



Southwest Cairn

Marking the trails for our members

June/July 2025

From the Presidents Saddle



SOS... Fire / Sale of Public Land Amendmment... withdrawn... Sober reminders of the great value of our united organization, BCHA.

The monthly June Chapter trail ride at Pine Valley Mountain will not likely ever be the same again during many of our lifetimes. The recent fire has significantly altered the landscape and made the Equestrian usage of this precious resource extremely limited for possibly several years. For certain the landscape is charred and changed for a long, long time to come. We are so blessed to have enjoyed this fabulous resource but now face the reality of natural disasters having altered our usage for the future. This reminds us

of how tentative nature can be and for us not to take access to these precious resources for granted.

We also recently gathered our collective voices together to halt Utah Senator Mike Lee's Sale of Public Lands Amendment from the Trump Tax Bill. Fortunately for us many Democrats and Republicans heard from the citizenry that wholesale selling off our public lands (1 million acres) is not in our interests. The Senators insisted the Amendment be removed before otherwise supporting the Tax Bill. We may instead want to see a carefully crafted alternative to solve deficit and starter-housing demands that do not sell off massive blocks of public land to corporations, foreign entities and perhaps a few wealthy persons. Public Land, unlike money, is a limited and shared resource that has been a unique part of our heritage in America. Any attempt to fire-sale (forgive the pun) this limited heritage indiscriminately for any reason whatsoever is something that should be singularly and carefully studied and vetted and be supported by a clear majority after significant debate and consideration. Even

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God Bless Them !



NEXT MEETING

Community Building

See Page 9 for details



August 9th Navajo Lake

See Page 9 for Details

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August 6th

Meeting at the Community Building 6:00PM

It's with bittersweet emotions that I write the story of our Pine Valley Chapter Ride on June 14th, just five days before hot, dry conditions combined with heavy winds would kindle a devastating fire that would burn through all our beloved trails and equestrian campground.

Eleven horses and riders were fortunate to join what would become our last Pine Valley chapter ride before "the fire". John & Tammy West, Jeanette Blasdel, Tammy Engeness, Steve & Norma Julian, Eliza Edgar, Shelly Anderson, Deja Schweitzer, Desire Zetterquist and ten year old Hazel Zetterquist. After a short safety meeting and introductions we began the ride at 10:00 am with pleasant temps in the 70's. The trail we would take loops around the Pine Valley Recreation Area by connecting several trails to make a 7 mile loop. We typically ride the loop clockwise as the canal trail is exposed to more sun and can be warmer later in the day, especially after the Forest Service chainsaw crews removed a lot of the trees on this trail last summer. Leaving the equestrian trailhead we headed north through the campground, tempting the horses to nibble on the tall grasses as we headed to the Gardner Peak Trailhead which climbs the hill and connects to the historic canal or ditch trail originally named the Highline Canal which was constructed as part of the Newcastle Reclamation Project in the early 1900's. Doug West, local historian and BCH member wrote wonderful article called "Riding the Canal Trail" and is wonderful read if you search for it on the internet.

One of my favorite things to do on the canal trail is look for the old rusted black powder cans used to blast through the rock.

The canal trail ends at a gate at the east end of the valley where a new connector trail passes behind the Mitt Moody campground and Pine Valley resident homes. This trail was redirected by the Forest Service last year and can be difficult to navigate without the pink and orange ribbons hung on the trees by the forest service and BCH members to help direct trail users to the Whipple Trailhead and then connecting to the PV Equestrian Trail that completes the loop back to the campground.

We stopped for a quick break to allow the horses to drink the cool water from the Middle Fork of the Santa Clara River before passing through the last gate and continuing the final 2 miles on the Pine Valley Equestrian Trail. This is my personal favorite section as it travels through giant pines and over the two BCH bridges installed in 2019 with a \$20k Utah State Recreational Grant obtained by our BCHU Southwest Chapter.

After the ride we all met up in John and Tammy West's campsite for a potluck burger burn. Derek Schweitzer grilled the burgers and Fred & Larry Dunn made the drive up to enjoy lunch and the cooler weather with us. We also invited Lawrence, the Campground host who has always been so helpful and kind to the equestrian campers. It happened to be Lawrence's birthday and we were happy to share our food and his company on his birthday.

Wonderful memories were made once more in Pine Valley as we enjoyed the respite from the Southern Utah heat and felt the cool mountain breeze as we visited with each other under the shade of the majestic pine trees.

It may take many years for the forest to recover and return to its splendor, but it will return and there will be opportunities in the future for our chapter members to assist in rebuilding the corrals, bridges and restoring the trails. We will be forever grateful for all the memories we have made here and look forward to when we will again ride in Pine Valley





The Way it Was

Douglas E West

Douglas E West, 78, of Pleasant Grove, American Fork, Grover, and St. George, Utah, died early July 4, 2025 after a months-long struggle with the effects of lupus nephritis and chronic kidney disease.

Doug was born July 11, 1946, the only son of Thomas E. West and Lela Myers West. He was preceded in death by his parents, by his beloved only sibling, older sister Diane West Hiatt, and by son Stacy Murdock West who died at birth in 1986.

