



Southwest Cairn

Marking the trails for our members

August 2024



From the Presidents Saddle



The August 7th educational session had a great turnout. Thank you everyone. Ice cream on a hot evening was a treat and we were honored to have Amanda Roland from Zion National Park update us on what's happening there.

Several from our chapter have been to the Bolander Mountain Trail Course at Three Peaks Recreation Area outside of Cedar City. What a wonderful obstacle course! Christine Fletcher was instrumental in getting the local 4H equestrian group involved with getting the grant that funded this, which is on about 1240 acres dedicated for equestrian users. Besides the obstacle course, there

is the ability to ride and ride some more. We've been asked to help designate trails, which will be forthcoming.

At the last business meeting, a few important decisions were made. First is that we will switch our October "play day" to the Three Peaks to challenge ourselves with the obstacle course. This will also be the "Grand Opening" of the site, with the 4H group also participating. Plans are to have gifts and prizes, food, a membership drive and a good time for all. This will be on our normal chapter ride date, Saturday, October 12, 2024.

Another decision was to change the educational sessions to quarterly, along with something to eat. Hence, we will only have a business meeting in September and October, starting at 6 PM as per usual.

We previously announced the need for a work project day at Red Mountain to rehab some of the trail on the north end of the loop to the overlook. We have learned that since it is in wilderness, we cannot rehab any trails – they are what nature, not humans, wants them to be.

(Con't Page 5)

Sept 4th
Meeting at the Community
Building 6:00P



NEXT MEETING

Sept 4th Community Building

See Pg 11 for details



Sept 14th Buckskin Gulch (Kanab)

See Pg 11 for Details

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Navajo Lake Loop: Our August 10th Ride by Aspen Rider

Day by day, this Southwest summer heat has been slowly stewing us. An escape to the cooler mountain air refreshed all 12 riders and 13 horses that completed this BCH group ride.

Kathy Stoker on the little dun mare "Peanut" and Heather Vance atop the handsome Hollywood Dunit prodigy "Woody" arrive together, representing the High Desert (Kanab) chapter. Up next is our President, Lin Hokana, on the poised, intelligent, and willing-to-please "Gracie." Jeanette Blasdell and the Blond-Hubba-Hubba-Hunk of a Gelding "Kade" keep this ride orderly and safe for everyone! Retired and entering their Wild West cowboy and cowgirl era are Rick Schmalz and Sheryl Schmalz. The Schmalz's receive the award for the farthest distance traveled to join this ride. Trailering from the mountains outside Las Vegas with their two horses and a BLM mustang ponying along. Gliding into position are John's smooth movers-Missouri Fox Trotters- ridden by John West himself and our trail nurse Tammy Ferney. David Barnhurst from Hatch saddles up his mellow Cremello Stud "Ryder." You've seen her before, folks, so if you're experiencing Déjàvu, it's because that's Déjà again! She's riding her MFT angel, "KissMe." The unflappable and highly adored "Rosie" was ridden by Ron Johnson! And then there's the short, cute, red-headed matched set, Aspen Rider and "Penny."

Starting our ride in a counter-clockwise fashion, we climbed through the pine and aspen trees. The overnight rain left the trail slightly damp, and the leaves were covered in water droplets. One of my favorite tactile experiences from this ride was my sleeves brushing against leaves and having the water drops cool my arms as we rode.

We crested the peak of the trail and got a rewarding view of the entire lake. We did have an, "Oh no!" moment, an obstacle was met at roughly our halfway point in the form of a large, downed tree. Our industrious BCH members swiftly cleared a safe, passable route around that horizontal pine.

We arrive at our designated lunch spot, equipped with several picnic tables. The horses grazed and gazed in a restful state while the humans chatted and champed down.

Back in the saddle, we immediately entered the scenic and unique lava field. The pleasantly swaying trail through the dark black lava rocks contrasts strikingly against the bright blue sky, spattered with solid white clouds. It's a visual delight as we once again get a view of the lake across the green meadow.

