



File Code: 2300

Date: **MAR 21 2012**

Mr. Mike McGlenn
Chairman
Back Country Horsemen of America
Post Office Box 1367
Graham, WA 98338-1367

Dear Mr. McGlenn:

Thank you for your letters to the Regional Foresters in Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 regarding the impacts of Mountain Pine Beetle on trails in the west. Because of the national implications of your letters, we are responding from the Washington Office. We appreciate your thoughts and concerns on this issue.

We agree with you that this is a severe environmental condition that will have major impacts on our forests and trails in wilderness and non-wilderness areas. In fiscal year (FY) 2011, the Forest Service developed a comprehensive strategy to address the beetle kill situation on National Forest System lands.

The Western Bark Beetle Strategy (Strategy) focuses on safety, recovery, and ecosystem resiliency. It addresses safety of individuals working and recreating in the forests who could be injured by falling trees. It recognizes the increased risk of fire due to the dead and dying trees. The Strategy also recognizes that the heightened fire hazard could compromise the Agency's ability to protect ecosystem services, such as clean water, clean air, and wildlife habitat. In response to the severity of the situation, the regions intend to carry-out vegetation management activities that will leave forest less susceptible to the affects of the bark beetle.

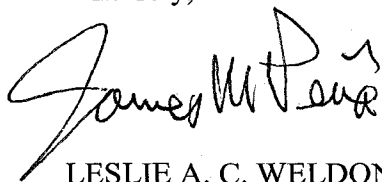
The Agency's FY2012 Budget Program Direction requires Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 to report on bark beetle mitigation accomplishments described in the Strategy. With respect to safety, the program direction calls for field units to prioritize roads and trails based on levels of use and maintenance. The Forest Service is reporting miles of trail maintained or treated under the Strategy. The Strategy encourages our employees to work with partners in prioritizing watersheds that should be treated. The Strategy also recognizes that regions will emphasize different priorities for addressing the bark beetle situation based on the level of infestation.

As regions implement the Strategy, there will be opportunities for the Back Country Horsemen of America and other groups to raise their trail-use concerns. We encourage you to work with local field units and regional offices to ensure that your specific concerns about the impacts of the beetle kill on trails used by your organization are considered.


Again, thank you for writing, and for sharing your thoughts. We appreciate all you do for the trails on the National Forests.



Sincerely,



LESLIE A. C. WELDON

 Deputy Chief, National Forest System

cc: pdl wo Chief Regional Foresters Mailrooms



Back Country Horsemen of America



PO Box 1367

Graham WA 98338-1367

360-832-2461 FAX 360-832-2471 Toll Free 1-888-893-5161 www.backcountryhorse.com

March 20, 2012

Jon Jarvis, Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Jarvis,

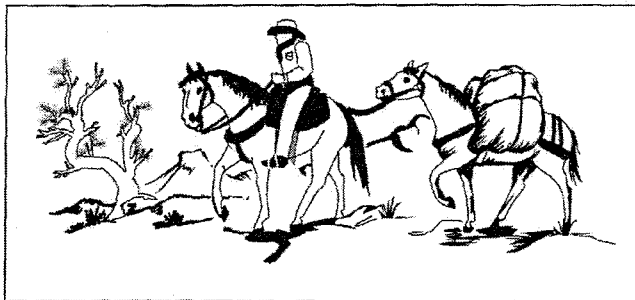
A recent court order No. C 09-04621, in a court case filed by High Sierra Hikers Association, and the efforts of extremist organizations to obtain favorable consideration for allocating stock free zones for exclusive hiker/pedestrian use, has prompted Back Country Horsemen of America and The Wilderness Society to draft the following statement on our position regarding the use of pack and saddle stock within Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks.

