

## National Directors Meeting Notes

September 25th, 2024, at 5:00PM. PST

Zoom Video/Call

**National Director call** began at 5:02PM Pacific

Executive Committee Meeting last night, minutes and financials were approved by the EC last night.

### **Financial Report – Reports provided to National Directors in advance of meeting**

- Value of the investment accounts provided
- CD Accounts were provided
- The amount paid out in youth grants provided
- Total liabilities and Equity provided
- Donations provided
- Chapter Support Grants provided
- Miscellaneous income is for Equisure
- Public Lands advisor is on budget
- Executive Administrator and Accounting expenses are on budget.
- Total Expenditures and revenue provided.

### **Membership**

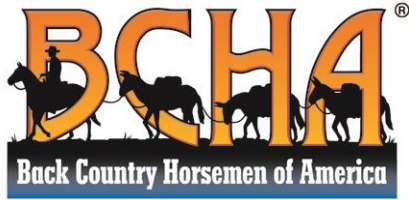
Membership data has been collected through September 2024

During the NBM it was stated memberships would go up but National we are down over 400 (Net) members.

Chairman asked the past chairman to provide projections for the remainder of the year.

### **Financial Projections 2024-2025**

- Dues are going to be a shortfall of approximately \$15,000.
- Membership dues are down 6%
- \$5.00 Dues Donation: It is being reported that many states are not going to provide this with dues
- Donations: Down at this time (First 4 months of Fiscal Year)
- Lack of response to the chair letter
- We are looking at a projected income decrease of \$40,000 for 2024-2025.



## National Directors Meeting Notes

September 25th, 2024, at 5:00PM. PST

Zoom Video/Call

- Places to cut is not an option with the budget we have with the exception of travel which may be approximately \$7000.
- We need to be prepared to go into savings without the option to replenish it.
- Questions regarding donations. We have not stopped asking for donations.

### **National Board Meeting**

Will be held in Prescott, Arizona April 13<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>.

We had a nicely balanced budget and about 3 weeks ago we were provided with the new menu with increased food and beverage fees which put us with a deficit for the National Board Meeting.

National Board Meeting Policy- We have put together a National Board Meeting that is available to states who are interested in hosting the NBM.

### **Public Lands**

Chairman has had numerous conversations with the Forest Service, he has received 3 different answers and asked the National Directors to contact their local representatives to find out for sure what is going on closer to their home.

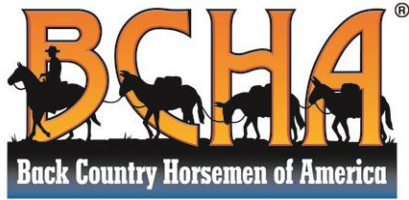
Randy provided his report.

Big shakeup in how the Forest Service hires regular and seasonal staff.

Congress once again failed to pass a budget for FY'25, which starts next week (Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>). They are kicking the can down the road in the form of a Continuing Resolution that freezes agency budgets at current spending levels and provides no certainty for agency programs and hiring or replacing staff.

Recall that Congress only approved agency budgets for **this** year (FY'24) mid-way through the fiscal year, when steep budget cuts were enacted. That's no way to run a business and greatly ties the hands of the agencies in a number of ways, including hiring.

With the upcoming election, both sides are jockeying for position in either funding for their priorities or cutting government spending. For example, the House of



Representatives budget proposal again includes steep cuts in non-fire FS programs.

As such, FS Chief Randy Moore has chosen to plan a conservative budget estimate for FY'25. He announced last Monday at a zoom meeting with over 10,000 participants that all external hiring has been paused. Plus, for the first time I can recall, the agency does not anticipate hiring additional seasonal employees (outside of the Fire program).

