

# Gila Chapter

## Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico | MINUTES

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Meeting date | time 3/8/2017 6:00 PM | Meeting location WNMU Watts Hall, Rom 224

Meeting called by	Susan Austin	Attendees
Type of meeting	Monthly business meeting	Chris Allen, Susan Austin, Joan Bacon, Donna Cinti, Cindi deCapiteau, Joan Dewbre, Vicki Dowd, Gerry Engel, Amy Hartell, Jean Hill, David Imler, Nancy Imler, Mickey Lemon, Rawlings Lemon, Ted Miles, Christa Osborn, Lee Perry, Cheryl Roth, Randy Roth, Becky Shumway, Donna Tillmann
Note taker	Cindi deCapiteau	

### AGENDA TOPICS

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Agenda topic *Call to order* | Presenter *Susan Austin*

Susan Austin, this evening's substitute teacher, introduced herself with a dazzling smile and sparkly blue eyes. Susan is the Gila BCH Chapter's vice president, a job (she claims) that's really easy because all she has to do is to fill in when the president gallivants (infrequently) on the west coast and turns a blind eye to his duties.

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Agenda topic *Education Segment* | Presenter *Crista Osborn, Recreation Program Manager, Gila National Forest*

Christa reported that the Forest Service's travel management rule has been implemented in the Gila National Forest. The rule concerns motorized traffic in the forest and dictates where such traffic can and cannot go. Christa referred to a stack of maps on a table near the back of the room and invited us to take them and study them. She admonished, however, that since the maps are intended to show routes and areas where off-highway vehicles are permitted, they show main highways faintly—so anybody who uses one of the travel management maps should also have on hand a better road map.

The travel management rule is a process that evolves. Development of the current rule began in 2005 and has just now been implemented. Christa encouraged us to review the maps and contact the Forest Service about corrections and questions on roads that are now closed but should be open. An efficient way to comment is to access the Gila National Forest's handy pre-addressed travel management comment form at [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd504451.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd504451.pdf) (also presented here on page 7). (Tip: Note that the form is designed for two-sided (a.k.a. back-to-back) printing, so that the form occupies both sides of a single sheet of paper. Your printer needs to be support two-sided printing.) Christa left a stack of these forms along with the maps and advised that the Forest Service would compile a summary of comments about the travel plan and produce a report at the end of the year.

The Gila Forest website has plenty of interesting resources about the travel management plan, including maps, an app that lets you download the travel plan maps onto your Garmin GPS, the text of the travel rule itself, and more. If you are especially geeky about motorized travel in the forest, take advantage of the information and materials at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gila/home/?cid=STELPRDB5035773>.

The travel plan maps feature a QR code. "QR code" is techno shorthand for "Quick Response code"—the bit-mappy-looking box (example at right) that's ubiquitous on product packaging and magazine advertising. A QR code is designed to be scanned by your camera-equipped cell phone and which does something like go to a website or downloads information to the device that scanned



the code. In the case of travel plan maps; the QR code downloads the map to your cell phone. Pretty cool. *(Tangentially, it might be fun to scan the QR code shown here. The secretary captured this illustration from the Internet and has no idea what it does. The Gila BCH chapter assumes no liability or responsibility for what happens to you if you try this. You might end up cloned in your cell phone, for all we know.)*

Anyway . . . Christa advised that when you're tooling around in the forest, if you see a road or trail number posted and you want to see what's down there, check the map first to see if you can take your four-wheeler on that road.

The steadfast Ms. Osborn reported on the second annual Tommyknocker 10 bicycle race, recently held on trails in the northern part of Ft. Bayard. The number of race participants doubled this year to some 300 cyclists. The race, she commented, is a good generator of funds for the Silver City area with all those outside agitators hurtling around on the trails. If you have any feedback about the event, deliver your complaints or kudos to Christa or Amy Hartell. You can phone Christa at 575-388-8201. Contact Amy at 575-536-2250, ext. 75154.

Cheryl Roth noted that on a visit to the trails following the Tommyknocker race, she found gates hard-wired open. Christa replied that the Forest Service did that because the USFS equines were moved from their usual habitat on Ft. Bayard up to the Wilderness District in preparation for the race—so there was no need to have the gates closed.

