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Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen, Inc.
Preserving our equine cultural heritage on public lands for today and tomorrow.

FFBCH NEWS

June, 2014



MARK YOUR CALENDARS !!

**The June meeting is scheduled for Thursday,
June 19 at The Old World Restaurant**

**8370 S Florida Ave, Floral City, 34436
352-344-4443**

Dinner 5:30-7:00 business meeting at 7:00 p.m.

***We have LOTS to discuss!! We need your
suggestions an ideas regarding a
unique fund raising opportunity!***

Y'all Come !!

***Non-Members are WELCOME!
Please come and join us!***



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We had a great meeting last month with lots of great input from the members. It seemed that one good idea fostered another—keep ‘em coming! A number of people mentioned that they were not getting the quarterly newsletter from BCHA. Becky Fulcher has already been in touch with BCHA with an updated membership list so you should be receiving the newsletter going forward.

I have included a BCHA article regarding the 2013 Double Diamond Award which was awarded to Black Hills Back Country Horsemen of South Dakota. Trust me, I will never complain about how difficult it is to get our maintenance teams to their sections of the forest again. It just goes to show—it is all a matter of perspective. This group is a prime example of what the Back Country organizations are all about.



We have a great opportunity for a fund raiser that will require minimum dollar investment on our part. It is likely that it is something that could be done on either a quarterly or semi-annual basis if it turns out well. The BOD feels it may be a good opportunity for us, but we want your consensus and will need your help to pull it off. It won't require a lot of physical labor, but we will need your help to organize and direct it. This potential fund raiser will be our primary topic of discussion for this month's meeting. Please come—your ideas are important to the success of this event!



Report any and all trail issues in the Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee Forest to Fred Fulcher at 352-341-2461 or email at rafulche@aol.com. Fred will get the word out to the appropriate people



FFBCH GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - SONNY'S BBQ --5-22-2014

The meeting was called to order at 7PM.

Janice Reynolds won the 50/50 drawing. \$18 in the pot.

The minutes are posted in the Newsletter and on the website so will not be read at each meeting. Corrections and clarifications will be asked for and a vote to approve or amend. Motion to approve April 2014 minutes by Barbara Porch 2nd by Jean Damron. Approved.

Treasurer's report by Gary Reynolds (copy attached) Motion to approve by Tom Allen 2nd by Fred Fulcher. Approved. Gary mentioned that up-coming expenses are the portion of our dues that the National organization gets. \$20 membership \$15 goes to national and of the \$25 family membership, \$18 goes to national. So approximately \$400 due to Back Country Horsemen of America. There is also an on-going Map expense \$336/1000 maps. At Tillis Hill, the maps were moved closer to the barn area and that has cut down on usage by other parties. We have a good supply of signs. We will need to discuss the dues amount since National takes such a large amount and will check with our membership in this regard.

The IRS wanted a lot of information to reinstate our tax exempt status. Hopefully this will happen within a year. It will not affect the grant we received from AQHA/Tractor Supply.

During the summer months we will not have speakers since our group is much smaller during this time. The group indicated that we still want to have the meetings anyway. Non-horse type speakers may have topics that interest everyone. A suggestion was made to have one on trailer maintenance when we have our larger winter group. Suggestions are always welcome for meeting sites. So far suggestions are Golden Corral, Joe's Family Restaurants, Angellotti's, Old World, and Sonny's BBQ.

Fred Fulcher has volunteered to be the primary contact for trail issues. They can be reported to him via phone or e-mail. 352 341 2462 or rafulche@aol.com. We need reports of missing trail signs (ours and the Brown FFS FR signs) and any problems that block the trail. Let us know and we will get the appropriate person out to clean the trail. There should be a trail sign every place the trails cross and on every forest road. Tom Allen noted that currently there is one spot where a tree was blocking the trail.

It was brought to our attention that some of our members are not getting the National News letter. We will contact National to see how to correct that situation.

\$125 in donations was collected. Enough to buy 4 hoses for the Tillis Hill stable area. We have 3 corner feed buckets for the stalls and cross ties for the wash racks. We will plan a work day for Tillis to work on the feed troughs, repair latches and trim trails going in and out. Also, there will be another Bear Hammock work day to work on the trailhead area. We will need a flat bed to carry all the trimmings out.

Membership: Please speak to all the horse people you know about Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen. We need to grow our membership. We want this to be a people's group and have members involved.

Group discussion: Some suggestions from members were: Maybe have a brochure or business card to hand out to people when you see them on the trail or out and about. Free classified ads for members in the Newsletter. Have a sign at Tillis about FFBCH. Label the donated stuff with FFBCH stickers. Signs saying trails maintained by FFBCH.

