

# SQUAW BUTTE BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN

PO Box 293, Emmett, ID 83617

July, 2006

## SAVVY SADDLEBAGS

A photograph of a rider on a white horse leading two pack animals up a rocky, steep trail. The rider is wearing a blue shirt and a hat. The pack animals are carrying gear. The background shows a rocky, forested hillside under a blue sky.

## RAPID RIVER ADVENTURES

### JULY EVENTS & PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*Squaw Butte Back Country Horsemen*

*Meet the 1st Thursday of every month at La Costa Restaurant in Emmett, ID*

*For information about joining contact Bob Howard, 208.278.5011 or robertnchristy@msn.com*





By Robbin Schindele

*Part 2 on handling stock in the back country*

### **PART 1: Packing In Sunday June 25, 2006**

The weekend of June 23-24. Members of SBBCH had a big weekend. It started with the drive to Bull Trout Lake on Saturday morning. Gathering there in a big meadow just outside the official campground, a sizeable body of members; the Bobs Howard, Rob Adams, Ellen Knapp and Charles Lox, Karen Fareese, Robbin Schindele, Kelly Creamer, Shannon Shantz and Boise chapter members Jonathon Seel and his son, eleven riding and ten pack animals. Quite the bunch, everyone was eager to finally get into the mountains after a long spring.

Bull Trout was a substitute because our original plan to scout the Whitehawk Basin trail was nixed by snow. So today we would work to clear as much of the Kirkham Ridge Trail as we could. I was the last

aboard and was a little tentative. Although I had led my two mules individually on many trips, I had never strung them together, so this would be a learning experience for all three of us.



Kelly on the Kirkham Ridge Trail

We set out about 9:30 and didn't get 1/2 mile before the first tree appeared across the trail. Riders got off and the work began. So it went for the next few hours as many of our party spent more time on the ground than they did in the saddle. Last winter's heavy snow pack had been hard on the trees, especially in the burn areas. By 2:00 we had only gone slightly over 2 miles, the chain

saw was out of oil so we had our lunches and headed back to Bull trout.

There we loaded up and headed down the road a few miles to the Beaver Creek Campground. We would spend the night there and drive 18 miles down the road over Vanity Summit to Seafoam Guard Station for the big event of our weekend.

It was something we had been planning since last winter. SBBCH had been contacted by a new organization from Bellingham, Washington, The Alliance for Wilderness Education and Stewardship. Their Program Director, Brad Tuininga, had contacted us to explain his vision to recruit volunteer trail crews to work on the trails of the Frank Church RNR Wilderness. His question to SBBCH was, "Would we help support his efforts by packing supplies for the crews in and out."



Our answer was, "Of course." Everyone knows the NFS doesn't have the resources it needs to maintain, much less improve, the trails in the Frank and the consensus of our officers, and most members, is we'll support any group or individual who is willing to help the NFS do that.



Shannon, Ellen & the Bobs cargo gear

Bright and early Sunday morning seven rigs started down a road that, once over the summit, is more rock than gravel and almost a single lane wide most places. A road that's hard on tires and no place for the timid. The 18 miles took nearly an hour to travel.

As we rolled into the guard station people rolled out of the cabins. As planned their gear had been piled up and they were glad to see us. They were 10 members of the American Hiking Society, Brad from the Alliance and Justin XXX from the NFS.

Horses and mules were unloaded and saddled. Each pack animal in turn led to the staging area and loaded. A kind of organized chaos with weighing and cargoing the crew's backpacks, food, a 12x 14

wall tent and frame into bags and manties.

Everything was loaded and we were on our way just after 11:00. The crew had gone on to the trail head in trucks. They were going to go ahead of us and clear any obstacles that might be on the trail. The first three miles of the eleven we would travel were on drivable (loosely used term in that country) road. You could get to the trailhead on the road but there was nowhere to park our trailers once there, hence the staging at the guard station.

The objective was the pack bridge on Sheep Creek and the trail started off pretty good. It was an old mining road winding alongside Rapid River filling in with young trees and brush. It started at river level and then began to climb. We quickly caught up with the trail crew as some of them were clearing a log from the trail less than a 1/2 mile from the gate. Others had gone on to look for more. We waited about 15 minutes for them to do their work and went on.

It's easy when looking at a map of a trail winding along a river to imagine the shade and cooling effect of the water tempering the heat of the day as you wind your way down the flood plain of the river. When you do look at this particular trail on a map you can see that the trail is indeed less than a 1/4 mile from the river along its whole length and it is easy to overlook the fact that the trail is also, in many places, nearly a 1/4

mile higher than the river. And that day was hot. There was no breeze and after about 5 miles the trail began to narrow and cling to the mountainside like pinstripping on a '59 Chevy.