Christa asked if anybody from the Gila chapter has visited the remodeled trailhead at the C Bar Ranch Road access point for the Continental Divide Trail (see map on page 9). The trailhead now features ample turning room for trailers and parking for two or three rigs, as well as newly graded and graveled surface. She also advised that the Gila Forest Service would be installing information on the signboard at the trailhead.

The Forest Service's next project is to expand the parking area on Little Walnut Road at the Gomez Peak trailhead. There will be parking for 12-15 cars as well as equestrian rigs. The site plan has just been finalized and the Forest Service's next step is to apply for money to fund the project.

Relative to the draft trail project schedule that Gerry produced recently; Christa asked if we could also help the Forest Service on a list of trails they would produce (which might differ from Gerry's project list). Our obligation would be to log out the trails so the Forest Service trail crews could follow up by working on trail tread.

Christa also commented that the Forest Service needs GPS tracks for trails in the Gila. If anybody has them, email them to Amy or Christa. Call Amy at 575-536-2250, ext. 75154 and Christa at 575-388-8201 for their email addresses.

The Continental Divide Trail festival will occur in Silver City the last weekend in April (April 28 and 29) from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day. Amy noted that several of us assured Doug at our January meeting that we are interested in putting on a crosscut saw demo. To that end, the Forest Service trail crew will make sure that logs are in place at the festival booth. The idea is that festival attendees will be invited to use the crosscut saw. The chunks they cut off ("cookies" in USFS parlance) will then get marked with the CDT brand and the participating sawyer can keep the cookie as a souvenir. The Forest Service has two booth spaces at the festival, so there will be plenty of room for GBCH to hang out and help. Christa recommends that we send 3-6 people for each of the morning and afternoon shifts. A poster featuring GBCH people sawing away at trail obstructions will be prominently displayed.

Gerry Engel, referring back to the earlier discussion about the travel plan, asked to what degree the Forest Service perceives compliance with the plan is occurring. Christa replied that the perception is compliance is ok, but the Forest Service is down a couple of law enforcement officers. She added that the travel management plan is not necessarily about enforcement; it is more about education, producing better maps, and improving the plan itself. Many of the roads that were closed in the current plan iteration were closed because they were user created and were not officially designated trails and roads that the Forest Service is prepared to patrol and maintain.

Ted Miles asked if we're out there and we witness a violation of the travel plan, what should we do? Christa responded that we should notify the USFS office in Silver City.

Randy Roth advised about a pile of nasty barbed wire on the ground on the south end of Ft. Bayard's Fenceline Trail that needs to be cleaned up. Christa advised she would look into it.

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Agenda topic *Financial and membership report* | Presenter *Jean Hill*

See finance and membership report on page 10.

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Agenda topic *Publicity* | Presenter *Ted Miles, Mara Miles*

Ted Miles announced that the big news for GBCH is that the [Las Cruces Bulletin](#) will publish a story about us. A reporter contacted some of the GBCH officers to request permission to use photos from the chapter's [Facebook page](#). Our astute and generous management gave permission to use the images. Susan Austin asked if Ted could provide copies of such articles once they are published. Ted promised to look into it.

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**Action items**

**Person responsible**

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Investigate obtaining and distributing copies of articles published about GBCH.	Ted Miles
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Agenda topic *Public Service/Communications* | Presenter *Gerry Engel*

Gerry Engel advised that the first draft of the 2017 trail project schedule has been released (see page 11). Send your comments about the plan directly to Gerry (you know how to find him). Susan Austin reminded those of us who distribute documents by email that everybody doesn't have software (e.g., Microsoft Word) that can open .docx and other kinds of files, so please distribute these as portable document format files (.pdf).

Gerry reported that seven GBCH members attended the recent chainsaw certification training that he and Rawlings Lemon conducted at Doug Dexter's place. The Gila chapter now has seven people who are certified to operate chainsaws and crosscut saws on trail projects in the Gila National Forest and wilderness areas.

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Agenda topic *NMBCH rendezvous* | Presenter *Mickey Lemon*

Ah, the 2017 BCHNM rendezvous, that annual gathering of New Mexico's trail faithful and their intrepid horses and mules, that event that we have agreed to sponsor, in spite of the fact that our venue is like five billion miles from anywhere over twisty and obscure roads in a part of the state that nobody beyond our membership is really sure how to find.

