

BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN OF NEW MEXICO

PUBLIC LANDS AND LEGISLATIVE REPORT

JULY 2017

The following is the first of a series of reports to be provided Back Country Horsemen members on recent developments on public lands and legislative issues affecting equestrian users of federal and state lands. These reports will be prepared monthly by the Public Lands/Legislative Chair and forwarded to the State Chair, who in turn will send them on to the Board of Directors. It will be the responsibility of the directors to send the reports to the members of their chapters.

Each monthly report will be one to two pages in length and will summarize proposed legislation in Congress and the New Mexico legislature and administrative actions taken by USDA (Forest Service), the Interior Department (National Park Service, BLM, BOR) and by New Mexico state agencies. The report may also describe actions taken by other public lands groups.

The report will not call for action on specific issues but will give members information they need to decide whether to take action on their own such as by calling their Congressional delegation or otherwise lobbying for or against a specific proposal. By providing a summary of information from a wide variety of sources, the report will limit the number of documents that need to be sent to members and hopefully make their review of public lands issue more efficient.

From time to time, the Lands Chair, the State Chair and the Board may determine that an issue is so important as to warrant sending out an Action Alert. This was the case with the National Monuments review last month. Action Alert's will be sent out separately from the monthly reports and will call for specific action to be taken by members.

Please note that members who have provided an e-mail address to the national BCH organization will also receive certain notices and alerts directly from the national.

Please call or e-mail the Lands Chair any time you have a question on or information concerning anything in the reports or action alerts. Working together we can make a difference in the future of public lands.

The President's Budget

The President's proposed 2018 budget will eliminate most funding for trails. Specifically, it would cut the Land and Water Conservation Fund budget by 84% and the trails program of the US Forest Service by the same percentage. However, the

President's budget is only a proposal, and Congress will have the ultimate say. The national organization has sent out an alert on these budget issues that you may have already received.

Carson National Forest Plan Review

The Carson National Forest is beginning its forest plan review as indicated in a recent press release:

The Carson NF is revising our current forest plan to address needed management changes so that the forest can provide healthy forest resources and benefits for present day use and future generations. We have completed the assessment of current conditions and trends and the evaluation of lands with wilderness character. We are beginning development of a draft proposed plan.

The draft plan will address many aspects of forest management including trail use and maintenance. The Forest Supervisor is holding an open house to discuss the draft plan at 208 Cruz Alta Rd., Taos, NM 87571 on Wednesday, July 19th, from 2:00—2:00 pm.

Bicycles in Wilderness

Representative Tom McClintock (R-CA) has introduced HR 1349, a bill to amend the Wilderness Act to allow mountain bikes in wilderness areas. The bill was introduced at the behest of a recently formed mountain biking organization, the Sustainable Trails Coalition. Both the national organization and BCHNM strongly oppose this bill.

Resources

The Lands Chair recommends the following, free e-mail publication to anyone interested in wildfires, wildfire fighting and wildfire policy. As you all know, wildfires affect trails both directly and indirectly (by taking away trail maintenance resources). Sign up to receive at **wildfiretoday.com**

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