

WHATCOM CHAPTER



Newsletter of the Whatcom Chapter  
Backcountry Horsemen of Washington

# TRAIL TALES

## Notes from the President

December 2023

BCHW mission statement: 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 governmental 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 chapters in the state organization.

**Whatcom Chapter**  
P. O. Box 28607  
Bellingham, WA 98228  
2023

**President:**

Roger Edmonds  
360-296-3512

**Vice President:**

Cindy Piccolo  
360-961-4839

**Director:**

Joe Remenar  
j.remenar@gmail.com  
(2021-2023)

**Alternate Director:**

Bill McKenna  
360-599-2526  
(2023)

**Secretary:**

Sharon Hoofnagle  
360-734-4258

**Financial Manager:**

Timothy Van Beek  
bchwtim@gmail.com

**Membership:**

Fran Van Diest  
360-734-2567

**Newsletter Editor**

Fran Van Diest  
fvandiest@msn.com  
360-734-2567

**VET NOTES Sharon Hoofnagle D.V.M. Season's Greetings**

Winter is here. Your winter hay is in the barn. Your fences have been checked after the big windstorm. The stock tank heater is ready to be dropped in. You remembered that horses drink more water if the chill is off it, plus chopping ice is not a welcome chore in a nor'easter. Your horse is on or close to free choice low calorie hay, all they want. The fermentation will provide internal heat on those cold nights. You remembered to avoid pulling shoes or trimming just prior to a deep freeze. You are ready for winter.

To all of you- may you have-  
A horse or mule, pony or burro in your heart. It may be dreams for the future, memories of the past, or a critter in your barn now.  
And may you be fortunate to spend much of your life on a trail.

To paraphrase an ancient writer:

Stop at the crossroads and look  
Ask for the good way to go  
Seek out the ancient of paths  
And you will find rest for your soul

Joyful Holidays and Happy New Year to all

**Membership for 2024**

**If you have not renewed, your membership ends December 31, 2023.**  
Renew your membership for 2024 now! Complete the enclosed form or go online at <https://www.bchw.org/>  
This will be your last newsletter, if not renewed.  
Any questions, please let me know.  
Fran

**WBCH General Meeting Minutes Nov 8, 2023**

The meeting was held at the Laurel Grange. It was preceded by a social time from 6:30 to 7:00. The meeting was called to order at 7:00. The pledge of allegiance was said.

Guest speakers: DNR presentation

Introduction of guest speakers: Our guest speakers were Hyden McKown and Dan DeVoe from the DNR. Hyden is the Baker District Recreation Manager for the Dept of Natural Resources. Dan is the maintenance manager. The areas managed include Blanchard, H.O., Stewart Mt (Olsen Creek) plus several other areas.

They talked about the new trail system at Y Rd, now called the Olsen Creek System. Input from the users has been very positive. There is a history on Stewart of naming timber sales after mushrooms, The DNR would like to retain that tradition and name trails after mushrooms. It would tie the trails to the area. For example, the park has the Chanterelle Trail. The project has been a challenge since it is in the Lake Whatcom watershed. However, since its inception in 2015 they now have excellent trails started on the north side and planning and permitting in the works for the 22-mile total.

They also answered questions on other areas. The DNR also has a small acreage on Galbraith they manage. Blanchard upper trailhead has two reserved spots for trailers, the lower trailhead has two reserved spots. (stock can park anywhere that is open but will have these spots reserved) There is a new restroom at the upper trailhead. A new restroom is planned for the lakes. Vandalism is still a huge issue. Cameras have not been very successful. You need a clear picture with perpetrators in the act.

The general business meeting was called to order at 7:47pm.

Approval requested of minutes from Oct general meeting as printed in the newsletter: approved

Approval of agenda: moved to approve by Melinda, seconded by Andy

Agenda from board

Treasurers report was given by Tim. Balances are available on request from members.

Elections: Cindy- nomination committee report- the committee contacted members for volunteers to fill positions. Volunteers were found for all positions.

