### Issues and Problems

Low attendance at monthly meetings and at trail projects

# CHAPTER REPORT

## Front Range Back Country Horsemen (FRBCH)

### Accomplishments

#### Trails & Facilities

- Maintain trails in the Mount Evans Wilderness (73,459 acres) – mostly clearing fallen trees and supporting noxious weed management by the Friends volunteer support group (FOMELC)
- Maintain trails in the Lost Creek Wilderness (114,875 acres) – mostly clearing fallen trees
- Maintain our two adopted segments of the Colorado Trail
- Some success in outreach for new members – 26 new members in 2023
- Continuing to use an online Calendar that greatly increased number of rides and attendance on trail clearing trips, and also facilitated recreational rides, camp trips and clinics
- Educational booth at the Rocky Mountain Horse Expo in Denver (2023)
- Assist National Forest in outreach to the public during Christmas tree cutting weekends
- Evolving partnerships with other outdoor stewardship organizations (hikers, mountain bikers) who use and help maintain some of the same trails. Particularly with the Outside 285 task force, we are working with more non-equestrian groups

### Current and Future Projects

- We will continue with all the projects listed above.
- We are planning more trail work projects that involve camping. Many of our members have campers or living quarters horse trailers and we get better participation.
- We are expanding our focus for education to include single-day clinics in the Denver area on a variety of topics, and plan to engage more speakers at monthly meetings to increase attendance

### Issues and Problems

- Aging trail work volunteers, and limited number of members willing and able to work on the trails
- Limited number of pack animals and limited interest in packing reduces the scope of these efforts
- Very wet spring in the Rocky Mountain front range caused cancellation of many activities, and our trail clearing was severely reduced for the year.
- Our previous activities in hosting a Colorado Trail Ride were suspended in 2021. The chapter has not committed to support another multi-year effort to ride the entire trail, after completing the last series in 2020.

### Organization Details

#### Board of Directors (for 2023)

President John Case

Vice President Bill Klink

Secretary Karen Chaney

Treasurer Joan Wealing

Board Members Donna Fleischer, Shawna Jarvis, and Amanda Halvorson

State Representatives John Case (BCHCO Chair), Julie Chaney

Courtney Cowgill (Alternate)

#### Dues Structure

Individual \$30

Family \$35

Corporate Sponsor \$55

★ We were founded in 1996.

★ At the end of 2023 we had 78 memberships.

★ In 2023 we volunteered 411 hours, traveled over 1700 personal vehicle miles and 1140 stock haul miles, and put in 18 stock days.





# CHAPTER REPORT

## Mesa Verde Back Country Horsemen (MVBCH)

### Accomplishments

**Trails & Facilities** – The Mavreeso and Goble Trails required our annual use of chainsaws to clear after heavy winter snow delayed access to the high country. We identified a major washout on the Goble trail requiring a trail reroute which ultimately utilized the USFS trail crew. MVBCH maintained the Equestrian Facility at Transfer Campground.

### Education/Outreach

On National Trails Day members provided public education about user interface on trails, handouts, and the opportunity to interact with a mule at the Boggy Draw Trailhead. A booth at 4 Corners Ag Expo provided information about our Chapter mission and a Crosscut Saw demonstration. Participants cut and branded wood rounds to be taken home with them. Continuing education for our members included learning about Equine Dentistry and Fire Evacuation Protocols for Large Animals. We are pursuing evolving partnerships with other outdoor stewardship organizations. Many of our members trained to be Wilderness Study Area Monitors for the BLM. Our newsletter is published monthly online. In addition to our website, a Facebook page is maintained with 304 members.

### Current and Future Projects

- Pick up one more USFS trail to maintain in 2024.
- Work with the BLM to maintain the trailhead parking area of the Summit Ridge Recreational Area.
- Provide pack stock support for USFS Projects on the SJNF and BLM Canyon of the Ancients National Monument.
- Provide educational outreach at a trailhead on National Trails Day.
- Award a \$1500 scholarship for higher education to a local graduate with an interest in outdoor resource management.
- Plan group campouts in support of trail workdays.
- Do monthly WSA Monitoring for the BLM.
- Put on a packing clinic to facilitate support of agency projects.
- Hold our annual Poker Ride fundraiser.
- Explore partnership with local trail user groups and the San Juan Mountain Association.

