



<b>2012 Officers</b>	<b>Issue 5</b>	<b>MAY 2012</b>
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Hi Gang

Hi Gang,

The weather has been goofy and it threatened our Bunny Treasure Hunt at Fobes. Audrey and I had to trot faster than the storm clouds coming in on us on Friday while marking the trail. Saturday weather was wild also. While were out marking trail on Saturday, we were getting snowed on we laughed the whole time. Chuck guarded the Porta Pottie starting Friday and he really got the wrath of Mother Nature. Chuck said it snow and the wind howled Friday night. What a trooper you are Chuck. We all thank you! We had a fun Saturday night potluck. It was cold and the bottle of hooch was being passed around to warm us up. We all got to learn a bit more about each other that night. We need to do that more often. Audrey, Mike and I had been out marking the trail a few weeks prior. That is always a good time. Everyone that helped put this event on did a great job. Mike, Tim, Audrey and myself saddled up at 630am Sunday, it was in the high twenties, burr. Bundled up we split up and headed out on the trail to put out treasure. I loved it. Looked like the Michelin man and it is very hard to remount with all those clothes on. By the end I had stripped all the heavy stuff off. Back at camp, we pulled out a large canopy for Carol and Gail to set up the "start here" area. These gals had an easy to follow set up for membership, riders and also all the history books were there for the viewing. Laurie got almost \$3,000.00 in products for the raffle. Great raffle, Lots of thought and care in preparation. I got a call from a company that donated items and said they felt very important due to Laurie contacted them with a pic of their items for the raffle. Nice touch! We had the meal catered and the tacos were the bomb. When you hang out with Mike you always get a chance to learn things. First off in the early morning, was to put the horse's bit in your pocket to warm it up, huh that worked great. I also got to learn how important a bowline knot is. I pulled a stuck truck hooked up to a living quarter trailer out of the frozen snow (ice) with my truck and we used a lash rope with a bowline and that knot came right out. I could not believe it. I need to keep practicing that knot for sure. The weather scared off a bunch of folks but the ones that came got to enjoy a spectacular day. The day was cool, not a cloud in the sky, It was an awesome day. We sang happy birthday to Cathy Haun Firth after dinner. We have a lot of talented people in our unit; they donated so many nice things. If you did not make it, you sure did miss out! We got some new members to join our group. When you see them, say hi. What a great idea of a drawing for those that help clean up, that was an awesome idea Audrey. It was two glasses etched with backcountry horseman logo/pack team and a bottle of wine. Oh and BTW, I won it. Thanks everyone again for all the hard work and dedication to this unit!

Audrey and I had a blast un-marking the trail on Monday. We took Tanner as our pack animal to get out the treasures from the spots and hauling cones back to the trailer, we also picked up some trash. I laughed so much my sides hurt many times. It was amazing that Audrey could not reach all the tags, just about 6 inches too short. That filly of hers is awesome, she tolerates us both. Of course I had to take some video because I knew no one would believe us. Great times and great friendships.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Hope you can make it to the ride to Eagle Rock on Sunday May 13<sup>th</sup>. Flyer at the website. It is a nice easy ride. Please mark your calendar for June 3<sup>rd</sup> at Santa Margarita. Anne will be hosting this great ride. Refer to the flyer in this newsletter.

**THE HOT TOPIC IN PUBLIC LANDS:** The Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Backcountry Access Act. Devin Nunes got an interim bill passed in the House this morning to provide relief for the commercial packers whose use of Sequoia and Kings Canyon Parks is at risk because of a lawsuit in San Francisco. Devin Nunes is asking all of our members to call Senators Boxer and Feinstein to urge them to use the unanimous consent procedure in the Senate to pass this bill which is H.R. 4849. **Request unanimous consent.** The phone numbers are as follows: Boxer (Fresno) 559 4975109 (Tom) Feinstein (Fresno) 559 4857430 (Shelly). Please spread the word!!!!

The first week in April, BCHC sent an individually addressed letter to all of the commercial packers that we believe work in the Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks. In that letter BCHC advises that they will support the packers in their struggle with the decision by and action by the parks to shut down their operation in the National Parks. The following is the wording of that letter.

