

Back Country Horsemen of Idaho Proposal

January 1st 2026

Problem:

It has been brought to my attention that the Back Country Horsemen of Idaho's (BCHI) volunteer work is viewed as insignificant by the State of Idaho and the Federal Government, primarily because our trail maintenance and in-kind value information is submitted too late to affect State Legislature or Federal Forest budgeting decisions.

I learned of this issue when a BCHI member, while working with the State Legislature on non-motorized trail issues, was told that no current BCHI data was available. As a result, our input could not influence the legislative process, which had already begun.

The State starts all negotiations for the legislature's lawmaking at the beginning of January. By the time our numbers are available from BCHI, they are already far into the process, leaving our BCHI numbers of no value. It is sad that, despite the hours and miles we accumulate, we are not even known or have any impact on the legislature's budgeting and law-making process.

The Federal Government operates on a fiscal year from October 1st to September 30th. It is beneficial for our local forestry departments to receive our trail information at the beginning of their fiscal year, allowing them to plan both physically and financially for the upcoming year. They have been asking for the numbers to coincide with their fiscal year, and it seems we should provide them to have an impact. This would also get the information to Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA) in a timely manner.

This problem also applies to the newly acquired foundations' payout of trail maintenance reimbursement of mileage. Since the federal government's new budgeting year starts on October 1st, the foundation has no numbers available to give insight into the dollars needed for the new fiscal year budget. Since the mileage payout is done once a year, it would be favorable to time it before the beginning of the Federal fiscal year to avoid potential annual government shutdown delays.

Solution:

The solution to the issue would best be resolved by having the trail maintenance reports coordinate with the Federal Government's fiscal year. This would solve the state issue of not having the information for their legislative year. It would also solve the foundations issue for the next year's budgeting, as well as the Federal Government's (forestry) numbers they need nationally for legislation and budgeting. **It would be necessary to have the trail reports deadline to be September 1st** to give enough time to pull all the chapter numbers together. A foreseen challenge would be the trail work done after September 1st. That information would have to go into the next fiscal calendar year. It will take some work to get all the chapters on

board for this new deadline, but it can be done. **For the Foundations trail reimbursement, it would be a requirement to have the numbers in by September 1st** to receive any payout on mileage for that year. **There would be no exceptions.** Payouts are once a year at the end of the federal fiscal year. All work after September 1st would be in the next year's payout. This shift of recording and turning in all information would solve all the challenges this proposal has shared.

Closing:

This proposal is to have the trail work and mileage reports turned in with a deadline of September 1st of each calendar year. This would solve all the time challenges this proposal has explained. I have discussed this with many people, including Carol Hennessy, Forest Service reimbursement coordinator, Vice Chair – Hours Coordinator of BCHI, Mike Pilkington, Foundation Officers, Tim Palmer and Nancy Ady, as well BCHA, Volunteer Hours Chair, John Chepulis. John told me that many of the other states already turn in their numbers corresponding with the federal government's fiscal year. All told me they believe it is a good idea to move this through. Please include this in the annual meeting for consideration.

Sincerely,

Bartley Baer
SBBH Chapter VP
BCHI Foundation Treasurer