



SIS-Q-TRAILS

Backcountry Horsemen of California
Top of the State Unit

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Second Quarter, 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our first three months started out with Michele Machado Woods attending the Wilderness & Primitive Trails Summit in Eureka, CA, on January 8 with several BCHC Units and trail alliance groups along with our Klamath National Forest and other National Forests from Northern California.

On January 23, Michele, Alan Woods and I met with representatives from KNF and discussed trail clearing



and what their plans were for summer and how we might be able to help them. We have been asked by the Goosenest Ranger District for help in getting the Juanita Lake Campground open for

the summer. This will be in April or May, they will let us know of dates.

April 11-12 the first State Of Jefferson Expo will be held at the Siskiyou Golden Fairgrounds in Yreka and Top of the State Unit will be there doing packing demonstrations and hand out literature. We could use some extra help on these days, so please attend our next meeting on April 2 at the Grenada Fire Hall and we will be discussing what we will be doing those days. On March 13, work lead by PCTA in partnership with our Unit and the KNF cleared part of the Pacific Crest Trail at Grider Creek.

We held our spring dinner March 21 and announced our Top Hand Award for 2025, congratulation to JME (pronounced Jamie) Essex. Also at 2026 Rendezvous, our Unit received awards for our newsletter and an



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GRIDER PCT WORK

Great weather allowed our Unit sawyers, Jeff McCabe (pictured above) and Alan Woods, to join a PCTA work crew on March 13 to log out 4 miles of the PCT southbound from Grider Creek Campground. **Read more, pg. 4**

award from the Education Committee.

On May 14, we will be at Siskiyou County Fairgrounds for the annual Ag Awareness Day. All fourth grades from the county are invited to attend. We will be doing a demonstration on pack box balancing and the kids will get hands on balancing pack boxes.

On June 3-8, we have our Carter Meadows work party/campout . Members from Shasta Trinity Unit and the Redwood Unit will be there. I would like to see our members come out and socialize and ride the trails or hike if you prefer.

**Happy Trails and 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](https://www.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/>

TOP OF THE STATE UNIT 2026 ACTIVITIES

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

April 2	BOD Meeting, Grenada Fire Hall	July 2	BOD Meeting, Fort Jones City Hall
April 4	Spring tune-up, Mill Creek Ranch, Quartz Valley	August 6	BOD Meeting, Grenada Fire Hall
April 11-12	Jefferson State Expo, Fairgrounds, Yreka	September 3	BOD Meeting, Fort Jones City Hall
May 7	BOD Meeting, Fort Jones City Hall	September 12	Deer Mountain Group Ride
May 14	Siskiyou Agriculture Awareness Day, Yreka	October 1	BOD Meeting, Grenada Fire Hall
June 3-8	Carter Meadows campout (trail work and riding)	October 3	BCHC Fall BOD Meeting, location TBD
June 4	BOD Meeting cancelled (Carter Meadows work weekend and Fair month)	October 24	Halloween Obstacle event, Big Springs
June 24-28	Siskiyou Golden Fair, Yreka	November 5	Membership Meeting, Fort Jones City Hall
		December 3	BOD Meeting, Grenada Fire Hall

Unit Briefs

Come see us at State of Jefferson Expo

The Top of the State Unit will be participating in the first State of Jefferson Expo on April 11-12, 2026, at the Siskiyou Golden Fairgrounds in Yreka. The Expo will highlight the Agricultural and Timber industries as well as the outdoor and sportsman activities in our region. This is a family-friendly, FREE event that runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on April 11 and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 12. Our Unit will be partnering with The Outfitters Legacy Project Young Mule Co. packers to give packing demonstrations and provide educational information and brochures about BCHC and Leave No Trace. **We are actively seeking member volunteers to help with our booth each day.**

Commitments can be for a few hours or for the whole day. Come out and share with the public why you love being a member of BCHC! The Expo will also feature the 12th annual NorCal Chainsaw Carving Championship and the 2nd annual Siskiyou Hot Saw competition.