### Issues and Problems

Our membership is aging. We need younger members over time. We want to monitor problems caused by non-equestrian use of equestrian campgrounds. User Interface between bikers, e-bikers, and equestrians continue to be a challenge.

## CHAPTER REPORT MVBCH (Cont.)

### Organization

President	Alan Story
Vice President	Rex Alford
Secretary	Lauren Lawrence
Treasurer	Ellen Leis
Board Member	Alice Pierson
National Director	Tif Rodriguez
State Board Representatives	Tif Rodriguez, Alice Pierson, Alternate -Lisa Busby-Akers
Dues Structure	
Individual	\$38
Family	\$43
Corporate	\$43
Youth	\$14

### History

1998	Incorporated in February; official chapter of BCHA
2009	2,826.25 Volunteer Hours; 32 Family and 29 Individual Memberships
2010	2,067.1 Volunteer Hours; 30 Family and 27 Individual Memberships
2011	1,135.35 Volunteer Hours; 28 Family and 25 Individual Memberships
2012	1,159.25 Volunteer Hours; 27 Family and 30 Individual Memberships
2013	695 Volunteer Hours; 25 Family and 23 Individual Memberships
2014	350 Volunteer Hours; 15 Family and 15 Individual Memberships
2015	1,086 Volunteer Hours; 18 Family and 18 Individual Memberships
2016	2,003.15 Volunteer Hours; 15 Family and 21 Individual Memberships
2017	2,115.05 Volunteer Hours; 21 Family and 21 Individual Memberships
2018	2,449 Volunteer Hours; 17 Family and 17 Individual Memberships
2019	2,552 Volunteer Hours; 14 Family and 11 Individual Memberships
2020	498 Volunteer Hours; 9 Family and 9 Individual Memberships
2021	365 Volunteer Hours; 12 Family and 12 Individual Memberships
2022	507 Volunteer Hours; 12 Family and 13 Individual Memberships
2023	684 Volunteer Hours; 16 Family and 13 Individual Memberships



# CHAPTER REPORT

## Mountain Trekkers Back Country Horsemen (MTBCH)

### Accomplishments

#### Trails & Facilities

- Maintained the Mucky Lake trail in White River National Forest near Gypsum.
- Maintained the McKenzie Gulch trail in White River National Forest near Eagle and Sylvan Lake State Park.
- Equestrian trail advocacy for Sweetwater Lake on the Garfield-Eagle county line. The property recently transitioned from private to public when it was acquired by the White River National Forest and we stay involved through public meetings to ensure equestrians have a voice in management decisions.

#### Education/Outreach

- We focused on education in 2023 and offered a backcountry skills workshop and a backcountry first aid class. Both were free for participants.
- Group social rides: The Spring Fling (held in May in Eagle) and Poker Ride (held in September in Bond), helped bring members, friends, and their equines together to enjoy BLM and private trails in the Eagle Valley.
- We partnered with the Tipi Raisers in June for a Four Directions ride, part of the indigenous wisdom gathering at the Town of Eagle's annual Flight Days celebration. The Tipi Raisers work to alleviate conditions of poverty in Native communities and encourage non-Native volunteers to work alongside them. Our members helped plan routes and joined other riders, both Native and non-Native, as four groups rode from different directions while learning indigenous lessons and converged at Flight Days.

#### Organization

- We had 27 members join in 2023 and seven of them were new members.

### Current and Future Projects

- We will continue with trail maintenance at Mucky Lake and McKenzie Gulch. A large trail maintenance and water crossing project at Sylvan Lake State Park is pending a 2024 Trails Capacity Grant application.
- Social events planned for 2024 include our Spring Fling ride, Poker Ride, a Murder Mystery ride, and an overnight trip to the Rabbit Valley area in McInnis Canyons. Our annual Poker Ride is a great fundraiser and we hope the Murder Mystery ride (new in 2024) will also serve as a successful fundraising event.
- A trail obstacle playday is planned in 2024 to develop trail skills for members and help bring in new members and backcountry riders.
- A 4-H Day is planned in 2024 when we will visit with our local Freedom Riders 4-H club during one of their meetings to introduce them to MTBCH and encourage them to join us on the trails. A project to assist with making trail obstacles for the 4-H club is pending a BCHA Youth Grant application.
- We will continue to advocate for equestrian use and facilities at Sweetwater Lake and with Eagle County as they develop their Open Space Plan.