This position is consistent with the intent of Congress as iterated by Senator Hubert Humphrey in the Congressional Record of the Senate, February 19, 1959 (2637-2654); *"These wilderness areas will not be locked up for the benefit of a few. They will be preserved for the Nation, and will be available to any and all persons who want to see and visit and enjoy them."*

Sincerely,

Michael K. McGlenn
Chairman BCHA

Back Country Horsemen of America



PO Box 1367

Graham WA 98338-1367

360-832-2461 FAX 360-832-2471 Toll Free 1-888-893-5161

www.backcountryhorse.com

March 20, 2012

Christine Lehnertz, Regional Director
Pacific West Region, National Park Service
333 Bush Street, Suite 500
San Francisco, CA 94104-2828

Dear Ms. Lehnertz,

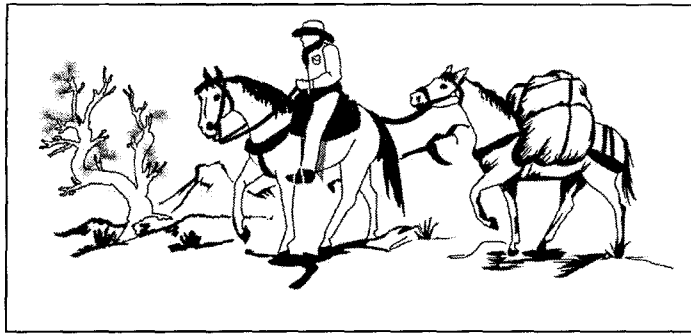
A recent court order No. C 09-04621, in a court case filed by High Sierra Hikers Association, and the efforts of extremist organizations to obtain favorable consideration for allocating stock free zones for exclusive hiker/pedestrian use, has prompted Back Country Horsemen of America and The Wilderness Society to draft the following statement on our position regarding the use of pack and saddle stock within Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks.

This position is consistent with the intent of Congress as iterated by Senator Hubert Humphrey in the Congressional Record of the Senate, February 19, 1959 (2637-2654); *"These wilderness areas will not be locked up for the benefit of a few. They will be preserved for the Nation, and will be available to any and all persons who want to see and visit and enjoy them."*

Sincerely,

Michael K. McGlenn
Chairman BCHA

Back Country Horsemen of America



PO Box 1367

Graham WA 98338-1367

360-832-2461 FAX 360-832-2471 Toll Free 1-888-893-5161 www.backcountryhorse.com

March 9, 2012

Superintendent Karen F. Taylor-Goodrich
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 92371

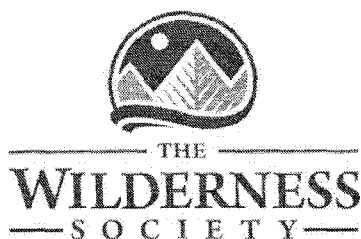
Dear Superintendent Taylor-Goodrich,

The recent court order No. C 09-04621, in a court case filed by High Sierra Hikers Association, and the efforts of extremist organizations to obtain favorable consideration for allocating stock free zones for exclusive hiker/pedestrian use, has prompted Back Country Horsemen of America and The Wilderness Society to draft the following statement on our position regarding the use of pack and saddle stock within Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks.

This position is consistent with the intent of Congress as iterated by Senator Hubert Humphrey in the Congressional Record of the Senate, February 19, 1959 (2637-2654); *"These wilderness areas will not be locked up for the benefit of a few. They will be preserved for the Nation, and will be available to any and all persons who want to see and visit and enjoy them."*

Sincerely,

Michael K. McGlenn
Chairman BCHA



**STATEMENT OF THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY AND THE BACK COUNTRY
HORSEMEN OF AMERICA ON THE USE OF STOCK WITHIN SEQUOIA-
KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS**

February 27, 2012

A recent court decision has once again highlighted the use of stock within Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks. The Wilderness Society and Back Country Horsemen of America issued the following statement reaffirming their commitment to supporting stock use within the park:

“We support the continued and sustainable use of horses within Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks, including within park wilderness in areas where it existed at the time of designation, and believe that properly managed stock use is consistent with the Wilderness Act and protecting wilderness values.

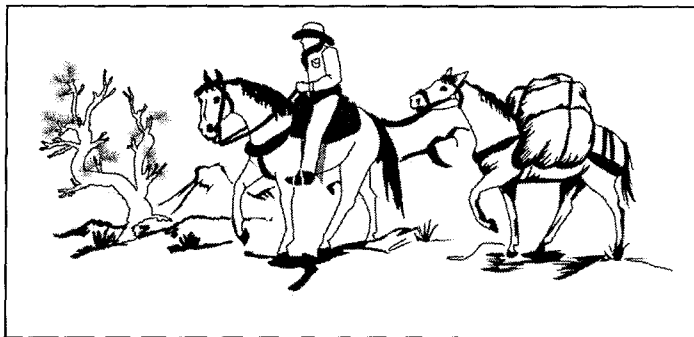
“For over a century, horses have been used to explore and enjoy the parks. Horses allow many Americans to enjoy the parks and park wilderness and are a legitimate use within the parks and park wilderness.

