

# SIS-Q-TRAILS

Backcountry Horsemen of California Top of the State Unit

Volume 29 Issue 3 Third Quarter, 2025 https://tos-bchc.com/ https://www.facebook.com/ bchctopofthestate/



It's July and we hope all of our members are enjoying the summer, especially riding, packing and camping in our area mountains. Be careful out there and be mindful of wildfire activity and ways to get home safely.

Your Unit leadership is proud of the volunteer work we've accomplished so far this year. However, with wildfire season upon us, we anticipate a slow down in trail work parties. We've scheduled another campground cleanup work day, this time at Grider Creek Campground near Seiad Valley. The



work is scheduled for July 26 at 9:30 a.m. Please call me at 817-308-0258 if you can join us. All volunteers are welcome.
Our efforts this year have been aided greatly because we were able to get four additional members certified as chainsaw sawyers. That is me in the photo at left earning my "A" certification on May 11 with the Siskiyou Mountain Club. Kyle Adkins and Jeff McCabe also

earned their certifications with SMC in March and Michael Stapleton earned his certification with BCHC saw evaluator, Dan Chartier, late last year. Stay tuned for more opportunities to get certified on both chainsaw and crosscut saw. Our Unit members are selling raffle tickets to help fund youth and trail work programs this year. We have two fantastic prizes to give away and tickets are only \$10. Please see page 9 of this newsletter for more information. We'll draw the winners on Oct. 2.

Speaking of youth, our Unit sponsored Youth Packers placed first and second at Rendezvous in April, which sparked many more adventures for the teams and a whole new local project/nonprofit. Read more on **pages 7 and 8**.



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#### DEDICATED SAWYER

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Our spotlight photo above features one of our newest certified sawyers, Jeff McCabe, getting after a downed tree on the Pacific Crest Trail near Carter Meadows on June 5. Jeff is a great hand and an avid hiker. You can see more of his saw work on the PCT southbound out of Grider Creek.

We're still looking for volunteers to help pack wilderness signs to the Russian Wilderness boundary departing from Etna Summit and going southbound on the PCT. Please reach out to me ASAP if you can help with this task. The trail should be clear of snow now. Looking ahead, we're planning our Deer Mountain Group Trail Ride for September 20. We'll get word out if we plan any additional rides before or after that.

Happy Trails! Michele Machado Woods Unit President and Newsletter Editor

### SIS-Q-TRAILS

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

Editor: Michele Machado Woods

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Publisher email: topofthestate-bch@outlook.com Publication Information: The SIS-Q-TRAILS Top of the State Unit newsletter is published quarterly. It is an independent publication with news and information of interest to Unit members.

**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

Send all information (text, photos and/or images) to newsletter editor/publisher mailing or 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.

Unit bylaws, membership form and more: https://tos-bchc.com/forms

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## **Unit Briefs**

#### **Grider Creek CG work planned**

We are seeking volunteers to help with campground debris cleanup, installing campfire rings and installing a kiosk at the Grider Creek Campground near Seiad Valley on Saturday, July 26 at 9:30 a.m. All volunteers should plan to bring gloves, bug/tick spray and lunch/beverages. There is also plentiful Poison Oak in this area so please prepare for that. Certified sawyers should bring all of their own PPE and chainsaws.

Please reach out to Michele Machado Woods at 817-308-0258 if you can volunteer for this work or if you have any questions. ALL VOLUNTEERS are welcome.

#### 2026 Rendezvous volunteers sought

2026 Rendezvous is scheduled for March 20-22 in Ceres, CA. Mid Valley Unit will be the lead Unit, but BCHC is seeking volunteers from all Units to help lead these tasks/events:

- Registration
- Publicity
- Wine/Beer tasting event
- Vendors
- Program/Sponsors
- Contests (Art Show, Packing, Obstacles, Dutch Oven)
- Parking, Stalls & Camping
- Raffle

Any volunteers will be expected to attend Zoom meetings and communicate what they need and what they have accomplished. Please reach out to Michele Machado Woods at 817-308-0258 if you are interested in volunteering for any of these opportunities. As of late June, our Unit has not committed to help with any of these tasks.

#### Welcome new members!

Kathy Graves, Jamie and Vose Hayden, Judy Morton, Christine Nahmens, Amanda and Jose Ortiz

### TOP OF THE STATE UNIT 2025 ACTIVITIES

## Please watch the Unit website, Facebook page and Unit emails for continued updates.

July-Sept.	Work Party projects in cooperation with the
J 1	Klamath National Forest and other partners
July 10	BOD Meeting, Fort Jones City Hall, 7 p.m.
July 26	Grider Creek campground cleanup, 9:30 a.m.
Aug. 7	BOD Meeting cancelled
Aug. 6-10	Siskiyou Golden Fair, Yreka
Sept. 4	BOD Meeting, Fort Jones City Hall, 7 p.m.

