

BCHA National Board Meeting
April, 2008
Elko, Nevada

Volunteer Hours: New record on dollar amount for volunteer hours
\$5,619,737.00 for 2007. Hours: 236,847

Mileage allowance changes: Personal 80 to 90 cents/mile
Hauling stock \$1.00 to \$1.10/mile

Constitution: Changes were approved and ratified by all states present.

State Representation: National Directors from Arizona
Jim Higgs and Tony Van Rooy
Gayle Higgs Alternate Director

Strategic Planning Committee: Board approved applying for 501(c)3

Status. It will cost \$750 to apply. After we are approved BCHA could offer the same status to states at a cost of \$900 or approx \$40 per state. BCHA is now 501(c)4 and states that are under that umbrella will no longer have that designation.

BCHA Foundation will remain separate with its own 501c3.

The Executive Committee was approved by the board. This committee will consist of the chairman, vice chairman, treasurer and 4 national directors who are elected for a one year term. The purpose of the committee will be to assist the chairman in decision making during the period when the National Board is not in session.

If a person signed up for a committee, you are expected to serve on that committee for the coming year so that the chair does not have the burden of all the work after the board meeting. Decisions will be made with input from all committee members.

New States Approved: Alabama, Kentucky and Wisconsin

There is a total of 25 states with a total membership of 12,787 as of 12/31/07.

Resolutions:

California – wanted representation changed to number of members in state.
Voted Down.

Missouri – NAIS- National Animal Identification System
Voted Down

Wyoming – Chair of standing committees must be National Directors
Al Sammons, ND Wy recommended defeat.
Voted Down

Wyoming #2 – Development of Equestrian Facilities on Public Lands- withdrawn

Montana – communications between BCHA and State organizations
Voted Down

Montana #2 – Communication between BCHA and states re: expenditure of money - withdrawn

Resolution opposing equestrian only specialized fees, no action as a resolution regarding these type of fees passed several years ago.

Public Lands Committee: In California the FS is using new standards that have not been approved and Ann Lange from CA said that the FS supervisor of the Sierra National Forest said that in 15 years there probably wouldn't be any equestrian use in the forest. This is a cultural shift as the Sierra forest has the largest use of mules and pack strings in the US.

Regarding the Sequoia King National Park lawsuit, BCHA has been asked to come in as an intervener.

Kandee Haertel, Director of Development gave a “this is how it is” talk. It will take 2 to 3 years for money to start coming in after we receive 501c3 status. Don't expect miracles, it is going to take time. She was very disappointed on the amount of money received when the membership was asked to donate. Of the 12,000 plus members, we had a 3% return. Only 424 people responded and we raised \$20,000. An average of \$50 per return. This may have an effect on donations from outside sources because they sometimes ask what the membership donates.

We had 3 featured speakers:

Jim Bedwell, FS – Director of Wilderness Outdoor Recreation , Volunteers and Heritage Resources

Rick Potts, PS – Chief of Conservation and Outdoor Recreation

Connie Myers, - Director Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center.

Jim Bedwell talked about how informed people who love the outdoors are and how they are willing to look for the perfect spot for recreation.

Must maintain the environment, over 200 million people recreate each year.

We are a “People Program”

Need sustainable benefits – economic benefits

Travel management plan – for the future – need full public involvement.

Trying to retain volunteers (partners). Some areas have too many volunteers and they do not have the money for support.

There are still trail classification issues, hope to have this resolved in June or July.

98% of the forest lands have no fees, 2% of the lands have fees.

In 2004, Congress passed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) which allows the FS to keep 95% of fees collected at recreation sites and use these funds locally. This enables the FS to do a better job in high density areas. We are reducing top and regional offices by 25% so more money reaches the ground. 48% of the budget goes to fire suppression. Ranger districts now have no budget.

The government will not underwrite the insurance for LNT.