“We are pleased that the court affirmed that stock use is a legitimate use within the parks and park wilderness and look forward to working with the National Park Service to ensure that stock use can continue within the parks, consistent with preserving park resources and wilderness values.”

The Back Country Horsemen of America works to perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America’s back country and wilderness. The Wilderness Society works to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places. The Wilderness Society and Back Country Horsemen of America work together to support continued use of horses in wilderness areas, consistent with preserving wilderness values; advocate for increased funding for trail maintenance; encourage proper stewardship of wilderness areas; and educate Americans about the values of wilderness.

###

Back Country Horsemen of America



PO Box 1367

Graham WA 98338-1367

360-832-2461 FAX 360-832-2471 Toll Free 1-888-893-5161 www.backcountryhorse.com

February 14, 2012

Harv Forsgren, Regional Forester
Intermountain Region
324 25th Street
Ogden, UT 84401

Dear Mr. Forsgren,

*Sent to Rocky Mtn Region
Northern Region
Pacific NW
SW Region
Pacific SW*

Back Country Horsemen of America are becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of Mountain Pine Beetle on our trail system. We are aware of efforts to manage beetle kill near roads, campgrounds, infrastructure, and power lines, but the only reference that we've read about backcountry trails is one sentence in a R-2 report that states; "There was not the funding, capacity, nor public support to address backcountry areas." (The Bark Beetle Outbreak in Northern Colorado and Southern Wyoming, September 2011) Yet, to gain public support, there needs to be public awareness. As one of the primary providers of volunteer trail maintenance resources (about \$12 million in 2010), we have not seen a coordinated effort to advise user groups of the potential impact or to mobilize efforts to address these impacts. This is unfortunate since the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation has the potential to result in the biggest trail management challenge the Forest Service has experienced since the trail system was initially constructed in the first half of the last century.

In areas where the impacts of the beetle have been occurring since the 1990s, the infestation has been described as catastrophic and unprecedented. It is also accepted that the problem will spread throughout the west potentially killing all, or at least most, of the mature Lodgepole pine, Whitebark pine and other pine species. Lodgepole pine is one of the most widespread tree species on western Forests often occurring in pure, or nearly pure, stands. A conservative estimate would suggest that, on the average, 250 or more trees will fall per mile of trail each year over a period of 15 to 20 years. That yearly impact, of course, is more than 10 times that which would occur in a normal year.

We recognize that the Forest Service has dealt with this catastrophic impact on a limited basis after fires or windfall by shifting priorities from un-impacted areas. However, the Region 2 report indicates that over 4 million acres have been impacted on just 3 National Forests in Colorado and Southern Wyoming. A far greater impact than is seen through wildfire or windfall. We have also seen news articles from states throughout the west, indicating that more than 10 million are dead and dying and the infestation is still spreading. The R-2 report goes on to say that “The current bark beetle outbreaks ... are unprecedented in their intensity, their extent, and their synchronicity (that is, their occurrence at the same time). Bark beetles are killing trees in larger numbers, at a faster rate, over longer time periods, and over larger areas compared to outbreaks recorded over the past century. Furthermore, the outbreaks are occurring concurrently across western North America in multiple forest types.” It seems unlikely that the agency will be able to respond to a crisis of this magnitude by shifting existing resources from one forest or one region to another.

The perception exists among many wilderness users that designation as wilderness results in a loss of public access. In our work with our members and partners to support efforts to secure protection of future wilderness, this is a common argument that we are hearing. We are particularly interested in how you will accomplish the purposes of the Wilderness Act, which include administering wilderness “for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness” in light of this new challenge.