Mickey reported that the rendezvous registration packet is ready to roll and to prove it, she distributed copies. (*Last month, you'll recall, the secretary tried to display the registration form on her stupid little data projector without satisfactory results.*) Mickey asked every present at tonight's meeting to take a look at these materials and provide feedback immediately, as the packet would be delivered to the state muckety-mucks the very next day.

Mickey commented that there has been much discussion about the \$30 registration fee, which must be paid by all rendezvous participants—riders, workers, officials, host chapter members (that's us, folks), hangers-on, and basically anybody who shows up. The fee covers expenses incurred by the Gila chapter for food, glamorous portable toilets, and a goody that all registrants will receive. That goody, by the way, is a water bottle—an essential article out here in the stinkin' desert—that will be imprinted with the state BCH logo on one side and a list of all eight New Mexico BCH chapters on the other. How cool is that!

Now it happens that if we don't spend all the funds generated by the registration fees, we don't get to keep it. This event, Mickey reminded us, is a fundraising mechanism for the state BCH chapter, so the state gets the profits. Nobody seemed particularly concerned by that fact, especially not the secretary, who wins the 50/50 lottery every time she plays and is therefore rolling in moolah.

Mickey reported that a question came up regarding registration for somebody who just attends the rendezvous for one day. Should such a person pay only \$15 instead of the full \$30? Nope. The consensus was that we should keep things simple. Everybody pays \$30, whether they attend for the full weekend or five minutes. What about paying

\$15 for a partial stay and not getting a water bottle? No dice. Pay \$30, take a water bottle, and simplify the recordkeeping.

Casting a gloom of uncertainty over the fun and joy of the rendezvous is the Forest Service requirement for weed-free feed for the ponies. Nobody knows where to get it. Cheryl Roth conducted an Internet search on weed-free hay for New Mexico and came up empty. There's an outfit up in Utah called [Bailey Farms International](#) that produces and ships certified weed-free hay. Pelletized feed is of course one approach, but one problem is that some of us don't feed pellets and our pampered equines are likely to toss a hissy fit if we try. Last month's meeting produced the notion that Tractor Supply's bales of Standlee compressed timothy/alfalfa hay are weed-free, but—alas and alack—that's not the case. Amy allowed that weed-free hay is getting harder to find.

Amy Hartell shared her impression that there must be places closer to us than Utah where we can get certified weed-free hay and she promised to follow up—with the Gila region's outfitters, who probably know where to find it. Amy promised to use her considerable cheerful energy and influence with the USFS to make the weed-free requirement work one way or another.

Joan Bacon mentioned a Wyoming ride for which the vendor supplies weed-free hay that riders can purchase.

Somebody asked if weed-free hay is required for animals that don't venture in to the wilderness itself. Gerry Engel responded that the weed-free requirement is a matter of fair play; the USFS requires outfitters and guides to feed weed-free and the Gila Chapter doesn't want to annoy them. Amy added that a regulatory technicality is at work here. The regulation, she said, differs between members of the general public who visit the Gila and those who put on events for which they request a permit. The Gila chapter has requested a permit for the rendezvous, so the weed-free regulation applies to us.

Mickey brought up the requirement of natural physics that what goes in must come out, whether weed-free or not. The rendezvous committee doesn't want manure produced by rendezvous steeds to be scattered. Carry it in as hay and take your manure with you when you leave. The committee will have contractor-quality trash bags available for this purpose.

Attached to the registration forms Mickey distributed at the beginning of her presentation were raffle tickets for the rendezvous' fundraiser (funds in excess of excess funds from registration fees, of course). The drawings from this happy lottery will deliver one or more of up to eight \$50 gift cards to a lucky participant. Each ticket costs \$5. Anybody can buy one, whether a BCH member or not, and winners do not need to be present to receive their reward. The idea is that you can buy tickets for yourself or shake down your friends and relatives. You can do so right up to the minute of the drawing, which will happen at the rendezvous camp. Each New Mexico BCH chapter will provide one gift card from a chosen national vendor (e.g., Amazon, Tractor Supply, Cabellas—you get the idea). Anybody whose ticket is drawn from the hat wins, even if he or she has won before, so it's possible one person could take all eight cards (the Gila Chapter's 50/50 lottery champion might want to opt out).

