



SIS-Q-TRAILS

Backcountry Horsemen of California
Top of the State Unit

Volume 29

Issue 2

Second Quarter, 2025

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

<https://www.facebook.com/bchctopofthestate/>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Are you ready for a busy Spring? We sure are! Your Rendezvous planning committee is putting the finishing touches on the schedule for the April 11-13 event at the Equestrian Center at Rolling Hills Casino in Corning. You don't want to miss our diverse array of educational clinics featuring everything from horse trainer Bryan Neubert, to chainsaw and crosscut saw clinics with Dan Chartier and Dave Moser, to an equine dentistry clinic with Unit member Scott Essex, DVM, to Leave No Trace Core classes, to classes to learn more about saddle fitting or emergency preparedness or equine bodywork or trail work tools or lightweight horse camping.... and the list goes on and on. Learn more: <https://www.bchcalifornia.org/rendezvous.html>. I want to personally thank Jamie and Scott Essex for taking leadership on organizing and assembling area youth and coaches for two youth packing teams to learn and compete in the Youth Packing competition at Rendezvous. Our Unit leadership, Essex Veterinary and Etna Creek Outfitters have graciously offered to sponsor these two teams to get to Rendezvous. See **page 6** for a full story.

In January, I attended the 2025 Wilderness and Primitive Trails Summit in Eureka. This event, hosted by the Bigfoot Trail Alliance, was important for our North State BCHC Units as we continue to forge partnerships with Northern California and Southern Oregon volunteer trail work organizations that have similar missions and goals. At this meeting, I was introduced to Trevor Meyer with the Siskiyou Mountain Club based in Ashland. Since then, we scheduled with Trevor a chainsaw classroom and field training and certification opportunity on March 28-29. If you could not make these dates, but still want to become a certified sawyer, Trevor has scheduled additional training dates for May 10-11 for chainsaw and May 17-18 for crosscut. Keep in mind that these opportunities are open to all SMC volunteers so space is limited. Reach out to me for more information and steps needed to sign up for these events.



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FUTURE OF PACKING

The cover photo for this edition features our youth packers learning and practicing to attend the 2025 Rendezvous Youth Packing competition on April 12-13. Eight youngsters and their four coaches have been practicing each Sunday at Double H Ranch in Yreka. Big thanks to Pat Hampton-Hayes for lending her fantastic facility for the practices!

It's very important that we have more certified sawyers and eager volunteers because there is a lot of work to be done this year in our area forests and campgrounds. We've scheduled with the Klamath National Forest and PCTA a campout at Grider Creek Campground for PCT log-out work on April 18-20 and we're scheduled to be at Carter Meadows for a multi-Unit work event on June 4-8. See story on **page 4** for more information.

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**

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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 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

Board of Directors opening

We have one Director opening for the 2025-27 term that we need to fill ASAP. Board of Directors responsibilities and requirements:

- All Directors must be BCHC members in good standing
- Serve a two-year term
- Attend monthly meetings (first Thursday of each month)
- Help manage the affairs, property, business and control of policy of the organization
- Bring new, fresh ideas and fill open chairperson roles

Contact Unit President Michele Machado Woods at meechele418@gmail.com or 817-308-0258 for more info.

First Aid/CPR class on April 5

Chainsaw and crosscut sawyers get first priority for this opportunity to satisfy the Forest Service sawyer certification requirements. If you are a certified sawyer or aspiring sawyer and already have a current first aid/CPR card, you do not need to attend this class. Here are the details for the class:

When: April 5, 9 a.m. to approximately 2 p.m.

Where: Covenant Chapel, 200 Greenhorn Road, Yreka

RSVP required? YES. Please contact Michele at 817-308-0258 or Robert at 530-340-5166 no later than April 1.

Welcome new members!