*To all commercial packers working in the Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks*

*The Backcountry Horsemen of California is concerned about the decision by SEKI to suspend all activities by Commercial Packers within the SEKI. We feel this action is very detrimental to the Commercial Packers and the general public at large. We are also concerned that the lawsuit brought by the High Sierra Hikers against the SEKI could have long lasting negative consequences to all stock use in the SEKI and other public lands in the future.*

*Much of what the Commercial Packers in the SEKI do as a part of their regular business and activities support the objectives and purpose of the Backcountry Horsemen of California. For example, your activities regularly provide the ability of those who have health or physical conditions to access and enjoy the backcountry with the services you provide. Your educating the public on the necessity to maintain a clean backcountry is also aligned with our purpose. Every day your continued activities of providing the services of stock to provide packing of supplies and transportation which is a historical activity of horsemen and stock in the back country is also aligned with our organization.*

*Because of these activities and others, we the Backcountry Horsemen of California, without reservation, voice our support for your continued activities within the Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks. We offer our support and help, as we might be able to provide, to assure that those activities will be continued within these parks.*

Please help these packers. This situation is the initiation of a major offensive to the elimination of our use of public lands. Please send a letter to the Supervisor of the parks and tell her that shutting down the operations of these packers will affect the general public as a whole and it has enormous consequences to the use of these parks by the public and is not the right thing to do. Send this email to everyone you know who should help. And then send a letter to the parks and tell all of your horse and mule friends to send a letter. We need your help, now.

Mail to:

Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Superintendent  
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan  
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks  
47050 Generals Highway  
Three Rivers, California 93271  
Fax: (559) 565-4202

The High Country Journal did a great article on our BCHC Unit in the last publication. I am hopeful that non-members will see what we are all about and the important role of our unit.

The next monthly meeting will be at the Little Red Schoolhouse in Anza at 7pm on May 10<sup>th</sup>. Hope you can make it.

Cya on the Trail, Stacy and Joe with the pack mare

*\*For your convenience, all board members contact information is on the 1st page of each newsletter*

## Redshank Riders April 12, 2012

### Meeting Minutes

**Location:** Little Red Schoolhouse

**Meeting began** at 7:10 pm

18 Attendees

Anne read the minutes from March; Chuck moved to accept, Audrey 2nd

**Treasurers Report:** Mike reported income from a dues rebate of \$114. Our expenses were from the newsletter, insurance & schoolhouse rental, totaled \$1257.02. Ending balance of \$3732.52

**Membership Report:** 114 total. Chip has notified us that they will no longer send out renewal slips by mail.

**Trail Development & Maintenance:** Mike reported that there are many opportunities to support CCC this summer. There will be a pack in from June 27-July 1, and 6 - 8 loads need to be packed in every Tuesday thru October. The Pines to Palms project is on hold.

**Adopt a Highway:** No report

**Public Lands:** Stacy will be meeting with Anitra to discuss goals for our area. BCHC needs us all to step up and support our access to National Parks for horses and mules.

The High Sierra Hikers group is trying to ban us. If you have specific question email them to Stacy.

A dues increase of \$5 will be asked for by BCHA. This is the first increase since 2003.

Pete made a motion to approve and Allison 2nd. We voted and it was unanimously passed.

2011's Top Hand Award went deservedly to Carol Schmuhl.

**Education:** Trail Skills College will be offered due to a grant from REI, Oct 12 - 14. They are looking for suggestions for classes wanted.

Shadow Hills from ETI has donated \$500 to our education fund.

**Newsletter:** Report by phone

**Historian:** Carol will have the 2012 book finished and ready for viewing at the Bunny Hunt Ride.

**Unfinished Business:** No report

**New Business:** Rhonda nominated Mike for the Trail Warrior award from Trail Blazer Magazine and he won (will be in the June issue).

The official raffle tickets for the Pack Saddle Raffle will be available at the Bunny Hunt ride.

The 2013 Rendezvous will be held in Norco. RSR will be in charge of vendors, trail trials, wine & cheese & beer.

