# BYLAW Guidelines

The following are copies of bylaws that have proven to work well for our organization at both the state and local levels. No need to "reinvent the wheel". **Remember, this is a volunteer organization, and the decision making should rest in the hands of the membership. These bylaws reflect as much.**

**Other words of advice:** Do not list the dues amount in your bylaws. Your financial needs will change as well as your dues. Such things as setting the amount of your dues can best be achieved via a vote of the membership at a regular meeting rather than by a revision of the bylaws.

Conduct your meetings in accordance with the general practices such as those outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order.* Well run meetings will make you more productive and keep you out of trouble.

## BYLAWS FOR A BCH AFFILIATE OR LOCAL CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

### Article I - Name

*(Your name) BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF (your state)*

Adopted, Date:

The name of this affiliate/Chapter, which is a nonprofit organization, shall be the (Your name) Back Country Horsemen of (your state)

### Article II – Purpose/Mission

The purpose/mission of this organization shall be:

1. To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and Wilderness areas.
2. To work to insure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
3. To assist the various government, state 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 back country horsemen’s

organizations.

### Article III - Membership

**Section 1.** Membership shall be open to anyone who is committed to the purposes of BCH as stated in ARTICLE II.

**Section 2.** The membership classifications shall be "Single", "Family", and "Associate". (It is not necessary to have the "associate" category.)

**Section 3.** Membership shall correspond to the calendar year, January 1 through December 31.

### Article IV – Dues

**Section 1.** Dues shall be determined by majority vote of the membership. Dues shall be payable on the first day of January of each year. Dues shall be considered delinquent when not paid within three months of the January date. Delinquency in payment of the annual dues shall remove a member from "good standing" and said member shall relinquish all voting rights and privileges.

**Section 2.** The holding of any office or membership on any committee shall be contingent upon the member being in "good standing".

### Article V - Voting

**Section 1.** Single and associate members shall be entitled to one voting right. Family members shall carry two voting rights. Only members in good standing [dues paid] may exercise the right to vote on matters of chapter business.

**Section 2.** Associate members may, at the time of membership application or renewal, designate one person who will be considered their voting member.

**Section 3.** A simple majority of members in good standing, voting when the organization is in session, shall be required to conduct that business requiring group action, providing a quorum is present.

**Section 4.** Twelve (12) members shall constitute a quorum for transaction of legal business. (This depends on the size of your organization.)

### Article VI - Meeting

**Section 1.** Regular meetings shall be established and held at a time and place decided by a majority vote of the membership.

**Section** 2. Special meetings may be called by the President or upon written request signed by any three (3) voting members.

**Section 3.** Notice shall be given to voting members of all meetings.

### Article VII – Officers

**Section 1.** The officers of the affiliate/Chapter shall consist of a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and such other officers as the voting membership may create.

**Section 2.** The election of officers shall be conducted at the January meeting in accordance with ARTICLE IX of these bylaws.

**Section 3.** Any vacancy in an office shall be filled by special election except for that of President which shall automatically be filled by the Vice President.

**Section 4. (For Chapters)** (Select an appropriate number) directors and an alternate shall be elected by the membership at the annual meeting to serve as a chapter representative to the state Board of Directors. These directors shall serve staggered two-year terms.

**NOTE-**Section 4 above pertains to the selection of chapter directors for the State Board of Directors in those states that have a state organization. However, if your state does not have a state organization and you are forming an affiliate of BCHA, you still need to select one director and an alternate whose duty will be to attend the National Board meeting and serve as the liaison between the affiliate and the National Board of Directors. The reason for an alternate is in the event the regular director cannot serve, the alternate can automatically fill the vacancy.

### Article VIII – Duties of Officers

**Section 1.** The power and authority of this organization shall be vested in the membership. The officers shall conform to the wishes and instructions of the membership; and subject to the rules of this document, manage and execute the affairs of the organization. When the organization is not in session, the officers shall have all the necessary authority to manage the activities of the organization.

**Section 2.** The President, or his representative, shall preside at all meetings. The President shall appoint committee Chairperson and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees. The President may cosign checks for the disbursement of funds. The President shall be responsible for all communication between the state and/or the national organization.

**Section 3.** The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President when absent, or by request. The Vice President may also cosign checks for the disbursement of funds. The Vice President shall serve as the coordinator with the state and/or national organization.