Snow report bleak as of March 1

The Klamath National Forest announced on March 12, 2026, that it completed its March 1 snow surveys as part of the statewide California Cooperative Snow Survey program. These measurements support California's efforts to forecast water availability for agriculture, hydropower, recreation, and streamflow management throughout the year. February brought significant weather variability to the region. A mid-month storm delivered substantial snowfall and cold temperatures, briefly boosting snowpack levels. However, an atmospheric river arrived near the end of the month, bringing unseasonably warm temperatures and periods of heavy rainfall that eroded many of those gains. Across all survey sites, snow depth measured 34.2% of the historical average, while Snow Water Equivalent (SWE)—the measure of water content in the snowpack—registered at 33.4% of the historical average. Snowpack typically reaches its seasonal peak between late March and early April.

Full report can be found at:
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r05/klamath/newsroom/releases/march-snow-survey-results>

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 bottom of the home page 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.

ADVERTISE WITH US

This space and above are available for local advertising. Please contact Michele Machado Woods at meechele418@gmail.com for more information.



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- 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!



Photo courtesy of Debbie Bacigalupi

Barr speaks about pack internship

At our March 5 Membership meeting, we had the pleasure of hearing 2025 BCHC Packing Intern, Mathilda Barr, speak about her experience packing with the Inyo National Forest Center of Excellence.

Mathilda told us about the skills she learned and how each and every trip she made into the wilderness built her confidence. She relayed stories about the challenges and skills needed for

weekly trips resupplying a CCC crew that was working in the Golden Trout Wilderness. She also spoke about many of the beautiful places she saw and the mule and horse knowledge she gained working with Lee Roeser and Michael Morse. We're thrilled to have Mathilda as a Young Adult member of our Unit and we hope to see her at many of our events in the future.

Work starts early on PCT at Grider Creek

Article by Michele Machado Woods

One of the benefits of attending the now annual Wilderness & Primitive Trails Summit hosted by the Bigfoot Trail Alliance in Eureka in January is the opportunity to speak to regional trail stewardship partners about needed work. I had one such conversation with Ian Nelson of the PCTA and that chat resulted in our Unit sawyers, Alan Woods and Jeff McCabe (photo at right), joining Regional Trail Stewardship Coordinator, Spencer Valenti, and a crew about about five PCTA trail workers on March 13 to log out and maintain a 4-mile stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail southbound from the Grider Creek campground near Seiad Valley.

This stretch of trail is in a 2014 wildfire burn scar and is notorious for having numerous blowdown logs, with some making the trail dangerous for hikers and stock, alike. Jeff and Alan cleared more than 20 downed



Photo courtesy of Alan Woods

trees while Spencer's crew took care of brushing and tread work. This work, which was in coordination with the Klamath National Forest, shows how valuable our partnerships with the PCTA and other area non-profits are in getting work done, especially this early in the season. Look for more opportunities like this in the coming months as we recon trails.

Seven members earn saw certifications

February was a busy month for getting our Unit sawyers recertified on chainsaw and certified on crosscut saw. Robert Robustellini, Duane Eastlick, Alan Woods, Jeff McCabe and Michele Machado Woods were recertified on chainsaw by Forest Service Regional Saw Program Manager, Jason Murieen (photo below). Kyle and Ashley Adkins traveled to Weaverville to get certified on crosscut and recertified on chainsaw.