Rapid River from the trail

All the trail crew behind us now, we were on our own. First obstacle, the trail crossed a 300 foot slide area with the hint of a trail tread leading directly to a three hundred pond boulder and beyond. Three dismounted and rolled the rock on its way to a watery existence. Second obstacle, an inside hairpin turn on a rock face 1000 feet above the river, here the trail was shale that had slid away for about 6 feet in the middle of the turn. There was no tread, a little sliding of hooves, but no accidents.

And while no real obstacle immediately after that, an outside hairpin turn on a sheer rock face. Here the tread appeared so narrow it was easy to imagine the packs forcing my mules over the edge as we passed. Did not happen.

Obstacle three was a two foot diameter tree across the trail. Luckily its base had been only about 40 feet above the trail in soft dirt. Though the incline

was above 60 degrees most of the riders were able to go up, around and down to the trail, some walked.

In the final stretch the trail narrowed quite a bit and was exposed and slickery in places. The final obstacle occurred where the trail traversed a gravel and sand face on about a seventy degree incline about 400 feet above the river. My three were the second group across after the Seel's four animals, we were quite a ways ahead of the group owing to some horse and rider problems behind us. The hind ends of all three of mine pushed a bit of the trail away as they scrambled back up on the tread. Less than ¼ mile beyond it I sighted the bridge and the Seels tied off in a clearing. I joined them and we waited for the others.



Some of the trail crew.

They wandered in in bunches, but soon everyone was there and all agreed this was where we finished. Everyone was hot, most were thirsty and some were a bit crabby. There were two extra horses as a couple people had gotten spooked and decided to walk rather than risk an obstacle. Old Bob's horse had slid out from under him on the last slide and his knee was a

little sore. The horse had scrambled back up on the trail OK.

The animals were unloaded, water was shared and we started back. I was about seven horses back when we came to the slide. Young Bob in the lead hollered back, "There's no trail here." Looking forward there was no trail indeed, just a slippery, sandy hillside dropping down to the river.

Everyone got off, stood aside and the first horse started across forty feet of shifting, sliding sand, followed by another and another and another. Then their riders did the same. In the end all the animals and all the riders made it across. Two had to be assisted with a rope safety harness but we all made it. And the ordeal did not cheer any of us up. I don't know how many times the trail crew was told they had a lot of work ahead as we passed them on the way out. They were strung out in smaller groups as were we. They just nodded smiled as I told them, mostly they just stood there sweating and said thanks for hauling their gear. A week later when we hauled them out we heard when they got to that bad spot they used their Pulaskis like ice axes to get across it.

The ride out was long, as only a hot, tired rider can make a trail long. I filled my canteen from a spring creek Giardia be damned. But the trail held no obstacles. The crew had fixed them all and done well in the slippery areas building a decent tread and shoring it up.

We were all back to the GS by 8:00, home by midnight. Nine hours in the saddle and 4 hours driving. It had been a long day.

### **PART 2: Packing Out Saturday June 30, 2006**

Since there were no obstacles but the one going out, there were NONE going in. The trail crew had done a wonderful job of fixing the slide. Look closely at the cover photo, they built a four foot wide tread shored up with a 3 foot rock wall above and below it. It was quite literally the best spot on the trail when they were done. My understanding was they had 5 people working most of the week on that spot alone.

That day's ride was pretty uneventful. Just five riders and seven pack animals on an easy and pleasant day ride. It took us only 6 hours to ride in pack-up and ride out. We had no packing problems and I have never seen a more appreciative group of people. We were thanked over and over by these guys who had given up their vacations to improve a trail they will probably never see again. But you might or I might, I liked that trail and it leads into some mighty pretty country.

While they thanked us for packing their gear, every Idaho back country horseman or woman owes volunteers like them and the Alliance a big thanks for helping improve one of America's greatest assets and one we can access and enjoy whenever we like.



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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear SBBCH Members,

I would like to start off by congratulating Elise Conger, Nursing, Christy Howard, Office Management, and Jesse Buthment, Ranch Management, on their graduation from college. All Good Luck in the future!

Eleven members turned out for our trail clearing and packing in the American Hiking Society trail crew out of Seafoam. You can read all about it in the preceding article, but let's just say it was a long day.

I have nothing but high regards for the work and enthusiasm this volunteer crew and the FS personal who supported and lead them showed on this project. And am looking forward to working together on other projects in the future.

David Hayes, DVM, provided education and entertainment at the July meeting. Thanks! David OU July birthdays are Jim Thiegles and Donna Howard. Many more of the same to both of you!  
Bob







**J**uly 29/30 (Sat/Sun) Pack Trip – White Hawk Basin (Pack timber 2x12x48” in to repair bridges; riding & fishing) This basin is a real gem – plan to attend.