On the last stretch of the ride, we passed the Navajo Lake Dike. This landmark attracts families with its beach area and fishing. This perfect summer Saturday is no exception, and families with children exclaim and looked on with interest as they see our beautiful herd of horses pass by. I was touched when Rick Schmalz rode his mustang towards the family on the Dike. He gave several children the rare opportunity to pet a "wild horse." Rick was prepared with carrots and gave the kids the chance to feed the horse a treat. The experience was a much bigger "treat" for the families and children that Rick engaged in interaction with his horse. Rick promoted the BLM wild mustang and burro program in a special way by taking a few minutes to appease the admiring family. Horses are so special. Often horses light up the faces and excite the interest of hikers or on-lookers. Horse owners are a privileged minority who get to call a horse their very own. I was touched by Rick's willingness to share his love for horses with the family on the lake shore. Rick inspired me to be more generous, accommodating, and kind when an obviously admiring pedestrian wants to meet my horse.

An extra "thank you" to those who pre-rode this loop for the group the week before this ride and cut up a small downed tree. The newly downed tree was more than we could buck with our folding saddle saws, but several of those little saws were put to use to make a path around it. So be prepared for the unexpected.



3 Peaks Obstacle Course

Multitude of obstacles to challenge horse & rider incl: an 'L', Balance beam, Bridge & Tunnel, Multi level step, two Stepovers, Swinging Bridge, Teeter Totter among others



IN THE NEWS, IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD

The latest attempt to force a highway where it doesn't belong...

Last week, Washington County [filed a federal lawsuit](#) seeking to reinstate the stale and inadequate 2020 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which previously granted a right-of-way for the proposed four-lane [Northern Corridor Highway](#) through the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area.

Through this lawsuit, Washington County has again demonstrated its impatience with a full and fair process that is designed to determine the ecological and community impacts of a high-speed highway through a National Conservation Area.

Washington County rushed to secure right-of-way decisions before the end of the Trump Administration in 2021, and a federal court reversed these decisions in 2023. The BLM and FWS are set to release their [Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement \(SEIS\)](#) (which reconsiders the right-of-way) sometime this fall—but the county is now seeking to short-circuit the new analysis before it's even finished.

Instead of working together to find a reasonable solution to the issues faced by our community, Washington County is trying to revive what has proven to be a failed and widely-unpopular approach. They are actively ignoring science and the law, and trying to force an unnecessary and unworkable high-speed highway through Red Cliffs.

“We should expect more from our elected representatives. Now is the time for thorough, intentional, and collaborative planning from the County rather than a single-minded focus on a destructive highway.”

- Holly Snow Canada (CSU Executive Director)

DOG GONE IT – in Washington County, no dogs are allowed off-leash in public areas. That means any and all trails in our county. New signs are being posted at trailheads, referencing the county code.

When did you last ride at Chuckwalla? The step over we equestrians had used has been eliminated! The parking lot has been and will continue to be remodeled this fall. It is also now a fee area, as is the overlook parking lot off HWY 18 (need your Snow Canyon annual pass!). There is just one stepover, close to the entry into the parking lot. We were consulted and suggested this one can be modified to be safe for equestrians by placing the step over in a slightly different location, on flat terrain. Right now, it is too dangerous for most to ride over the log obstacle and drop down all at once. We hope to see this modified soon.

Come September 10th, Pine Valley will be closed for repaving all of the campgrounds.

Until then, happy trails...Lin



Oh Hel(met)!

By Lin Hokana

I have a personal story to share. Several of us were starting a trail ride at Three Peaks. The weather was starting to turn from sunny to rain so we were speculating as to how far we should ride. Right then one of the loudest cracks of thunder I've ever heard shattered the air – it seemed like right above us. The majority of the 6 horses spooked, especially my ever-so-calm gelding. He had a fit – and dumped me onto the dirt road. Even though I rode the buck for 8 seconds you never expect it to happen to you, but it happens oh so quickly.