**Alison Pick and Aubrey Champlin
Pat Hampton-Hayes**

TOP OF THE STATE UNIT 2025 ACTIVITIES

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

April 3	BOD Meeting, Casa Ramos, Yreka, 6:30 p.m.
April 5	First Aid/CPR training, Yreka, 9 a.m.
April 11-13	BCHC Rendezvous, Rolling Hills Casino, Corning
April 18-20	Grider Creek PCT southbound log-out work
April 26	Spring tune-up, Mill Creek Ranch, Quartz Valley
May 1	BOD Meeting, Fort Jones City Hall, 7 p.m.
May 29	BOD June Meeting, Yreka, location TBD, 6:30 p.m.
June 4-8	Carter Meadows work weekend
June-Sept.	Work Party projects in cooperation with the Klamath National Forest and other partners
July 10	BOD Meeting, Fort Jones City Hall, 7 p.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, Yreka, location TBD, 6:30 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, Yreka, location TBD, 6:30 p.m.

Visit the Top of the State Unit website at

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

Visit our Unit's Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/bchctopofthestate/>

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Advertisers needed! Contact Michele at
meechele418@gmail.com for more info.

Forging trail work partnerships

Article by Michele Machado Woods

In January, representatives from the Redwood, Shasta Trinity and Top of the State Units attended the 2025 Wilderness and Primitive Trails Summit in Eureka. This event, hosted by the Bigfoot Trail Alliance, was important for our Units as we continue to forge partnerships with Northern California and Southern Oregon volunteer trail work organizations that have similar missions and goals. In past years, the Bigfoot Trail Alliance and Ascend Wilderness Experience have partnered with BCHC Unit packers to transport tools, gear, food and other supplies into our wilderness areas for important trail work. More supporting pack trips are scheduled for Summer 2025, primarily with Shasta Trinity Unit packers.

At this meeting we also learned of an opportunity to schedule sawyer training and certifications with Siskiyou Mountain Club. We are very thankful for this opportunity and look forward to working more with Siskiyou Mountain Club, based in Ashland, in the future.

We heard so many kind words from these partner groups, the Forest Service and CCC at this summit, and it inspired us to keep building these relationships in an effort to get the most work done. Likewise, increased cooperation will help with educating trail work partners on stock use in the backcountry. We're looking forward to attending the Trails Summit in 2026!



Learn more:

ascendwilderness.org/
www.bigfoottrail.org/
siskiyoumountainclub.org/

Grider PCT work scheduled

Article and photo by Michele Machado Woods

As we wait for the snow to melt on the trails and campgrounds at the higher elevations, we have scheduled a Pacific Crest Trail log-out weekend on April 18-20 on the southbound trail out of Grider Creek TH. This work will be done with chainsaws on foot because the trail is too dangerous for safe stock use at this time. Sawyers must provide their own saws and PPE. Swampers are also needed for this event. The poison oak and ticks will be out at this location, so please wear appropriate clothing and bring repellent.



Your work party leaders for this event are Michele and Alan Woods. Please contact Michele at 817-308-0258 if you can join. The campground will be open for dry camping.

Carter Meadows work: We have scheduled our Carter Meadows work weekend for June 4-8, 2025. This event will feature members from the Top of State, Shasta Trinity and Redwood Units, and we'll be doing all necessary work to clean up the campgrounds, repair corrals, and log out the nearby trails, including the PCT, with chainsaws where allowed and crosscut saws in the wilderness areas. This is a family-friendly event and we need all types of volunteers to get the most work done. Campers and day workers are welcome. Contact Michele if you want to camp so we can schedule meal prep plans.



Photo by Michele Machado Woods

Obstacle fun with special guest

Michele and Alan Woods opened their equine obstacle course on March 22 for practice and tune up for the Rendezvous trail obstacle course event. We had about eight attendees, including a special guest, Ruby the donkey, brought by Lori Luddon. Ruby did great on all of the obstacles, and the other equines in attendance “enjoyed” keeping a close eye on Ruby.

This extra obstacle for many of the equines is a great reminder that you never know what you may encounter out on our mountain trails and desensitizing beforehand is very valuable to ensure everyone stays safe.

March dinner always a fun social event

Article by Michele Machado Woods

We had nearly 50 members and guests at our Corned Beef and Cabbage potluck dinner on Saturday, March 15.

The food was amazing and there was plenty of visiting and catching up done by all as we welcomed Spring and updated attendees on the trail/campground work and riding events we are planning for 2025!

