

Squaw Butte - 2011 Year Summary

It Official Folks.... The SQUAW BUTTE CHAPTER of Back Country Horseman of Idaho had another FUN and SUCCESSFUL year in 2011 by increasing Membership Participation and Development.

Commentary by outgoing President, Marybeth Conger

How did the chapter increase Membership Participation and Growth? First, the Monthly Meetings were dramatically shortened with a call for agenda items for all members, including committee heads. This resulted in speakers organizing their thoughts beforehand, rather than "droning on" which saved time and showed respect to the rest of us. Tickets were given to all members and guests for some Fabulous and Fun Door Prizes. Items came from our annual Yard sale but by the end of the year, members were bringing in donations; everything from Duck eggs, Slippers from a Princess Cruise, to gently used Tack. Educational Fun topics were scheduled after the Monthly Meeting was adjourned, so members could choose to leave or attend. The net result, we had an average Attendance increase of 25% at our Monthly meetings.

Second, check out the attached SBBCH Committee list which documents a 45% Membership Participation rate. How cool is that. Bottom line these folks are the 2011 Hero's for the Squaw Butte Chapter. All Chapter Committees were put in place by mid-February, rather than waiting to ask for volunteers at the monthly meetings. Committee members were chosen for both their skills set and a willingness to volunteer. Mentoring was accomplished by paring a new member with a more seasoned one. Plus, members weren't afraid to attend the Monthly Meeting for fear of being "roped" into another project.

All new members in 2011 received a hand written Thank you for joining Card with a Backcountry Packing photo that was separate from the highly important and voluminous membership packet. Several seasoned members reached out to these new folks and invited them to one of our events. New members were welcomed and introduced at the meetings and they never sat alone or in the back corner. Our calling committee communicated with them to determine interests and the best contact method. Seasoned Members reached out at meetings and sat with them vs. staying in their in the pre-established sitting areas. Come on you know what I am talking about. We also had a \$50.00 Gas card drawing at our Grand Jean July event to encourage participation. Consequently 70% of new members attended meetings and/or activities during the year.

This number would be even higher as 3 new members live in California or North Dakota which would be quite the commute. Fostering new member involvement is important as they bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the Chapter.

A Continuing Goal of the SBBCH chapter is having many Diverse Activities throughout the year, so members can choose to participate in what interests them. Keep in mind members are not expected to attend all events but those that they can. Horse carpooling is encouraged too. Activities focused on Education, Public Outreach, Trail Projects, Fun

Rides, Packing Adventures, and as always Great Food. SBBCH believes it is important to work with neighboring chapters vs. being competitive which helps BCHI to grow.

Check out our website sbbchidaho.org which is getting a lot of attention. Some of the 2011 activities include:

- Four Arena nights focused on Safety and Defensive Horsemanship
- Six Fun Rides to get Ourselves and Stock in shape while sharing good trail times
- Manning the BCHI Information Booth with neighboring BCHI chapters at the Horse Expo and Idaho Sportsman show
- Co-Sponsored a AQHA and BCHI Ride to Promote our Organization while having Fun & good Food
- USFS Sawyer (A & B) Certification Class to promote partnerships while doing Trail projects
- CPR & First Aid Classes along with First Responder Training Classes to be Prepared
- Four Trail Projects putting our mighty muscles to work clearing trails
- USFS Large Saw Training for trail work in wilderness areas
- Two pack in/out Trail crews in the Frank Church Wilderness promoting a partnership with the Selway Bitterroot Foundation

A record breaking Yard sale that will help fund chapter expenditures

Highway cleanup and an End of year Christmas/Holiday party that raised several hundred dollars for the local Idaho food bank demonstrating our sense of community

Now if we can just remember to report all of our Volunteer hours for these and other activities that qualify. I suspect reporting hours will be a 2012 emphasis area for the Chapter along with celebrating our 20th Birthday.

2011 was a solid year for SBBCH and 2012 will be even better. See you on the trail and please feel free to stop by and see me as I start a new job opportunity in Emmett. Look for the Cherry Red Mustang on Washington Street, starting January 2nd.