Here's my message. I was wearing a TuffRider Starter Carbon Fiber Helmet and didn't notice until I got home that it broke the headband tightening mechanism!! No other marks. This was a no-speed fall with me initially landing on a shoulder. YES, I must have hit my head. The *TuffRider Carbon Fiber Print Helmet* was ranked #2 overall by the Virginia Tech helmet study for helping prevent concussions! That's why I bought it. So YES, it worked as designed—to "give" and absorb the shock. It's unique that way and is by far the most affordable of the top-rated helmets, about \$83. A new one is on order.

For all my cowboy hat wearing compadres, I will say this just once. Would you rather go to the emergency room for a concussion protocol or spend a couple hay bales worth of moolah to protect your noggin? If it hasn't happened to you yet, you're on a short list of candidates for getting dumped – you never know when or how. I should thank neurologist Dr. Steve Peters for posting this information on Facebook. BTW, you will see him on horseback and in the credits of Horizon 2, as well as, hopefully, Steve Julian and me as extras when that episode is released.

A 'comer' horseman's journey on Pine Valley's historic canal trail

FEATURE — My family arrived in Utah in 1848, but I'm still a "comer" in St. George. My family's long trek along the Mormon Trail from Nauvoo, Illinois to Salt Lake City doesn't count for much in my adopted town.



Doug West rides the trails near Pine Valley, Utah often, date not specified | Photo courtesy of Doug West, St. George News

The "comer" label is especially true in the small town of Pine Valley, which I visit regularly to ride. The high honor of "local" requires a surname of Jones, Burgess, Gardner, Snow, Whipple or another family name dating back to at least 1855.

This small, historic Mormon community is beautifully situated on the west slope of the rugged, volcanic Pine Valley Mountains. These volcanic mountains dominate the view from the town on three sides, with Signal Peak towering above the valley at 10,364 feet.

The Pine Valley Mountains are the largest known volcanic laccoliths in the United States and possibly the world. As a result, the trails are frequently steep and rocky. These somewhat difficult trails provide a lot of still exploring the many trails on the west and east side of the mountain. The trail names describe the rich history of the valley. When riding the Mill Canyon Trail, I imagine the once-operating sawmill producing lumber and shingles for the people then living in Pine Valley and St. George. Unfortunately, this once popular trail is now closed due to a past wildfire that made it impassable for horses.

When we did ride it, we could easily imagine the sawmill operating as we rode past the long-abandoned steam boiler that powered the mill. We could almost smell the sawdust and fresh-cut lumber. What I can't imagine is how the old-timers got the lumber down this steep, rocky trail to the valley floor.

The Canal Trail

While not a very challenging ride, the Canal Trail's history immediately attracted my attention. While riding the trail, I wondered how an approximately seven-mile-long, six-foot-wide, and six-foot-deep canal was built across a steep mountainside through hard volcanic rock.

With great views below, the trail overlooks Pine Valley. We actually ride in the bottom or on the banks of a deep ditch overlooking the pinion, juniper and mountain mahogany trees. The first impression was that this trench shouldn't be here.

Known as the "China Ditch" by most locals, this route traveled seven miles by horses, hikers and bikes was originally named the Highline Canal.

It was constructed as part of the Newcastle Reclamation Project. The canal hangs on the north side of Pine Valley and is easily accessible from the cemetery, Gardner Peak and Equestrian Campground trail heads.

The Newcastle Reclamation Project started in the early 1900's. A group of northern Utah businessmen, "Comers," envisioned building a large agriculture-based community in Newcastle. It was not unlike the many developments still happening in the west today.

Through private purchases and the federal Desert Entry Act, they acquired large blocks of land and platted their agricultural, utopian community. The Desert Entry Act allowed private parties to claim public land for private use, but required irrigation to make the land productive. The developers needed people to purchase the land and the water to irrigate it.