Thanks to everyone who donated items for the raffle and dessert auction. We had a nice mix of raffle items donated by members and local businesses.

More thanks to everyone who donated their time to decorate the hall and prepare food.

All proceeds from this fundraising event will help our Unit sponsor two youth packing teams at 2025 Rendezvous.

We’re also planning to have a prize raffle in the coming months to help fund a North State packing intern. More information will be available soon, so stay tuned!



Photos by Michele Machado Woods





Coaches Beau Burton and Randy Shinskie work with the youth packers. Photo by Michele Machado Woods

Youth Packing teams prep for Rendezvous

Article by Michele Machado Woods

With Rendezvous closer to home this year, our Unit has the opportunity to send youth packing teams to compete and learn. The Youth Packing competition at Rendezvous will challenge children ages 12-17 to work in pre-determined teams of four to earn points by attending education clinics and showing their skills in team challenges, such as balanced load and team packing on an iron mule.

In January, Jamie Essex offered to take lead on forming teams for this competition, and through the magic of social media and Jamie and Scott Essex's vast network, we were able to recruit six coaches and mentors and eight local youth,

ages 12-15, to learn about packing and build the skills to compete on April 12-13 at Rendezvous. The teams have been practicing and learning each Sunday at Double H Ranch in Yreka.

The Top of the State Unit is helping sponsor these teams by providing western shirts and camping spots at the event. Essex Veterinary is sponsoring the embroidery for the team shirts and Etna Creek Outfitters is donating knives for each child.

The teams are:

SisQ4: Aubrey Champlin, Carter Brandon, Clayton Burton, and Raul Ortiz. Coaches Beau Burton and Randy Shinskie.

Sky High: Cale Brandon, JayCee Burton, Aubri Bridwell and Jaiden Nowdesha. Coaches Jamie and Vose Hayden.

Rendezvous clinic highlights

The Rendezvous planning committee is excited to offer this list of clinics:

- TrailMeister seminars on four topics (see page 9)
- Horse and mule training with Jeff Gleason and Bryan Neubert
- Equine body work (Masterson Method) with Carrie Owan
- Equine Dental with Scott Essex, DVM
- Saddle Fitting with Susan Hartje
- Shoeing and Hoof Care with Diane Greene
- Preparing for evacuations with Katie Thorn and North Valley Animal Disaster Group
- Backcountry first aid and leg bandaging with Christine Russell, DVM
- Chainsaw use and care with Dan Chartier
- Crosscut saw use and care with Dave Moser
- Trail tools use and volunteering on trails with Zach Sullivan and Jacob Shinnors
- Forest Service packing demos
- Packing 101 & Advanced Packing instruction from George Archer and Sam Burrows
- Leave No Trace Core classes

Visit this link to learn more and download a registration packet:
<https://www.bchcalifornia.org/rendezvous.html>

Packing Competitions

April 12 & 13 | Equestrian Center at Rolling Hills Casino, Corning, CA

Adult Competitions

BOX HITCH AND DIAMOND HITCH SPEED COMPETITIONS:

Animals and all equipment will be provided. One packer will load and balance boxes with load provided. He/She will put boxes on the mule from each side. He/She will then put mantee on the mule properly, tucking all corners and top, then tie box hitch or a single diamond hitch of your choice. Speed and correctness of procedures will be split 50%-50%. This is a timed event and faults will incur a time penalty. Clean run beats a fault.

COST TO ENTER: \$20 EACH

PACKING CONTEST

(ODD LOAD/BALANCED LOAD):

Animals and all equipment will be provided. A two-packer team will use live mules. The teams will be provided with two separate loads, one top load and one side load. The team will load the top load items provided on one mule, and tie on securely with a box or diamond hitch. The team will load the side load items on the other mule, and tie on securely with a box or diamond hitch establishing the best possible weight balance. The pack animals will then be led from the ground around a cone to establish stability. Scores will be a combination of time and load balance.

COST TO ENTER: \$20

Download the Rendezvous Registration packet to enter at:

<https://www.bchcalifornia.org/rendezvous.html>



Intercollegiate and Youth Packing Competitions

Contests will be similar to the Bishop Mule Days competitions, however the packing systems to be used will include Decker and Salmon River packing systems along with traditional sawbucks.

