



Keeping Trails Open and Maintained - "we are the workers"

## Minnesota Back Country Horsemen – 2022 Summary Newsletter

**December 2022**

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Last year the Board of Directors of BCH-MN decided to send a simple brief “summary” style newsletter to members as a way of sharing activities from the past year, announce the BCH-MN Annual Meeting and remind members to renew memberships for the coming year. We are doing that again this year - here is the 2022 summary!

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### **2023 BCH-MN Annual Meeting –**

**General Membership Meeting – Saturday, January 14 from Noon to 3:00 PM at the Fat Willies Restaurant in Rochester, MN. Address – Suite 400 4325 Maine Ave. SE Rochester, MN 55904**

Lunch at Noon with meeting beginning at 1 PM. Meals – Dutch Treat. Room is free with purchased meals.

Review of 2022 activities, election of officers (Vice President & Secretary), and other business as necessary.

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### **BCH-MN’ S President Report for the 2022 year**

Affiliation with Back Country Horsemen of America identifies you as a responsible voice for recreational stock use on public lands. This representation goes far beyond our local community and the trails we ride. BCHM and BCHMN are recognized on a national and state level as leaders in low impact horse use education.

BCHM has been working in the effort to enhance our visibility at the regional and national levels by participating in activities such as wilderness seminars, national park symposiums, and trail conferences. We have representation in Congress as well as organizations such as the American Horse Council, the Continental Divide Trail Alliance Board of Directors and affiliate status with other trail advocacy organizations such as The Coalition for Recreational Trails, American Trails, The Partnership for the National Trails System, the National Recreational Trails Training Partnership, and the Wilderness Society. Did you know, the American Horse Council did a survey for where horsemen want to see more support? The number one issue identified was trails.

By affiliating with the Back Country Horsemen of America as a local chapter of Back Country Horsemen of Minnesota, your organization is recognized as a group that seeks to improve trail access for recreational horsemen's use in a responsible and sustainable manner. Your group will also have the backing of both a recognized state and national organization to help you when necessary to accomplish your mission. The BCHA has grant money available to help local chapters support projects.

We continue to work on increasing membership and establishing new chapters in all areas of our state. This year we had a display at the MN Horse Expo and our summer rendezvous at Sand Dunes. Projects were identified to improve this campsite and trails and there is interest in forming a BCH Chapter to support the DNR in this area. We are planning a workday there this spring and members of our current chapters are excited to support this.

Please join us at our annual meeting on January 14 in Rochester to participate in our planning for 2023. We have state officer positions open for Vice President and Secretary. We will also be looking for committee members. Let us know if you would be interested in working with us. Your active participation will help keep us growing and strong.

Have a blessed holiday season,

Diane Freese

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## Quilt Raffle Fund Raiser

BCH-MN and chapters are always looking to raise funds to support projects and activities. Member, Marilyn Mesmer, quilt maker extraordinaire, donated a quilt she made to be raffled off by BCH-MN. A predetermined number of tickets were sold by members and chapters at events including at the MN Horse Expo. When all of the tickets were sold the lucky winner turned out to be Susan Danners of Plum City, WI.



Congratulations Susan! Here presenting the quilt to Susan (center) are Bruce Kvitem, BCH-MN Treasurer and Marilyn Mesmer, Rochester, MN.

Proceeds from the raffle were divided equally between the State BCH-MN treasury and the 2 Minnesota Chapters. A BIG THANK YOU to Marilyn for a wonderful donation!

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## **2022 Rendezvous August 26-28 - Sand Dunes State Forest - Bob Dunn Recreation Area**

We had a great gathering for the Rendezvous this year. Weather was great but the gnats were also great and plentiful. Friday nights storm only gave us rain enough to settle the dust.

We had 12 people riding in the poker run Saturday and 23 for the potluck and meeting. Some of the attendees were also MTRA board members. Food was great and plentiful, prizes were given for longest distance driven, oldest rider, and people that found all the special items along the trail. We had a great time.

During the meeting we introduced the state officers that were there, had a report of activities from the SE, ZB and State chapters. The revised bylaws were presented and discussed and voted on. The motion to adopt the revised by-laws passed.