To attract potential buyers an advertising campaign was initiated. Newspaper ads and brochures appeared around the country advertising the availability of cheap, rich, well-watered farm land. Interested buyers were picked up at the railhead and transported to the development in two new Cadillacs. They stayed in a recently- built hotel on site where they toured various properties and were entertained.

Marketing was probably the easiest part of the project. For it to be viable, a complex irrigation system had to be built between two different water basins. Water had to be moved from the headwaters of the Santa Clara River south into the Colorado River and also north to Pinto Canyon where the water runs into the Great Basin. This engineering was not an easy task with the technology available in 1914.

The Highline Canal, called the "China Ditch" by most locals, is the best known and most traveled feature of the Newcastle Reclamation Project. While riding it, we talked with various horsemen and hikers about their knowledge of the canal's origins. It is always surprising to hear the apocryphal legends that have been passed down over the 100-year history of the Canal Trail.

While discussing the trail with two other riders, one asked if all the Chinese workers were killed. Another legend is repeated that water ran through the canal only once or twice before it was abandoned.

Effie, now deceased, reported playing with the Japanese daughter of a foreman. She also recorded the death of a Greek worker. When riding the Canal Trail, it's surprising more men didn't die. All the work was done basically with picks, shovels and black powder.

We occasionally come across a metal barrel that probably stored the black powder used to blast the rock loose, which was removed by the Japanese laborers. Unfortunately, many of the artifacts have been taken by visitors. The seven-mile-long ditch cut through tough volcanic rock is a testament to the strong backs and determination of these men.

The canal or trail was cut through very rocky ground, but today follows a ditch bottom full of sandy sediment. Many areas are full of large, fallen rocks. But most of the trail is like riding a constructed bridle path with excellent, soft footing for horses. The canal was actually in use until 1935 (approximately 21 years) when it was abandoned due to maintenance and operational costs.

While the Canal Trail is the best-known part of the Newcastle Reclamation Project, two other features can be visited on horseback. Riding the trail northwest takes you into Grass Valley. The Grass Valley Reservoir was an important feature of the project.

Water was to be stored in the reservoir from the Highline Canal, Mill Canyon (Grass Valley Creek), and Water Canyon. Both Mill and Water Canyons have trails leading to the summit. They are more easily accessible from the Grass Valley Road, but it is more interesting to follow the history on horseback.

The reservoir was central to the project's success. Water was to flow from the reservoir to a mile-long tunnel into Pinto Canyon. Using picks, shovels and a wood-fired, steam jackhammer; local workers cut the tunnel through solid rock.

An important geological problem was immediately discovered when trying to fill the reservoir. The reservoir was constructed on top of volcanic strata that were extremely porous. Basically, the reservoir leaked faster than it could be filled to push the water to the tunnel.

This flaw meant that the canal system had to be extended and deepened for the water to reach the tunnel.

Needless to say, the Newcastle Reclamation Project was not a great economic success. The hotel burned down, the two Cadillacs were sold.

Today Newcastle is a small farming-ranching community of approximately 250 residents. It is not the large agriculturally based city envisioned by those who built the Highline Canal, Grass Valley Reservoir and connecting tunnel.

Some water still runs through the tunnel in high water years. A dream before its time, costs and water rights disputes probably doomed the project from the start. Today we have to admire the effort.

Written by DOUG WEST, St. George, Utah.

Meeting Minutes August 7, 2024**Call to Order: Lin Hokana****Pledge of Allegiance and Introductions****Educational Presentation:** Amanda Rowland, Program Manager, Zion NP

A drawing for Chapter Merchandise took place after the presentation.

