



SIS-Q-TRAILS

Backcountry Horsemen of California
Top of the State Unit

Volume 30

Issue 4

Fourth Quarter, 2026

<https://tos-bchc.com/>

https://www.facebook.com/bchc_topofthestate/



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's that time of year for my brief 4th quarter newsletter message. In August we sent one of our youths to the Ascend Wilderness Experience to Stoddard and Doe Lakes in the Trinity Alps Wilderness. We sponsored Aubrey Champlin, daughter of Alison Pick. She gave us a talk at our September meeting about her experience. She was a little shy about speaking in front of a group of people, so we let her speak from her chair. After a



few questions were asked about her participation in the event, she was no shy girl. She told us about her experience at clearing trails. How to read a log before you cut it with a crosscut saw so

you would not get injured, how to use the saw in a way that it would not bind on you, using wedges so it would not bind, make sure you have a safe place to go if the log rolls or falls the wrong way.

Clearing brush from the trails and make sure the trail is wide enough for hikers, horses and pack strings. Clearing trails through burned out timber and getting black from clearing the burned timber, and how to get along with others in the group and make sure that no one is put in danger because of your actions or someone else's actions. She feels this experience has made her a better person and how to get along with others. She was glad to have had the opportunity to participate in this event. She plans to attend more events like this and Top of the State Unit will be

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WEEK OF LEARNING

Aubrey Champlin (top of photo with mule) was chosen to participate in the Stockmanship & Stewardship Teen Internship with Ascend Wilderness Experience in August. She had so much fun she wants to participate again next year.

See more, page 4

behind her. This is what makes you proud as a group organization like the BCH that you make a difference in the lives of our youth members through programs like this. I give thanks to Sam Burrows of the Shasta Trinity Unit and his crew for working with all the youths that were there. I am proud to make my message here that this is what BCH is all about, showing them the great outdoor experience is for all to enjoy and that they will be the next generation to carry this legacy on for all to enjoy, whether you are a hiker, a horse person or one that just enjoys the outdoors, this country is for all to enjoy.

President Robert Robustellini

SIS-Q-TRAILS

A publication of the Backcountry Horsemen of California Top of the State Unit

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DISCLAIMER: Articles and advertisements that appear in SIS-Q-TRAILS do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the BCHC, TOS Unit or its officers and members. Nor does publication of said articles and advertisements constitute an endorsement of views or of the goods or services offered therein that they may express. Accuracy of all material is the sole responsibility of the authors. BCHC TOS is not responsible for unsolicited material of any kind.

SUBMISSIONS AND DEADLINES: The Top of the State Unit welcomes new member contributions, club news, events, calendar dates, and items of interest that you wish to have submitted in the next issue of the newsletter. These need to be submitted by the 15th of the month and will be printed as space is available. This newsletter is edited and published four times per year.

Submission deadline dates: March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15

Publication dates: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1

Send all information (text, photos and/or images) to newsletter editor/publisher email addresses listed above.

PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

This newsletter is a document of communication that disseminates information of the Top of the State Unit of the BCHC covering schedules, information, philosophy and historical materials pertinent to the participants of the back country of Northern California.

1. Perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness.
2. Assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resources.
3. Educate, encourage and solicit active participation in wise and sustaining use of the back country by horsemen and the general public.
4. Work to ensure that the public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
5. Foster and encourage the formation of new state backcountry horsemen organizations.

Learn more about Backcountry Horsemen of California: <https://www.bchcalifornia.org/>

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The Top of the State Unit is online and on Facebook!

Important forms are available for download and printing on our website. Go to tos-bchc.com and click on Forms to see the full list of documents. The Top of the State Unit Facebook page can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/bchctopofthestate/>

Unit Briefs

Board of Directors opening

We have one urgent Unit Director vacancy for the 2-year term through 2027. Board of Directors responsibilities and requirements:

- Must be a BCHC member in good standing
- Serve a two-year term
- Attend monthly meetings
- Help manage the affairs, property, business and control of policy of the organization
- Bring new, fresh ideas!