**Rides:** Allison reported that the Tule Springs ride went well. The next ride will be to Eagle Rock on

Mothers Day, May 13th and the June ride will be at Santa Margarita River on June 3rd.

**Meeting Adjourned:** at 8:25 pm.

# Star Milling Co.

**Stacy Kuhns**

TERRITORY SALES MANAGER

**909-633-1705**

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Greg Bruce

## The Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Backcountry Access Act

(Submitted by Stacy Kuhns April 28, 2012)

Letter from Damon Nelson. . . Congressman Devin Nunes

We have delicately negotiated a bi-partisan agreement in the House of Representatives to direct the National Park Service to issue SEKI stock use permits for the 2012 and 2013 season. This bill, the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Backcountry Access Act, passed the House of Representatives unanimously this morning. The bill is linked below with the handwritten edits that were negotiated early this morning. This will allow time for the administrative process to proceed on a permanent solution. We have asked the Senate to immediately pass it by Unanimous Consent. Below is the press release.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Damon

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 Damon Nelson  
 Deputy Chief of Staff & Legislative Director  
 Congressman Devin Nunes  
 Office: (202) 225-2523

### Backcountry Horsemen Get Relief from House - H.R. 4849 passed House by unanimous consent

**Washington DC** - Congressmen Devin Nunes (CA-21), Kevin McCarthy (CA-22), Tom McClintock (CA-04) and Jeff Denham (CA-19) today announced that the House has passed a bill that would restore access to the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks for backcountry horsemen. To view the actual bill go to the link below:

[http://nunes.house.gov/UploadedFiles/H.R.\\_4849\\_Bill\\_Text.pdf](http://nunes.house.gov/UploadedFiles/H.R._4849_Bill_Text.pdf)

Commercial permits necessary for the operation of the region's pack stations have been suspended due to a lawsuit by a radical environmental group, the High Sierra Hikers Association, which opposes horse and mule access to the parks. [The Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Backcountry Access Act](#) will require the Parks Service to issue commercial permits for the next two years while changes are made to the permitting process to comply with a federal court ruling.

*"I was highly disappointed by the Park Service's refusal to work with the federal court on an agreement to issue permits in time for the current season. Officials opted to wait until a new process was established and approved by the court instead of seeking an interim solution," said Rep. Devin Nunes. "This legislation will allow commercial pack operations to continue in the parks while changes are made to the permitting process to comply with the court's decision. It is now up to California's Senators to quickly act on the bill. There are hundreds of jobs at stake."*

*"This Administration's refusal to work towards a solution on this issue is the latest example of this Administration's war on Western jobs. I commend the House for taking swift action today on legislation I cosponsored to help preserve hundreds of jobs in the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Passage of this bill will ensure that the public can continue to access and enjoy public lands and national treasures. I call on the Senate to take this bill up immediately and join House Republicans in working to save jobs in our local communities and preserve access to public lands," said Rep. Kevin McCarthy.*

*"At a time when unemployment in California remains well above the national average, we are working to keep hundreds of hard-working families in business while adjustments are being made to comply with new wilderness requirements. It's imperative that we take swift action to protect the jobs of our backcountry horsemen and preserve access to our public lands," said Rep. Jeff Denham.*

[The Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Backcountry Access Act](#) was introduced by Congressman Nunes last evening. Chairman Hastings and the bi-partisan House leadership agreed that the temporary measure was worthy of special treatment and swift action. It was expedited through a unanimous consent agreement for consideration by the full House in less than 24 hours and is currently being transmitted to the Senate.

Due to the large amount of important information in this newsletter there wasn't enough room for all the photos from the Treasure Hunt ride. The webmaster will be adding a slide show at the website with the pictures from the event and of the beautiful raffle items. An email message will be sent out when these photos will be ready to be viewed online.