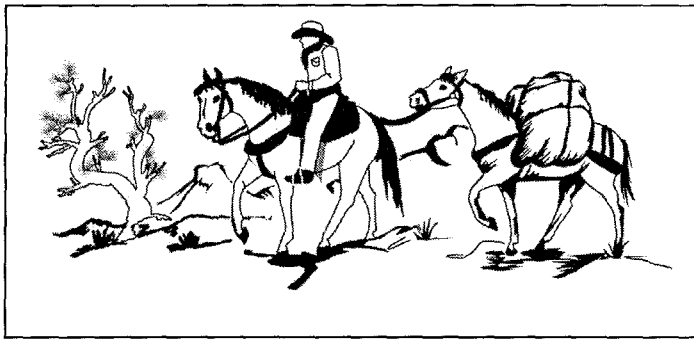
Please advise us of your strategy to address this catastrophic impact in both wilderness and non-wilderness areas. Specifically, how many miles of trail have been impacted, or potentially could be impacted, by the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation in your Region? How many miles of trail do you anticipate that you will be able to manage in a safe and serviceable condition with your anticipated budget? And, do you anticipate trail closures (or area closures) on those trails that are not managed in a safe and serviceable condition.

We look forward to your response. We are hearing concerns about future access limitations from horsemen throughout the west, and would like to be able to advise our membership of the situation at our National Board Meeting in April, 2012.

Sincerely,

Michael K. McGlenn
Chairman BCHA

Back Country Horsemen of America



PO Box 1367

Graham WA 98338-1367

360-832-2461 FAX 360-832-2471 Toll Free 1-888-893-5161 www.backcountryhorse.com

February 14, 2012

Angela Gee, USDA Forest Service
National Forest System, Mail Stop 1106
201 14th Street SW
Washington, DC 20025

Dear Ms. Gee,

Please accept our nomination of Mr. Dan Clifford to the Planning Rule FACA Committee. Mr. Clifford has the support of a broad spectrum of recreational horse users and organizations.

Find attached the application form, letter and resume from Mr. Clifford, a recommendation from the American Horse Council (representing over 120 equestrian organizations), and the recommendation of Back Country Horsemen of California where Dan has been involved in planning issues on public lands for the last ten years. It is also our understanding that letters of support for Mr. Clifford from the Honorable Harry Reid, Senator from Nevada, and the Equestrian Land Conservation Resource are being mailed directly to your office.

It is our great honor to forward Dan's application to you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael K. McGlenn
Chairman BCHA



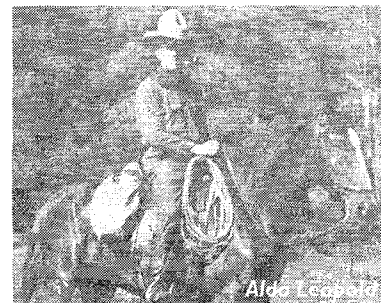
Back Country Horsemen
of America



THE
WILDERNESS
SOCIETY

WILD RIDERS

A Partnership Between the Back Country Horsemen of America and The Wilderness Society



TWS Mission

To protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places.

BCHA Mission

The purpose of this organization shall be:

To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness

To work to insure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.

To assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.

To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.

To foster and encourage the formation of new state Back Country Horsemen's organizations.

For more information, contact:

Dennis Dailey, BCHA
dennisdailey@centurytel.net
307.859.8583

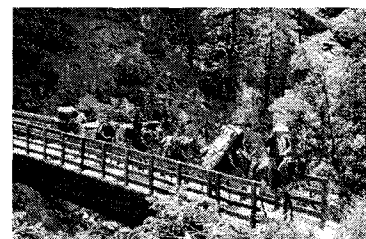
Anne Merwin, TWS
anne_merwin@tws.org
202-556-2920

Wild Riders is a partnership between the Back Country Horsemen of America and The Wilderness Society to "insure that traditional, historical and responsible pack and saddle stock use in wilderness areas is recognized, protected, supported and sustained consistent with the capabilities of the land." We believe that trails are a critical way to connect Americans to the outdoors and to insure our wild heritage remains cherished and protected.

PUBLIC LANDS RECREATION: CONNECTING AMERICANS TO THE OUTDOORS

Each year millions of visitors recreate on public lands, places within our national forests and national parks, and untold more on Bureau of Land Management lands. They hike, bike, view wildlife, horseback ride, fish and canoe across the hundreds of millions of acres we are lucky to call every American's birthright.