Those present (in person or via Zoom): Lin Hokana, Jarice Butterfield, Ann Guhman, Bill McMurrin, Ronald Johnson, Steve Julian, Roger Green, Jeanette Blasdell, Maria and Jim Harris, Murlan and Debra Grise, Larry Dunn, Doug West, Kacey Ore, Kaylee Lamoreaux, Tammy Ferney, John West, Patricia Wilson, Julie Stephenson, Jodi Durbin, Lorie Stobie, Dana Millsap, DeAnn Fieselman, Derek and Deja Schweitzer, Freddy Dunn, Kathy and Mike Duvall, J.D

Minutes: Motion to accept/corrected as published in the newsletter – motion approved

Treasurer's Report: Jeanette Blasdell; the current budget was presented. There are some excess funds that are earmarked to fund future projects at Pine Mountain. Motion made and approved.

Old Business:**Zion Grant** – Reimbursement for equine transport – Lin

Lin proposed that the BCHA SW Chapter members that hauled up their horses and completed work at Zion be reimbursed per the grant guidelines. There are funds left. (If you want the specifics, come to a business meeting for the treasurer's report – we don't include numbers as it leads to scamming). Some members opted to donate their reimbursement back to the organization fund raising account.

New Business:**How to increase attendance at educational sessions**

change the format, 3 or 4 x per year

A motion was made and approved to only have 4 quarterly educational sessions/presentations in the future with a single presenter. Motion approved. It was also informally agreed that the organization would provide refreshments for the quarterly educational sessions

Three Peaks Equine Recreation Area (TPERA)

Lin reminded the members that BCHU SW Chapter signed a letter of support for this project. He also shared that there this is future development like camp sites, more water hydrants near obstacles and a manure dump, etc. that are needed and the organization may want to participate in future projects. He also passed out a handout on common sense rules and etiquette to follow when you visit the area.

It was proposed to switch the October play day from Reinmakers to TPERA in partnership with the 4H group chili cook off. The members present agreed. The date of the October ride will be changed from October 19th to the 12th and will be at TPERA.

Utah Regional Councils (Five County Assn of Governments) – Freddy

Freddy shared that this council had funding they want to expend on worthy projects to improve government trails/lands. She applied to serve on this council. She asked members to submit to her any proposed trail improvement projects they feel are needed.

Sen. Lee's bikes in wilderness bill: Lin indicated that he signed a letter of support opposing this bill on behalf of the organization along with other entities.

Annual Fund Raiser – The tentative date is 12-6-24 (the first Friday in December). Deja will check to make sure the high school facility is available that date. There was discussion about adding more entertainment and making it a big affair versus a smaller dinner and membership drive only. It was pointed out that there needs to be a target project or projects if fundraising is the focus. More planning and designation of a committee will be forthcoming.

Committee Reports

Liaison to local public lands agencies: Freddy Dunn and Lin Hokana

No update

Membership – There was discussion that the October 12th TPERA event could also be a fundraiser along with the December 6th dinner.

Projects proposed were: 4H First Step program, horse corrals added to the Webster Flats area, more work at Pine Valley, or further development at Duncan Springs area. Members are to bring back more information on proposed projects (more detail and any pre-approvals that may be needed).

Work Projects: Jeanette Blasdell and Deja Schweitzer

Red Mountain & Cottonwood Trail Maintenance – There are three sections that need improvement. This work could possibly be combined with the ride to the Donut Hole and be a combined work / party.

Add gravel/sand/road base needed at these to step overs: 600 in Hurricane, Harrisburg near campground, Turkey Farm Road, Babylon & Red Mtn parking lots – possibly in October or November when it has cooled down

Education: Doug West

The quarterly dates/months for education presentations will be discussed. It was agreed that one of the dates should be the August meeting. *(The members decided to have educational sessions 3-4 times per year.)*

Ride Calendar:

- August 10 Navaho Lake
- September 14 Buckskin Gulch
- October 12 Changed from Reinmakers (obstacle course and trail) to TPERA (Bolender Mountain Wilderness Obstacle Course).
- November 9 Donut Hole
- January 11 Rainbow Ravine (2-hour drive)

Adjourn: 8:05pm

Calendar of Events

CHAPTER MEETINGS :

Sept 4, 2024—St. George Community Bldg. 6:00PM

Come and Participate in our Chapters Success



**CHAPTER RIDES: Every 2nd Saturday of each month
(unless specified otherwise)**

- **September 14th**—Buckskin Gulch (Kanab) in the saddle at 10AM bring lunch. 10 mile ride 3-4 hours in saddle some water crossings.