This article does a good job of making the facts of the issues clear. Submitted by Stacy Kuhns

Please sign urgent petition to maintain public access to horseback and mule-train recreation in Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. A judge's ruling in May will have ramifications on the public's ability to access equestrian recreation in all national parks. See article in the Visalia Times-Delta below. Horseback riding and mule trains are healthy and historical family recreation, and the only way the young, old, and those with disabilities can get into the backcountry. The national parks are for ALL Americans to share and enjoy.

Petition is here: <http://www.change.org/petitions/us-senator-maintain-the-people-s-right-to-access-parks-by-horseback>

## **JUDGE MAY RESTRICT HORSE, MULE ACCESS TO NATIONAL PARKS**

By David Castellon

<http://www.visaliatimesdelta.com/article/20120405/NEWS01/204050301/Judge-may-restrict-horse-mule-access-national-parks>

9:00 PM, Apr. 4, 2012

After more than nine decades of providing horses, mules and guides for trips through the back trails of Sequoia National Park, Balch Park Pack Station's future may depend on a federal judge's decision in May. That's when National Park Service officials and a group that successfully sued it will submit to federal judge proposals of how to manage the wilderness areas of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. Until that happens, the Park Service has announced it will not issue permits to "commercial packers" to bring their horses, mules or other pack animals into the wilderness areas of the two parks.

That decision stems from a January determination by a U.S. District Judge that the agency violated the Wilderness Act of 1964 by granting special-use permits allowing commercial packers to operate in Sequoia and Kings Canyon. If the judge doesn't alter his ruling, Balch Park Pack Station co-owner Dianne Shew said her business and other commercial packers that make use of the neighboring national parks could be out of business. "We run a horseback business, and we pack people into the wilderness," she explained. "The people will ride horses, and sometimes they'll hike, and we will pack their gear on mules."

The backcountry trails in the parks' wilderness areas often are steep, narrow and rocky — accessible only on foot or by using horses and mules to ride or carry camping and cooking gear, Shew said, who bought the pack business about 30 years ago with her husband, Tim. While Shew's business also takes people in the Golden Trout Wilderness area in the Sequoia National Forest, about 70 percent of her customers go to Sequoia National Park. And without access to the park, "We might survive a year or two, but that's it."

In a March 12 letter to Shew's business, Karen Taylor-Goodrich, superintendent of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon parks, explained that the change in policy stems from a 2009 lawsuit filed by the High Sierra Hiker's Association. The group claimed that the Park Service violated the Wilderness Act, which designates special protections of national parks' wilderness areas.

Based in Lake Tahoe, the 600-member group filed the lawsuit seeking to overturn a 2007 management plan on commercial stock use in the parks, claiming the federal agency failed to first conduct an adequate environmental analysis on the effects of horses and pack mules on the wilderness.

Among the concerns raised by Sierra Hikers were:

- Horses and mules trampling plants.
- Animals bringing in weeds not native to the wilderness.
- Whether animal urine and manure gets in the parks' waterways.
- Effects on endangered animals.
- How the presence of stock animals affects visitors to the wilderness.

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

In January, Judge Richard Seeborg ruled that the parks' management plan violated the Wilderness Act. Before that ruling, the Park Service was developing a Wilderness Stewardship Plan that addresses some of the issues raised in the lawsuit. Dana Dierkes, a Park Service spokeswoman, said an initial draft of the plan is expected to be released for public comment later this year. In the meantime, Taylor-Goorich's letter states that a hearing is set for May 23 to "address what remedial action should be take to address the violation of the Wilderness Act," which could include to what extent, if any, commercial stock animals will be allowed in the wilderness areas.

"Unless and until there is a further ruling by the court after the [May] hearing that allows commercial stock us in wilderness areas of the parks, the National Park Service will not issue any [permits] for this use," the letter continues. No other national forests are affected.

The Park Service's decision has raised the ire of the affected business owners and others who enjoy back country wilderness trips using their own horses and mules, among them Visalia attorney John Cochran. "They are basically prejudiced against the uses of horses and mules in the back country," he said of the High Sierra Hikers. He noted that people have been packing with stock animals through the Sierra since the 1800s, and horses and mules were used to build and maintain the trails that hikers uses. "Even people who started [hiking] with heavy packs on their back, they still want to get to the same places," and often use horses and mules when they get too old or if they're no longer fit enough hike through wilderness areas, Cochran said. A representative of High Sierra Hikers said representatives of the group wouldn't be available for comment Wednesday.

