

OVCBCHW

Director's Report October 2012

Trygve Culp, OVC Director

It has been quite a while since I've written my column. Between Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail work this past summer and a busy fall getting in hay and firewood and hunting, it seems that time has just slipped away from me. Now maybe that we have had 6 or 7 inches of snow here in the Highlands things will slow down a bit. Now before you get to thinking we have 7 inches of snow on the ground, let me assure you that is not the case - we've had a cumulative total of that amount since October 15th - as of this morning there is only about 3 inches left. Fortunately, the ground is not frozen so all of this snowmelt should be going into the ground.

I attended the BCHW Board of Directors meeting last month. It was sort of a short meeting without a lot of "fluff". A couple of things jumped out at me as being important to the membership; though, and I will pass those along.

First of all was a discussion of a possible dues increase for Back Country Horsemen of America, our parent organization. Directors were asked to discuss the proposal with their Chapters and be prepared to vote on a BCHW state position at the December Board meeting. I explained the proposal at the Chapter business meeting on October 17. In a nutshell, the rationale for increasing national level dues at this time is fairly straightforward: The cost of doing business on the national stage has increased significantly; for example, the price of sending the BCHA Chairman or Wilderness Advisor or other trails expert to Washington D.C. to testify before Congress has escalated from around \$300 (when the last dues increase was imposed in 2006) for roundtrip airfare from the west coast to nearly \$1200 for the same flight today. Although membership in BCHA continues to grow every year, dues have just not kept pace with costs. Anyway, the Chapter voted in favor of the proposed increase 22 in favor and 3 opposed; I will vote for the proposal at the Board meeting.

The second item that I thought should be shared concerns a proposal to construct a new Horse Camp on the Loup-Loup summit just north of Highway 20 between Twisp and Okanogan. The Methow Valley Chapter has taken the lead on this project and has pledged \$17,000.00 to see it to fruition. The USFS - Methow Valley Ranger District - has "ponyed" up \$8,000.00 and has received a Secure Rural Schools grant for \$16,000.00 to do the planning and NEPA analysis. Initially, a 10 site "horse trailer friendly" camp facility with corrals, high-lines, a stock ramp and toilets is proposed with possible expansion in the future. What a great start! But, the Methow Chapter needs your help. As a part of the

NEPA process, the Forest Service must show that there is a need for a horse camp in that location. As you know our Chapter has had many rides on the Loup-Loup over the years. For those of us from the north end of the Okanogan it would be super if there were equine friendly camping facilities in that neck of the woods as it is about a 3 to 3½ hour drive one way. Anyway, what you can do is write a letter of support in favor of the camp - outlining why it is important to you. Send the letter to: MVBCH, P.O. Box 902, Twisp, WA 98856. The Methow Chapter will forward all letters to the Forest Service. Alternatively, you can e-mail your comments to: wpjzford@centurylink.net.

One last item... Christmas is just around the corner and BCHW Raffle Calendars make wonderful gifts or “stocking stuffers”. Shucks, get one for yourself - there is a possibility (small though it may be!) that you could win up to \$6,300.00.

One more last item... At the October meeting President Stan announced that the Chapter had set a new record for volunteer hours. Let me add my thanks to Stan’s and those of Trail Boss, Dave Sunde. Congratulations one and all - and a special thanks to Peggy Swanberg for encouraging us to submit our hours to her and her meticulous recording of all of our hours.

Take care, stay safe, don’t forget to vote and I hope to see you on down the trail...