

The Trailhead News

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Back Country Horsemen of Washington

July/August 2026



National Trails Day in Elbe State Forest –

See article on pages 4-5



www.bchw.org



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Back Country Horsemen of Washington expresses its gratitude to those who contribute to BCHW as "Lifetime," "Contributing," "Sustaining," and "Patron" members.

The Optional Membership Program is available to all members for renewal or new membership. Members in this program pay only the optional membership fee, which includes the Family or Single Membership. The optional membership information on this page is provided by the BCHW Membership Committee. **If you have any corrections or questions, please e-mail membership@bchw.org.**

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Lifetime Members		2026 Sustaining Level		Ruby Irving-Hewey.....MTA	
Mitch Baird	IND	Sheila & Bud Blakely	NEC	Beau & Kelly Lacrosse	IND
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Caleb Canby	MVC	Kathy & Bob Cole	MSH	Sheila Richards	NEC
Tawney Carrier	PSR	Patrick Dolan	MSH	Leonard & Kathy Rolph	MAC
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Teri Starke.....	IND	Darrell Wallace.....	NEC		
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Edris Kenan	TAH	Ken & Patti Carmichael.....	NEC		
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Ken Wilcox BCHW

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Carol Wilcox

Doc Wesselius

Jim Murphy

Laarin Lee Barber

Marianne Finrow

Teunis Wyers

Trygve Culp

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Please be informed that membership dues, paid at the state as well as the chapter level, are tax deductible for the calendar year and subsequent years. Deduct your dues as a charitable contribution under authority of IRC Section 170 (assuming the person paying the membership dues itemizes their deductions when computing their federal net taxable income) or as a business deduction under authority of IRC Section 162 (assuming the person paying the membership dues has a "trade or business" and the payment of the membership dues is directly related to this "trade or business"). When making a donation, ask for a receipt.

Your volunteer mileage is also deductible. Make copies of your volunteer hours logs with mileage for your taxes. ➡

A Gift To Honor or In Remembrance

Donate in memory of a friend, family, or loved one. To make a donation in their name to BCHW, please contact Teri Starke, BCHW Treasurer, at: 253.709.5052 or tstrk21@msn.com.

President's Corner



My Last Presidents Corner Article

By Dana Chambers, BCHW President

Hello, BCHW Members! This will be my last President's Corner article as my term ended on July 1. It has been my pleasure and honor to serve as your President since January of 2022. Your support and help during that time has been greatly appreciated and has been instrumental in our organization's health and future.

On Saturday, June 20th, your Board of Directors voted in Heather Moorman of the Purple Sage Riders as your new President and Jim Breeze of the Wenas Valley Chapter as your new Vice President.

I look forward to continuing to support BCHW by serving in my other duties as requested by your new President. BCHW has been in existence since 1976, and with all of your help, it will continue to thrive well into the future.

Let me introduce you to your new BCHW President! I would like to introduce Heather Moorman with the Purple Sage Riders. She has been a member of BCHW for 27 years

and a Lifetime member since 2013. In that time, she has been involved in many activities at both the chapter and state levels.

Some of the highlights are:

- BCHW Membership Chair for 13 years
- BCHW Executive Committee member for 4 years
- Winery Ride Trail Lead for approximately 20 years
- Chapter offices: Trail Boss, Alternate Director, Director, and Membership Coordinator
- Volunteer for countless fundraisers and work parties

She has been riding horses for most of her life and participated in 4-H. She has always enjoyed trail riding but didn't know anything about BCHW until she and her husband Daren moved in next door to Terry and Vicki Clark. Both were officers in the Purple Sage Riders chapter at the time and quickly introduced Heather and Daren to BCHW.

Away from BCHW and horses, she works for Bechtel at the Hanford site as the Quality Manager on an environmental cleanup project. She received her bachelor's degree in busi-

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BCHW Mission Statement

BCHW is affiliated with Back Country Horsemen of America (hereinafter "BCHA") and therefore adopts the BCHA mission statement as follows: The mission of this organization shall be:

- To perpetuate the common-sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness.
- To work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
- To assist the various governmental and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
- To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.
- To foster and encourage the formation of new chapters in the state organization.

Did You Know

"Good trails don't happen by accident—they're built and preserved by people who care enough to give back."