President: Roger Edmonds

Vice President- Sharon Hoofnagle

Secretary- Melinda Smull

Financial Officer- Cindy Piccolo

Director:( Joe has one more year on his term)

Alternative director- Bill McKenna

Trail Bosses: Andy McLeod, Rocky Leavitt

Board members at large: Geri Surrat

Kate Chandler was nominated by Jackie.

Additional nominations for each office were asked for. The request was repeated 3 times for each office separately. There were no additional nominations. Bill M moved that nominations be closed, and the slate elected. Verna seconded. Ayes were unanimous.

Directors: Joe R.- There will be a quarterly meeting on Monday.

Wine Ride: Bill- ride went well. Riders' numbers were down a little, there were around 400 riders. The drop may have been due to the cold. The problems with permits for next year have probably been settled. The ride is a major fundraiser for the state.

Volunteer hrs.: Verna- we had 148 hrs. for Oct.

Trailheads: Vedder- trails are in good shape

Olsen Creek (Y Rd) the porta-potty has been blown up twice. For now, the porta-potty will not be replaced. The new trails are excellent.

Saxon: Andy and Tim will be walking in tomorrow with land trust people (Russ Pheiffer-Hoyt) to check out the trouble spots.

*(Continue on Page 3)*

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General meeting minutes, November 8, 2023

Christmas Party- Melinda- Darlene Tuttle had offered her place for the party but probably would not be big enough. Thank you, Darlene. Verna and Linda R cleared up the confusion over the shared party. Skagit will hold theirs at the rodeo grounds. We will look into Herman Miller Park or the grange. Since cooking facilities are limited at HM Bill suggested chili. Joe suggested a restaurant. What was a universal agreement was to have it during the daylight hours. There were 30-40 people at last year's combined party. Linda and Bill verified that as long as an event is open to everyone, we can finance more than one event per yr. Melinda S volunteered to chair the committee for the party. Several people have volunteered to help. Options were Laurel grange or Herman Miller (post note- Herman miller on Dec 9 was decide on.  
Good or the order: Jim Harmon benefit event is Nov 11th at Canyon Creek- dinner and auction. Bill moved to adjourn the meeting; Andy seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:28pm. Sharon Hoofnagle, secretary.

**2023  
TRAIL BOSSES**

Rocky Leavitt  
360-599-2675

Roger Nelson  
360-927-6964

Andy McLeod  
360-595-2744

**WORK PARTY  
COORDINATOR**

Roger Nelson  
360-927-6964

**PACKING  
COORDINATOR**

Rocky Leavitt  
360-599-2675

**Support our advertisers!**

**Sunshine Committee**  
If you know someone that needs a little ray of sunshine, please contact Michelle McKenna at 360-599-2526 or send her an email at: [wintercreek10@gmail.com](mailto:wintercreek10@gmail.com).

**Check out our Website:**  
<http://www.whatcom-bch.com/>

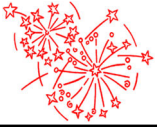


**Before**

**After**



The Whatcom CD Small Grants Program can fund up to \$3,000 for fencing, heavy use area footing, gutters, manure storage, & more! See if you qualify today by scheduling a free, confidential, farm plan before the application opens in January. Learn more at: [www.whatcomcd.org/financial-assistance](http://www.whatcomcd.org/financial-assistance)



# CALENDAR



**No board meeting or general meeting in December 2023.**

**Christmas party December 9, 2023 at Herman Miller 4H Park, see flyer in newsletter.**

**Happy Holidays!**

**Volunteer hours for October 2023—**

**basic—29, skilled—66.75, admin—13, travel—34.5, for a total of 147.8 hrs.**

- Andy McLeod
- Anne Graves - nm
- Bill McKenna
- Cindy Piccolo
- Colette Cloutier
- Fran Van Diest
- Joe Remenar
- Letitia Wheeler-nm
- Michele Cameron - nm
- Robbie Harris
- Ryan Heacock
- Sharon Hoofnagle
- Verna McLeod
- Viki Schimke - nm



**FOR SALE**

Assorted tack: saddles, pack saddles, gun scabbard, saddle blankets, rope, saddle bags and more.  
Roy  
360-734-2567