Fred Fulcher gave a little history of the horse trail along the Withlacooche State Trail and how working with the Florida Greenways people opened the door to work with Forestry and that they would like to have the trail opened up in Citrus County. There are lots of horse people along the Bike Trail. Perhaps we can get the Derby Oaks people involved in the work day and get some new members via the project. The Chronicle writes a monthly report on the trail and also did an article on the new trail development. Fred will check in to working on the bike trail.

There was some discussion on using Horse and Pony to post articles and monthly meetings.

Meeting adjourned 7:58 PM

2013 Winner of the Double Diamond Award

Posted by BCHA on June 4, 2014

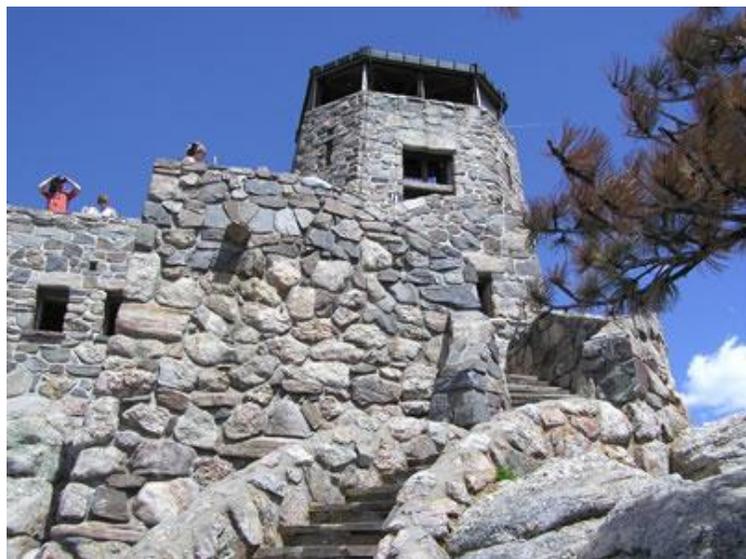
The winner of the 2013 Double Diamond Award is the Black Hills Back Country Horsemen of South Dakota. The Black Hills Back Country Horsemen of South Dakota (BH BCH SD) members won the award for their efforts in assisting USFS—Region 2 Pack String, packing in equipment for the Harney Lookout Tower Preservation project during September 9-13, 2013.

Harney Lookout Tower Preservation Project

BH BCH SD members had a rare and unique opportunity to assist USFS personnel including USFS—Region 2 Lead Packer—Glen Ryan with his mule pack string on a significant Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) project. BH BCH SD members were foremost in this historic project with the overall goal to preserve the Harney Peak Lookout Tower for future generations of hikers, runners and horseback riders. The Harney Peak Lookout Tower resides in the Black Elk Wilderness on the Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota. The Harney Peak Lookout Tower has become a significant destination for non-motorized recreation users on the BHNF.

Harney Peak rises to 7,250 ft elevation and has been a historical landmark in the Black Hills prior to South Dakota achieving statehood. Harney Peak was significant to Native Americans of the area and also as a landmark to the first European Americans to travel to the Black Hills. General Armstrong Custer was noted to have ridden his horse near the summit during his 1874 military expedition into the Black Hills. The Harney Peak summit offers a panoramic view of the surrounding Black Hills area which eventually resulted with Harney Peak becoming a fire lookout in 1911.

A formal fire tower structure was not build until the 1920s which was constructed of wood. The construction of the Harney Peak Lookout Tower in native stone began in 1935 by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and was completed by 1938. The stone was hauled from French Creek by man and mule during construction of the tower. The Harney Peak Lookout Tower had been utilized by the USFS—Black Hills National Forest as a manned fire tower until 1965. The fire tower was later utilized by Custer State Park until it was formally disbanded as a fire lookout in 1967. The advent of airplanes and additional technology for fire detection has resulted with the tower being officially disbanded for fire. Harney Peak Lookout Tower has since become recognized as a National Historic Site as well as a recreational destination over the years.



Harney Peak Lookout Tower with stairway

The USFS-BHNF proposed redoing structural work to the famous Harney Peak Lookout Tower. Years of weather damage, vandalism and tourist use had taken its toll on the National Historic structure. The Harney Peak Lookout Tower was missing windows allowing weather to erode and wear the structure's interior. Numerous original structural stones to the steps and tower were also missing on the structure's exterior. USFS archeologists and Wilderness personnel initiated planning a project in order to return the Lookout Tower to some of its original state. It was proposed that windows could be reinstalled in the lower structure while also locating and replacing the stones that had been removed due to weather, vandalism, etc.