Sept. 20 Deer Mountain Group Ride, TBD

Oct. 2 BOD Meeting, Grenada Fire Hall, Grenada, 7 p.m.

Oct. 3-4 BCHC Fall BOD Meeting, location TBD
Oct. 18 Halloween Obstacle event, Big Springs

Nov. 6 Membership Meeting, Fort Jones City Hall, 7 p.m. Dec. 4 BOD Meeting, Grenada Fire Hall, Grenada, 7 p.m.

Dec. 4 BOD Meeting, Grenada Fire Hall, Grenada, 7

Visit the Top of the State Unit website at <a href="https://tos-bchc.com/">https://tos-bchc.com/</a>
Visit our Unit's Facebook page at <a href="https://www.facebook.com/bchctopofthestate/">https://www.facebook.com/bchctopofthestate/</a>



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### **Debbie Bacigalupi awarded TOS Unit's 2024 Top Hand**

#### **Nominated by Michele Machado Woods:**

Debbie Bacigalupi fills many roles in the Top of the State Unit, including Vice President, Education chairperson and Programs and Events chairperson. In all of these roles, Debbie never shies away from a challenge and her ideas are endless. As Education chair, she recruited our members who volunteered at the Siskiyou County Cattlewomen Agriculture Awareness Day in May, where they taught area fourth graders about packing and weighing panniers. Later in the summer she procured supplies and created a lovely Top of the State Unit feature booth at the Siskiyou Golden Fair in August. This booth is our Unit's chance each year to educate fair attendees about BCHC and its mission and work on area trails. Our 2024 booth earned a third-place ribbon, but our booths the past years have won Best in Show and that is due, in great part, to Debbie's fantastic ideas for organizing and decorating the booth. In March and again in December, Debbie helped organize and decorate for our very popular



Unit potluck dinners. These dinners are our main fundraisers for the year and Debbie's eye for decorating always makes the dinners a hit.

Debbie and her family also often volunteer to host a trail ride on their beautiful ranch and we look forward to scheduling that ride again soon.

Debbie is a cherished and valuable member of our Unit leadership and I'm honored to nominate her for our 2024 Top Hand award.



Photos courtesy of Debbie Bacigalupi



# Ag Day exhibit is a hit with attendees

#### **Article by Michele Machado Woods**

Siskiyou County Agriculture Awareness Day is one of our Unit's favorite events to attend each vear because it allows our members to teach fourth-grade students a little bit about packing. Our educational exhibit on May 15 again challenged the 287 total students to fill a packing pannier to be weighed, with the aim of having two balanced panniers. Many of the schools did a great job at balancing their loads, with Montague Elementary doing the best. At the end of the event, teachers from the 12 school districts in attendance rated our booth a 4.9 out of 5, with the feedback that they liked having multiple people working with the students. In fact, one teacher wrote "I wanted to give you a 6." Big thanks to Robert, Debbie, Caralee, Kathryn and Gail for helping this year.

# Low attendance may halt road cleanups

#### Report and photos courtesy of Michael Stapleton

On April 24, we scheduled a highway cleanup on our stretch of Highway 3 outside of Etna. Only Penny and Gail joined me for the work. I ordered six scones being optimistic.

We really need a minimum of four able-bodied individuals to do the main 2-mile stretch, which we break into two 1-mile segments (each of those is is 2 miles going in each direction). Gail usually does a short section between the Telephone Company and Horn Lane. However, on this day 86-year-old Gail did a 2-mile stretch with Penny. I did all of the rest of it. We decided to not do another cleanup until Spring 2026. Penny will call folks encouraging them to help in the cleanup. If we don't get sufficient attendance then, I think that we will be done with highway cleanups.





# Juanita Lake CG cleanup

#### Report and photo courtesy of Michele Machado Woods

Our partnership with the Klamath National Forest has grown this year to include areas in the Goosenest Ranger District. On May 17, our volunteers gathered to help maintain campsites and trails in the very popular Juanita Lake campground in the Butte Valley area. While this isn't an equestrian campground, we're proud



to help the KNF in any way possible. We bucked any logs that had fallen in campsites and on the trails leading to the lake, trimmed limbs and stobs on live trees, cleaned out fire pits and ensured the campsites were tidy for future occupants. This campground features 22 regular campsites and a separate group campground. We bucked a few small logs in the group campground and marked one large hazard tree for the Forest Service to take care of on another day. Thanks to Alan, Robert and Neves for

Thanks to Alan, Robert and Neves for helping with this work.