It was suggested that we should try to do a work day up there next year as the camp needs repairs. Tie lines need refreshing, barriers need to be fixed, fence needs repairs and wheel barrow should be replaced.

A location for the next rendezvous was discussed and the thought was Fort Ridgely but maybe later in the season. We took in \$371 from the auction and poker run. There were no funds set aside for this event and no bills furnished.

Those of you that missed it missed a good time and some nice riding.

Submitted, Barb and Bruce Kvitem

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## **2022 Volunteer Hours Report**

Congratulations on another great year! Year to date we have generated \$95,712 worth of volunteer hours to support our DNR Land Managers in Minnesota. This brings our total to \$390,805 since our BCH MN inception in 2016. Members have worked on camps and trails at Zumbro Bottoms, Hay Creek, Wet Bark, Lake Louise, Chester Woods, Skalbekken, and Beaver Falls. In addition, tie lines and benches were installed at Forestville, Lake Louise, Wet Bark, and Chester Woods this year. Trees were planted at Zumbro Bottoms and major trail restoration is planned.

If you have some hours not turned in yet, please send them to me at [bchminnesota@gmail.com](mailto:bchminnesota@gmail.com) by the end of this year.

Kudos to everyone who supported us with memberships and "boots on the ground" work.

Diane Freese, Volunteer Hours Coordinator

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## Chapter Reports

### 2022 Zumbro Bottoms Wrap-up

Thanks to all the people that helped make 2022 a great year at Zumbro Bottoms. Without your support, we could not accomplish what we do.

We had a couple work sessions to clean West, Central and North camps. Spring session we cleared the tie lines, placed wheel barrows and forks at the manure bunkers, cleaned trash in camps and along the roads. Fall session was held after the trails closed and we cleaned tie lines, picked up trash and did some repairs on the tie lines. We are still waiting for approval to increase the number of tie lines at West camp. However, we were able to add three in the center area. Hopefully we will be granted final approval by spring as we are planning a clean-up day with the date to be set in March.

We are working with the DNR, MTRA and Golden Eagles to get the FRTP grant money for repairs on the west side of the bridge. Money was set aside to cover the cost of the engineering with an estimate of \$15,000. ZB BCH-MN put in \$5000, the Golden Eagles Motorcycle Club contributed \$5000, and MTRA pledged \$4000 and \$1000 from Trail Pass money. Main areas of repair are Rock Hill, Richie's Mt, and West Scenic trails. This fall the DNR engineers were out and toured these areas with regards to what it looks like and currently they are designing plans on how to repair mainly those three. We will be meeting with them as they develop the plans and offering suggestions or other ideas. Currently the plans are to restore those three trails as rerouting them is not really any better than the current trails. We hope that the bids can be released next spring with work to be done during the summer of 2023.

The Golden Eagles, Zumbro Bottoms Endurance runners, CMO riders and Endurance rider groups have offered to partner with ZB-BCH-MN to do extra repairs on trails in the spring if we can get DNR approval for volunteering.

We were able to clear brush on the Paddy trail area last spring to prep for trail repair, but Forestry approval was not given until mid-summer, so we unable to get the repairs done this year. However, we did buy gravel and have made plans to get the work accomplished spring 2023. If you can help, contact any board member of ZB-BCH-MN and we will keep you informed of the dates. Plans are for early April, weather permitting.





The first weekend in May is the opening weekend for the Bottoms. For the second year we hosted a chicken dinner fund raiser on Saturday evening. Weather was perfect and it was another sold out event for us. We served a total of 136



meals.

Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup> was National Trails Day. For that weekend, we hosted two events. The first was a 2-day mini obstacle clinic with Dennis Auslam. This event was open for 6 rider/horse combinations with spectators welcome and ran from 9-12 both Saturday and Sunday. Saturday afternoon we held a 2-mile scavenger hunt. Saturday evening was topped off with a potluck at the shelter.

Keep in mind that your memberships are due each year and it includes membership to the state group and the national BCHA. With your memberships, we have a larger voice towards how things happen at the Bottoms as well as other trails around the state and the nation. BCHA is a national organization with a large backing of help for things like E-bikes on trails and trail regulation. We can ask the national group how to accomplish things that they have already done in other states, so we appreciate their assistance, and they appreciate your membership. We usually meet monthly

and at most meetings members are able to attend remotely via phone.

