

Resolution Pertaining To

The Rehabilitation and Maintenance of Wilderness Trails
In The Pasayten Wilderness and
Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness

Sponsor: Okanogan Valley Chapter
Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Whereas, The Nation has provided for areas of landscape untrammelled by man where man is a visitor enjoying "...outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation" The Wilderness Act (The Act) Sec 2(c); and,

Whereas, "...wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use." The Act Sec 4(b); and,

Whereas, National Forest trails, particularly wilderness trails existing at the inception of The Wilderness Act of 1964, the designation of the Pasayten Wilderness (1968), and the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness (1984), have experienced substantial deterioration due to deleterious conditions as a result of wildfires, insects, tree diseases, climate change, erosion and the passage of time; and,

Whereas, United States Forest Service funding allocations and grants have been significantly and steadily decreasing over decades thereby causing historic trails to be abandoned and maintenance of main trunk trails to be severely limited even in highly unstable and deteriorating areas; and,

Whereas, Volunteer labor and resources of user groups such as The Backcountry Horsemen and motorized users, have been valuable in the National Forest(s) they cannot practically assist in Congressionally designated wilderness areas due to the Forest Services' restriction against mechanical means; and,

Whereas, By necessity, outfitters serving horse and mule riders and providing hiker support provide extraordinary and onerous trail clearing in the wilderness throughout the season by primitive means; and,

Whereas, Private citizens are generally without means to clear trails of fallen trees or circumvent dangerous areas, thereby placing them at an increased risk of injury or harm; and,

Whereas, Multiple structures to drain/direct water, carry stock and pedestrians over ecologically sensitive areas or waterways have failed or are failing throughout the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth and Pasayten Wilderness Areas; and,

Whereas, The abandonment of historic trails and reduction in trail maintenance has intensified use to restricted areas thereby impairing “outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation”; and,

Whereas, The current condition of our wilderness trails does not fulfill the public purposes of The Act for recreational and historic use; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Okanogan Valley Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington,

- 1) Urges the Congress of the United States to secure significant increased funds for trail rehabilitation and maintenance to fulfill the mandate of The Wilderness Act; and further,
- 2) Calls upon the Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest to authorize, as a minimum requirement, the use of mechanical means, by Forest Service, Back Country Horsemen of Washington and other user group certified and permitted users, to keep main trails clear and appropriately useable throughout the season and to reopen historic ancillary trail access for both stock users and hikers; and further,
- 3) Requests that the United States Forest Service propose and promote legislation and develop and implement administrative rules authorizing the use of mechanical means of trail clearing, tread and drain work on wilderness trails as necessary to meet the recreational and wilderness purposes of The Wilderness Act.

s/Dave Sunde
Dave Sunde, Director
Okanogan Valley Chapter
Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Date Approved by OVC: March 18, 2016