### Helping friends: Horse Flat ready for new corrals

On May 24, Michele and Alan Woods ventured to the Trinity Lake area to help the **BCHC Shasta-Trinity** Unit clean up and prep the Horse Flat campground for new stock corrals and easier access for stock trailers. The Forest Service was scheduled to bring in new panels for corrals. This campground, which is currently closed, offers 10 sites, four of which can accommodate trailers up to 16 feet. Eagle Creek TH is accessed from this campground.

# **Carter Meadows trails cleared**

# Article by Michele Machado Woods

Each year, since 2023, our multi-Unit work party weekend at Carter Meadows has grown. This year, on June 4-8, we had more than 25 volunteers young and young at heart from Top of the State Unit, Redwood Unit and Shasta-Trinity Unit working to clear trails, repair wooden stock corrals, tidy up the campgrounds and prepare amazing food for the group. We were thrilled to have the Youth Packers at camp on Friday, June 6, to help with log out work on the Trail Gulch Trail. Shasta-Trinity Unit packer/sawyer, Sam Burrows, mentored the youth on cutting and clearing logs with a crosscut saw. On June 5 and 7, our sawyers

and swampers cleared 40-45 deadfall logs and debris from the Pacific Crest Trail from Carter Meadows Summit (Mile 1581.5) northbound to approximately Mile 1586.5 near the Siphon Lake Trail cutoff. Snow drifts blocking the trail stopped the crew from reaching Siphon Lake. During our stay we also logged out the feeder trails from the campgrounds to the Trail Gulch and Long Gulch Trailheads. The Klamath CCC crews were working on clearing the Long Gulch Trail while we were there and we very much appreciate their work.



Top: Alan cuts a log on a feeder trail. Middle left: Michele uses a small saw to cut a downed tree off the PCT. Middle right: Rose made excellent Dutch Oven desserts.





At right: Robert led a crew that repaired and cleared rocks from two corrals at Hidden Horse Campground. All photos courtesy of Michele Machado Woods and Alan Woods



# Youth packers inspire project

As the saying goes, all it takes is a seed for something big to grow. In this instance, BCHC members, parents and outfitters in our area came together earlier this year to create youth packing teams. That work has led to a whole new project created by new Top of the State Unit members, Jamie and Vose Hayden.

# We'll let Jamie introduce you to this exciting new nonprofit:

This whole project started when Top of the State Backcountry Horsemen, our local Unit here in Siskiyou County, invited our community to help represent our area in a youth competition at the Corning BCHC Rendezvous. Word got out that they needed coaches to teach packing skills and hitches — and since we (my husband Vose and I) are professional outfitters in the region, being Flying O Outfitter, we volunteered.

What began as a small act of service quickly became something much bigger. We ended up coaching eight kids, ages 12 to 15, forming two teams for the event. We trained every Sunday using live animals and iron mules to practice proper hitching techniques. Most of these kids didn't know each other before — they came from all corners of the county — but they quickly formed friendships and strong bonds. And they absolutely adored Vose, our main coach and now President of the nonprofit. After taking 1st and 2nd place at the Corning Rendezvous, one of our key supporters (and now board member), Jamie Essex, encouraged our group to take the kids to Bishop Mule Days. Our community stepped up in a big way, sponsoring the entire trip. That overwhelming support and the clear impact on



Top photo: Top of the State Unit sponsored Youth Packing teams placed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Rendezvous. Photos courtesy of Jamie Essex, Jamie Hayden and Amanda Ortiz.

these kids made something click — there was a real need and a real hunger for this kind of experience.

That's when The Outfitter's Legacy Project was born. We knew we had to go bigger. From that foundation, we built not just our youth program, but also branches for veterans and horsemanship training for the general public. Our goal is simple: to help people of all backgrounds get into the backcountry with confidence, equipped with the right tools, knowledge, and stock — and to fall in love with the wild places we are lucky enough to call

Continued on next page

home.



Top photo: Youth packers learn at Bishop Mule Days.
Bottom photo: The youth helped with crosscut work on the Trail Gulch Trail during our Carter Meadows work party.



