**To all BCHW Members,

BCHW would like to encourage all of our Chapters and members to Review USFS Memo below “Best Practices for Managing Stock Use Sites at Developed Campgrounds”

Then take the time to discuss with Local USFS District Staff!**

**U.S. Forest Service Guidance on Use of Equestrian Campsites:**

At the prompting of BCHA and allies that include the American Horse Council the Forest Service national office circulated a memo to all national forests and national grasslands titled “[Recommended Best Practices for Managing Stock Use Sites at Developed](https://www.bcha.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ManagingHorseCampSites_whitepaper_FINAL.pdf)Campgrounds “.

BCHW would like to encourage all of our members to read the above document!!

**Some background info!**

Last year, BCHA approached the Forest Service regarding what options exist to minimize the extent to which parties without stock were occupying designated equestrian campsites throughout the National Forest System. We pointed out that agency policy for developed campgrounds prohibits parties from “Bringing in or possessing a saddle, pack or draft animal except as authorized by posted instructions” (Code of Federal Regulations, Section 36, subsection 261.16(l)). That is, parties with stock are prohibited by law from occupying Forest Service campsites that are not designated for equestrian use.

Yet, there is no corresponding regulation that prevents parties without stock from occupying developed equestrian campsites. The problem of occupied horse camps escalated across the nation during the COVID pandemic, when many families and others chose close-to-home vacations in favor of long-distance travel. The Forest Service memo describes well the implications to stock users of this growing problem.

**Horse Camp Incident Report Form**

BCHA and its allies developed a Horse Camp Incident Report form for members to capture and record incidents where parties without stock are occupying Forest Service equestrian campsites. The purpose of the form is gather data which will be reported to the Forest Service. Data will be critical if BCHA determines the need to make the case for new regulations to prevent parties without stock from occupying equestrian campsites. BCHA is pleased that the Forest Service issued the aforementioned memo to field staff; it represents a logical first step to apply education to help lessen the problem.

**If You Depend on Developed Horse Camps on Public Lands, please print out some copies and fill one out if you find non horse folks camped in designated horse camping sites. This is not intended to confront; this is important data/statistic gathering. Do not confront them, just take a photo to submit when you get home with the fully completed online Incident Report Form. Complete details will be important for our data to be credible.**

We need help in documenting incidents of parties without stock occupying developed horse camps in our State to push for new rules in the use of public lands horse camps.

[Download Horse Camp Incident Form](https://files.constantcontact.com/e75b0703801/4f7d635d-4441-4373-a126-2a2be1368c64.pdf?rdr=true)
[Online Horse Camp Incident Form](https://form.jotform.com/220378164958062)

We don’t know that education alone will prove sufficient to solve the horse camping problem. But by collecting your accounts of incidents in the field, we might better document the magnitude and geographic extent of the problem. Consequently, BCHW and BCHA are relying on members to provide data from the field of your observations, should we need to promote further solutions.

Please help by gathering this important data so we can go back to the Land Managers and ask them to help us!!  Get with your Chapters across the State, go to your local Horse Camps, just do a drive through and see if there are any issues.  We need your help!

Thank you in advance for your help!

**Dana Chambers, President BCHW**