Planning and coordinating a project of this magnitude is unfathomable to most individuals with so much at stake—including Mother Nature. A crew of USFS personnel (fire, wilderness, R2 Pack String and archeology), volunteers from hiking groups, local masons, carpenters, and BH BCH SD members assembled to help during the week of September 9-13, 2013 on the project. Volunteers and USFS personnel gathered at Willow Creek Horse Camp or Harney Peak Lookout to assist with the endeavors of the project. It was an arduous undertaking to coordinate personnel plus livestock to initiate this project.



Willow Creek Horse Camp

Unfortunately, on September 8, 2013, Trail #9 to Harney Peak Lookout was affected by a late season thunderstorm with 70 mph winds. The weather played havoc on the ponderosa pine forest area already devastated by the Mountain Pine Beetle. After the winds went through, any "standing dead" ponderosa pine trees near Trail #9 either fell down along or on the trail. BH BCH SD members were

Instrumental with cutting/removing dead/down trees that had crossed Trail #9 overnight. Trail #9 begins near Willow Creek Horse Camp in the Norbeck Area which allows chainsaws for trail clearing. Trail #9 soon winds into the Black Elk Wilderness where only cross-cut saws and hand tools could be utilized for trail clearing. A hardy BH BCH SD crew assisted several USFS Wilderness personnel with the overwhelming task of clearing the trail to allow the R2 Pack String through with supplies/materials. It took 10 hours of riding, packing, sawing, cross-cutting and removing trees to re-open Trail #9 on September 9, 2013.



BH BCH SD Members with USFS—Fire and Wilderness personnel clearing Trail #9 to Harney Peak Lookout in order to allow R2 Pack String through with materials and supplies for the project.

BH BCH SD members were also instrumental from the ground by assisting Glen Ryan—USFS lead packer and his assistant Barrett with loading/packing 10 head of mules/horses with masonry supplies for the project. BH BCH SD members also utilized personal pack stock to assist with the transport of supplies. Tools, scaffolding, windows, concrete, water, and miscellaneous items were packed in for three days to meet the needs of the personnel (archeologist, masons, carpenters and volunteers) for the week. The items that were not used or that needed to be returned to Willow Creek Horse Camp had to be packed back down the trail on September 12-13, 2013. Approximately 40_ loads of materials were hauled in by USFS and BH BCH SD pack stock for this project. The week long project was considered a success overall. Contributions by BH BCH SD members were greatly appreciated by Glen Ryan and his assistant plus Dave Pickford—Wilderness and Recreation Specialist for the Black Hills National Forest—Hell Canyon District—Custer, SD. The Harney Peak Lookout project is to continue for the next two years prior to “proposed” completion in late 2015.



Materials and equipment laid out to organize for loading pack string with BH BCH SD members, USFS personnel and volunteers assisting.



BH BCH SD Member, Ralph Carlson helping load USFS mules with Glen Ryan, Doug Bechen, BH BCH SD on Scotch with pack mule, Ruby ready to head out, packing water for all the volunteers at the Harney Peak Lookout



Glen Ryan USFS—R2 Lead Packer with assistant Barrett headed out with mule string from Willow Creek Horse camp to Harney Peak on Trail #9.



Glen Ryan—R2—USFS Lead Packer leading the pack string up to Harney Peak Lookout on Trail #9 (Left). Jim Allen—BH BCH SD—Public Lands Chairman—on his mule with pack mule hauling supplies/equipment on Trail #9 to Harney Peak Lookout. (Right).



USFS—R2 Pack String waiting to be unloaded at tie-up area below Harney Peak Lookout.

USFS—R2 Pack String at tie up area below Harney Peak after unloading supplies for the Harney Peak Lookout project.





Want to help? Can't find the time to work on the trails? Can't always make the meetings? That doesn't matter! You can show your support by joining Florida Forever Back Country Horsemen (FFBCH). Individual memberships = \$20 and Family memberships = \$25.

Every member of a local chapter is automatically a member of the Back Country Horsemen of Florida AND Back Country Horsemen of America. Not in the Citrus County area? Then join Back Country Horsemen of Florida as an at-large member until a local chapter is developed in your area. Don't forget Nature Coast Back Country Horsemen serving Hernando, west Sumter and northeast Pasco Counties.

There are many issues facing equestrians today. Help us to preserve the trails we have. Add your voice to those of more than 15,000 of your fellow American horsemen and women. **You only have to look at the Croom and the Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee Forest as an example of what can be accomplished when we work together and with our land managers!**



Current Officers and Directors

President—Sally McDavid
Vice President—Fred Fulcher
Secretary—Becky Fulcher
Treasurer—Gary Reynolds

Janet Day - Director
Tom Allen—Director

Florida Forest Service
Emergency Phone:
352-797-4100

FFBCH Website: www.ffbch.org