If you weren't present at the meeting and therefore missed out on your chance for more BCH finance hijinks, contact Mickey Lemon for your supply of tickets.

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### Action items

### Person responsible

Find sources of certified weed-free forage for rendezvous

Amy Hartell

Sell raffle tickets! Support NMBCH!

All members

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### Agenda topic *Future education segments* | Presenter *Cheryl Roth*

Cheryl Roth is always looking for brilliant ideas to increase our knowledge and appreciation for the wilderness and those who venture into it. If you have a brainchild about this, call Cheryl.

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**Agenda topic** *USFS happenings* | **Presenter** *Amy Hartell*

Amy Hartell mentioned the Gila region's project on wilderness stewardship data collection. This is a thing where volunteers plant themselves at trailheads to record encounters with hikers, outfitters, and other energetic souls who go out there in seek of solitude. Amy said she wants to present the Forest Service's request for data collection assistance at the April GBCH meeting, along with an orientation to the data collection process and paperwork.

<b>Action items</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Put Amy Hartell on the April agenda. Subject: Wilderness stewardship data collection	Doug Dexter	April 10, 2017

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**Agenda topic** *CDT Trail Days 4/29* | **Presenter** *Gerry Engel*

In acknowledgment of Christa Osborn's comprehensive report on the CDT Trails festival coming up at the end of April 2017, Gerry Engel advised that he had nothing to add.

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**Agenda topic** *NATRC Clinic* | **Presenter** *Vicki Dowd*

While a few of the more deranged among us consider hosting another NATRC ride in 2018, Vicki Dowd is busy thinking up ways to attract more riders from Silver City and environs. She has proposed holding a NATRC clinic this year for that purpose.

Vicki reported that she has spoken with Brian Martinez, a National Resource Recreation Specialist for the Gila National Forest. Brian advises that the Servis Corral would be available for a clinic. The clinic would be followed by a short trail ride, during which riders can practice with the information they receive at the clinic.

Jerry Sims, one of the judges for the NAN Ranch ride in 2016, said he would love to come down and conduct the clinic. He charges \$25 per participant and requires a minimum of 14 participants—but could easily handle 25 people. NATRC would impose a charge of 5% of whatever money we take in.

Vicki would flag the trail for the practice ride and Jerry would provide feedback to riders about their performance over obstacles and other fine points of trail riding.

Dave Imler asked if Vicki had noticed any interest in such an event beyond GBCH members, to which Vicki responded affirmatively. In response to Rawlings Lemon's question if Vicki had any feel for the number of participants, Vicki responded "no." Jean Hill asked if the clinic would involve any other expenses for the Gila Chapter. Vicki replied that the only expense would be Jerry's fee.

Amy Hartell introduced the fact that the use of the Servis Corral would involve a permit from the Forest Service and that a permit is normally accompanied by a requirement for liability insurance—so that expense must be considered. The minimum liability coverage requirement is \$300,000, but since risk can increase given the nature of an event, liability coverage might be higher. There are also USFS fees that depend on the revenue generated by the event. Ninety-five percent of the money from those fees, however, stays "on the forest," and is used for improvements such as installing gates. Amy offered to provide Vicki with names of insurance providers, whose offerings Vicki can compare with insurers she has used in the past. Gerry Engel noted that the state BCH insurance policy might cover the clinic. The state has a policy that covers claims up to \$1,000,000, but if non-BCH people are involved, an extra charge for them might apply.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried that authorized Vicki to get more information about insurance requirements and costs and to report her findings at the April meeting.

<b>Action items</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Research insurance requirements and costs for 2017 NATRC clinic	Vicki Dowd	April 10, 2017

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Agenda topic *Announcements*

The next chapter meeting will occur on April 12, 2017.

The Southwest Horsemen's Association, which holds the professional rodeo every year, is facing hard financial times and needs to increase its membership. Membership in the association conveys privileges to use the arena at the rodeo grounds and other benefits as described on the web site at [silvercityprorodeo.com/category/southwest-horseman's-association/](http://silvercityprorodeo.com/category/southwest-horseman's-association/).

Applications for membership, which costs \$15, were distributed. The application requires sponsorship by an existing member. Cheryl Roth is just such a person, so contact her for more information.