Also upset by the change is U.S. Rep. Devin Nunes, who on Wednesday issued a press release calling the federal action a "job killer." "They want to eliminate the back country horsemen, the only means left by which the vast majority of Americans, including those with disabilities, are able to gain access to the American wilderness," he stated. The decision doesn't affect visitors going through the back country with their own stock animal, nor does it affect people riding horses in areas of Sequoia and Kings Canyon not designated as wilderness areas, Dierkes said.

Dierkes said the Park Service sent letters to 16 commercial packers that have had permits issued in the past couple of years to operate in Sequoia and Kings Canyon parks. She said that after the Park Service and High Sierra Hikers present the judge with their proposals for remedy in May, he may not decided what actions to order right way. And Nunes has criticized the Obama Administration for not issuing a one-year extension on commercial packers' permits while changes are made to the parks' wilderness plans. But even if that happens or if the judge's ruling favors commercial packers, it may be too late to salvage this season for the affected businesses, Shew said. Normally, commercial packers operate from June or July to about mid October, depending on the amount of snow on the foothill trails. But earlier in the year, they're usually booking clients.

Luckyfish, Inc.

### REDSHANK RIDERS BCHC TENTATIVE RIDE AND EVENT SCHEDULE FOR 2012

May 13 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday-Mother's Day Eagle Rock host Stacy <a href="mailto:stacykuhns@aol.com">stacykuhns@aol.com</a> 909-633-1705
June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Santa Margarita River host Anne York <a href="mailto:anne@starfiredesignstudio.com">anne@starfiredesignstudio.com</a> (951) 662-2928
July	TBA-Ramona Trail in Garner Valley host Chuck Streeter
August	TBA
September	TBA
October	TBA-Apple Canyon host Kormans (951) 659-0332
November 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Saturday-Unit Poker ride, location TBA.
Dec 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sunday-Christmas ride location TBA

As you see, we have two months that we do not have a ride scheduled for, Aug and Sept. If you are interested in showing us your favorite ride, please contact Ron or Sandy Korman.

## Packers Corner

By Michael Lewis

### Snow Creek

Last month I got the opportunity to pack in above Snow Creek for Don Line and his PCTA trail crew. The trail crosses I-10 at Cabazon and heads up into the San Jacinto mountains. Morning found Greg Palmer, Don Palmer, and I saddling stock and loading gear, ready for the 6 ½ mile ride up the mountain to the spike camp. Andy Smith from the Forest Service stopped by for a few minutes to make sure all was going well then headed off on his rounds. Don Line and his crew hit the trail out ahead of us, so when we got everything loaded, we mounted up and headed out. Now let me tell you, down there on the desert floor the wind was howling and it was cold. Loading gear and stretching mantie's was a challenge. Even the stock was difficult to keep still. Makes you appreciate the nice days even more.

The first mile or so of the ride was desert and road for we could not park near the trail head but when we hit the trail it was beautiful. It followed the face of a boulder strewn mountain, around switch backs and over stone bridges. These bridges were made



to span gaps between some of the huge boulders. They are smaller stones wedged and stacked in the space between to the height of the top of the large boulders. The resulting structure is about 3 feet wide, 6 to 8 feet high, and 6 to 8 feet long with dirt packed in the center to create a trail. Oh, buy the way, no guard rail. Not for the faint of heart to say the least. It is a very good trail but you do not want to step off for the face is quite steep. 4 ½ miles on the trail and I could look down and still see my rig. We finally crossed a ridge and lost sight of our trucks and trailers. About a mile later we rode into camp and, believe it or not, it felt 20 degrees warmer up there with no wind. A bit backwards. We unloaded the mules, ate lunch, said our goodbye's and headed back down. At the bottom the wind still blew and it was still cold. I thought how nice it would have been stay up top for more than an hour but I had my family and job waiting. I'm thankful for the time I get to spend in the saddle and the new country I continually get to see, so I headed home with another section of the PCT ridden. If I keep it up in a few years I can ride the whole southern PCT 6 miles at a time.