National Trails Day in Elbe State Forest



By Louise Caywood, Pierce Co. BCHW

Workers arrived for our safety meeting at **8:00 a.m.**, and we promptly set about our chores. The DNR had staged several logs for us to cut and split for our chapter members' use. With a log splitter, our crew made quick work of processing and stacking **three cords** of dry wood in the shed.

A couple of people mowed the campground, a few whacked weeds, and another crew installed a new mounting block. Others rode the Lower Elk Spur Trail to remove logs



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President's Corner

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ness management in 2024 from Western Governors University.

She is committed to the BCHW Mission and to helping the organization grow and stay relevant. One way she would like to do that is by improving our business infrastructure to increase efficiency and maintain consistent operations through leadership transitions at both the state and chapter levels.

Next is your new BCHW Vice President Jim Breeze. Jim has been a member of BCHW for 20 years. He currently serves as the Director for the Wenatchee Valley Chapter, Project Manager, and EC Liaison for Grants and Trails Operations Coordinator. He ran for the position of Vice President because he feels that BCHW is at a crossroads. With membership starting to age out, it is more important than ever to look to what the future holds. He feels that as VP and the EC liaison to the grants committee, he will be very helpful to the incoming president. He has a very good working relationship with Darrell Wallace and Tim Van Beek concerning the grants process. He would work fully with the incoming president to be a successful administration. He has a proven record of being involved in all things BCH and does everything possible to advance the mission statement.

Thank you to Heather and Jim for agreeing to run for these important positions within BCHW. I wish them both great success! 🐾



National Trails Day in Elbe State Forest

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from the trail. One worker was taken up the mountain and dropped off on foot (with his crosscut saw—we all know who that was!) to work his way back to the campground. Two others cleared the ADA Loop as they made their way along the trail.



With the jobs completed, the riders back from their trail work, and enough sunshine to dry out our clothing, we all sat down to enjoy a hearty BBQ lunch. Sadly, everyone was so busy working that we didn't get many "action" photos of the day's accomplishments. 🍷

Cheers!

Registration Is Now Open For The 25th Anniversary Winery Ride in Zillah, Washington!

By Barbara Thomas, Chair

Thanks to the generosity of Whitman Hills Winery, we have access to approximately **35 acres** of flat camping space. The additional acreage will provide campers with spacious campsites, and even our volunteers will have a little more elbow room to relax after a busy day.

BCHW members were given the first opportunity to reserve campsites, with registration opening to the public on July 4. Our email inbox has certainly gotten a workout over the past few days! Fortunately, with all this extra camping space, we're excited to welcome everyone.

Speaking of volunteers, now is the perfect time to start thinking about signing up to help. Without our volunteers, this event simply couldn't happen. This

year, we're expecting our largest turnout in the past four years, so we'll need plenty of helping hands.

Volunteers come from nearly every BCHW chapter, so let's show everyone—including our non-member guests—that BCHW still knows how to work hard and have fun! If your chapter is planning a fun ride, fundraiser, or other event in **2027**, bring a flyer. Our Outreach Chair, Rose Calvin, will gladly display it at the BCHW booth. Bring an extra copy, and we may even post it in the portable restrooms so attendees have something to read!

Mark your calendars now and make plans to join us—whether you're coming to ride, volunteer, or both! 🐾



RTP Grants Cleared for Action



OlyPen Trail Work 1 – Gray Wolf Trail Crew clearing the Dosewallips Trail.

By Darrell Wallace

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants have been released for full activity. In November, when the grant agreements were signed, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) advised that grantees could not spend the funds on actual trail work until the RCO finalized some additional requirements. After months of confusion and delay, we received word in late April that work could proceed. It turns out the RCO needed to update an agreement concerning cultural resources with the Federal Highway Administration, the source of RTP funding.

Grant recipients (such as BCHW chapters) have been provided with an Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) that they must follow, but it appears to be straightforward and reasonable.

RTP has been our most consistent source of grant funding since before 2010. We currently have three separate RTP grants in effect, totaling more than \$220,000 per year. Six chapters and two mixed crews have grant allocations, while the Grant Committee has also allocated funds for corps crews to work in specific locations.

All chapters are encouraged to apply now for grant allocations for the 2028–2029 funding cycle. Our application must be submitted before October 2026. 📄

For more information, contact bchwgranthelp@bchw.org

Why Do Horses Spook at Things Above Eye Level?