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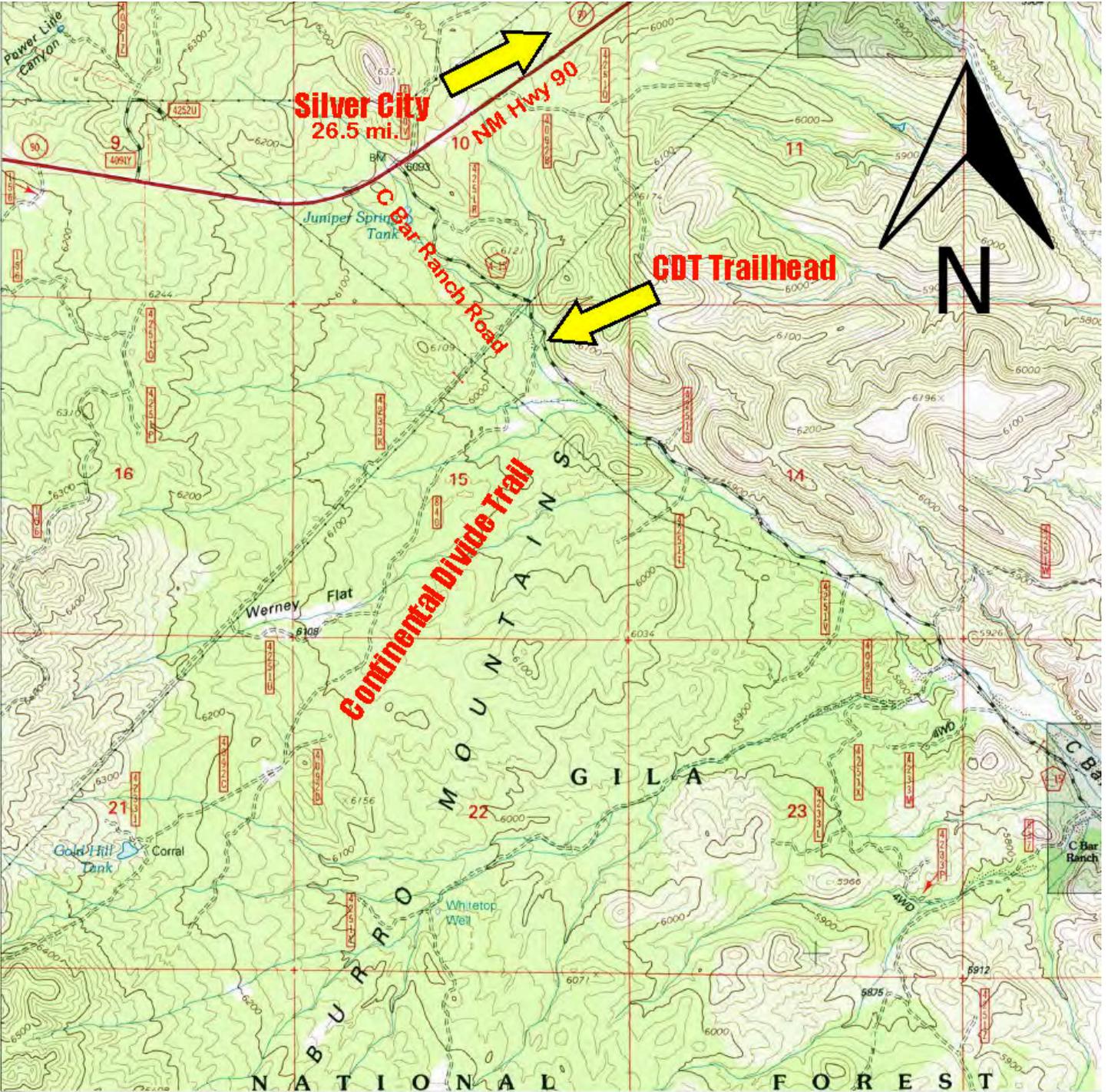
Place Postage  
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**Gila National Forest**

**Attn: Travel Management Leader**  
3005 E. Camino del Bosque Silver  
City, NM 88061

C Bar Ranch Road access to Continental Divide Trail south of Silver City (source: USGS 1999 C Bar Ranch Quadrangle map)



(last bank statement available at meeting)

