

Introduction to BCHI Governing Documents

Back Country Horsemen of Idaho uses several different “books” because not all decisions are the same.

- Some documents define who we are.
- Some explain how we make decisions.
- Some show how to do everyday tasks.
- Some provide forms to record what happened.
- And the website ties it all together.

Each one has a different purpose.

Together, they create a complete system that keeps BCHI organized, legal, safe, and consistent statewide.

Here’s what each one does.

Bylaws

(The Constitution)

What they are:

The Bylaws are the foundation of the organization.

They define:

- The name of the organization
- Officers and directors
- Membership structure
- Voting rules
- How amendments happen
- What they accomplish:

They establish BCHI as a legal nonprofit organization and define its basic structure.

Think of them as:

The skeleton of BCHI.

They rarely change and only deal with big structural issues.

Book of Rules (Rules of Operation)

What it is:

This explains how governance works in practice.

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It covers things like:

- Officer duties
- How meetings are run
- How elections work
- Financial controls
- Delegate procedures
- What it accomplishes:

It turns the Bylaws into workable day-to-day governance.

Think of it as:

The operating instructions for leadership.

Book of Policies

What it is:

This sets the organization's standards and expectations.

It includes:

- Code of Conduct
- Safety rules
- Risk management
- Animal welfare
- Financial responsibility
- Member discipline
- Non-discrimination

What it accomplishes:

It protects:

- Members
- Officers
- Volunteers
- The organization
- Public land access
- Insurance coverage

Think of it as:

The guardrails that keep BCHI safe and compliant.

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Book of Procedures

What it is:

This is the “how-to” manual.

It gives step-by-step instructions for common tasks like:

- Running meetings
- Filing incident reports
- Tracking volunteer hours
- Handling complaints
- Conducting elections

What it accomplishes:

It makes sure everyone does things the same way, even when leadership changes.

Think of it as:

The instruction manual for getting work done.

Book of Forms

What it is:

This is a collection of official documents used to record activities.

Examples:

- Incident Report
- Volunteer Hours
- Waivers
- Complaints
- Appeals
- Mission reviews

What it accomplishes:

Forms create written records for:

- Insurance
- Legal protection
- Accountability
- Historical tracking

Think of it as:

The paper trail that proves what happened.

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These are usually individual PDFs, not printed in binders.

The Handbook

A How-To Procedures Handbook provides BCHI officers, directors, committee members, chapter leaders, volunteers, and other authorized users with practical, step-by-step instructions for completing routine BCHI tasks consistently and correctly.

It explains how to carry out requirements established by the bylaws, Rules of Order, policies, and procedures.

It does not create new authority, establish policy, change approval requirements or deadlines, override Books 1–5, or authorize anyone to act beyond their assigned responsibilities.

The Website

What it is:

The website is the public front door and the member access point.

It holds:

- The latest documents
- Downloadable forms
- Instructions
- Training material
- Contact information

What it accomplishes:

It makes everything accessible and keeps everyone working from the same current version.

Think of it as:

The central hub that connects all the books together.

How They All Fit Together

They work like this:

Bylaws

→ define the organization

Rules of Operation

→ explain how leaders govern

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Policies

→ set safety and conduct standards

Procedures

→ explain how tasks are performed

Forms

→ document what actually happened

Website

→ distributes everything

Each layer supports the next.

None of them work alone.

Simple Summary

- Bylaws = Structure
- Rules = Governance
- Policies = Standards
- Procedures = How-To
- Forms = Records
- Website = Access

Together, they create a complete system that lets BCHI operate legally, safely, and consistently.

Bylaws → Rules → Policies → Procedures → Forms
all connect — with the Website as the hub.