Intercollegiate teams: Will consist of four college students who will compete in team and individual contests. Teammates may also gain points for their teams by attending any education events during Rendezvous.

Youth teams: Will consist of four students, ages 12-17, who will compete in team and individual contests. Teammates may also gain points for their teams by attending any education events during Rendezvous. Teams will be sponsored and trained by BCHC Units.

BCHC 2025 RENDEZVOUS

DUTCH OVEN

COOKING

Competition: Friday, April 11, 1 p.m.,
Equestrian RV camping area

Demonstrations: April 12

(see program for times and location)

**Rolling Hills Casino Equestrian Center
Corning, CA**

Interested in Dutch Oven cooking? It's a great way to cook delicious one-dish meals in an outdoor setting.

During the Friday competition, come meet the contestants to observe Dutch Oven cooking in action. You will learn about the basics of Dutch Oven cooking, including essential equipment, temperature control, and cleaning/storage of the pots. Plus, you get free samples of the dishes, recipes, temperature control charts and a chance to vote for the best dish!

See the Rendezvous Registration Packet for full details and to enter the competition:

<https://www.bchcalifornia.org/rendezvous.html>



BCHC 2025 Rendezvous

TRAILMEISTER CLINICS

Backcountry Horsemen of California is thrilled to welcome TrailMeister, Robert Eversole, as a featured clinician at our 2025 Rendezvous!

FREE SEMINARS

Horse Camping 101: All good camping trips with horses require preparation. And planning can be part of the fun. The reward is being able to ride for as long as you want with friends and family. Let's talk about tips for getting the most out of your camping trips this summer.

Lightweight Horse Camping: If you want to trot off into the wilderness for a few days but fall short because you don't have an extra horse to carry all of your gear, don't fret. You'll love the versatility of Lightweight Horse Camping! We'll borrow from the world of ultra-lightweight hikers, use the tools from Leave No Trace, and combine them with backcountry horse camping to get you into the backcountry without pack stock.

When the Shot Hits the Fan: Are you prepared for when "Just a Day Ride" becomes much much more? Are you prepared for the challenges you'll encounter during an emergency? Together we'll discuss what you'll need to get through a long night and how to summon help when the bars on your phone are few and far between.

Steps That Can Save Your Life if the Worst Happens During a Ride: Make your trail rides safer by examining a harrowing horse wreck and discussing what went right as well as what went wrong.

All TrailMeister clinics will be held in the Equestrian Center Office. Check the daily schedule for times.



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UPCOMING APPEARANCES

April 24-27: Cinch-building clinics and more at the Minnesota Horse Expo

May 24-25: Camp and Craft Weekend Clinic at the Flying Horseshoe Ranch in Cle Elum, WA

May 30-June 1: Back Country Horsemen of Oregon Wilderness Skills Rendezvous, Sisters Cow Camp, OR

July 8-12: Cinch-building clinics at Ty Evans Mule Week, Spring City, UT

<https://www.trailmeister.com/>

**SCAN FOR
MORE INFO**



Photo courtesy of Robert Eversole

BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN
OF CALIFORNIA RENDEZVOUS

TRAIL OBSTACLE COURSE CHALLENGE

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2025
ROLLING HILLS CASINO EQUESTRIAN CENTER
SECONDARY ARENA

At least 12
fun, trail-
inspired
obstacles!

CSHA SANCTIONED EVENT
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Prizes to
4th place

Divisions

Mini-Youth* (ages 10 & under)
Youth* (ages 17-11)
Novice
Intermediate
Advanced
Pack Animal (Adult & Youth*)

Registration Costs

Adult: \$40 per division
Youth: \$25 per division
CA drug fee: \$14
Register day of event: Add \$5
All entrants must sign release of
liability form at event

April 12 Schedule

8:30 a.m. - Rider walk through with judges
9:00 a.m. - Start with Adult classes
6:30 p.m. - Awards ceremony at dinner

Questions?

BCHC - Michele Machado Woods, 817-308-0258
CSHA - Vicki Nims, 707-695-4235



*Must wear a helmet and have adult/parent present