

TOP OF THE STATE UNIT – BCHC  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Grenada Fire Hall  
February 5, 2026  
7 p.m.

President Robert Robustellini called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**Officers:**

Robert Robustellini (President)  
Debbie Bacigalupi (Vice President)  
Michele Machado Woods (Secretary)  
Caralee Scala (Treasurer)

---

**Directors:**

Laurie Robustellini     Janice Rushton     Alan Woods

---

**Alternate:**

~~Michael Stapleton~~

---

**Members and Guests:** JME Essex, Aysha Falconer

Administrative:

- Establish Quorum/Flag Salute
- Members sign in sheet with miles
- Guest Speaker: None
- Additional agenda items: None
- Introduction of Guests: None

Approve Minutes of December 4, 2025 Meeting: Debbie moves to approve the minutes, Alan seconds the motion. Motion carried.

Correspondence:

- The week of January 5, Robert sent in our Unit's nomination for the BCHC Ann Lange Award. Winner will be announced at 2026 Rendezvous in Ceres (March 20-22).
- On January 7, Robert received from new BCHC Co-Secretary, Anna Baglione, the agenda and all information for the February 7 BCHC Board of Directors meeting in Hilmar, CA.
- On January 14, Michele sent in our 2025 Unit Annual Report.
- On January 15, Michele mailed paper copies of our 2025 Unit newsletters to CJ Hargreaves for the Max & Irene Cochran Journalism Award. Winner will be announced at 2026 Rendezvous.
- On January 23, Michele emailed BCHC Education Chairs Denise Robinson and Ruthy Heuer to nominate our Unit for a 2025 Unit Education Award. Michele consulted with Debbie before sending in our nomination. Please reach out to Michele if you want a copy of our nomination document. Winner will be announced at 2026 Rendezvous.
- On January 23, Michele sent to BCHC Treasurer, Lynn Joiner, our Unit's nomination for 2025 Top Hand Award. Winner will be announced at 2026 Rendezvous.
- Robert read a short letter regarding Youth Packing competition at BCHC Rendezvous this year. Robert asked that the packing competitions be held on Friday or Saturday morning so the winner can be recognized at the Saturday dinner during the awards ceremony. Robert sent the letter to Sam Burrows to be read during the BCHC Board of Directors meeting on February 7.

- Our Unit received a letter from Carlena Kellog regarding a request to donate prizes or money for the 2026 Rendezvous Obstacle Challenge. However, the deadline to send prizes or money was February 1 so we will not be donating to this event.

Treasurer Report: Caralee Scala reported that the Checking Balance as of November 30, 2025, was \$17,568.43. Income since our December 4 meeting was \$250.50 (\$154 for October membership rebate, \$56.50 for November membership rebate, and \$41 for December membership rebate). Expenses for December and January were \$2,293.65 (\$68 for P.O. Box rent, \$90.65 for Membership supplies, \$2000 for Packing Intern with the BCHC Shasta-Trinity Unit, and \$135 for Fort Jones City Hall 2026 rent for 5 meetings and St. Patrick's Day dinner). Checking Balance as of January 31, 2026, was \$15,525.28. Bills to pay were to Michele Woods for fuel to attend the Wilderness Trails Summit in Eureka in January. Janice moves to approve the Treasurer Report and pay bills, Laurie seconds the motion. Motion carried.

#### Committee Reports:

- Education: Debbie Bacigalupi has nothing to report.
- Membership: Jennifer Bull reported via email that we have 89 voting members and 1 young adult member. She sent out four expired letters. Chip Herzig sent the information for Shirley Tickner.
- Newsletter: Michele Machado Woods reminded everyone that they can send stories for the newsletter. Robert said he gave some newsletter content to Alan awhile back. Michele will find it, how to be a member when you're in the public, etc.
- Insurance: Michele Machado Woods has nothing to report.
- Website: Kathryn Matthews not in attendance; nothing to report
- Adopt-A-Highway: Michael Stapleton not in attendance; nothing to report.
- Public Lands: Michael Stapleton/Michael Journey; On January 7, Michael Stapleton shared with Michele and other Unit members waiver forms for riding on The Wildlands Conservancy preserves, which includes Beaver Valley Headwaters Preserve near Callahan. Reach out to Michael at frenchcreek@gmail.com if you want the forms emailed to you. Learn more here: <https://wildlandsconservancy.org/preserves/findapreserve>. Michael shared an article with Robert regarding a horse that was rescued in Wyoming.
- Work Parties: Robert Robustellini has nothing new to report. Carter Meadows work weekend with Shasta-Trinity Unit and Redwood Unit is scheduled for June 3-8.
- Agency/Partner Liaison:
  - Michele gave a report on Wilderness and Primitive Trails Summit in Eureka on Jan. 8
    - Topics that kept coming up were youth and equine education; lots of great ideas came from these discussions on how to educate hiker volunteers about equines and packing.
    - Possible partnership opportunity for BCHC/OLP and Ascend Wilderness for teen events
  - Michele, Alan and Robert reported on meeting with the KNF's Shelby Weister and Ellen Andrews on Jan. 23
    - Carter Meadows work party campout scheduled for June 3-8
    - Ellen asked if our members would be interested in helping pack out trash from wilderness campsites this summer. Lakes would be Campbell, Cliff, Long Gulch, Trail Gulch, Paradise, Sky High Lakes
    - Robert talked about the fire rings that would need to be broken down, especially those nearest to the lakes.
    - If we're doing a project with the FS, we are covered by FS insurance, people and stock.
    - FS likes to have at least one "sponsor" at events.