Have you ever wondered why your horse calmly walks past a stump but suddenly jumps sideways when a bird flies overhead or a branch moves in the breeze?

It all comes down to how horses see the world.

As prey animals, horses have eyes positioned on the sides of their heads, giving them nearly 350 degrees of vision. This wide field of view helps them detect predators approaching from almost any direction. However, they have limited depth perception directly in front of them and must raise or lower their heads to focus on objects.

Movement above a horse's eye level can trigger an instinctive reaction because, in the wild, danger often came from predators lurking on hillsides, falling branches, or birds suddenly taking

flight. Even today, a fluttering jacket in a tree, low-hanging branches, or a drone overhead can cause a horse to stop, stare, or spook.

Tips for Trail Riders

- Give your horse a moment to look at anything unusual overhead.
- Speak calmly and avoid pulling abruptly on the reins.
- If possible, approach the object at an angle rather than forcing your horse straight toward it.
- Remember that if your horse is looking, it's thinking. Allowing a few extra seconds to investigate often builds confidence.

Understanding how horses see their surroundings helps us become better riders and better partners. Sometimes what seems harmless to us looks very different through a horse's eyes. 🐾

Backcountry Trail Safety: Preparation Is Your Best Trail Partner

One of the greatest joys of Back Country Horsemen is exploring the beauty and solitude of our public lands. Whether you're heading out for a short afternoon ride or a multi-day pack trip, every ride into the backcountry comes with a responsibility to prepare for the unexpected.

Every trip into the backcountry is a little different. Trail conditions change with the seasons, weather can shift quickly, and horses don't always react the way we expect. No matter how many miles you've logged in the saddle, taking a few moments to prepare before your ride is time well spent.

Have a Plan Before You Leave

Before heading down the trail, let someone know where you're riding and when you expect to be back. It doesn't have to be complicated—a quick text, a note, or a phone call can make all the difference if something unexpected happens. Include the trail you'll be riding, who is with you, and where your truck and trailer will be parked. If your plans change during the ride and you have a way to let someone know, take a minute to do so.

Know Before You Go

Even if you've ridden a trail before, you shouldn't assume it will be the same this season. Winter storms, washouts, wildfires, and fallen trees can change a familiar trail overnight. Before you get ready to leave, check with the land management agency, your local BCHW chapter, or riders who've been there recently to see what conditions are like.

Your phone can be a useful tool, but cell service can become unreliable once you're in the backcountry. Download maps before

you leave home, and consider carrying a GPS, a paper map, and a compass. Electronics can fail, but a little preparation can keep you headed in the right direction.

Give Your Tack a Once-Over

Take a few minutes to look over your tack. Check that your saddle is secure, your cinch is snug, and all your straps and buckles are in good condition. Make sure your horse's shoes or hoof boots are solid, and that your saddlebags are balanced and fastened securely.

It's a simple habit that can save you from dealing with broken equipment or loose gear several miles down the trail.

Pack for the Unexpected

Every rider should carry a few essential items, even on shorter rides.

- First aid kit for people
- Basic equine first aid supplies
- Knife or multi-tool
- Extra lead rope
- Halter (if not already on your horse)
- Water and snacks
- Rain gear
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Fire starter
- Emergency blanket
- GPS or map and compass
- Whistle

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Please clip out and mail



Permanent or Temporary Address Change Form

Name: _____

Current Address: _____

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Temporary Address for Snow Birds: _____

Start date: _____ Return Date: _____

Mail to: Dana Chambers, State Membership Chair, 11404 210th Ave Ct E, Bonney Lake, WA 98391

Email to: membership.bchw@gmail.com

Backcountry Trail Safety: Preparation Is Your Best Trail Partner

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Many experienced riders also carry a lightweight emergency shelter and a satellite communication device when traveling in remote areas.

Ride Within Your Limits

Not every obstacle needs to be conquered. If a creek crossing, steep slope, or downed timber makes you uncomfortable, it's perfectly acceptable to turn around. Good judgment is one of the most valuable trail skills you can develop.

Remember, both horse and rider can become tired. Plan realistic distances, allow plenty of rest breaks, and watch for signs of dehydration or overheating.

Practice Good Trail Etiquette

Sharing the trail safely helps everyone enjoy the outdoors.

- Slow down when approaching hikers or mountain bikers.
- Communicate clearly with other trail users.
- Be courteous and patient.
- Stay on designated trails.
- Yield when appropriate and follow local trail regulations.
- Pack out everything you bring in.