**New Year's Ride**

**Haven't heard anything yet if we are having a New Year's ride. Will send out notification when I receive info.**

**Fran**

**2023 COMMITTEE CHAIRS:**

**Legislative:**  
Bill McKenna  
360-599-2526

**Leave No Trace**  
Bill McKenna  
360-599-2526

**Programs**  
Sharon Hoofnagle  
360-7344258

**Public lands committee**  
Tim Van Beek  
360-472-5449

**Membership committee**  
Cindy Piccolo  
360-961-4839

**Sunshine**  
Michelle McKenna  
360-599-2526

**Volunteer Hours**  
Verna McLeod  
360-595-2744

**Ways and Means committee**  
Tim Van Beek  
360-472-5449

**EDITOR'S POLICIES**

Trail Tales is published monthly. Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month. Non-copyrighted submissions are welcomed (subject to space limitations). Opinions and views expressed in letters or personal articles are not necessarily the opinions of BCH. Send submissions to: Editor, Fran Van Diest, 723 Van Wyck Rd, Bellingham, WA. 98226. Email to: fvandiest@msn.com.

A Special Thank You to:  
**Laurel Farm & Western Supply**  
America's Horse Country  
Weylin & Amy Eldred  
325 W Laurel Rd., Bellingham 360/398-1216  
\* 360/398-8050 fax  
Hours: Mon– Fri: 8:30am. to 7 pm; Sat:  
8:30am.to 6:00 pm. and Sun 9 am. to 5 pm.



## **Whatcom BCH Christmas Party**

**Saturday December 9, 2024**

**Doors open at Noon. Dinner at 1:00pm.**

**Herman Miller 4H Park,**

Our Christmas party will be held on December 9th at the Herman Miller 4H park and will be in the afternoon. The Chapter will provide Ham and Turkey. The rest will be potluck, so bring a dish to share. Be sure to mark your dish and serving utensils.

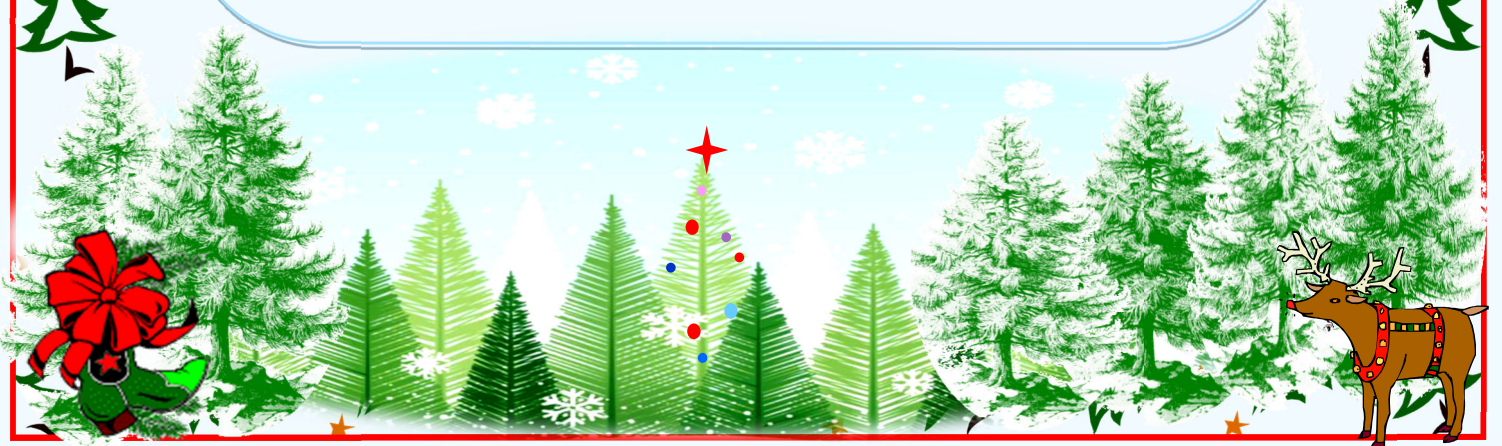
The club will provide plates, utensils, napkins and cups. There will be coffee and water.