Connie Myers – is a very dynamic and upbeat person. The Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center was established in 1993 to preserve the values and benefits of wilderness for present and future generations by connecting agency employees and the public with their wilderness heritage through training, information, and education. The Center is jointly staffed and funded through an interagency partnership between the BLM, FWS, FS, and NPS. Oversight is provided by national

wilderness program leaders from each of these four wilderness-managing agencies, the USGS and the interagency Wilderness Policy Council. The Center is focused on developing products to support the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities in each of six Wilderness Technical Core Competency Areas:

1. Wilderness History, Law, Regulation and Policy
2. Managing Special Provisions identified in 1964 Wilderness Act.
3. Wilderness Planning
4. Wilderness Field Skills
5. Visitor Use Management & Monitoring
6. Natural & Cultural Resources Management & Monitoring.

Rick Potts – NPS is a member of BCHA and regards us as one of the best volunteer groups in the US and believes in what we stand for. He stated that we are still losing ground, the wilderness is more fragile and vulnerable and is in worse shape than 30 years ago because of the tremendous use and pressure on the land. He spent 4 years at the Arthur Carhart Center as the NPS representative.

He suggested that we all should read “ **Last Child in the Woods** “.

The Park service requested comments awhile back and received 46,000 replies. 5 of those were from equestrians. This is very disappointing. We need to stay in the picture. WRITE!

Park Service to double amount of volunteers hours by 2016

81% of people grow up in urban environment. Agency managers raised urban and didn't have a chance to be free range kids to explore and test. We are dealing with a different mind set.

“A Strategy to Engage the Support of Mainstream Wilderness Advocacy Groups in our Efforts to Obtain Legislated Protection for Recreational Stock Use”

BCHA Board of Directors Members:

It has come to my attention that there is apparently some confusion as to the strategy the Board adopted in Elko "A Strategy to Engage the Support of Mainstream Wilderness Advocacy Groups in our Efforts to Obtain Legislated Protection for Recreational Stock Use".

Pasted in this letter are the specific recommendations from that strategy. There will be a series of letters drafted in the coming weeks that will be available to help satisfy the specific recommendations.

The Forest Service will be making recommendations, in upcoming Forest Plan revisions, for management of 54 million acres of inventoried roadless lands. Debate between motorized recreationists, mountain bikers and wilderness advocates will be intense and each group will be attempting to maximize the acreage managed to accommodate their respective interests. To do so they will be trying to gain as broad a support base as possible. It was very apparent at the recent Quiet Commotion Summit that non-motorized interests want our support and in return they may be willing to support efforts to gain legislated protection for historical pack and saddle stock. It is unlikely that Right to Ride legislation will pass unless we are able to broaden our base of support, and it is unlikely that we'll get that support unless we are willing to support them in return. We have nothing to lose by trying, and potentially much to gain.

Specific Recommendations:

1. First and foremost, BCHA must affirm the position that we will not actively support legislation, or circulate requests for support from other organizations, designating a new wilderness, monument, park or similar special designation, unless there is specific language in that bill protecting historical pack and saddle stock use, and the trails, trailheads, stock handling facilities, and recreational grazing necessary to accommodate that use.
2. Write letters (probably for signature by the State BCH president/chair?) to national legislators in each state with a BCH organization that we will not support new wilderness proposals that do not provide protection to historical pack and saddle stock use.
3. Encourage BCH State president/chair to write each National Forest or BLM District during scoping for land management plan revisions stating that we will not support new wilderness proposals that do not provide the above stated protection.
4. Write letters (signed by BCHA Chair) to appropriate committee chairs in both the House of Representatives and the Senate and to the departments of Agriculture and Interior (and possibly the director/chief of land managing agencies) stating that we will not support new wilderness proposals that do not provide the necessary protection.
5. Send copies of the above letters to key wilderness advocacies with cover letter proposing a dialogue to discuss our concerns and gain their support for the above protections.

If these items are coordinated to happen within a short time frame, it will have a significant impact! I will offer to draft these letters and research the wilderness advocacies and provide this information to the BCHA Public Lands Chair.