Contact Robert Robustellini at (530) 468-5636 or muletrackstoo@gmail.com for more info.

Carter Meadows fuels reduction plan

The Klamath National Forest is in the early planning stages for a potential fuels reduction and meadow restoration project in the Carter Meadows and Trail Creek areas in the Salmon/Scott River Ranger District. KNF leaders have invited our Unit leadership to consult with them on these plans and we plan to work closely with them regarding impacts to equestrian campgrounds and trails in that area. We will update this story as more information becomes available. A formal public comment period will be available, but the date for that opportunity has not been announced.

Apply for Hike the Hill opportunity

The BCHC State Board of Directors has decided to financially support a BCHC member to participate in the annual Hike the Hill trek to Washington, D.C., scheduled for Feb. 28-March 4, 2027. The BCHA Director of Public Lands makes this trip annually and is usually accompanied by the then current chair of BCHA. The selected BCHC member will coordinate with BCHA representatives regarding the event. People that BCHA/BCHC meet with in Washington D.C. are interested in real world experiences, so desirable qualifications for applicants include packing experience and public lands project experience. The selected person is expected to attend and present at the next State Board of Directors meeting following participation in Hike the Hill. If you are interested in this opportunity, please see DOCUMENTS & FORMS, Public Lands section on the BCHC website for Requirements and the Application Form. Link: <https://www.bchcalifornia.org/documents-forms/#PublicLands>

Welcome New Members!

Desiree Hardin

Lavina & Michael Smith



GIVE TO BCHC

If you would like to support our Unit and/or BCHC with a tax-deductible donation, please go to the BCHC website, www.bchcalifornia.org, and scroll to the "Support Our Cause" section to find a "Donate" button. **If you want to designate your donation for the Top of the State Unit, please select Education Fund and add a note that your donation is for our Unit's Education Fund.** The donation site will automatically send a thank you letter to you acknowledging receipt of the donation.



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Yreka, Fort Jones, Happy Camp,
Mt. Shasta and Redding

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Planning a Trip? Use
www.ytbtravel.com/bchc

**BCHC
EARNS 60%
OF THE
COMMISSIONS!**

BCH
GETAWAY

- You will find the same airlines, hotels, rental cars and cruises as on other travel websites!
- You'll get great travel prices!
- Each time you book travel a portion of the travel commissions will go to support BCHC!

It's that simple!

TRAIL ETIQUETTE & LEAVE NO TRACE

We'd like to host a series of seminars, open to the public, to educate all trail users about trail etiquette and Leave No Trace Principals. Seminars would be in cooperation with local businesses and the Forest Service.

AT OUR SEPTEMBER 3 BOARD MEETING WE COLLECTED IDEAS FROM MEMBERS

BACKCOUNTRY EDUCATION

We envision creating a youth educational program that would culminate in a trail clearing and overnight packing trip on a local historical trail. Program would be in partnership with the Outfitter's Legacy Project and the Forest Service.

IDEAS FOR 2027 EVENTS

MEETING FORMATS

In order to get more participation in our monthly board meetings, we'll look at scheduling a "fun" element after some meetings, like a BBQ potluck meal, cowboy poetry around a campfire, or a group trail ride.

SNAIL MAIL WORKS!

In an effort to reach more members, we'll mail monthly or quarterly flyers to all members and this newsletter to those who don't have email or internet access.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Educational events for high-lining, packing & trail stewardship at a local campground
- Dutch Oven cooking demo and competition
- More trail rides throughout the year
- Scavenger Hunt/Lingo rides
- Mule Appreciation Day
- Equine bodywork demos by local clinicians
- Basic farrier skills
- Backcountry first aid
- Emergency preparedness

Don't miss our end-of- year events!

Members and the public
are always welcome to
attend our monthly
meetings.

Check out the following
pages for more event
flyers!