### Issues and Problems

- We have low membership from two of the three counties we serve. We would like to increase our activity and number of members from outside Eagle County and increase the number of youth members overall.
- We discontinued our Wilderness Rider Competition due to lack of interest. This competition encouraged riders to compete to ride in all seven of our wilderness areas for a custom silver belt buckle.

# CHAPTER REPORT MTBCH (Cont.)

## Organization Details

### (For 2023)

President	Rika Moore
Vice President	Vanda Whittaker
Secretary	Rika Moore
Treasurer	Sarah Crawford
Board Member	Debra Dupree Batten Lana Bryce

### Dues Structure

Individual	\$35
Family	\$55
Assoc. Club	\$55
Youth	\$25

## History

In the Summer of 2018, Eagle County residents came together to create the Mountain Trekkers chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of America. We are a group of devoted equestrians who volunteer our time to clear, maintain, and improve trails for everyone to use. We seek to be a unifying voice for the horse community by advocating for horseback riding and stock access to public lands. Mountain Trekkers isn't a group just for equestrians and stockmen; it's a collaborative group of folks who are passionate about our wilderness and our community.

The Mountain Trekkers area of focus covers some of the most coveted wilderness in the Colorado Rockies. This includes the Holy Cross, Eagles Nest, Hunter-Frying Pan, and Flat Tops Wilderness Areas, and the White River National Forest. We work in cooperation with land management agencies such as the United States Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the Bureau of Land Management.



# CHAPTER REPORT

## Northern Colorado Back Country Horsemen (NCBCH)

### Accomplishments

Continued involvement with Pole Mountain Gateways Project  
Continued contact with USFS regarding Jack's Gulch Campground Rebuild (Assessments still ongoing) Most work to be contracted labor.  
Continued involvement with Southeast Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (SWORC)

### Education and Outreach

Established new contact with USFS - possibility of new riding areas ARPG  
Reached out to BLM - minimal success - really need a liaison.  
Still seeking to reclaim decommissioned campground (Pole Creek) on MBRTB

### Current and Future Projects

- Maintain bridge over bog area - HQ TH Corrals
- Maintain corrals: Pelton Creek, WY...MBRTB Ranger District - Laramie, WY
- Maintain corrals: Headquarters TH...Pole Mountain Laramie WY
- Check on/maintain corrals State Forest State Park-Gould, CO
- Rebuild Gate system into Pawnee Buttes for easier access for all user groups.
- Rebuild fencing/corner posts for above project.
- Rebuild Gate access for new equestrian access riding areas ARPG
- Gate on Molly Moon Trail - Red Feather Lakes, CO (delayed due to USFS burning)
- Clearing/reestablishing connector trail between ElkHorn and Disappointment Falls (delayed due to USFS burning - Red Feather Lakes)
- Continued efforts to get signage placed on Pole Mountain Trail System
- (delayed due to USFS focus on building trails from Laramie to connect to Pole Mtn)
- Clearing trails on Eastern section of Pole Mountain
- Wire Removal - Lady Moon and Elkhorn Trails (small sections along each trail)

### Issues and Problems

- It seems, within our Chapter, that the President and VP are responsible for any and all efforts to contact agencies in an effort to engage those agencies in partnership work. There is no interest within membership to be a liaison. Help is greatly needed!
- Retention of members is an ongoing problem.
- Recruitment of YOUNG people to engage in our Mission
- Saw Certification particularly chainsaw certifications continues to be problematic
- Mountain Bikers are taking over many trails - we are being pushed out.
- Reluctance of Members to utilize E-Bike Report or Campsite Report Forms

# CHAPTER REPORT NCBCH (Cont.)

## Organization

### Board of Directors (for 2023)

#### Organization Details 2023

President: Vickie Buchanan

Vice President: Jay McDonald

Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer: Rick Farasyn

Board Members:

National Director: Nancy McDonald

State Representatives: Jay and Nancy McDonald

#### Dues Structure:

Individual: \$40.00

Family: \$45.00

Youth: State and National Dues with Sponsor

Business/Assoc:

Honorary:

#### History:

Incorporated September 23, 2003

Non-Profit 501c3

Sadly VH records are missing/misplaced until year 2018-multiple persons were responsible for submitting these reports with no 'chain of command' as to where they were sent or retained.