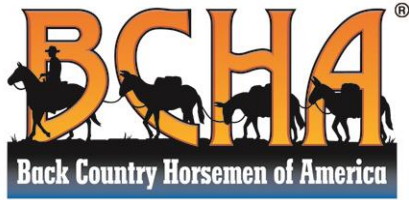
Think about that. This means no seasonal rangers, crew bosses or trail crews and fewer personnel to work on wildfire prevention and forest restoration. The agency will continue to fill open positions with internal (FS) candidates, but they will do so only for its "highest-priority work." Recreation and trails are usually **not** considered the highest priority.

Therefore, any current vacancies among your local District staff likely will not be filled (hired) until and only if Congress agrees to provide more robust funding for the agency. They will also tightly scrutinize expenses associated with outside travel and participation in conferences and the like.

Please do our friends at the Forest Service a favor by not complaining about the lack of agency personnel to get projects done this or next season. They are reeling from these budget cuts and **Congress is the primary source of the problem**. Let FS field staff know that you recognize that Congress has placed them in an untenable budget situation. Ask them how you can help. That's what partners do.

Chief Moore is pulling out every stop to avoid layoffs, or a Reduction in Force (RIF), and has chosen not to cut necessary job training. The agency is still down thousands of jobs over years of attrition and its inability to rehire long vacant positions—again, a problem created largely by Congress and inappropriate funding.

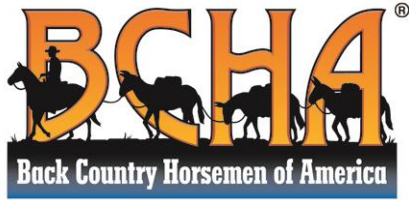
What should be BCHA's role in addressing this? At this stage, we are:



1. Gathering information and communicating with partners about how the hiring pause would affect:
  - a. Vacant trails-related positions at the District level and the crafting or updating of local volunteer agreements.
  - b. The hiring of seasonal trail workers/crews that are funded fully or primarily via outside grants, outfitter & guide fees or recreation amenity fees (e.g., Pacific NW Forest Pass, fees assessed at trailheads/parking lots).
2. Fielding inquiries from the press/media about how the hiring pause might affect volunteers and changes to the experience of forest visitors.
3. Developing a **Communications Strategy** to share with BCHA Directors and chapters with recommendations on how to broach/discuss this issue with local FS personnel or the press/media (if contacted).
4. Working with partners on letter(s) to the FS Chief seeking clarification regarding the magnitude of positions that would be affected by the hiring pause.
5. Working with partners (in the short-term) to ask that Congress pass the Senate version of the FY'25 appropriations bill, which does not contain the level of budget cuts to the Forest Service and others as in the current bill by the House of Representatives.
6. Working with partners (in the long-term) to make the case to Congress of the need for appropriately funding the FS and agencies.
7. Working with partners (short- and long-term) to provide broader hiring authorities for the FS once the hiring pause is lifted, including options for local hiring (versus running announcement via the national office/USA Jobs) and streamlining other aspects of employment announcements, hiring, training and retention, including seeking solutions to the federal employee housing crisis.

Suggestions:

We do a letter writing campaign and push congress to do something to fix this.



## National Directors Meeting Notes

September 25th, 2024, at 5:00PM. PST

Zoom Video/Call

Do not contact your forest service agents about this, they don't have anything to do with it.

### Saw

Letter from Forest Service received on Friday, National Saw Program Manager.

Brenda said Region 2 and Region 3 were not affected by the cutbacks.

Challenge Cost Share: Chairman is hoping this will go down to the Chapter level.

They have cut back on a lot of trainers; they were using contractors but with cutbacks they may not be using contractors as much anymore.

### **Question to National Directors**

What topics would you like covered on Tuesday during the National Board Meeting?

Please email your suggestions to Mark or Michelle.

### **Website**

There is a "Forms and Documents" page you no longer need to use the Shared Drive. Also, there is a National Directors password protected page, this will be where you will find the National Directors information, notes, minutes, financials, National Board Meeting information, etc.

Meeting ended at 6:00PM Pacific