OCT. 1
7 p.m.

Board of Directors Meeting
Location: Grenada Fire Hall

OCT. 10
All Day

**BCHC State Board of
Directors Meeting**
Location: Hilmar, CA

NOV. 5
7 p.m.

Membership Meeting
*Location: Fort Jones
City/Community Hall*

DEC. 3
7 p.m.

Board of Directors Meeting
Location: Grenada Fire Hall

DEC. 5

5 p.m. (Happy Hour)
6 p.m. (Dinner)

Christmas Party
*Location: Fort Jones
City/Community Hall*
Meal: Ham and turkey
provided; please bring a
side dish or appetizer.
Gift exchange and raffle:
Yes!

Interns learn valuable equine, packing tips

Article by Betsy Stapleton

On July 22, six Scott River Watershed Council Youth Environmental Summer Studies (YESS) interns were introduced to horse packing by Backcountry Horsemen Top of the State Unit volunteers Robert Robustellini and Mathilda Barr. YESS is a summer youth employment and education program teaching youth employment skills and practical environmental science. The YESS interns learned that many backcountry trails were established by stock use and that horses and mules are still used today to haul supplies into the backcountry for trail maintenance and fire fighting in remote areas.

Mathilda started the afternoon by showing how to catch the horse, Apache, and shared that it is necessary to brush Apache and clean his feet before starting to load the pack gear, just like making sure that you don't have rocks in your shoes before starting a long hike. Interns learned that horses are prey animals and naturally enter a "flight mode" when scared or anxious and that there are ways to reassure the horse and help them relax and feel safe. Basic "horse language" was taught so that interns could read when the horse was relaxed. How to safely pass a pack team on the trail was explained and then practiced. Two teams of interns were challenged with a variety of tools to pack into pack bags, weigh to make sure the loads were



Photo courtesy of Betsy Stapleton

balanced, and explain why they selected the tools and loaded them the way they did. Tips on how to improve the packing were given and then the Apache was loaded. Interns took turns leading Apache as if they were out on trail. Some interns had never been close to a horse before and were pleased to learn that Apache liked being petted and given cookies.

One intern reported "I learned that horse packing is more complicated than I thought and that horses aren't like a machine - they have feelings!" Mathilda and Robert said that they enjoyed the interns' enthusiasm and that the youth were very polite and asked good questions. Apache said, "I liked the horse cookies and being petted". All and all, it was a fun and informative afternoon.

Ride with us at the Bacigalupi Ranch!



Group trail ride and BBQ potluck lunch

October 3, 2026

Please join the BCHC Top of the State Unit for a group trail ride at the Bacigalupi Ranch in the foothills near Little Shasta. Ride will be approximately 7-8 miles on moderate terrain with some rocks.

When: PLEASE arrive by no later than 9 a.m.; ride starts at 9:30 a.m.

Address: 13632 Ball Mountain Little Shasta Road, Montague; follow BCHC signs to trailer parking and potluck lunch location. Message us for directions.

Members only? Yes, all riders must be current BCHC members. Non-members wanting to ride will need to sign up to be a member before or on the day of the event (\$60 for one-year membership, \$75 for a family). All youth riders age 17 and under MUST wear an equestrian helmet.

Cost: Free

RSVP: YES by September 30 if you plan to attend the potluck lunch. We'll need a firm headcount so we can purchase enough hamburgers and buns.



BBQ potluck lunch at the ranch: If you want to stay for lunch after the ride, please bring a potluck dish to share. Non-members are welcome to join us for lunch. We anticipate the lunch will start around 12:30 or 1 p.m. for anyone planning to join just for lunch.