Members 2015 Family - 14 Individual - 27

Members 2016 Family - 15 Individual - 27

Members 2017 Family - 16 Individual - 30

Members 2018 No records to access

Members 2019 Family - 17 Individual - 15 VH: 1322

Members 2020 Family - 18 Individual - 16 VH: 1232

Members 2021 Family - 26 Individual - 22 VH: 975

Members 2022 Family - 26 Individual - 17 VH: 713

Members 2023 Family - 18 Individual - 14 VH: 331

Note: 2021-2023 At least three individuals did not report any hours despite common knowledge of work done in various places. Just sad.

# CHAPTER REPORT

## Rocky Mountain Back Country Horsemen (RMBCH)

### Accomplishments

- over 1,200 volunteer hours logged (\$24,000 value)
- opened several Sangre de Cristo trails for multi-use, as well as assisting on many other USFS trails such as Squirrel Creek and Bruno Gulch
- maintained and reopened several BLM trails, such as Shelf Road, Grape Creek, Deerhaven, and Seep Springs
- completed a work ride at Dome Rock; published in CPW newsletter
- published in Horse Trails of America, a national equine travel resource
- helped with trail planning for Red Canyon Park in Cañon City
- partnered with Wet Mountain Valley Saddle Club to provide free camping for our trail work volunteers during ABC Sangres weekends
- membership covers a wide area; reaching many counties of Colorado

### Education and Outreach

- memorial ride at Seep Springs to christen the Fred Garza Trail
- all of our rides are used for educating new members and other trail users
- we used our Facebook page to continue promoting our work this year, such as cleaning up the mounting area at Hidden Mesa Open Space
- We used our Facebook page to promote our work a lot this year, many posts leading directly to new member sign-ups

### Top Projects from 2023

- our biggest project for the year was ABC Sangres
- gained membership support for our work projects on Sangre de Cristo mountain trails, in partnership with WMVSC and USFS
- three large-scale events used to organize volunteers (Asses, Brighten, and Celebrate the Sangre de Cristo mountains)
- Cleared several trails (Lakes of the Clouds, Macey Lake, Venable, and Music Pass [with NPS]), with this year being a first time for rides staffed by disabled riders and an ability to daylight trails
- these events were staged from WMVSC, and all were attended by several new members
- received a \$1000 grant from BCHA and \$200 in Big R gift cards
- Grape Creek in Cañon City is always a fun project for us: beavers move their dams constantly and the willow brush grows out of control quickly so we are typically working on this trail all spring, summer, and fall
- brought back the popular ride series "Cabin Fever" to help green horses/riders get out on easy trails in the spring in preparation for later rides

### Issues and Problems

- general organizational issues such as lack of funding and low membership participation have been some of the main reasons this chapter struggles to accomplish its larger goals
- although new members were generally excited about opportunities to participate with RMBCH, their enthusiasm was overshadowed by negative remarks from several former members, who spoke critically about the chapter after their departure.
- This negativity, including inappropriate reactions on social media, may have contributed to a significant drop in renewals
- It's essential the state addresses such issues and work towards fostering a positive and supportive atmosphere within all chapters of BCH, as complaints are often related to the struggles each chapter is having but solutions are never the focus.

## CHAPTER REPORT RMBCH (Cont.)

### Future Projects for 2023

- Nothing major planned this year, other than our usual Cabin Fever Ride Series, and we will likely set dates for ABC Sangres but not do it at the same large scale as 2023
- We may do a charity ride this year, details TBD

## Organizational Details

### Officers in 2023:

- Hillary Leeman, president
- Helena Laliberte, VP thru 8/23
- Kim Godfrey, treasurer
- Amy Mason, secretary
- Board of Directors:
  - Katie Fitzgerald
  - Sadie Welsh
  - Leslie Miller
  - Bill Morgan
- Dues structure: \$40 individual / \$50 family / \$75 business (+\$3 process fee for online payments)
- We are a 501c3 non-profit organization