Your actions represent not only you but the entire Back Country Horsemen organization.

Expect Wildlife

Wildlife encounters are part of the backcountry experience. Horses may react suddenly to deer, bears, elk, grouse, or even squirrels.

Remain calm, give wildlife plenty of space, and never attempt to approach or feed wild animals. If your horse becomes anxious, stop, allow it to look, speak calmly, and proceed only when both of you are relaxed.

Weather Can Change Quickly

Mountain weather is unpredictable. A sunny morning can quickly become an afternoon thunderstorm.

Dress in layers, carry rain gear, and pay attention to changing skies. If lightning develops, move away from ridgelines, isolated trees, and exposed areas whenever possible.

Keep Learning

No matter how many miles you've ridden, there is always something new to learn. Attend BCHW training events, participate in work parties, learn basic wilderness first aid, and ride with experienced members. Every ride builds knowledge that may someday help you or another trail user.

Remember The goal of every ride is simple: enjoy the journey and return home safely.

Preparation, good judgment, and respect for your horse, fellow riders, and the land are the foundations of safe backcountry travel. A few extra minutes of planning before the ride can create memories that last a lifetime—and ensure you're ready for your next adventure.

Be Prepared for Wildlife

Seeing wildlife is one of the rewards of riding in the backcountry, but it's also something every rider should be prepared for. Deer, elk, bears, grouse, and even an unexpected squirrel can catch a horse off guard.

If you come across wildlife, stay calm and give the animal plenty of room. Let your horse stop and take a look if needed. Speaking calmly and giving your horse a chance to settle often works better than trying to rush past the situation. Remember, wildlife is at home out there—we're just visitors.

Pay Attention to the Weather

If you've spent much time in the mountains, you know the forecast is only a starting point. Clear skies in the morning don't guarantee they'll stay that way all day.

Carry a rain jacket, dress in layers, and pay attention to what's happening around you. Dark clouds, rising winds, or distant thunder are good reminders that it may be time to head for lower ground. A little caution can keep a memorable ride from becoming an uncomfortable—or even dangerous—one.

Never Stop Learning

One of the best things about BCHW is the opportunity to learn from one another. Whether you've been riding for five years or fifty, someone always has a trick, tip, or lesson worth sharing. Take advantage of chapter work parties, clinics, and training opportunities. Ride with people who have experience in different terrain, ask questions, and be willing to share what you've learned with newer members. That's how we keep our knowledge—and our organization—strong.

One Last Thought

Every ride has its own story. Some days everything goes exactly as planned, and other days the trail reminds us who's really in charge. Good preparation, sound judgment, and a little common sense go a long way toward making every trip safe.

At the end of the day, the goal is simple: enjoy your horse, enjoy the trail, and make it back to the trailer with memories worth sharing. 

BCHW Sponsorships Program

We are now offering annual sponsorships!

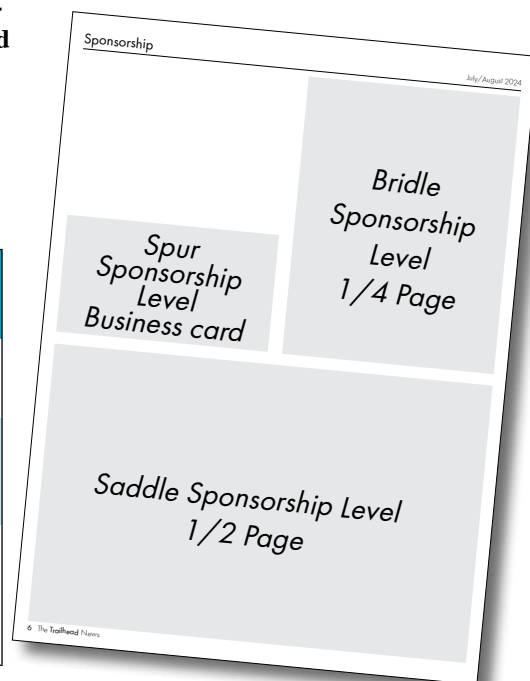
Sponsorship Levels will be for a calendar year and include the benefits listed below.

All levels of sponsors will be listed on the Sponsors' page of our website.