Check out our web site: [zumbrobottomsbchmn.weebly.com](http://zumbrobottomsbchmn.weebly.com) for membership form and other information.

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### **Southeast Minnesota Back Country Horsemen (SEMNBCH) 2022 activities:**

- \* Annual meeting at Forestville State Park with a silent auction and potluck for members/guests.
- \* Tack Sale at Forestville State Park with a portion of the sales set aside to help fund SEMNBCH projects.
- \* Trail cleaning at Forestville State Park; Lake Louise State Park; Hay Creek and Wet Bark.
- \* Workday to construct mounting block/benches scheduled for delivery to various locations in SE MN.
- \* Installed additional mounting block/benches at Historic Forestville.
- \* Installed additional hitching rail and repaired existing hitching rail at Wet Bark.
- \* Representation at MN Horse Expo including:
  - a) bench/mounting block displayed (thanks to donation of lumber from chapter member and others pitching in to build/install – the chapter has received much positive feedback from the public!)
  - b) quilt displayed/raffled off (thanks to donation from chapter member who created the quilt – we received positive feedback and generated enthusiasm!)
- \* Placed a mounting block/bench at Chester Woods Park in addition to installing a new hitching rail.
- \* Trail ride, camping & potluck at Wet Bark which had to be postponed until next season.
- \* BCHA representation at booth set up at Historic Forestville equine event.
- \* Tree trimming and campground clean up at Forestville State Park.











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## Calendar of Events

Jan 14 – Back Country Horsemen of MN – 2023 Annual Meeting – Noon – 3 PM – Fat Willie’s – Rochester MN

Jan 22 – Southeast MN Back Country Horsemen of MN – 2023 Annual Meeting – 1 PM – Forestville State Pk

Jan 29 – Zumbro Bottoms Back Country Horsemen of MN – 2023 Annual Meeting – Blacktop Bar Elgin, MN

11:00 – food; 1:00 Meeting

April 5 – ZB Camp Cleanup Day – 10:00

May 6 – ZB Ghost Riders and BBQ

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## 2022 BCH-MN Officers and Directors

President – Diane Freese – 507-319-5808 [freese.diane@outlook.com](mailto:freese.diane@outlook.com)

Vice President – Mark Fitting – 507-273-5883 [fittingsnuthouse@gmail.com](mailto:fittingsnuthouse@gmail.com)

Secretary – Ken Olson – 507-251-7401 [oakridgefarm244@gmail.com](mailto:oakridgefarm244@gmail.com)

Treasurer – Bruce Kvitem – 507-259-6127 [kvranch@mail.com](mailto:kvranch@mail.com)

### SE Chapter Delegates to State Board –

Dave Robson – 507-273-8401 [crazyhorses@gmail.com](mailto:crazyhorses@gmail.com)

Nola Robson – 507-272-7882 [nolar2@gmail.com](mailto:nolar2@gmail.com)

### ZB Chapter Delegates to State Board –

Dawn Dick – [winddancer55945@yahoo.com](mailto:winddancer55945@yahoo.com)

Jim Reisinger – 612-919-6382 [jtreisinger@yahoo.com](mailto:jtreisinger@yahoo.com)

### Area Representative on State Board –

Marv Breitkreutz – Southwest/West Central MN 320-212-9843 [mphorses43@gmail.com](mailto:mphorses43@gmail.com)

**National Delegates** – Marv Breitkreutz and Diane Freese

### Chapter Presidents -

- Southeast MN BCH-MN - Dave Robson - [crazyhorses@gmail.com](mailto:crazyhorses@gmail.com)
- Zumbro Bottoms BCH-MN - Bruce Kvitem - [kvranch@mail.com](mailto:kvranch@mail.com)

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## Renew your membership for 2023!!

## Contact your chapter or state treasurer

[www.bchmn.org](http://www.bchmn.org)

[www.facebook.com/BackCountryHorsemenMinnesota/](https://www.facebook.com/BackCountryHorsemenMinnesota/)

[bchminnesota@gmail.com](mailto:bchminnesota@gmail.com)