**Section 4.** The Secretary shall record and keep the minutes of all regular and special meetings, shall register, and keep current membership lists, be responsible for the recording of all volunteer hours, and perform such other duties as pertaining to this office.

**Section 5.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial control of all affiliate/Chapter funds. The Treasurer shall give financial reports to the membership on a regular basis, shall keep financial records of income and expenditures suitable for audit, shall assist in the formation of an annual budget, shall collect dues, and maintain a "good standing" membership list. The Treasurer shall be one of the cosigners of the checks for the disbursement of funds.

**Section 6.** The affiliate /Chapter directors shall represent the affiliate/Chapter at (state and/or) national board meeting. The chapter directors represent the chapter on the state board of directors. The director shall be responsible for the flow of information to and from the (state and/or) national organization.

### Article IX - Elections

**Section 1.** Officers and directors shall be elected at the January meeting and will assume office at the next regular meeting. Officers shall serve through the January meeting of the following year. Officers shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. Directors may serve multiple terms.

**Section 2.** A nominating committee of at least three members shall be appointed by the President at least two months prior to the general election. (Some organizations elect the members of the nominating committee rather than have them appointed by the President. This is done to avoid favoritism.)

**Section 3.** The nominating committee shall select a slate of candidates for the officers and director positions to be voted on at the general election. The slate shall be presented at the regular December meeting. Nominations may also be made from the floor during the election.

### Article X - Committees

**Section 1.** Committees, necessary for the functioning of the affiliate/Chapter, shall be created by the President with the approval of the membership.

**NOTE-** Committees can be either standing (permanent) or temporary and should be created to meet the individual needs of the affiliate/Chapter. The following list of standing committees is a suggestion; Public Lands, Activities, Service, Education, Public Relations, Membership, Health, and Safety. The national organization recommends that every affiliate/Chapter have a standing public lands committee listed as part of their bylaws.

This committee is key for working with the land management agencies on issues of both local and national importance. It is advisable to list your committees in the bylaws so be sure to include a brief job description of each under

**Section 2.** Committee Chairperson shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the membership. Vacancies of a committee Chairperson shall be filled by appointment by the affiliate/chapter President. (Some affiliates/Chapter elect their committee Chairperson)

**Section 3.** Committee Chairperson shall select members as necessary to accomplish the functions of the committee. (Avoid committees of one!)

### Article XI - Removal

**Section 1.** Any officer or member whose conduct has not been in the best interests of the affiliate may be removed from participation in affiliate activities by a two-thirds vote of the membership at a regular meeting.

**Section 2.** Notification of intent to remove an officer or member must be made known at the regular meeting preceding the meeting that the action is to take place.

**Section 3.** An officer or member who is removed must be informed in writing of the action taken by the membership.

### Article XII - Amendments

**Section 1.** These bylaws may be amended at any regular or special meetings by a majority vote, provided notice of such proposed amendment and a "first reading" be given to the membership at a regular meeting preceding the vote on the amendment.

By-laws adopted this day of , 20 Chairperson: Secretary:

## BYLAWS FOR A BCH STATE ORGANIZATION

When there are two or more BCHA affiliates in a state, they must organize to become a BCHA state organization. A governing document in the form of bylaws must be developed and submitted to the Back Country Horsemen of America as part of the application process.

BCHA has specific requirements which must be included in the writing of state bylaws. First, Article I must have a sentence naming the organization which includes the words "Back Country Horsemen of (your state)". Second, you must include as Article II; Purpose, the five guiding purposes of BCHA as they appear in the sample below. These are the same five purposes stated in the Constitution of the National Organization; the purposes that were drafted by the founders and have stood the test of time. Some states require that

non-profit organizations such a Back Country Horsemen file articles of incorporation with their state government. This is not a requirement for becoming a state organization and need not be submitted as part of the application package. A 501(c)(3) or (c)(4) IRS classification is also not a requirement.

The following is a set of bylaws which must be used by affiliates in the writing of the governing document required to become an official organization.

## BYLAWS OF THE BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF (YOUR STATE)

### Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be the Back Country Horsemen of (your state) hereinafter referred to as the BCH of (your state) and shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of( ) as a non-profit, educational organization. The administrative body of the BCH of (your state) shall be hereinafter referred to as the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall be composed of Directors from each member chapter/unit.