- **Back Country Horsemen of Washington Facebook page has 8.6K Followers**

- **The Trailhead News publication goes to 2100+ members**
- **Rendezvous Three-day event gathers 400+ members and 100+ public attendance**

Sponsorship Level	Benefits
Spur \$500	• Business card-size listing in all 6 editions of our Trailhead News • Your banner displayed at our statewide events
Bridle \$1000	• Quarter-page listing in our 6 editions of The Trailhead News • Your banner displayed at our statewide events. • Booth at our statewide events (if desired)
Saddle \$5000	• Half-page listing in all 6 editions of The Trailhead News • Your banner displayed at our statewide events. • Booth at our statewide events (if desired) • Posts on BCHW Facebook page



Contact president@bchw.org for more information

BCHW Membership Announcement

BCHW memberships expired on December 31, 2025 and the renewal season starts on October 1st. Please go to BCHW.org and click on the Membership tab to join or renew. If you have any questions, issues or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me, Dana Chambers, at membership.bchw@gmail.com or call 206-498-6952. I'm here for you!

PRICING FOR OUR SINGLE AND FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS ARE INCREASING.

In Addition To Chapter Dues

Single	\$45.00
Family	\$60.00
Contributing	\$75.00
Sustaining	\$125.00
Patron	\$250.00
Benefactor	\$500.00
Lifetime (Single)	\$1,200.00
Lifetime (Family of 2)	\$2,000.00

Content Deadline for the September/October 2026 Digital Newsletter is August 1, 2026

Cover Photos can be sent anytime, 8x10 Vertical orientation is best (300 dpi).

You can send articles, photos and calendar of events early!

Please email your articles (700 word maximum) and 3 or 4 photos with caption and photo byline to thn@bchw.org as soon as possible.

ATTENTION!

FREE Listing on BCHW Chapter Events Calendar

Be sure to: • Contact the ride host to check for updates on the event.

• Check to see if dogs are welcome.

Note: The BCHW Trailhead News represents as many events as possible; however, it makes no guarantees an event will be published. The calendar of events is subject to change. Please check with ride contact for most updated information. Please send calendar corrections to: thn@bchw.org.

Tahoma Chapter BCHW 36th Annual Prize Ride

Saturday, September 12, 2026
Gates Open: 7:30 am, Registration: 8:00 am
25258 Landsburg Rd SE, Ravensdale, WA 98051
Cost: \$25.00, inc: Lunch, 4-affle tickets (\$5 ea. addtl. ticket)
Well-marked 6.5 mile trail. No loose dogs.
No stallions, smoking & alcohol
Prize drawings start: 3:00 pm-4:30 pm: Prizes, Gift Certificates, Silent Auction, 50/50 drawing
www.tahomabchw.org

Peninsula Chapter Olympic Spirit Prize Ride

Saturday, September 12, 2026
Time out of first Rider: 9:30 am
Sage Horse Camp
2514 Chicken Coop Rd, Sequim, WA
Register by Date: September 4, 2026
Cost: \$30.00
Cost of BBQ dinner: \$20.00
Cost of camping: \$25.00/night
Email: peninsulabchwchapter@gmail.com
Chapter website: www.pbchw.org

3rd QTR BCHW Board of Directors' Meeting

Saturday, September 19, 2026
9:00 am, Armory
Kittitas Valley Event Center
901 E 7th Ave, Ellensburg, WA
BCHW President Dana Chambers
president@bchw.org

25th Annual Winery Ride & Halloween Costume Contest

Saturday, October 31, 2026
Zillah, WA
BCHWwineryride@gmail.com
for Sign-up and additional information, visit:
www.bchw.org/

Example

Your Chapter Ride or Event Must Be Open To All BCHW Members To Have A FREE Listing

Lines in the listing have a maximum character count of 32, including spaces. Please keep this in mind.

Please submit the following information with your event listing to thn@bchw.org.

Chapter Name _____
Name of Ride _____
Date _____
First Rider Out _____
Location _____
Register _____
Lunch _____
Name of Pass Required (if needed) _____
Weed-Seed-Free Feed Required _____
Camping (if available) _____
Cost to Member _____
Cost to Non-member _____
Contact Name _____
Phone _____
Email _____
Website _____

Free Entrance Days in the National Parks

August 25: 110th Birthday of the National Park Service
September 17: Constitution Day
October 27: Theodore Roosevelt's birthday
November 11: Veterans Day