- Michele said she will meet with Shelby on Feb. 20 regarding youth helping with work parties and how that will be written into our volunteer service agreement
- Michele received an email from Ian Nelson, PCTA, regarding planned work on the PCT at Grider Creek on March 12-15. Michele responded that we can definitely have some volunteers available to help with this work. Debbie suggested we make a map for work party events.
- California Wilderness Ranger Academy, Trinity Lake, May 4-8: Ellen Andrews sent information to Michele regarding this event, which is open to volunteers. Michele will research this event and consider attending, per discussion with Ellen and Shelby regarding their request for help with Wilderness campground monitoring and help with trash pack-out.
- Fish Plants: VACANT; Robert reported that he talked to the head person, Cody, at the CDFW/Fish Hatchery and found out we can't do any lakes in our area. They are still doing Cascades Frog surveys.
- Programs and Events: Debbie Bacigalupi; all in attendance discussed early plans for the March 21 dinner; Michele confirmed that Keith Thomas will cook the corned beef, Debbie can do cabbage, carrots and potatoes. Caralee will purchase the food. Happy hour at 5 and eat at 6. Potluck for all of the other parts of dinner. RSVP by March 16. Dessert auction, raffle. Michele will create flyer/social media post and send info for email to members.
- Parades: VACANT; nothing to report
- Scholarships: Penny Wells-Thomas not in attendance; Penny told Michele via text that she is in favor of doing a \$1000 scholarship this year. Alan said he is not in favor of doing a scholarship because the kids are bad about picking up the money. Consensus was that we should sponsor the Outfitter Legacy Project youth packers at Bishop instead. Janice moves that we donate \$1000 to the OLP youth for Bishop, Debbie seconds the motion. JME said we should promote this donation on social media. Janice suggested that we include that others can donate as well and promote what OLP is and what they do. Motion carried.
- Trail rides: Michele Machado Woods and Laurie Robustellini; Michele asked if we want to schedule a ride at Military Pass area is the weather stays nice? TBD on upcoming rides.
- Publicity/Social Media: Michele Machado Woods will promote everything that is going right now.

#### Unfinished Business:

- Michele submitted our Unit's volunteer hours to Cindy McMurry on December 29, 2025, to meet the January 1 deadline. Our totals for 2025: 2,816 volunteer hours, 234 trail miles, 25,580 miles driven for events and work parties, 109 hours of equipment use, 57 stock days. Total value was \$148,242.72. All totals were higher than 2024.
- RAC – Resource Advisory Committee: Per discussion initiated by Jamie Essex, Michele will reach out to Klamath National Forest regarding RAC grant money. Michele's contact at the KNF, Alicia Deery, no longer works for the KNF so we'll need to contact somebody else to find out more about RAC. The committee needs 15 members to function, per <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r05/klamath/working-with-us/committees>.
- Outfitters Legacy Project: Teaming up for some events in 2026. Any updates? Still waiting on insurance, Aysha is working on insurance. Pack clinic March 7-14, Trent Peterson at Double H Ranch in Yreka. Auditors are welcome. Packing teams can't practice until they have insurance. Meeting on Sunday, Feb. 8, on learn more. Laurie to look into booking a play day at Potts ranch in late March or April.
- Per vote at the December 4 meeting, need to set date for Unit Officers and/or others to discuss updates to bylaws with new Board Member number requirements and other updates as necessary to comply with state bylaws, including updates to insurance. It was decided during this meeting that we'll meet on Thursday, March 5, 5:30 p.m. at Fort Jones Hall to talk about bylaws updates. All Officers and board members plan to attend. Invite Kathryn and Gail. Debbie offered to bring dinner.

New Business:

- Feb. 7 BCHC Board of Directors meeting: Robert said he is sending our proxy with Shasta-Trinity Unit President, Sam Burrows. Robert said there was nothing on the agenda that concerns our Unit. Robert read a letter that he gave to Sam to read off at the BOD meeting regarding youth packing competition should be on Saturday so the winners can be announced at the Saturday dinner. Robert talked about a Trail Program letter about the Forest Service.
- Reminder: Unit Financial Statements are due to BCHC Treasurer, Lynn Joiner, by February 28, 2026.
- State of Jefferson Expo update: Will we have a booth? Event is at fairgrounds on April 11-12. Cliff told Michele that we could have a free booth if we did a packing demo, including the youth. We could do a pack box weighing contest like at the Ag Day. It was asked how much a booth costs if we don't do a demo. OLP group will talk about it at Feb. 8 meeting. Need to submit an application to reserve booth. Event is 10-5 on April 11 and 10-4 on April 12.
- Chainsaw certifications: Alan Woods is working directly with KNF District 5 Regional Saw Program Manager, Jason Murieen, to get our chainsaw sawyer recertified. Those needing recertification are Alan, Robert Robustellini, Michele Woods, Kyle Adkins and Jeff McCabe. UPDATE: Alan Woods, Michele Woods, Robert Robustellini, Jeff McCabe and Duane Eastlick got recertified on Feb. 5. Kyle Adkins is going to attend saw training with Dan Chartier on March 14-15 in Anderson/Redding. Alan may go down in March to get certified as a "C" sawyer. Michele will send out information about March chainsaw class again.
- Michele would like to ask Mathilda Barr, BCHC 2025 packing intern, to be a guest speaker at an upcoming meeting. Will ask her if she can attend the March 5 Membership meeting in Fort Jones.
- BCHC 2026 Rendezvous registration packet can be downloaded via link at <https://www.bchcalifornia.org/rendezvous.html>. It's also on the Top of the State Unit website.

Announcements: None

Next Meeting: Fort Jones City Hall/Community Center, March 5, 7 p.m.

Adjourn: 8:23 p.m.