Raised in Pleasant Grove, Doug was the first member of his family to complete college, graduating from Utah State University a proud Aggie. He completed his Masters Degree at Brigham Young University before beginning a 30+ year career in public service.

Doug's career took him to a leadership position as a Deputy Auditor General for the State of Utah. In this role Doug relentlessly pursued accountability in government spending, refusing to bend to political pressure, often fearing for his job as political tides changed. Doug later took a role as Deputy Director for the Department of Human Services for the State of Utah, before taking an early semi-retirement and running his own consultancy business for a decade. In his career Doug was appreciated by those who believed in accountability and transparency, and disliked by those who attempted to misuse public funds for their own benefit.

Doug's greatest passions were the public lands of the Western United States, and his animals. He spent his life and wore out his body exploring the beautiful country entrusted to us all, with a specific passion for red rock canyons. A life-long horseman and supporter of Back Country Horsemen of Utah, Doug kept riding even after falls fractured ribs and punctured his lung. He rode well into his 78th year, before being incapacitated by illness. The best and perhaps only way to get to know Doug was through his passion for the outdoors and animals, and he eagerly shared his knowledge and experience with all who were interested, making many lifelong friends who he dearly loved.

Doug is survived by his wife of 55 years, Petrea Murdock, son Benjamin West and family, nephew David Hiatt and family, niece Lisa Hiatt Hamilton and family, sheepdog Maynard, four horses, and his lifelong friend Jack Barratt, with whom he formed a bonded pair, and whose five children he considered his own.

Doug long ago set aside the Mormon faith he was born into, believing at death his energy would return to the potential of the macrocosm. Now, beyond the reach of anxiety or discomfort, he belongs to the same silence that surrounded us all before our births. Though he is gone, the tenderness he felt for his friends and family endures. He is badly missed.

Doug's remains will be privately cremated and memorials are planned in Alpine, Utah and on Boulder Mountain in Wayne County. Contact the family for information.



To order [memorial trees](#) or send flowers to the family in memory of Douglas E West, please visit our [flower store](#).

McArthur Funeral Services

residents in the states back east know what a treasure public lands are to our citizenry. I came from a state, Georgia, which offered minimal Federal government land site accesses for equestrians. I am trying to think of more than one federal site beyond the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield which allowed a total of 7 miles of trails for equestrians in the entire state of Georgia! A few state and county parks were available but not federal lands. The Utah land resources available to us make us rich beyond money inheritance in our ability to access millions of acres of fabulous land. We must be vigilant about our public land inventories and availabilities.

Back Country Horsemen stand united in our desire to protect our lands and be partners with our land providers to reshape and rebuild trail and camping accesses and facilities whenever altered by natural disasters. We pledge our support to the Dixie National Forest to assist in whatever way we can to rebuild the devastating losses the Pine Valley Mountain fire has caused to our camping and equestrian trail sites. We encourage all to continue to be vigilant and collective in our voices to protect our lands from being diminished by sale or other means in the days ahead.

Until next time! John West



*Remembering
Pine Valley*



BCHU Southwest Chapter Meeting Minutes June 5, 2025

Members Present (in person) John West, Tammy West, DeAnn Fieselman, Eliza Edgar, Tammy Engeness, Dana Millsap, Debra Grise, Lin Hokana, Freddy Dunn, Larry Dunn, Deja Schweitzer, Debbie Baxter, Lorie Stobie. On Zoom: Ann Guhman, Jeanette Blasdell.

Pledge of Allegiance & Introductions: Debbie Baxter from St. George is a new member.

Dave Robinson and Tammy Carson have renewed their memberships.

Approval of May 2025 Meeting Minutes as published. Motion made to accept the minutes as published in the newsletter were approved.

Treasurers Report: Jeanette Blasdell reported financially we are in very good shape with few expenditures.

Special Presentation: Lin Hokana showed a special slide show of the Beginnings of BCHA. Very informative about how the organization was formed. It began with a major early work project involving a huge bridge replacement in the backcountry.

Old Business:

600 S Hurricane: Review of three stepover locations at 600 S Hurricane were reviewed on a Google map representation.

West entrance: Limited parking, very narrow area now enclosed with fencing. It has telephone poles and an uneven surface. Not suitable for trailers or horses.

Middle entrance: Too close to the road so it's a safety issue. Limited parking. Not a good option.

East entrance: is promising. It's city property and a parking lot is a possibility with a stepover.

John West is to send a letter to the mayor regarding our concerns regarding safety and access. We are asking if we can help get this process started. We could then consider seeking a grant to assist.

Brochures: Need disbursed to locations in the area.

Signs: Trail signs were distributed to Washington City for Exit 13 and Snow Canyon regarding trail etiquette. Freddy Dunn and Lin Hokana need permission from land managers to put them up in the Desert Reserve.

New Business:

Public Lands : Freddy Dunn reported that the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance has asked for our support. They want BCHA and BCHU to sign on in writing to continue to defeat Senator Mike Lee's push to sell public lands for housing shortages for development. This includes a large area north of Zion. The senate currently has the bill. John West will call Rep. John Curtis to talk about the land proposals.