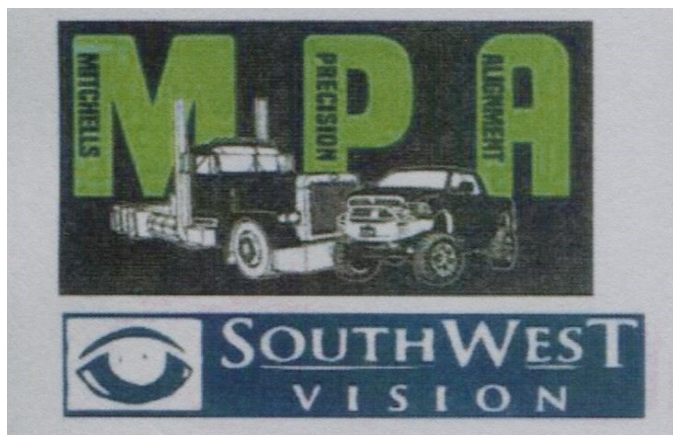
Directions: Once in Kanab take Hwy 89 east (towards Lake Powell) travel 38 miles to cockscomb, turn right travel 4.5 miles on dirt road to TH.

Please RSVP to Jeanette 818-415-1305 so we will know how many to expect

REMEMBER: Dogs are only permitted on leashes anywhere in Washington County. We as Back Country Horsemen must set the example, so we thank you in advance for your compliance with the rules.



Sponsors of the Month!



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Southwest Chapter Newsletter
P.O. Box 3174
St. George, UT 84771

The Purpose of the Back Country Horsemen of Utah is:

1. To perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses and mules in America's back country and wilderness.
2. To work to ensure the public lands remain open to recreational pack and saddle stock use.
3. To assist the agencies responsible for the management of public lands.
4. To educate, encourage and solicit active participation in wise and sustaining use of back country resources by horsemen and the general public, commensurate with our heritage.
5. To foster and encourage the formation of new chapters of Back Country Horsemen throughout Utah.

To:

BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF UTAH—Southwest Chapter

PO Box 3174, St. George, UT 84771
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New Membership: _____ Renewal: _____

NAME/S: _____

*Please list names for family membership. Children over 18 may be included in family membership or join as individual members.

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBERS:

Home: _____ Work: _____

Cell: _____ Fax: _____

OTHER HORSE/MULE ASSOCIATIONS YOU BELONG TO:

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Liability Release: (MUST BE SIGNED)

Recognizing the fact that there is a potential for an accident wherever horse/mule use is involved, which can cause injuries to horses/mules, riders and spectators and also recognizing the fact that Back Country Horsemen of Utah, including units, officers, directors, or members cannot always know the condition of trails or the experience of riders or horses/mules taking part in trail rides or other BCHA functions, I do hereby release the above named from any claim or right for damages which might occur to me, my minor children or horses/mules.

By signing this release, I/WE recognize the following Utah State Law, *UCA 78-27b* Limitations on liability for Equine and Livestock Activities. * It shall be presumed that participants in equine or livestock activities are aware of and understand that there are inherent risks associated with these activities. *Inherent risk* with regard to equine or livestock activities means those dangers or conditions, which are an integral part of equine or livestock activities. The equine activity sponsor is not liable for those inherent risks. If you are unwilling to assume these risks for yourself or for those under your supervision, you should not participate in these activities.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____