In fact, recreation is the main reason a lot of us get out on our public lands.



BCHA's volunteers have donated over 2.6 million hours of volunteer time to trail maintenance over the past 16 years

ACTIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION DRIVES OUR RURAL ECONOMY

Recreation is a key economic driver for many of the rural communities that neighbor public lands. According to the Outdoor Industry Foundation, "active outdoor recreation (a great deal of which takes place on federal public lands) has a **\$730 billion annual impact** on the U.S. economy and **supports 6.5 million jobs nationwide**. Active outdoor recreation also generates \$289 billion annually in direct retail sales and services across the U.S. and \$88 billion annually in federal and state tax revenues."

BUDGET CUTS THREATEN RECREATION ACCESS

While recreation is one of the top uses on our public lands, it is also facing traumatic cuts in FY 2013 – cuts that will further reduce the ability for all Americans to access the lands they love. **Trails programs are facing an additional 9 to 10% cut as of January 2013, on top of already drastically reduced funding levels. This means depleting the already bare-bones resources we have for things like trail maintenance and safety improvements, and support to youth and other volunteer programs that are some of the only sources of trail maintenance going on these days on our federal public lands system.**

Our groups understand that we face difficult economic times. That's why The Wilderness Society is sponsoring wilderness trails stewardship efforts in several states, and BCHA has an active volunteer base that has worked hand in hand with land managers for years to maintain, build and improve safety for trails all over the country. In fact in 2010 alone, BCHA's volunteers donated over 315,000 hours of volunteer time or **an equivalent of \$11.9 million dollars**. All because **The Wilderness Society and BCHA's volunteers love to connect people to our public lands** and what better way to do that than make sure they are **accessible to people now and in the future**.

Photo credit: Sage Paulson

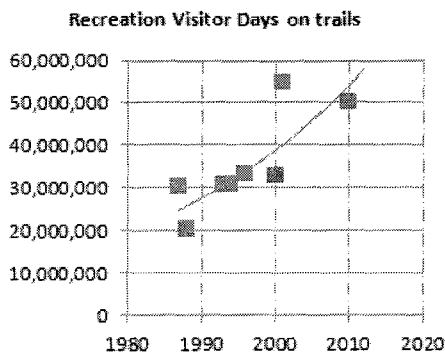
2012 HIKE THE HILL WILD RIDERS PRIORITIES

We need your support to protect foundational trail budgets

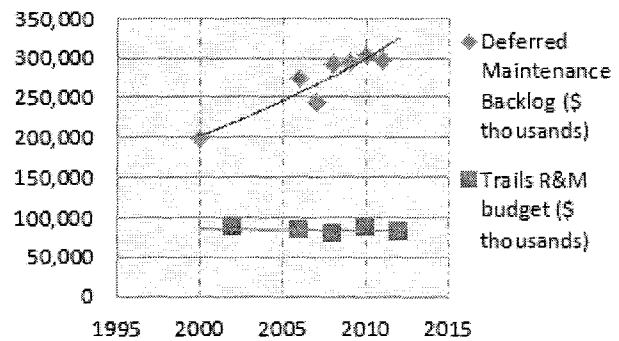
In FY12 the Forest Service trails budget was cut 4% from FY11. However modest this cut may appear, it belies the real and longstanding crisis the trails budget is facing. Last year's cut was just one in decades' worth of stagnant trail budgets that have collectively resulted in "death by a thousand cuts" for our National Forest trail system.

The Forest Service trails budget line item has remained flat for over 30 years, increasing only 1.75% since 1980 after adjusting for inflation. Meanwhile, the miles of trails have grown 56.9% since 1977 to accommodate the 376% growth in annual visitor-days on the trail system. The trail maintenance backlog had reached \$296 million as of FY 2010, and continues to grow despite the fact that the trails program leverages thousands of hours of trail work from volunteers each year.

Currently, only 21% of trails are maintained to standard.



**Adjusted For Inflation
Trails Backlog and Budgets in 2011 Dollars**



Longstanding maintenance needs have now been drastically exacerbated in the more than 10 million acres of forest land affected by Mountain Pine Beetle damage. The number of dead trees falling over our trails every year could be 10 times the average amount, and it could continue for periods of up to 20 years after an area is affected by the beetle, dramatically adding to the already huge maintenance backlog. This has the potential to result in the biggest trail management challenge the Forest Service has experienced since the trail system was initially constructed in the first half of the last century.

