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***Peg Greiwe***

***1-888-893-5161***

***peg@backcountryhorse.com***

**Back Country Horsemen of America Celebrates 40 Years with  
100 Miles of Volunteerism  
by Sarah Wynne Jackson**

This year marks Back Country Horsemen of America's 40th year as the leading organization keeping trails open for horse use. Their state organizations have been celebrating this milestone in many unique ways. Back Country Horsemen of Utah combined their love of traveling by horsepower with their dedication to caring for the land. From July 27 through August 4, about 130 people on 10 authentic Conestoga-style wagons and horseback rode over 100 miles across central Utah, doing trail projects along the way.

**100 Miles of Camaraderie and Service**

Traveling 12 to 15 miles each day, BCHU followed the Skyline Drive Trail through the high mountain valleys of central Utah above Sanpete and Emery counties. Riders, hikers, and packers joined at different places along the route and traveled with the group as long as their schedules allowed.

At various points along the trail, they stopped to complete projects for the local Forest Service units. In addition to general trail clearing and maintenance, they clipped seed heads from noxious weeds near Potter's Pond and removed an old wood and wire pen at Grassy Lake. They also assisted with reseeding efforts and trail rehabilitation in the canyons descending into Sanpete and Emery counties, which were ravaged by the wildfires of summer 2012.

Back Country Horsemen of Utah members learned more about America's great western heritage, thanks to the teamsters, who generously shared their knowledge and even taught folks how to drive a wagon. Dutch oven dinners around the campfire were accompanied by Leave No Trace presentations and entertainment by cowboy poets, storytellers, and musicians. Near the end of the trek, BCHU members formed a parade down Main Street in Ephraim and Spring City.

**In the News**

Back Country Horsemen of Utah were joined on their journey by two teams of reporters. *Deseret News* ran their story on the front page on Monday, August 5. Read it on their website, [www.deseretnews.com](http://www.deseretnews.com) (search for Back Country Horsemen of Utah). KSL 5 Outdoor Show's Adam Eakle devoted an entire show to BCHU's trek, which aired on August 24. You can watch the 30-

minute show via podcast on [www.ksl.com](http://www.ksl.com) (search for Outdoor Show August 24).

On behalf of Back Country Horsemen of America, BCHU accepted a plaque and a letter of appreciation for 40 years of service and partnership from US Forest Service Regional Supervisor Sean Harwood and District Ranger Kevin Draper.

Utah Governor Gary Herbert sent a letter of gratitude for the public service BCHU provides on the state's trail system. In part, he wrote, "I understand the United States Forest Service estimates that 40 percent of all volunteer hours donated to maintain trails in our nation are contributed by members of Back Country Horsemen of America. On behalf of the residents of Utah, I express our appreciation for the more than 7,100 hours of volunteer labor members of Back Country Horsemen of Utah donated in our state last year... Your valuable volunteer service equated, in fact, to more than \$168,800 in cost savings."

#### About Back Country Horsemen of Utah

Formed in 1993, BCHU has 13 active chapters in the state of Utah encompassing every geographic region. To commemorate this exclusive event, Back Country Horsemen of Utah posted a video collage of photos from the trek on their website, [www.bchu.com](http://www.bchu.com); on Back Country Horsemen of America's homepage, [www.backcountryhorse.com](http://www.backcountryhorse.com); and on You Tube.

#### About Back Country Horsemen of America

BCHA is a non-profit corporation made up of state organizations, affiliates, and at-large members. Their efforts have brought about positive changes regarding the use of horses and stock in the wilderness and public lands.

If you want to know more about Back Country Horsemen of America or become a member, visit their website: [www.backcountryhorse.com](http://www.backcountryhorse.com); call 888-893-5161; or write PO Box 1367, Graham, WA 98338-1367. The future of horse use on public lands is in our hands!

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