Freddy Dunn will do online support for no sale of public lands. Motion was accepted and approved.

State BCHU Meeting:

-Lin Hokana reported that the state is well funded and is trying to spend down their budget this period. Proposals are being accepted by the state for marketing to grow the membership which is down by seventy members. Our's is the largest chapter and we are down 9 members this year.

-National youth grants are available for activities. See: Jarice

-Leave no trace has been trademarked. The new backcountry saying: Light on the Land pertains to good camping etiquette.

-Jennifer at BLM is now in charge of Equine.

-More chainsaw safety classes are available.

Freddy Dunn went over the big budget projects(30 million dollars) are for long term major projects. Keeping equestrians in mind when designing these is the goal.

-Zion to Hurricane pedestrian-bike trail needs to be watched for development and the possibility of adding equestrians.

-Colorado has a new equine law that lowers speed limits around equestrian events and areas.

-Buffalo Soldiers Trail near Vernon/Salt Lake is new. They are planning an opening and reenactment of the soldiers.

-Questions came up regarding the need for a yearly license to use Utah State Property in and around the Salt Lake area.

Lyons Club: Wants horses in their rodeo parade this year on Sept. 20. There will be no fees for us to attend. They are calling for horses and riders. John and Tammy West and Deja are going. Please let us know if your interested in riding in the parade.

Work Projects: Three Peaks is scheduled for June 9 from 6-8pm with the local 4-H Club. We were asked to join them in moving gravel by shovel and with ATV's and wagons. RSVP is going out to members. We will confirm that they still need this assistance.

National Trail Day: June 7 we are meeting at the Pine Valley Equestrian Loop At 9 am. Plans include flagging the new connector trail on the canal loop, raking the trail to better identify it. Removal of a broken metal sign that is a hazard. Screwing down the loose boards on the bridges. Lin Hokana to bring a tool for that.

Ride Calendar:

June 14-Pine Valley Campout and club ride with the burger burn. Ride begins at 10 am in the equestrian parking lot at the equestrian campground. Riding the canal loop. Please RSVP.

August 9-Navajo Lake at 10 am. Deja to check that there are no conflicting events in the area.

Sept.13-Bryce Valley Ranch campout and club ride from the ranch.

Sept. 12- club members can contact us to ride the Picaboo Trail in Bryce National Park. We are going to reserve 20 spots so you need to let us know if you want one. All the reserved ride slots begin at 4 pm. It will be dusk when you are done. Please contact Rec.Gov for a reservation if you want to do another day, scheduling is now open.

Oct. 11 Three Peaks Obstacle Course.

Three Peaks Work Party, June 9, 2025

by Lin Hokana

Have you been to the Three Peaks Equestrian Mountain Trail Course yet, just outside Cedar City? If not, it's about time you did. This is a real gem, what with all the obstacles of varying difficulty for you and you ride to navigate. It was constructed last year and we're lucky to have it so close by.

And since it's been there a year, and getting used, it was time to do some minor maintenance. On a very lovely Monday evening, the Iron County 4-H Horse Program youth and parents, BLM staff plus members from BCHU-Southwest Chapter put on gloves and helped do some grooming. BCHU-SW purchased more landscape rock like what was used before, the BLM staff used a Bobcat to place piles of it at the obstacles and the work party spread it out to again make the grounds pristine.

Twenty sets of hands made short order of the work, finishing the job in about an hour.. Those attending from 4-H were Effie Chappell, Sara Benson, Keziah Chappell, Collin Chappell, Carlie Chapell, Abigail Chappell, Lyia Benson, Naomi Benson, Taylor Gurley, Avery Truman, Brakel Truman, Mira Ward, Gracie Ward, Christine Fletcher, Madi Fletcher, Owen Fletcher, BLM staff Dan Fletcher, Michael Innes and Andy Farrell plus BCHU-SW members DeAnne Fieselman, Jeanette Blasdel, Freddy Dunn and Lin Hokana. There was a light breeze which helped make the time go by quickly on a warm evening.

There are plans for more improvements as time and \$\$\$ allow. Everyone is looking forward to making this one of the premiere destinations for all to enjoy time bonding and improving skills with your "pony". The more it's used the more we can enhance. Until then – happy trails...



Calendar of Events

CHAPTER MEETINGS :

August 6,2025—St. George Community Building 6:00PM

Come and Participate in our Chapters Success



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

- **August 9th—Navajo Lake in the saddle at 10:00A, bring lunch.** This is a 4-5 hour ride in beautiful country, not difficult. **Allow 1.5—2hrs travel time from St George.** Take hwy 14 east off of Main Street in Cedar City (Zion's Bank on corner) go 27 miles to the lake , turn right onto the road to Navajo Lake and go all the way to the west end of the lake, look for BCH signs to the parking area which is by a FS restroom that can be seen from the road.

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.



Sponsor of the Month!

Kyle Chappell—Ledges Golf & Country Club



Chapter contacts

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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: _____

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO BCHA Southwest Chapter: Individual: \$35: Family: \$45