# **Introducing Outfitter's Legacy Project**

The Outfitter's Legacy Project is the parent nonprofit. Under that umbrella, we run four branches:

- Young Mule Co., our youth-driven program
- Valor Ridge Outfitters, focused on veterans
- High Mountain Horsemanship, dedicated to horsemanship and stock training
- Legacy Trails Restoration, working on public land stewardship and trail work

We chose the name The Outfitter's Legacy Project because we believe packers and outfitters are a dying breed, and the legacy deserves to live on. We're building a bridge between generations, getting young people into the backcountry, in the saddle, and on the trail with a real sense of purpose. Even in the short time we've been doing this, we've already seen a change in our youth. They're choosing to be outside with stock, setting aside screens, and diving into hands-on learning. When they went to Bishop Mule Days, it lit a fire — the competition gave them drive, purpose, and a goal to work toward. We plan to keep going to Bishop and other events, not just to grow their skills, but to invite more youth into this way of life.

## The Outfitter's Legacy Project Mission Statement:

The Outfitters Legacy Project exists to preserve the rich traditions of wilderness outfitting while cultivating the next generation of stewards, leaders, and public land advocates. Through focused programs for youth, military veterans, and trail-based recreationists, we provide hands-on education in backcountry skills, land stewardship, wilderness restoration, including forestry, native fish, and trail maintenance with the method of animal packing. By honoring the legacy of working landscapes and fostering community connection to public lands, we empower individuals to lead with purpose, resilience, and respect for wild places.

Follow The Outfitter's Legacy Project on social media:

Facebook: Young Mule Co. Instagram: @youngmuleco

Note: The Outfitter's Legacy Project would love the support of Top of the State Unit members in the form of mentorship, money, lightly used tack, etc. They also are in search of affordable or free equines suitable for young or beginner trail riders and packers. Reach out to Jamie and Vose at flying.o.outfitter@gmail.com



Top photo: Youth packers, coaches and parents learned a lot at Bishop Mule Days.
Bottom photo: The youth packers represented the Top of State Unit in the Etna Rodeo parade in May.
Photos courtesy of Jamie Essex



Backcountry Horsemen of California Top of the State Unit

# FUNDRAISER RAFFLE

To help fund Youth and Trail Work Programs
All tickets are \$10 each







Prize 1

GUIDED FLY-FISHING TRIP FOR TWO \$800 VALUE Prize 2

\$500 GIFT CARD FOR SHASTA VALLEY CHAINSAW IN YREKA

Drawing to be held on October 2, 2025. You don't need to be present to win. Contact to purchase tickets: Michele Machado Woods, 817-308-0258



#### MAIL TO: BCHC **Backcountry Horsemen** MEMBERSHIP of California 1280 State Rt. 208 Yerington, NV 89447 MEMBERSHIP PARENT UNIT AFFILIATION: (Select and CHECK a Unit as your Affiliation) APPLICATION Antelope Valley A Family & Youth Redshank Riders Los Padres Sierra Freepackers Eastern Sierra Manzanita Riders Redwood Sutter Buttes Oriented Organization High Country Mid Valley Top of the State San Joaquín Sierra Release 4 2025 (11 Feb 25) High Sierra Mother Lode Santa Ana River Kern River Valley New Change Sequoia North Bay Kern Sierra Shasta Trinity Renewal 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 Patron \$250 Include Date of Birth 3 Year Family \$205 Mt. Whitney \$500 3 Year Individual \$160 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 \$15/Unit Associate Membership for: \_\_\_ Unit Name (from above list) \$15/Unit Associate Membership for: \_\_ Unit Name (from above list) Please clip form along dashed line and keep the below portion for your records. KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS Parent BCHC Membership Types Verifying BCHC Individual, Family, (Shared\*\*), Benefactor, Patron, and Mt. Whitney I submitted an Application Form for a -Membership by A Parent Membership is with a single Local Unit. 1) BCHC Unit 1 Year Individual \*\*A SHARED Membership is for two adults with differing last names President's reports 2 Year Individual \$110 who share a common address. 3 Year Individual 2) BCHC Membership \$160 Associate Memberships 1 Year Family \$75 VP reports These special Memberships are only available to persons already 2 Year Family \$140 holding Parent BCHC Membership. No one may sign up for an 3) a self-addressed 3 Year Family \$205 Associate Membership without 1) having registered one of the stamped envelope Parent Membership types, and 2) having selected Parent Unit Young Adult (18-25 years old) \$15 submitted with this affiliation. Benefactor \$100 Patron \$250 Young Adult Memberships MUST include date of 4) a valid email address Mt. Whitney \$500 birth on application. The year you turn 24 is the last year you On that form, I also requested: may renew under this membership. Associate Memberships My Total Remittance:-Complete information regarding BCHC Membership My Check Number: is available on the MEMBERSHIP TAB at Date Mailed: bchcalifornia.org or call (775) 463-3634