HALLOWEEN OBSTACLES

**CHALLENGE YOUR
HORSE OR MULE
ON OUR SPOOKY
COURSE!**

**9:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.
PRACTICE ONLY
COME & GO ALL DAY**

**7330 STERCHI LN.
BIG SPRINGS, CA
96064**



**FREE* &
OPEN TO THE
PUBLIC!
*DONATIONS WELCOME**

OCTOBER 24, 2026

Hosted by Backcountry Horsemen of California Top of the State Unit.
Riders 17 years old and younger must wear an equestrian helmet. No dogs on course.
Questions: Call or text Michele at 817-308-0258

Backcountry Horsemen of California



MAIL TO: BCHC
MEMBERSHIP
1280 State Rt. 208
Yerington, NV 89447

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

A Family & Youth
Oriented Organization
Release 4 2025 (11 Feb 25)

☐ New ☐ Change
☐ Renewal

PARENT UNIT AFFILIATION: (Select and CHECK a Unit as your Affiliation)

☐ Antelope Valley	☐ Los Padres	☐ Redshank Riders	☐ Sierra Freepackers
☐ Eastern Sierra	☐ Manzanita Riders	☐ Redwood	☐ Sutter Buttes
☐ High Country	☐ Mid Valley	☐ San Joaquin Sierra	☒ Top of the State
☐ High Sierra	☐ Mother Lode	☐ Santa Ana River	
☐ Kern River Valley	☐ North Bay	☐ Sequoia	
☐ Kern Sierra		☐ Shasta Trinity	

DCTR (Your Membership Number): _____

MEMBER'S NAME - No Business Names, Print Clearly

SPOUSE/CO-MEMBER'S NAME - MUST SHARE SAME ADDRESS

Street Address/PO Box

City _____ State _____ Zip Code (full 9 digits if known) _____ Area Code _____ Phone Number _____

Email Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Donation to BCHC Education Fund (Tax deductible) \$ _____ Enclosed: _____ Check No. _____

Parent Unit Membership Types (Check One)

☐ 1 Year Individual \$60	☐ 1 Year Family \$75	☐ Young Adult (18-25 years old) \$15	☐ Benefactor \$100
☐ 2 Year Individual \$110	☐ 2 Year Family \$140	Include Date of Birth / /	☐ Patron \$250
☐ 3 Year Individual \$160	☐ 3 Year Family \$205		☐ Mt. Whitney \$500

Associate Membership: An Additional \$15 PER UNIT is added to your Parent Unit Dues

Associate Membership Unit Affiliations MAY NOT BE FOR THE SAME UNIT AS YOUR PARENT UNIT

Associate Membership for: _____ \$15/Unit
Unit Name (from above list)

Associate Membership for: _____ \$15/Unit
Unit Name (from above list)

Please clip form along dashed line and keep the below portion for your records.

Parent BCHC Membership Types

Individual, Family, (Shared**), Benefactor, Patron, and Mt. Whitney

A Parent Membership is with a single Local Unit.

**A SHARED Membership is for two adults with differing last names who share a common address.

Associate Memberships

These special Memberships are only available to persons already holding Parent BCHC Membership. No one may sign up for an Associate Membership without 1) having registered one of the Parent Membership types, and 2) having selected Parent Unit affiliation.

Young Adult Memberships MUST include date of birth on application. The year you turn 24 is the last year you may renew under this membership.

Complete information regarding BCHC Membership is available on the MEMBERSHIP TAB at bchcalifornia.org or call (775) 463-3634

KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS

I submitted an Application Form for a -

☐ 1 Year Individual	\$60
☐ 2 Year Individual	\$110
☐ 3 Year Individual	\$160
☐ 1 Year Family	\$75
☐ 2 Year Family	\$140
☐ 3 Year Family	\$205
☐ Young Adult (18-25 years old)	\$15
☐ Benefactor	\$100
☐ Patron	\$250
☐ Mt. Whitney	\$500
☐ On that form, I also requested:	

_____ Associate Memberships

My Total Remittance: _____

My Check Number: _____

Date Mailed: _____

Verifying BCHC Membership by

- 1) BCHC Unit President's reports
- 2) BCHC Membership VP reports
- 3) a self-addressed stamped envelope submitted with this form
- 4) a valid email address