This problem is further exacerbated by the rapid defunding of other programs that have long been used to fill the growing gap in the day-the-day trails operations budget of the Forest Service. For example, the Legacy Roads and Trails program was cut by 50% in FY11, and the Recreational Trails Program is threatened with extinction altogether during the reauthorization process for the Highways Bill.

Please support continued funding for Forest Service trails in the FY13 budget process.

Other programs Congress can support to protect trail access:

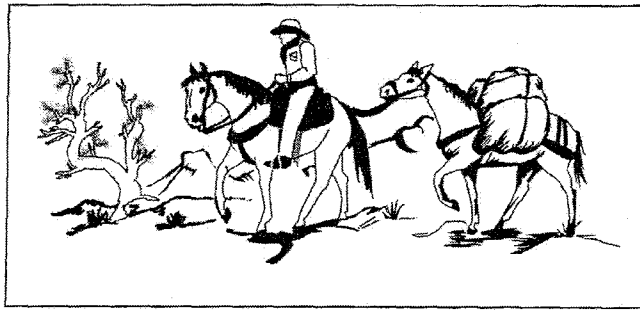
- Recreational Trails Program (Funded by the Highway Trust Fund)
- Legacy Roads and Trails
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Secure Rural Schools reauthorization



According to the Outdoor Industry Foundation, "active outdoor recreation (a great deal of which takes place on federal public lands) has a \$730 billion annual impact on the U.S. economy and supports 6.5 million jobs nationwide."

Photo credit: "Chinese Wall in the Bob Marshall Wilderness" by Betty Applebaker

Back Country Horsemen of America



PO Box 1367

Graham WA 98338-1367

360-832-2461 FAX 360-832-2471 Toll Free 1-888-893-5161 www.backcountryhorse.com

January 19, 2012

Andy Tenney, Division Chief
Division of Recreation and Visitor Services
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW, Rm 2134 LM
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Tenney,

A member of my staff had the opportunity to visit with Rob Perrin last week. Although we have a general idea of what Rob is trying to do with BLM's trail program at the National level, our directors and state officers would be quite interested to hear about the BLM's trail management program. During the conversation with Rob we extended the invitation to address our National Board Meeting in Eugene, Oregon, April 25th through the 28th, 2012, and Rob suggested that we route that invitation through you.

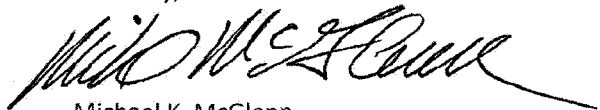
Our National Board Meeting is the one time each year that all of our directors and state officers come together to conduct business. There will be about one hundred participants from all over the country. We have tried over the past few years to have representation from each of our three major public land managing agencies – it puts a face on the organization, and provides both our organization and yours a name to contact when we have important matters to discuss. This would be an optimum opportunity to get your message out to equestrian trail users nation-wide – hopefully an opportunity that would be mutually beneficial.

Back Country Horsemen of America are proud to carry on a tradition of stewardship and partnership with our public land managers that originated in 1973 with the vision of a small handful of horsemen in the Flathead Valley of Montana. Our founders felt that providing service and assisting our land managers would lend credibility to our organization. From that beginning, our organization has grown and we now have organizations in 27 states and members in 47 states. Part of each state's mission is a

commitment to volunteer stewardship. Since we started keeping records in 1995, back country horsemen have contributed 2,643,804 volunteer hours to our land managing agencies for a value of \$63,250,975. In 2010, alone, we contributed 315,442 hours, valued at \$11,942.13. Although we are aware of a few exceptions, BLM has not commonly utilized BCHA as a volunteer work force. As your trail program continues to grow, so could the potential to capitalize on our volunteer resources.

We are hopeful that you will agree that it would be beneficial to have Rob participate. If you have questions regarding the meeting, please feel free to contact me at 360 739-2619 (Chairman@backcountryhorse.com) or Dennis Dailey our Senior Advisor at 307 859-8583 (SeniorAdvisor@backcountryhorse.com) .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike McGlenn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael K. McGlenn

Chairman BCHA