**Bank Balance December 16**                      **\$6,334.07****Transactions after December 16**

Deposits	12/30	\$ 661.10	FS reimbursement from RAC for 2016 trail work
	1/5/17	\$2,946.70	FS reimbursement from RAC for 2016 trail work
	all	\$ 663.00	7 deposits from 12/21/16 to 2/21/17
	2/28	\$ 2.27	interest (dec 16, 2016 – feb 28, 2017)

## Withdrawals

fourteen checks	\$ 3,401.89	RAC reimbursements, xmas party reimbursements
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**Bank Balance February 28**                      **\$ 7,205.25**

No transactions after bank statement. Bank statement ending date was changed at our request to be end of a month, rather than almost a month before our meetings, so this statement covers December 16, 2016 through February 28, 2017.

**2017 membership**      We had 63 members, 22 family and 17 single when we submitted names to state BCH for inclusion in the new national database. We did not include email or phone information to them.

## 2017 DRAFT TRAIL MAINTENENCE SCHEDULES

**Monday March 27** – Work on the Rabb Park Trail (747). There are about 9 miles to work on but we will do what ever we can. The part we will work on does not usually have very many logs across it. (Silver City District)

**Sunday April 2nd – Thursday April 6<sup>th</sup>** – Camp at the Celebration Site and work on the CDT going both north and south from the Sapillo Campground. I think that will only take a couple of days. The rest of the time we will ride other places out there to figure out trails for the State BCH Rendezvous. (Silver City and Wilderness Districts)

**Sunday April 9<sup>th</sup> – Friday April 14<sup>st</sup>** – Go up to Woody's Corral Sunday afternoon and camp on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> (9<sup>th</sup> is Palm Sunday). Work on the Trail 162 and 160 on Monday, clearing as much of Trail 160 as we can. Work on the first ½ of the West Fork Trail 151 on Tuesday. We will also be looking for a camp spot that we pack into when we clear the rest of Trail 151 to White Creek. On Wednesday and Thursday (assuming we can miss the BCH meeting) I would like to have a couple of folks ride and clear Trail 162 to Little Creek and the Little Creek trail to the junction with the 789 trail. If we get back early enough we could go home Thursday evening. On this project it would be good if some folks that do not want to ride could work on brushing the part of the West Fork Trail between Woody's Corral and the Cliff Dwellings on Monday. That would make Tuesday more productive for those clearing the West Fork Trail. (Wilderness District)

**Friday April 21 – Monday April 24** – Assist Lower Rio Grand Chapter with maintenance of CDT from Forest Road 150 to Brannon Park (Wilderness Dist). I think we will be camping someplace off Forest Road 150. (Wilderness District)

**Monday May 1<sup>st</sup> – Friday May 5<sup>th</sup>** - Pack into Little Creek on Monday afternoon. Camp in Little Creek Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and come out on Friday. While in Little Creek, we would clear the Little Creek trail to Little Spring, as much of the McKenna Spring Train (155) as we can, the 789 Trail to Trail 162 and the upper end of the 162 Trail. We might have to limit participation to folks with pack animals. Might also need to get Forest Service help pack in horse feed. (Wilderness District)

**Rendezvous is May 18 - 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Tuesday May 23<sup>rd</sup> – Saturday May 27<sup>th</sup>** – Camp at Kelly Tank of Forest Road 151 and work on the Powderhorn Trail (82), and the McKnight Trail (92) in the Black Range (Wilderness District). Talking with FS folks, there are a lot of brushing needs on these trails.(Wilderness District)

**Wednesday May 31<sup>st</sup> – Sunday June 4<sup>th</sup>** – Work on trails 181, 217, and 225 out of Sheridan Corral (north of Gila/Cliff). Details will need to be worked out. (Glenwood District)

**Saturday June 10<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday June 13<sup>th</sup>** - Go to Woody's on 10<sup>th</sup>, pack into West Fork afternoon of 10<sup>th</sup>, work on the remainder of the West Fork Trail (151) on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, and come out on the 13<sup>th</sup>. (Wilderness District)

**Wednesday June 21<sup>st</sup> and Thursday June 22<sup>nd</sup>** - Work on clearing and brushing Tadpole Ridge Trail (232). (Silver City District)

There are a bunch of other trails we could do but this is probably close to 100 miles. I will add more details as we get things firmed up. I am sure dates and probably even some trails will change over time due to scheduling problems or weather.