

# Back Country Horsemen of America: Keeping Trails Open for All

Short Slogan: Keeping Trails Open for You

Slogan: Keeping Trails Open for You through Advocacy, Education and Boots on the Ground.

Who is BCHA?

BCHA, a national 501 (3) (c), is over 174 local chapters strong with 13,000 members dedicated to protecting access into public lands. Those chapters advocate locally for accessible public lands through physical labor, education and advocating to local land managers, for recreational use of public land, including but not limited to stock use. (The use of horse and mules on public land) BCHA advocates nationally.

In 2012 BCHA members, driven by a need to share the quiet of our wild places, volunteered for 163,812.7 hours working directly to maintain trails into public lands. That equates to \$3.93 Million dollars in trail work donated to local and federal land managing agencies. Every drop of sweat is a labor of love. But it is a very small drop in the Forest Service's Trail Maintenance Backlog bucket.

## Our Calling:

The Forest Service alone has 158,000 miles of trails they are responsible for. In fiscal year 2012, the Forest Service reported that it accomplished at least some maintenance on about 37 percent of its 158,000 trail miles and that about one-quarter of its trail miles met the agency's standards.

The Forest Service estimated the value of its trail maintenance backlog to be \$314 million in fiscal year 2012, with an additional \$210 million for annual maintenance, capital improvement, and operations. Their budget is only \$80 million. Of the \$26 million dollars that service organizations like BCHA donate to the Forest Service, we account for \$12 million.

If we don't step up and keep these national treasures maintained, the Forest Service will do the only thing it can do to reign in their budget, **close them**.

In 2012 we cleared a grand total of 17,148 miles of trail. Those are 17,148 miles of trail to carry you into a soul quenching wilderness.

BCHA members completed a total of 27,396 hours (\$606,547.00 worth) of Leave No Trace (tread lightly) education to members and the public at large. We believe everyone needs to be good stewards of the land we maintain and protect.

On the national level BCHA keeps all of these state and local chapters focused and orientated toward a single goal: Keeping public land accessible. BCHA creates Memorandums of understanding and partnerships with both federal agencies and other recreational conservation advocates. Through these partnerships BCHA is able to advocate for access to public land on a national level.

## **Back Country Horsemen of America: Keeping Trails Open for All**

As a national organization we have a seat on the National Horse Council's Recreation Committee, which gives us a presence in national politics.