### Article II – Purpose/Mission

1. To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and Wilderness areas.
2. To work to insure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
3. To assist the various government, state 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.** Chapters are formed within the state by making applications to the Board of Directors of the state organization. Any chapter seeking membership must adopt the purposes of the BCH of (your state) as stated in Article II.

**Section 2.** The chapter application for membership must include:

1. The name which must include the wording Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of (your state)".
2. A copy of the chapter's working by-laws.
3. A list of officers.
4. A membership of at least 15 individuals.
5. Applicable dues.

**Section 3.** Membership as a chapter in the BCH of (your state) must be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors of (your state) at an assembled meeting.

**Section 4.** Chapter membership may be revoked by the Board of Directors for conduct by the chapter or its members on behalf of the chapter, which is contrary to the mission of the Back Country Horsemen of (your state) or adversely reflects on the integrity of the organization. Revocation shall be by a three-fourths vote of the Board of Directors in attendance at an assembled meeting. Notice of the proposed revocation vote shall be made to all member chapters 30 days prior to the vote. A revoked chapter's right to use the name "Back Country Horsemen" or similar name in any way, will terminate.

**Section 5.** Individuals, families, or other groups who subscribe to the purposes of the organization and who wish to affiliate with the BCH of (your state) but who do not belong to a local chapter may become a "member at large" of the state organization. These members shall be excluded from any voting rights or leadership positions in the BCHA of (your state) but shall be provided with all other benefits of membership.

**Section 6.** The membership and fiscal year of this organization and all chapters shall be the calendar year.

### Article IV - Dues

**Section 1.** The Board of Directors of the BCH of (your state) shall set dues applicable to the state and national requirements.

**Section 2.** Each member chapter shall submit no later than January 31, a report of chapter membership as of December 31 of the preceding calendar year, along with the payment of appropriate state and national dues.

### Article V – Powers and Duties

**Section 1.** The supreme authority of shall be in its assembled voting delegates. The State Board of Directors shall execute this authority when the voting delegates are not assembled but shall follow the direction given them by the delegates and shall be responsible to them.

**Section 2.** The voting delegates shall have equal representation from each chapter and shall decide State BOD policy and give direction to the State Board of Directors at the annual convention/meeting. They shall also have the powers and duties contained elsewhere in this constitution.

**Section 3.** Powers of the annual convention/meeting; The annual convention/meeting provided for in Article V hereof, shall have inclusive power to enact, repeal or amend the constitution or bylaws of . The annual convention/meeting may, by resolution, take any action not inconsistent with law or constitution and bylaws.

**Section 4.** Powers of the State Board of Directors – The State Board of Directors shall have power to take any action not inconsistent with law or constitution and bylaws, or any duly enacted resolution of the annual convention/meeting.

**Section 5.** The Board of Directors shall be charged with the duties of distributing information, providing a clearing house for actions and ideas, and representing the state organization on a national scale. It shall assist and coordinate with local chapters in their efforts and provide help and direction.

**Section 6.** The SBD shall elect two (2) members to the National Board of Directors of the Back Country Horsemen of America. National Board members shall be elected for a two

(2) year term with each board position elected in alternate years. The SBD shall elect one

(1) Alternate National Director annually.

**Section 7.** It shall be agreed that policies and issues may have different effects in different communities. Therefore, member organizations may publicly oppose the position taken by the state organization regarding controversial issues.

### Article VI – Board of Directors

**Section 1.** The Board of Directors shall consist of (number) directors from each member chapter, the immediate past Board Chairperson, and the state representatives to the National Board of Directors. Each member of the chapter shall also select one alternate director to serve in the absence of their regular director. Each regular chapter or alternate directors shall represent the membership of the local chapter from which elected.

**Section 2.** In the event that a regular director's absence becomes permanent, the alternate director shall advance to the permanent position to serve the balance of the replaced director's term.

**Section 3.** Member chapters shall elect their directors to the state Board of Directors for staggered terms except for their alternate who shall be elected on an annual basis.

**Section 4.** Each chapter’s elected director shall have one vote on the Board of Directors. When a chapter elected director to the state Board of Directors is selected as State Chairperson, that chapter shall be entitled to a voting replacement on the state Board of Directors for the person moving into the Chairpersonship position.

**Section 5.** The Board of Directors shall meet quarterly but may meet as often as necessary to conduct the business of the organization. Written notice of the meeting shall be sent to the chapter officers and delegates at least 30 days prior to the meeting date. These notices shall contain the known business agenda; however, other items of business may be added to the agenda at the time of the meeting. Special meetings shall be ap- proved by the Board of Directors.