# CHAPTER REPORT

## San Juan Back Country Horsemen (SJBCH)

### Accomplishments

#### Trails & Facilities –

- The chapter cleared 325 trees from nine trails on the Pagosa RD, Divide RD, and Conejos Peak RD of the San Juan and Rio Grande NF's.
- During a week-long August work trip 25 miles into the South San Juan Wilderness, we cleared several trails and the South Fork Conejos Trail (Conejos Peak RD of the Rio Grande NF) that hadn't been opened in decades. We also cleaned campsites and hauled out trash (photo attached).
- Packed trail tools in for Step Outdoors youth crew for work on Opal Lake Trail.
- Packed out approx. 600 pounds of trash from various Wilderness campsites in the South San Juan and Weminuche Wilderness Areas.
- Conducted National Trails Day event at Treasure Falls; cleaned litter, brushed trail, trimmed weeds, repainted two information signs.
- Extensive refurbishment and painting of large forest entrance sign at Coyote Hill on Pagosa RD (photo attached).
- Managed ticket sales for Pagosa Springs Thursday Night Summer Rodeos in exchange for donation to chapter for trail work.
- We actively participated in the Forest Service Jackson Mountain Mountain Biking Proposal which called for 65 miles of competitive loop trails meant to create a "Moab in the Pines" biking event center in the Pagosa Springs area, and likely greatly changing the landscape and culture of the community; with our comments on the projects and other groups comments directly related to wildlife impact concerns we were able to block this project.

### Education and Outreach

- Appointed two young people to the chapter board of directors as 'Youth Ambassadors' to help encourage young people's involvement in BCH.
- Held a back country skills clinic in June for about forty people to learn packing, knots, stock use, horsemanship, crosscut saw use, shoeing, etc.
- Participated in July 4 th Pagosa parade with a group of eight riders.
- Sponsored a booth for kids and families at the Archuleta County Fair (photos attached).
- Organized training to certify 20 members for chainsaw and crosscut work.
- Our monthly Pony Tracks newsletter includes articles and information about BCHA, trail use, Leave No Trace, stock use, etc. and is meant to educate and inform readers.
- Our Facebook page has about 600 followers where we include information about BCHA, trail use, LNT, stock use, public lands management, etc.
- We are actively participating with the Pagosa Area Trails Council on all area trail matters, including helping mountain biking users identify a trail system that is in balance and harmony with the land and community.

### Current and Future Projects

- We are working to expand our youth involvement, including asking our two young board members to apply for a BCHA Youth Grant to conduct a youth-oriented maintenance project this year at the Thirty Mile Stock Unloading Area on the Divide RD of the Rio Grande NF (20 miles west of Creede).
- We have committed \$5,000 in matching funds in partnership with the San Juan Mountain Association for a CPW grant for an SJMA trail crew to clear 17 trails on the Divide RD of the Rio Grande NF.
- We plan to continue our work in the South San Juan Wilderness to regain historic stock access in long-closed areas.
- We plan to extend our training for new members for trail and back country skills and to accomplish work on the ground, including through day work trips, overnight trips, etc.

## CHAPTER REPORT SJBCH (Cont.)

### Issues and Problems

- We have struggled with members who join our chapter mostly for trail riding, and we have had difficulty getting some of those folks to understand that we are first and foremost focused on the BCHA mission of maintaining stock access in the back country (working with land managers, volunteering on the ground, etc.), and that we are not a “saddle club”, as some members call us. We are telling members that social riding is fine, but it is secondary to the other things we do.
- We emphasize outfitter and guide partnerships as we feel that BCH and outfitters have a lot in common, and the two groups should partner and work together for the betterment of all back country stock users.
- We have trouble getting members to do needed chapter work like trail maintenance and construction, committee leads, etc.; as a result, the core group who hold the chapter together also (successfully) take on fundraising, social, etc.
- We are working hard to get other groups and the Forest Service to focus on trail tread maintenance and reconstruction. With the past decade spent mostly on simply getting blocked trails opened due to beetle killed down trees, and considering how little funding has gone into trail tread maintenance and reconstruction for several decades, many back country trails in the San Juan Mountains are degrading, and some have degraded to the point the Forest Service is considering closing them due to safety and resource impact considerations, while simultaneously considering significant expansion of mountain biking trails. We are pushing for this poor trail condition situation to be rectified, including asking the agency to prioritize the need more, and for them to accept more partnership opportunities from us and other back country user groups to obtain grants for crews – including private contract crews – to work on our trails.