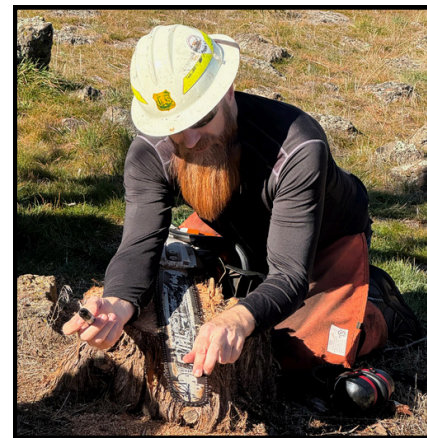


Photo courtesy of Michele Machado Woods

Unit welcomes Spring with potluck

Article by Michele Machado Woods

With Spring comes one of our favorite events of the year: our Corned Beef and Cabbage potluck dinner to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

On March 21, approximately 50 members and guests gathered at the Fort Jones City/Community Hall to visit and enjoy some amazing food.

We were thrilled to have Shasta-Trinity Unit members Mike and Paddy LaRue join us for this year's dinner.

Our fundraising ticket raffle and dessert auction helped our Unit earn approximately \$800. This money will help fund educational events throughout the year.

We honored JME Essex (bottom right photo) as our 2025 Top Hand at the dinner. See below the full nomination letter.

Big thanks to Debbie, Robert, Shirley and Erica for setting up and decorating the hall for the dinner. Also big thanks to Keith Thomas for cooking the corned beef and to everyone who donated an item for the raffle or the dessert auction.



Photos courtesy of Alan Woods and Michele Machado Woods

We were excited to have at this dinner many of the youth packers who competed at 2025 Rendezvous and who resumed practicing and learning with their Outfitters Legacy and BCHC coaches and mentors (right photo) this month.



Top of the State 2025 Top Hand: JME Essex

Nominated by 2025 Unit President, Michele Machado Woods

In January 2025, JME (pronounced "Jamie"), took the lead on recruiting area youth and packing coaches in preparation for the Youth Packing competition at Rendezvous. JME's connections in our county run deep because of her husband, Scott's, thriving large and small animal veterinarian practice. Because of JME's efforts with recruiting, our Unit was able to create two teams of four youth (ages 12-15) each. These youth and their four coaches trained and learned for eight weeks before Rendezvous. In Corning, the teams finished first and second in the Youth Packing competition and JME was there to see them excel. After Rendezvous, JME led fundraising and organizing efforts to enable the youth to attend Bishop Mule Days in May, where they learned more and competed alongside college packing teams. In June, JME helped lead efforts to get the youth packers to our Unit's annual Carter Meadows trail work event. The youth learned about trail stewardship and helped clear downfall from the Trail Gulch Lake trail. JME has boundless energy, especially when it comes to our youth, and we so appreciate her efforts to jumpstart this youth packing education.



Photo courtesy of Alan Woods

2025 was a big year for learning and growing

Last year, our Unit excelled at education events, which earned us a BCHC Unit Education award:

Wilderness and Primitive Trails Summit

Michele Machado Woods and Michael Stapleton attended this event in Eureka in January. The event, hosted by the Bigfoot Trail Alliance, was important for our Unit as we continue to forge partnerships with Northern California and Southern Oregon volunteer trail work organizations that have similar missions and goals. In turn, it gave us an opportunity to educate these trail work partners on stock use in the backcountry and how we can continue to partner and learn together to get the most work done.

Rendezvous

Youth packing education: JME Essex took lead on recruiting area youth and packing coaches to teach the youth about packing in preparation for the Youth Packing competition. Our Unit was able to create two teams of four youth (ages 12-15) each. These youth trained and learned for eight weeks before Rendezvous and then learned more packing, Leave No Trace, horsemanship, etc., once they arrived in Corning. The teams placed first and second at Rendezvous in the Youth competition.

Event planning and execution: Michele Machado Woods was a lead organizer for Rendezvous:

- She organized the equine Obstacle Course event in collaboration with California State Horsemen's Association (CSHA). Duties included procuring prizes for five classes, promoting the event on social media, building the obstacle course and helping run the event that featured 75+ competitors.
- She recruited five event education clinicians, including nationally known equine trail expert and educator, Robert Eversole (TrailMeister).
- She designed, created and helped get advertisements for the 30-plus page event program.