Members who rode into White Hawk Basin were so taken with the place that we said "Lets camp here when we come back July 29th" Let's invite other members who don't have pack stock to join us. **SO** here is the deal. If you have pack stock and want a great weekend pack trip to a pretty alpine basin with great camping, good grazing and a stream full of little brook trout, load up your trailer and come. If you don't you're still invited, but you're going to have to work with us a little.

First, you must tell us you're coming!(.) We are going to be doing community meals (breakfast and dinner) and need to get enough food. Second, The parking area is about two miles from the trail head into the basin. We will be setting up an equipment shuttle between the trailer parking and the trail head. Pack stock will be making trips into and out of the basin and your equipment will be packed in for you. Each person is limited to 40 pounds in a single duffel bag plus Your tent and sleeping bag/pad. This is how it will work. When you get to the "Trailer Parking area", unload and saddle your horses. Put your duffel bag with your equipment in it, into the **Green trailer**. Following the directions you have been given, ride into the basin. Your equipment will be shuttled to the trail head and packed into the camp. Sunday, in the morning, pack up your equipment and leave your duffel (well marked) in the designated spot. It will be packed out to the trail head, and shuttled back to the magic green trailer where you can pick it up when you ride out.

What is there to do in White Hawk Basin? There are a number of trails that leave the Basin that you can day ride. The chapter will be packing in material for building three new bridges so you can help with that. You can enjoy the wild flowers and butterfly, or you can spend your time fishing (small brookies). Information on how to drive to the parking area and ride into the Basin are available on the web site directions page. **USE THE WEBSITE I'LL BE THERE LINK** or send an email to [Projects@sbbchidaho.org](mailto:Projects@sbbchidaho.org) if you're planning on coming, please indicate how many are riding. Indicate if you plan on riding in on Friday Night or Saturday. White Hawk basin parking area is a 2 1/2 hour drive from Horseshoe Bend.



**For details & directions  
to all SBBCH events  
visit our website  
[www.sbbchidaho.org](http://www.sbbchidaho.org)**



**W**hile on the trail lately I've noticed some people travel pretty light for the back country. A bottle of water, maybe a canteen with a sandwich and whatever is on their backs. I'm a little more paranoid than that. I know that even a simple day ride a few miles from the trailhead can turn into something more than you expected. So besides a slicker and a knife of some kind here's the basics that should be in every back country rider's saddle bags.

**Easy Boot:** or some other type of temporary horseshoe. Remember the old adage "No hoof, no horse" The loss of a horseshoe has left many people on foot.

**Hoof Pick:** See above

**A Map:** Even if you don't get lost, or you "know" where you're going, a map of the area you're riding can come in handy for referencing landmarks, verifying a location or finding alternative routes.

**Matches:** In a watertight container, or some other alternative method for starting a fire. Fire is your best friend if you end up stranded or lost. I also carry a little magnesium block with a flint rod on the edge. You shave some magnesium onto a fire starter or some forest duff, strike the flint with your knife blade, or even a spur, and you get instant and very hot fire.

**Fire Starter:** Any highly combustible material. Dryer lint in a toilet paper roll works. So does the compressed cedar sawdust soaked with paraffin commercial starters I pack (about the size of a hockey puck.)

**Space Blanket:** Small, light and compact, a space blanket can be used for both a blanket and a tarp to protect against rain and snow..

**Signaling Device:** A whistle or a mirror or both. A mirror reflecting sunlight is very easily seen from a plane or over great distances. There are signal mirrors made with a hole drilled in the center that allow you to accurately aim its reflection.

**Compass:** It's easy to become disoriented in the stress of an emergency and a compass can help you to move in the right direction, especially on overcast days.

**TP:** We all have been caught short on the trail at one time or another and you can use it to help start a fire if you need it.

**First Aid Kit:** Doesn't need to be elaborate, but make sure there's plenty of bandages of all sizes and pain relief of some kind. I also carry an emergency toothache kit.

**Emergency Rations:** One unopened package each of jerky and trail mix can get you through a couple days if you're careful.

**Small Flashlight:** Very useful and even comforting if you have to stay out over night.

**Parachute Cord:** or some other type of light rope. It can be used to repair damaged tack or tie up your space blanket for shelter.



Anyone who carries something they think is essential to back country survival please let me know 'cause the only thing better than riding out is getting back.