### Organization Details

#### Organization – 2023/2024

President: John Nelson

Vice President: Ron Toland

Secretary: Katie Betts

Treasurer: Allan Netzer

Board Members: Annie Pack, Chris Boyd, Dick Ray, Donna Fait, Gabe Candelaria, Janie Finch, JoAnn Senzig, Justin Frie, Kelli Day, Larry Smith, Lisa Nelson, Rocky Day, Randy Betts.

State Representatives: Ron Toland; Alternate: John Nelson

Membership dues structure: Individual \$35, Family \$40, Multiple chapter \$20

History: Formed 2007, joined BCHA 2008.

CHAPTER REPORT SJBCH (Cont.)



# CHAPTER REPORT

## Trail Wise Back Country Horsemen (TWBCH)

### Accomplishments

- We did complete annual adopted maintenance projects on both San Francisco Creek Trail head-as well as Wheeler/Hanson Mill parking lots-Clean up of campsites, disperse illegal fire rings and camp sites, trash pick up, fallen limb and other spring debris, mounting of needed signage.
- Toadflax reporting for noxious weed data when we saw it. We are already planning a noxious weed ID class with the District Specialist in March 2024, and hope to expand on this avenue of being of service-either with data collection, weed mitigation “parties” and great awareness of noxious and non-native species.
- Reported on maintenance issues within some BLM sites-There was a well financed public lands trail crew this past year-so heavy trail maintenance was taken care of.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and expertise of SJBCH-John Nelson/Ron Toland and TWBCH-Lisa McClure (Retired from USFS), there was a very successful cooperative effort on the Wimenuche trail regeneration up by Rio Grande Reservoir. Details available to those interested.

**Education/Outreach** Organized a meeting with the public lands supervisors and specialists early in the year of 2023-which we repeated this year again-just this week. It has really made a difference in communications, and we look forward to enhanced participation at a level that the chapter is able to assist.

We are still stymied in our attempts to engage youth

Organization Essentially the same as 2022. 2023 and 2024 continues with:

### Current and Future Projects

- Looking at more collaborative efforts with SJBCH and Public Lands entities. (See above). Possibility of pack support for Archuleta trail crew in July, as well as trail projects in Conejos County, that link over into La Plata County.
- Planning with USFS to set Highlines at Duncan Cabin on the Liberty Trail
- Planning a weed ID course, as well as saw certification and first aide this spring
- Potential to help with weed data on trails not yet assessed last season
- Potential to assist with monitoring of archeological sites
- Potential to assist in Conejos county with trails that have “faded” and need to be re-established either with some use and or cairns
- Sign painting and sign placements under priority of public lands supervisor planning.
- Continue with the adopted trails of SFC and Hanson Mill/Wheeler
- Continue to respond to requests for attending zoom meetings, writing letters of support or dissent etc. in line with involvement from BCHA/BCHA-CO/ and local public lands issues and needs
- Volunteer report already turned in
- Membership to date stands at 20

## CHAPTER REPORT TWBCH (Cont.)

### Issues and Problems

- Great group with enormous knowledge, enthusiasm and dedication. We have been consistently stymied in our efforts to engage younger members and youth participation.
- In the interest of the previous statement-SJBCH did a skills day-and we are in communication with them on expanding on that-either with mutual participation, and/or notification to local youth in TWBCHA district.
- Continue to try and engage 4H level equine enthusiasts.
- Continue to Strengthen our communications with public lands supervisors and specialists so that they grow in their awareness of what we can offer them in terms of volunteer support for projects. Our group is aging, but capable of a lot, and we have fun doing it!
- Perhaps revisit our desire to see a trails skill course open to public on public lands-either city/county or federal. It's a big project with much to be taken into consideration. It has been tabled indefinitely for various reasons.

### Organization Details

~**Treasurer duties:** Carla Loftis, Meledy Story as dual signatory. Dues-Individual \$35/Family \$40

~**State Representative:** Lisa McClure and Monica Falk, with Nina Smartt-Alternate.

~**Communications:** Monica will continue to monitor the Emails and check the FB page, but 2024 is her last year to volunteer to do so. Claire will continue this year to do communications between members, activities, state and Public lands.

~**PLO:** Lisa McClure, Sid Alternate

We look forward to a fun and connected year of activity both with and without our equine partners in the service of BCHA and BCHCO.

