



Pony Tracks

The San Juan Back Country Horsemen newsletter

Dedicated to Keeping Trails Open for All

March 2024

President's Message



John Nelson

Spring is here, and the proof of that is snow and sun and snow and sun. The snowpack in the mountains is over 100 percent of average, so it looks like it's going to be a good year for the fish and us. The geese are back, the swan is back in Village Lake and it's almost time to shoe the horses for summer.

I'm excited about all of that and more so after watching the video the Back Country Horsemen of Pisgah (North Carolina) recently put out. It's an eight-minute explanation from an older man and young woman of what Back Country Horsemen is about and what we do. And it's good. Check it out if you get the chance – it's on our Facebook page and the link is [here](#). The

narrative, photography and music are good, and the message is spot on in my book. It inspires me to not only get out with the horses this year, but to be happy for what BCH is and does, and what we will do.

I hope you can join us out on the trail this year as we clear downed trees, fix washed out spots along the trail, clean up camps, ride some good horses, and see some beautiful country.

Chapter's Youth Ambassadors Awarded Grant

A big "Congratulations" goes out to the chapter's Youth Ambassador board members Elle Candelaria and Jenavieve Betts, who just received a \$500 Youth Grant from Back Country Horsemen of America.

Elle, age 12, and Jenavieve, 14, joined the SJBCH board of directors in September 2023 and applied for the BCHA Youth Grant in February. The grant project entails rehabilitating a 1.3-mile section of a connector trail for stock users from the Thirty-Mile Stock Unloading Area (just east of the Thirty-Mile Campground that is west of Creede) to the Weminuche Wilderness trail system on the Rio Grande National Forest.

The connector trail is important because horse camping is not allowed at Thirty-Mile Campground. Stock users can camp at the Stock Unloading Area and then ride to the Weminuche Wilderness trailheads adjacent to the campground. The connector trail originally was established so that stock users did not have to ride on the narrow and busy Rio Grande Reservoir Road to reach the trailheads.

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Take Note



There will *not* be a March SJBCH general meeting. The next meeting will be in April or May. Spring has arrived and we will get together to discuss plans for the 2024 season.

Youth Ambassadors Awarded Grant (cont.'d)

San Juan BCH has worked on the connector trail in years past, but it's been badly eroded. The grant-funded work will include brushing out overgrown willows, adding gravel and rock to stabilize two bad sections of the access trail and constructing rock cairns.

Jenavieve and Elle plan to reach out to other youth from the community, including Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, to participate. The group will camp at the Thirty-Mile Stock Unloading Area in July and learn about trails, Wilderness, stock use and camping skills.

"I am looking forward to the work trip," Elle said. "The youth grant helps us get there, so I'm happy we got it."

SJBCH President John Nelson noted, "It's great to see our Youth Ambassadors take such an active interest in caring for public lands and to share that knowledge with other users of the backcountry."



SJBCH Youth Ambassadors Jenavieve Betts (left) and Elle Candelaria with the \$500 grant award from Back Country Horsemen of America. (Photo by Gabe Candelaria)

Now's The Time for CPR and First Aid Certification



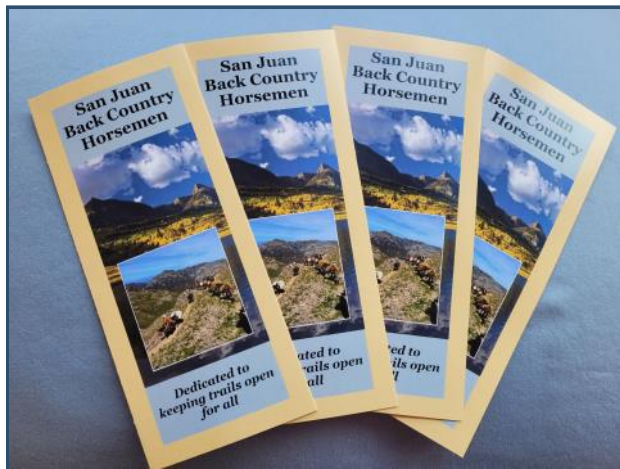
The trail season is fast approaching, and we want to be ready to help clear trails. CPR and first aid certifications are required for chainsaw/crosscut saw use on U.S. Forest Service projects.

CPR and first aid are offered *every other month* through the [Colorado State University Archuleta County Extension Office](#) at the county fairgrounds. The next classes scheduled are CPR on April 22 and first aid on April 24. An online first aid certification option also is available through [Survival Med Online Wilderness First Aid](#).

If you'd like to experience what it's like to cut out downed trees, you can dip your toe in the water (or dirt) by sawing with a level B- or C-certified SJBCH sawyer without your own certification.