**Squaw Butte Back Country Horsemen – Chartered 3/92  
06/01/2006 Regular Meeting  
Minutes**

Name	Present
Adams, Rob & Linda	X
Argo, Doug & Teri	
Berggren, Leon & Margaret	X
Boeder, Jess	
Brewer, Vernon & Anita	
Burak, Nadine	
Burdine, Russell	
Bush, John & Jackie	
Buthman, Tony & Tami	
Carpenter, Vern	
Conger, Bill & Marybeth	Marybeth
Creamer, Kelley	
Dann, Tony & Diane	
Davis, Justin	
Dineen, David & Tracy	

Edwards, Harold & Renee	
Farnese, Karen & Gary	Karen
Fry, Linda	
Gaskell, Lou Ann	
Gress, Rose	
Gudmundsen, Bob	
Guinn, Lettie	
Harding, Bruce	
Hezeltine, Alex & Sherrie	
Holcroft, Steve	
Holt, William & Chris	X
Howard, Bob	X
Howard, Robert & Donna	X
Leonard, Steve & Tonya	
Lox, Charles & Ellen Knapp	X
Lyons, Barney & Judy Hudson	Barney
MacDonald, Terry & Gail	

Nichols, Jil & Michael Bryant	
Nielsen, Dolores	
Richards, Tom	
Rindlisbach, Claudia & Fry, Martin	X
Ryan, Phil & Kay	X
Schantz, Shannon	X
Schindele, Robbin & Sally	X
Seal, Nate & Ruth	
Seel, Jon	
Selkirk, William	
Stroeder, Joanna	
Thielges, Jim	
Truax, Ralph & Sharon	X
West, Bob & Alasya	
Young, Gene & Cheryl	

**2006 SBBCH Officers and Board of Directors:**

**President:** Robert Howard, Sr., **Vice President:** Rob Adams, **Treasurer:** Charles Lox, **Secretary:** Kay Ryan

**Past President:** John Bush

**State Directors (2):** Phil Ryan, Bob Howard, Jr., **Alternate State Director:** Leon Berggren

**Foundation Director:** Sally Schindele, **Alternate Foundation Director:** Margaret Berggren

**Regular meeting brought to order at 7:00 P.M. by President Bob Howard**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Introduction and Welcome to Guests:**

**Introduction and Welcome to New Members:**

**MINUTES OF THE MAY MEETING**

Robbin Schindele moved to accept the minutes of the May meeting as published in the June newsletter. Bob Howard Jr. seconded the motion which passed.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>	<b>\$1,930.70</b>
<b>Deposits:</b>	<b>+\$ .00</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>	<b>-\$ 50.25</b>
<b>Ending Balance:</b>	<b>\$1,880.45</b>

Ellen Knapp moved to accept the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Barney Lyons and was passed.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Public Liaison Report:** No report as Harold Edwards was absent.



**State Directors Report:** Phil Ryan said the next Board of Directors meeting will be July 8<sup>th</sup> so he has nothing to report until after the meeting.

**Education & Foundation Reports:** Sally Schindele said she has nothing on the Foundation. She reported that she and Ellen put on back country medicine presentations to some small groups and that she has extra hand-outs for those who are interested. She has put together a medical kit that will serve 14 people for a number of days. She will keep the kit in her trailer. She recommended that everyone consider joining Life Flight or become a member of St. Luke's. She also said she has acquired a membership donation to Life Flight for the Gem County Sheriff's Posse to be raffled off at their upcoming rodeo.

**Work Projects and Rides Report:** Rob Adams reported that even though the Cuddy Mountain ride was cancelled due to bad weather, he joined a number of others to ride in the Wilson Creek area and they all had a great time. The first aid/CPR training has been rescheduled for June 11 because the instructor had a family emergency. On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the White Hawk Basin bridge repair project is supposed to start. Rob said he has doubts this will happen so stay tuned. July looks to be a busy month.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Right-to-Ride:** Bob reminded everyone to be sure to contact Senator Craig about this bill. The hikers are pushing hard to get the bill stopped and we have to do the same to get it to pass.

**Chain Saw Certification:** Phil mentioned that the certification instruction went well. There were 9 people who attended. Robbin said that the USFS now requires that anyone using a chain saw must have first aid training as well which is why he has worked to set up the class. Simply being certified to use the saw is not enough. The instructor from the saw class would like some feedback from those who took the class.

**Website Status:** Rob mentioned that Robbin now has a program that allows for more detailed maps on the website. He encouraged everyone to take a look.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Foundation Materials & Equipment:** Marybeth said that the Foundation purchased some LNT equipment and materials that probably should go with the Education chair. Kay Ryan moved that the Foundations items be inventoried and given to the Education Chair for use. Phil seconded the motion which passed. The one dissenting vote was from Sally, the Education Chair.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

**Notices:** Ellen reported that she distributed all of the Sportsmen Warehouse coupons at HP so she hopes people will use them and that SBBCH will get the credit. Kay reported that Bob Gudmundsen has had the hip replacement he mentioned at the pack clinic and that he is doing well and hopes to make the next meeting. Rob said the FS has provided a lot of equipment for us to use, including two power saws, Pulaski's, and hard hats which must be worn when operating the saws.

**Door Prizes:** Martin Fry won a bag of puppy chow donated by Pet Corral.

***Meeting was adjourned at 7:28***

Respectfully submitted by Kay Ryan, Secretary, SBBCH





Squaw Butte Back Country Horsemen  
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