If you would like to participate in the gift exchange please bring a new wrapped gift, \$15.00 or less, which will include children. We encourage you to invite potential young riders!

**Come celebrate Christmas with us!**

**(No alcohol, smoking allowed in the premises )**

1385 E. Hemmi Road, Everson  
(Between Hannegan and Noon Road).



## Montana Guiding

I got home last week after working for a month outside of Gardiner Montana. The Yellowstone River heads north through here on its way out of Yellowstone Park. They call it the Paradise Valley. The ranch I work out of is in the Cinnabar basin. They have different sections but it essentially borders the Gallatin National Forest.

The first week is getting the horses and mules ready for the upcoming hunting season. I go through the saddles and make sure all the parts are there, including changing the stirrups out for a wider hunting boot size. With the animals tied up I like to try out the lengths of the cinches. A lot can change from the summer time. Most of the time the cinches are too long and you can't tighten the saddle enough. I have seen a lot of people fall off due to a loose saddle. Under my watch I like the cinches to be very tight. As it turns out, most of the guys I take out are very marginal riders. A tight saddle helps to keep them on.

What also happens this first week is we load up and ride the property lines. The elk herds damage the fences every time they come through. Maintaining them is a never-ending project. It is quite the thing going up a very steep mountain on a horse to fix fences. Makes me appreciate my flat pastures a little bit more.

I spend a day with the horseshoer watching him put new shoes on and putting a piece of hard plastic under the shoe. If you don't do this, your horse will be walking with the snow building up under their shoes. Your mount will be walking on snow stilts. He also puts toe and heel shoes on to help with traction. One of our bigger issues is coming down off the mountains in the snow and ice. Very slippery. Very dangerous. In the right temperature the old logging roads are like rivers of ice. For me, the only safe thing to do is ride as far off to the sides as I can.

When the hunting starts it goes non-stop for their five-day hunt. We have four of these. They are mostly 12 hour days. Some of you know I don't like getting up too early. Somewhere between eight to ten is a reasonable number, but not in this camp. We get up at five am and drive up to the main lodge to have breakfast. It's hard for me to look at an egg at five thirty but it's about six hours until the next meal and you know I don't miss too many meals... If we are hunting out a few miles we will start saddling the horses and mules at three thirty in the morning. You haven't lived until you have handled a completely frozen horse blanket.

The pads never really dry out so you have to put them on and the weight of the saddle forms them to the back.

The animals here are very well built, stocky, and pretty tame. They are used all summer long for tourist trail riding at a fee of \$125 per two-hour ride. They are basically used to following each other so you must steer them even on a road. In the dark I for sure use a headlight. On those long days you ride a couple hours in the dark coming and going. You hunt until dark then you head home. It is incredible how much colder it is when the sun goes down.

When the temperature drops to way below zero you have to dress for the weather. I have found it hardest to keep my feet warm while riding. The solution is to get to where you need to go and then walk a bit. Deep in the snow it is only 32 degrees so they normally warm up pretty fast.

Sometimes we do stand or blind hunting. This is where you hike up to a certain spot and sit for 3-5 hours. Quite the challenge in 18 inches of snow and 12 below zero. We had that for a couple of weeks this season. I wear a lot of clothes for those days. This was my first year wearing Alpaca wool socks. I bought a couple of pairs at the BCH gathering in Ellensburg. I do recommend them.

The elk hunting in Montana is decreasing at an alarming rate in the areas where the wolves and grizzly bears are located. The wolves were introduced in 1996. At that time this herd was estimated to be 20,000 animals. Now it is plus or minus 4,000. An 80% drop in elk populations. Most folks are unaware of these numbers and others do not care. They just want the wolves.

When we are on the carcass of a newly harvested elk, I post a person with a 12-gauge shotgun to protect us from the grizzlies. They have bear spray and the shotgun is ready all times. The bears make no noise when they come in. I've also had to go with the critters to pick up the elk the next day after it was shot. Very scary. I stay on high alert with the shotgun ready in a moment's notice. Sometimes over night the bears will take possession of your kill. In a couple of basins over two grizzlies were shot while they were attacking hunters this hunting season. One lady was killed in July on the other side of this same range.