In these letters, it will be important to emphasize that Back Country Horsemen of America wish to go on record as supporting the wisdom of Congress "to secure for the American people the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness" that "shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness (Sec 2a, P.L. 88-577), and which will be "devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use" (Sec 4b, P.L. 88-577). Back Country Horsemen believe that Congress' initial intent, and the values that it sought to protect, have been distorted through the efforts of some environmental constituencies who simply see wilderness designation as a means of exempting areas of public land from logging and other commodity uses.

The timing for this proposed action has never been better! In the next generation of Forest Plan Revisions (that will take place as soon as the Forest Service Planning Rule is approved, and litigation resolved) all National Forests will address the management of 54 million acres of 'Inventoried Roadless Areas'. This will be a matter of considerable interest to motorized groups, mountain bikers, and wilderness users. Competition for these remaining roadless areas will be intense! The wilderness constituencies will be eager to gain the broad support necessary to maximize wilderness acreage.

Many Bureau of Land Management Districts are also revising Resource Management Plans. These plans include recommendations for Wilderness Study Areas.

Mike Reedy
Chair

The BCHA 2008 budget is \$151,000 plus.

Expansion Committee Final Report (summary)

Prior to the 2008 National Board meeting, the Expansion Committee was comprised of the current BCHA Chairman, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Immediate Past Chair and the Executive Secretary. The function of the committee was to review affiliate and state membership applications and if in good order, recommend acceptance by the National Board.

However at the 2008 meeting, the National Board, out of concern for the continued growth of the organization, changed the composition of the committee and also voted to make Expansion a standing committee. Gayle Higgs is one of the committee members for the next year.

Goals and Objectives for 2008:

Goal #1 – To sustain and maintain existing state and chapter units

Goal #2 – To increase the number of state and chapter units through out the nation.

Goal #3 – To increase membership nation wide.

Objective #1. – Maintaining what we have, by providing mentoring and support services for troubled units. Be proactive – head off problems before they occur. Identify troubled units – red alert system.

Objective #2 – Encourage growth by “spreading the word” about BCHA. What BCHA can do for you as a horsemen. Create a positive image through publicity.

Objective #3 – Assist with the start up of new state and chapter groups. Identify potential areas of growth, key leadership people. Encourage each chapter and state to have an expansion Committee

Objective #4 – Develop a support service. Leadership training for chapters and states. Establish a regional/area support team. Frequent communications between all members of the expansion committee.

BCHA Marketing and Media Report (summary)

It is Now Necessary to have a really good website. It is a MUST.

Newsletter is now on the web, now have a Search feature and you can purchase or donate using credit cards securely on line.

Traveling Display, two new ones are being built so we will have three.

Sherry Jennings is coming back on board as our editor of the newsletter. Changing size of newsletter, which will save money on postage. Postal service gave us non-profit status which will save \$1200 per issue. Newsletter will be small in size and also save on postage.

Write articles and disburse to 350 horse publications.

Yahoo groups is working well, use it monthly to broadcast information. Spam blockers have to be over-ridden or members will not receive messages.

Education Committee – Jerry Ledbetter, chair (summary)

LNT, we no longer have an agreement with them as we cannot afford the liability insurance. It would cost BCHA \$25,000 per year to carry the type and amount of insurance LNT requires. We will continue to send people for training and they will become Master Trainers, but they will have to buy the non stock use ins. From them at a cost of \$65 per year. If they want to use

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stock either the chapter or the state will have to insure them and the people taking the course will not get the official LNT certificate.

Basically the states are going to have to develop their own LNT programs.

Ways and Means:

This year there will be a membership contest for the chapters as well as the state. Cash awards, \$250, plus a paid registration to the National Board Meeting in April 2009, to the chapter and \$500, plus a paid registration to the NBM, to the state. This will be on a percentage basis from member totals as of 12/31/07. More information to come out in the national newsletter.

Jim Higgs
National Director