

SQUAW BUTTE CHAPTER

2013: The Year in Review

Janine Townsend, President

Squaw Butte Chapter got right to work in January with our Leadership Team meeting. We determined our budget for 2013 and planned our events and projects for the year.

In February we went on our first ride of the season at Celebration Park along the Snake River near Melba, ID. Celebration Park is a good place for an easy, fun ride to officially get the horses (and us) started for the season.

In March we got busy. We teamed up with the Boise and Treasure Valley Chapters and had a Back Country Horsemen booth at the Idaho Sportsman Show at the fairgrounds in Boise. We also held a two-day Wilderness First Aid class, and we hosted a very successful State Convention with the theme "Partnerships Clear Trails."

April saw us on another Fun Ride, this time in the Eagle Foothills. We participated in the Horse Expo and had another booth with the Treasure Valley Chapter. We also put on our eleventh annual 2-day Back Country Skills Clinic with the help of the Boise Chapter. This clinic is designed to present knowledge about safe trail riding and packing in the back country. The 'Talk to the Experts' section of the clinic provides attendees an opportunity to ask about equine information in general. It was a very good clinic.

In May, chapter members attended a USFS Chain Saw Training clinic, in order to keep our sawyer cards current. We did our Highway Cleanup Project, and we held our annual yard sale for our money-making project.

June got us out on the trails doing work projects. For National Trails Day we cleaned up a section of river bank on the Snake River near Weiser. We worked the Yellow Jacket Trail which is on the south fork of the Salmon River near Warm Lake/Cascade ID. We cleared trail on Renwyck Trail on West Mountain near Sage Hen, and we also packed 1200 pounds of supplies into the Tripod Fire Lookout in conjunction with the Emmett Ranger District. Tripod Lookout is also on West Mountain.

July, August, and September were very busy with challenging weekend projects--clearing fallen trees off the trails. Due to micro-bursts and severe wind storms, the blown down trees looked like Pick-Up-Sticks across all the trails. We cleared hundreds of trees off the Wilson Corral, Squaw Creek, and Poison Creek trails on West Mountain in the Boise National

Forest, and spent two weekends on the Needles trail, out of the Kennally Creek trail head in the Payette National Forest near Donnelly ID.

Besides the 'boots-on-the-ground' volunteer work we do, our chapter has two members that are very involved with the 'behind-the-scenes' work of keeping our trails maintained. Robbin Schindele is involved with The Boise Forest Coalition. Phil Ryan is involved with The Selway-Bitterroot-Frank Church Wilderness working group, The Wilderness Society, The Idaho Sportsmen's Caucus Advisory Council, The Frank Church Trails Initiative, and The Owyhee Initiative. Phil has been instrumental in bringing the plight of the trail system in our National Forests and wilderness areas to the attention of law makers from the State to the Federal level and is continually working on making the responsible agencies accountable for their part in keeping our trails managed.

One of the concerns of our Chapter has been our aging membership, and the lack of younger people showing interest in trail riding and riding/packing in the back country. We decided we would make an extra effort to reach out to younger folks and try to inspire the next generation of Back Country Horsemen to become involved in the activities that are near and dear to our hearts. Our first project toward this goal was to partner with a Gem County 4-H group and host a Trail Riding Clinic for area 4-H groups, in an attempt to get the kids out of the arena and hopefully out on the trails. Together with the 4-H-ers we put together a course of obstacles that might be encountered on a trail, and worked with kids and their horses to learn to navigate these trail obstacles. The clinic went well, with a fairly good turnout. We planned to follow up the clinic with a trail ride in the Emmett foothills and actually take the 4-H group out on some trails, but the trail ride was cancelled due to inclement weather. We hope to continue this Partnership next year.

Our year ended with our annual End of Year/Christmas Party- a potluck and white elephant gift exchange.

2013 was a fun, busy, and productive year. We look forward to another great year of keeping those back country trails clear in 2014.