Regardless of whether you plan to help cut out trees on the trails, CPR and first aid can be life-saving in everyday situations. Just in the last few years, I witnessed CPR being administered to someone who had an apparent heart attack in the Junction Restaurant parking lot, and a friend of mine performed CPR on a man who collapsed while riding his bike around Hatcher Lake. He lived to thank her.

—Lisa Nelson



New SJBCH Brochures Hot off the Press

Your SJBCH chapter has had brochures printed to promote awareness about who we are, what we do and why we do it. We encourage members to make the brochures available in your businesses and to share with folks at events and activities. You can include some brochures in your saddlebags to hand out to people you meet along the trail. Please help us spread the word. Brochures are available from *Pony Tracks* editor Lisa Nelson (lwnhorses@gmail.com) and other board members.

Hightailing It

By John Nelson

Awhile back, one of our trail-clearing crews was cutting on a difficult section of trail when the wind came up, and standing dead trees began to fall nearby. Earlier, the crew leader had noticed the wind coming up a little and now with more wind and when trees started cracking and falling nearby, he told the crew “The wind’s coming up, trees are coming down, we’d better hightail it.”

Everyone on the crew understood what he meant by saying they needed to “hightail it,” but after they had loaded up and were riding back down the trail one of the crew members asked what that expression really means and where it comes from. “I don’t know,” said the crew leader. “It’s like ‘skedaddle’ or ‘vamoose.’”

“Or ‘boogey,’” said another crew member.

The Oxford English Dictionary says the first usage of ‘hightail it’ came in 1925 in American speech and it comes from the erect tails of animals in flight. Other sources say it comes from mid-1800s American speech



Hightailing It

and for the same reasons—like a cow running away with its tail in the air.

In the May 1945 issue of *10 Story Western Magazine* (my main source of information), author Joseph W. Quinn

writes, “The term, ‘high tailing’—denoting a person moving in haste—was not coined out of the fact that a man’s coattails would lift to the breeze when he was running. The term is traceable to one of the characteristics of cattle. When cattle took it in mind to go off to nowhere in a big hurry, their tails lifted high. To the cowboy riding herd ‘high tails’ signaled trouble.”

So, when you’re on the trail amidst standing dead trees and the wind comes up, you may want to hightail it out of there for your own good. Next month, maybe we’ll get into “skedaddle,” “vamoose,”...but not “boogey.”

ANNUAL FOUR CORNERS BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN'S TACK & 4-H LIVESTOCK SHOW EQUIPMENT CONSIGNMENT SALE

PRESENTED BY THE
SOUTHWEST SILVERADOS 4-H EQUESTRIAN DRILL TEAM

SATURDAY, APRIL 6TH, 2024 8-5 PM
LA PLATA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
2500 MAIN ST, DURANGO



ALL DISCIPLINES AND TYPES...SADDLES, TACK, EQUIPMENT,
CLOTHING, 4-H LIVESTOCK SHOW EQUIPMENT,
HORSE TRAILERS & MORE!

Consign to sell:

Check in equipment- usable goods only!

Friday, April 5th 12-6:30 PM
2500 Main Ave. Durango

Commission Rates:

Trailers/Vehicles 12% (Bring your title!)

All Other Merchandise 20%

Pick up Unsold Items:

Sunday, April 7th from 1-4 PM

no exceptions

Payments:

Will be mailed

Sales Info:

* Buyers pay sales tax
and 3% on credit card purchases

* Sellers pay \$1 tag fee per item
+ commission rates,
price of items to be no less than \$5

* Items may be declined if unsuitable or dirty

* Unclaimed items become property
of the Southwest Silverados 4-H
Equestrian Drill Team

Consignor & Vendor Booth Info
Katie O'Hare 970-799-4644
Michele Meshew 970-749-6753



FREE ENTRY

+
CONCESSIONS BY
4-H FLORIDA FOU
LEAF CLUB



Thank you to SJBCH members Vern Jahnke and Dan Wand for creating these rounds for crosscut sawing demonstrations. They keep the log stable and well up off the ground for cutting. They are available for use at the fair or other events., where youth—and adults—enjoy trying their hand at cutting logs. Dan noted with a smile that it “just takes a couple of gorillas to load them.” (Photo by Dan Wand)

Thank You to Our Generous 2024 Donors



John and Jane Mancuso



**San Juan
Veterinary Hospital**

Ash and Trish Tully
Sundown Outfitters/Rio Grande Outfitters



Sherwin Williams

Justin Frie
Backcountry Outfitters

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Jenavieve Betts and Elle Candelaria — Youth Ambassadors