2012 is in full swing with a few of the areas PCTA trail projects already completed. There are going to be quite a few packing opportunities through the year.

### CCC / State Parks, Fuller Ridge Project

For the third year the Fuller Ridge project is a go with pack-in, pack-out, and re-supply dates already set. For those of you who do not know, the Fuller Ridge project is a realignment of the PCT along Fuller Ridge that will ultimately eliminate some 20 odd switch backs. For those who are thinking of getting started in packing, this is a great project to get your feet wet. Perfect loading and unloading areas along with a good trail and just over 6 miles to camp. They are estimating 40 loads for the pack-in and 6 to 7 loads for re-supply every two weeks through out the summer. Following are the tentative dates.

#### **Pack In for Season:**

June 27-July 1st (not sure if we will have more luck on the weekends?)

#### **Food Re-Supply:**

Ideally looking for 6-7 animals per food re-supply

July 10, July 24, Aug 7, Aug 28

Sept 4, Sept 18, Oct 2, Oct 16

#### **Pack Out:**

October 23-28th (whatever works)

Come out and join in if you can. If you like you can ride along and just enjoy the view.

# REDSHANK RIDERS



*Go to the Santa Margarita River!*

**Sunday, June 3rd, 2012**

**Ride out at 10:00 a.m.**

**Level 2 ride - Approximately 2 hrs,**  
*few rocky areas, hills*

**& MANY water crossings!**



**Bring drinks & a lunch for after the ride**

directions: Take I-15 S toward San Diego  
Exit 51 toward Mission Rd/Fallbrook  
Take the 1st right onto E Mission Rd  
Go all the way to Fallbrook and turn right onto N Pico Ave  
Follow this road down the hill - when you get to the intersection at  
Sandia Creek Rd., veer to the left - the entrance to the parking area  
is immediately on your right.

**RSVP to Anne: 951-662-2928**

**[www.BCHCalifornia.org](http://www.BCHCalifornia.org)**

# May 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 General Mtg. 7 PM	11	12
13 Eagle Rock Ride	14	15	16	17	18	19 Cedar Springs Trail Project (see pg 8 for details)
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## Next General Meeting Thursday, May 10 @ the Little Red Schoolhouse Anza ~ 7:00 pm

**MEMBERS:** You Are Invited to Participate in the Cedar Spring Trail Project

Date: May 19, 2012      Time: 08:30 to 12:30      Location: Cedar Spring Trailhead

Directions: Hwy 74 to CDF fire station at Morris Ranch Rd. in Garner Valley. Turn north and drive approximately 3 miles to the trailhead, which is marked and on the right hand side of the road. (If you hit dirt, you went too far.)

Bring: water, gloves, snack, tree clippers, hat, etc. Mcleods, rakes, etc. will be provided. This day will be a no-horse work project.

This project is in conjunction with the Forest Service, and BCH members can signup at this time to be volunteers for the Forest Service, but not necessary.

Project Leader: Ron Lawson

For further information call: Ron at 951-659-2111 or email [rlsaddle@verizon.net](mailto:rlsaddle@verizon.net)

**Unit Meeting**  
 ~ Thurs., May, 10th ~  
 at the Little Red School House

Agunga, Ca 92536

P.O. BOX 383

BCHC

Redshank Riders



***Objectives and Purpose of the  
 Backcountry Horsemen of California***

*from the BCHC Bylaws*



- To improve and promote the use, care and development of California backcountry trails, campsites, streams and meadows; to advocate good trail manners.
- To promote the conservation and utilization of our backcountry resources in concert with livestock transportation.
- To keep current information before the Corporation membership and its local Units regarding new legislation or management plans related to government regulations of the backcountry.
- To support or oppose new proposals, plans and restrictions as related to the interest of horsemen and those persons interested in recreational stock use and enjoying the backcountry.
- To promote the interest of people who, due to health or physical factors, need transportation other than by foot on backcountry trails.