*(continue on page 7)*

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Mountain Guiding

This year we did some packing into the Pasayten Wilderness here in Washington. It is located north of Winthrop. One of our trips was the trail Andrews Creek up past the Spanish Camp. I just recently saw a picture taken in September of a huge grizzly bear taken very close to the camp where we stay. Some of you will be very happy to know that our Federal government is bringing grizzlies and wolves into our area. They have promised us two hundred grizzlies in the Hannegan area over the next few years. I know that most of you do not ride the back country but if you do, I would suggest bear spray, a large bore pistol, and a shotgun. If you are unwilling to carry these items, I recommend you stay away from the wilderness.

Rocky L.

Cabin where he stayed, Yellowstone river, wildlife, entrance to Yellowstone.



Grizzly bear tracks-below



More pictures going on a hike, packing mule, wildlife, signs, hunting blind





**NON  
4  
MEMBERSHIP  
APPLICATION  
NO-1**

# Come Join Us!

**Go to BCHW.org and join or renew online.** If online is not an option, please fill out this paper application and sign, (all members **18 and over must sign**) enclose your cash or check made out to BCHW.

Mail to:

**BCHW Membership Chair**  
**11404 210<sup>th</sup> Ave Ct E**  
**Bonney Lake, WA 98391**



**Whatcom Co.**

## Member Info

**Check One:**  New Member  Renewal  Secondary Chapter Application Only

Adult's name(s):			
Children's name(s):			
Mailing Address:			
City:	ST:	Zip:	
Phone number:	E-mail:		
Legislative district (if known):	County:		

**BCHW Newsletters: Two Trailhead Newsletters will be mailed out per year, the other 4 are digital.**  
**All 6 newsletters are viewable online at BCHW.org Our Turnpike emailed newsletters go out 6 times a year.**

STATE MEMBERSHIP			CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP	
<b>Basic Memberships</b>			All chapter members must also be a member of BCHW. However, BCHW dues only need to be paid <b>once</b> each year. Joining additional (secondary) chapters only requires paying chapter dues.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single	\$41.00		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	\$54.00	Chapter Name:  <b>Whatcom Co.</b>	
<b>Levels below include Single and Family</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contributing	\$75.00		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustaining	\$125.00		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Patron	\$250.00		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefactor	\$500.00		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifetime (Single)	\$1200.00		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifetime (Family of 2)	\$2000.00		
			If joining a secondary Chapter, provide the Chapter name where BCHW State dues were paid:	
			<b>Chapter Dues</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>
			<i>Please consider making a Chapter donation:</i>	
<i>Please consider making a State donation:</i>		\$	<i>Chapter Subtotal</i>	
<i>State Subtotal</i>		\$	<b>Grand Total (State+Chapter)</b>	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	

**NOTICES**

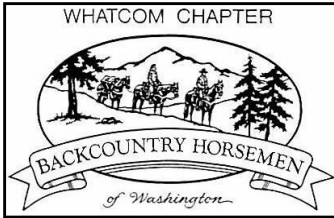
**By signing this membership application, you will agree to the terms of our Liability Release. You can read it on our website at bchw.org, under the Join tab. You also agree to receive notices from BCHW/BCHA by electronic transmission at the above email address.**

Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BCHW) is a public charity as defined in Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c) (3). Accordingly, membership dues paid to BCHW may be treated as deductions characterized as "charitable contributions" when computing federal and state income tax obligations.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_



Fran Van Diest  
WBCH Newsletter Editor  
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Check out the BCHW  
Website at:  
<http://www.bchw.org>



*Next*  
Whatcom Chapter Backcountry Horsemen

*Meeting:*  
**General Meeting: January 10, 2024**

**Laurel Grange Hall,  
6172 Guide Meridian, Lynden WA 97264**

**6:30 social, meeting 7pm to 8:30pm**

**Christmas Party December 9, 2023**