Clinician help: Laurie Robustellini provided a hard-to-catch mule for Bryan Neubert's horsemanship clinics.

Siskiyou County Agriculture Awareness Day

Unit Education chairperson, Debbie Bacigalupi, teamed with members Robert Robustellini, Caralee Scala, Kathryn Matthews and Gail Lyons at this event where we teach fourth-grade students a little bit about packing. Our educational exhibit on May 15 challenged the 287 students to fill packing panniers to be weighed, with the aim of having two balanced panniers. At the end of the event, teachers from the 12 school districts in attendance rated our booth a 4.9 out of 5.

Carter Meadows trail and campground stewardship

Several members in attendance educated youth packers on Leave No Trace and trail stewardship, including trail clearing efforts in the Trinity Alps Wilderness.

Equine Obstacle Course playdays/practices

Michele Machado Woods and husband, Alan Woods, hosted two family-friendly obstacle events at their ranch where members and public were able to practice, train their equines on the ground or mounted and learn about obstacles.

Wolf education

During a BBQ lunch at the Bacigalupi Ranch in October, our members were able to hear an educational wolf talk by Mike Ensley (Working Circle).

Local geography and history

Jerry Bacigalupi gave a geographical and historical tour of their ranch during our Unit's group ride in October, including showing caves where local indigenous people once lived and hunted, and another site where early settlers had a house and barn.

Community education

Our Unit, led by Education chairperson, Debbie Bacigalupi, partnered with new non-profit, Outfitters Legacy Project, for an educational feature booth at the Siskiyou Golden Fair in August. The booth highlighted on packing and trail stewardship efforts by our groups and the 100-year anniversary theme of the fair.

Newsletter/Social Media

- Michele Machado Woods created our Unit's quarterly newsletter that showcased our Unit's many events and trail/campground stewardship efforts. This newsletter is made available to all members and Michele adds a link to the newsletter to the Unit's Facebook page.
- Throughout the year, Michele contributed articles to the BCHC state newsletter highlighting all our Unit's activities and achievements during the year.
- Michele posted 2-3 times a week on our Unit's Facebook page to promote Rendezvous, our Unit's events and educational opportunities. She also shared relevant area events that may interest members and followers, and news from the Klamath National Forest regarding wildfires, campground and trail usage.

SAVE THE DATE!
BCHC Top of the State Unit

CARTER MEADOWS WORK WEEKEND

June 3-8, 2026

Camping available at Carter
Meadows Equestrian Campgrounds

Event Highlights:

- Stock corral maintenance
- Trail stewardship
- Plenty of time for fun and riding your horse/mule
- Group breakfasts and dinners
- BCHC Members only

RSVP required

More information to come!

All work is in partnership with the Klamath National Forest



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)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antelope Valley | <input type="checkbox"/> Los Padres | <input type="checkbox"/> Redshank Riders | <input type="checkbox"/> Sierra Freepackers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Sierra | <input type="checkbox"/> Manzanita Riders | <input type="checkbox"/> Redwood | <input type="checkbox"/> Sutter Buttes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High Country | <input type="checkbox"/> Mid Valley | <input type="checkbox"/> San Joaquín Sierra | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Top of the State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High Sierra | <input type="checkbox"/> Mother Lode | <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Ana River | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kern River Valley | <input type="checkbox"/> North Bay | <input type="checkbox"/> Sequoia | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kern Sierra | | <input type="checkbox"/> 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)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year Individual \$60 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year Family \$75 | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult (18-25 years old) \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Year Individual \$110 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Year Family \$140 | Include Date of Birth / / | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Year Individual \$160 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Year Family \$205 | | <input type="checkbox"/> 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 -

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 Year Individual | \$60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 Year Individual | \$110 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 Year Individual | \$160 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 Year Family | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 Year Family | \$140 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 Year Family | \$205 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Young Adult (18-25 years old) | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Benefactor | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Patron | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 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