### Article VII

Annual Convention/meeting

**Section 1.** The annual convention/meeting of shall be held at such a time and place as is established by the voting delegates presiding at the annual convention/meeting.

**Section 2.** Attendance - Any member in good standing with any affiliated chapter may attend any annual convention/meeting and have floor privileges, but they shall not solely by reason of such membership be entitled to vote.

**Section 3.** At the annual meeting the host chapter may assess and collect registration fees of attending members. The purpose of this assessment will be to cover expenses incurred by the host chapter for local arrangements, etc.

**Section 4.** All annual meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert Rules of Order.

**Section 5.** It shall be the responsibility of the State Board of Directors to develop the agenda for the annual meeting. For inclusion in the agenda, local chapters must submit their agenda items before the regular State Board of Directors meeting, prior to the annual convention/meeting. Copies of local agenda items shall be sent to local chapters by the State Board of Directors one (1) month prior to meeting date.

**Section 6.** Each voting delegate must be a member in good standing of an affiliated chapter and show evidence that the delegate is authorized as voting delegate by said chapter.

**Section 7.** A voting delegate may represent only one affiliated chapter.

**Section 8.** Delegates to the annual convention/meeting shall consist of eight (8) delegates from each affiliated chapter. Each chapter shall provide the chair with a list of these delegates prior to the meeting. All dele- gates shall be entitled to vote on all questions properly brought before the convention.

**Section G.** Fifty percent of all duly accredited delegates shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business. A simple majority of delegates in attendance can conduct business.

**Section 10.** Special measures, namely a vote to enact, repeal or amend the constitution or by-laws, must be passed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all delegates in attendance.

**Section 11.** The Chairperson of the State Board of shall preside over business affairs of the annual convention/meeting.

**Section 12.** Membership assessment: Member chapters may be assessed membership dues for the following year as determined and approved at the annual meeting by a two- thirds (2/3) vote of the attending delegates will be required. Dues will be due on or before January 1st and delinquent by February 1st each year. Delinquent chapters will lose their right to vote.

### Article VIII – Officers and Duties

**Section 1.** The officers of the Board of Directors shall consist of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, National Directors, and such other officers as the assembled board members shall create. All positions shall be elected by and from the elected chapter directors for a term of two years. No officers may serve more than two consecutive terms in the same position. The officers and National Directors shall assume office at the conclusion of the meeting at which they are elected.

**Section 2.** Elected officers to the state Board of Directors and National Directors who are not re-elected by their respective chapter may complete their terms of office at the state level and until such time as their term at the state level expires. However, their right to vote on state board matters will be revoked and the voting right as a director will be passed to the newly elected chapter representative.

**Section 3.** The Chairperson of the Board will have no voting privileges except to resolve a tie vote of the Board of Directors.

**Section 4.** The Chairperson shall be the chief administrative officer of the BCH of (your state) whose main responsibility is to provide leadership to the organization. Specific duties shall include:

A. Serve as the official spokesman for the BCH of (your state).

B. Authorize BCH statements having state significance.

C. Sign all official BCH of (your state) documents.

D. Delegate duties and responsibilities.

E. Establish lines of communication with other BCHA entities.

F. Provide direction/assistance to chapter members.

G. Preside over all assembled meetings of the Board of Director.

H. Assist the Board of Directors, committees, and chapter members in developing and maintaining sound financial practices.

I. Co-sign on all disbursements.

J. Create committees and appoint committee chairs subject to Board approval.

K. Relegate responsibility to committees.

L. Serve as ex-officio on all committees.

M. And such other duties as normal to the office of the Chairperson.

### Section 5. The Vice Chairperson shall:

A. Assist the Chairperson and assume duties of the Chairperson when the Chairperson is absent.

B. Be responsible for new chapter expansion and membership development and may create a committee for such purposes.

C. Be responsible for the collection of all volunteer hours and the reporting of such to the National Executive Secretary or other appropriate National officers.

D. And such other duties as normal to the office of the Vice Chairperson.

### Section 6. The Secretary shall:

A. Record and permanently file the minutes of all Board of Directors meetings.

B. Furnish copies of these minutes to board members and to member chapters.

C. Assist the Chairperson in preparing agendas for all assembled meeting of the Board of Directors.

D. Furnish members of the state Board of Directors with a current list of officers and delegates from all member chapters.

E. Quarterly furnish the Executive Secretary of the Back Country Horsemen of America with a list of all Back Country Horsemen members from (your state). This list shall

include the members’ mailing addresses for the national newsletter.

F. Send written notice of all meetings of the Board of Directors to the chapter presidents and delegates to the Board.

G. And such other duties as normal to the office of the Secretary.

### Section 7. The Treasurer shall:

A. The Treasurer shall safeguard all monies relative to the BCH of (your state).

B. Develop and maintain a system of accounting to include records of income, expenses, and the disbursement of all monies.

C. Provide financial reports; balance sheets and statements of operation to the Board of Directors at all assembled meetings or as required by the Board.

D. Participate in the creation of all budgets and audits.

E. File annually all appropriate state non-profit and corporate forms and make appropriate Internal Revenue reports.

F. Cosign on all disbursements.

G. And such other duties as normal to the office of the Treasurer.

**Section 8.** Officers of the state organization may be removed by a two- thirds vote of all members of the Board of Directors providing notice of the proposed action has been sent to all member chapters 30 days in advance of the action.

**Section G.** Chapter directors to the state Board of Directors may be removed by their respective chapter and their alternate shall finish their term. Notice of removal and the name of the replacement director shall be furnished to the state Board of Directors immediately following the action.

### Article VIX National Director

**Section 1.** The BCH of (your state) is entitled to two voting directors on the National Board of Directors of the Back Country Horsemen of America; therefore, the state organization shall select two directors and an alternate to serve as representatives from (your state) on

the National Board. These directors and alternates shall preferably be members of the state board; however, other individuals who are members in good standing of a local chapter may also be selected as National Directors. To maintain continuity on the National Board it is recommended that National Directors serve staggered multi-year terms. No two National Directors shall be selected from the same chapter.

**Section 2.** Directors and alternates to the National Board shall express a willingness and desire to attend and actively participate in the National Board meeting with some or all of the expenses to be borne by the individual.

### Article X Committees

**Section 1.** The Board of Directors shall create committees or activities to accomplish the mission of the state organization.

***Note*:** Committees can be either standing (permanent) or temporary and should be created to meet the individual needs of the state organization. The following is a suggested list of standing committees - Public Lands, Publicity/Media, Education, Membership/Expansion, Service Volunteer Hours, Finance, Health, and Safety. The National organization strongly suggests that every state have a standing Public Lands/Legislative Committee. This committee is key for working with the land management agencies on issues of local, state, and national importance. It is advisable to list your state committees in your bylaws along with a brief job description of each.

**Section 2.** Committee Chairperson shall be appointed by the state Chairperson with approval by the Board of Directors. Vacancies of a committee Chairperson shall be filled by appointment by the state Chairperson. (Some states elect their committee Chairperson to avoid favoritism.)

### Article XI Finance

**Section 1.** The treasury of the BCH of (your state) shall be borne by all member chapters in a manner established by the Board of Directors and ratified by a two-thirds vote of the member chapters.

**Section 2.** All expenses of chapter delegates/directors to the state Board of Directors shall be borne by the individual member. The director's home chapter may provide financial assistance at rates set by the chapter.

**Section 3.** All expenses of the state Chairperson for conducting the business of the BCH of (your state) may be borne by the treasury of the state organization.

**Section 4.** Office expenses for the officers and National Directors shall be borne by the treasury of the state organization.

**Section 5.** The state organization shall provide financial assistance, all or in part, to the voting delegates attending the National Board of Directors meeting. The Board of Directors shall determine the amount of financial assistance. Local chapters or individuals may also assist in this effort.

### Article XII Amendments

**Section 1.** These bylaws may be amended, repealed, or new sections added by a majority vote of the members of the Board of Directors at an assembled meeting and ratified by a two-thirds vote of all member chapters. All member chapters shall be notified in writing thirty days prior to the meeting at which the by-laws are to be changed.

### Article XIII Liquidation, Dissolution, or Termination

**Section 1.** In the event of liquidation, dissolution, or termination of the BCH of (your state), any assets remaining shall be transferred to the Back Country Horsemen of America 501

(c) (3) or to another Back Country Horsemen organization as determined by the Board of Directors of (your state).

### Article XIV Adoption

These bylaws ratified and adopted this day of , 20 Chapter President: