

The Shoshone Rider

April 2026

Shoshone Back Country Horsemen

Email

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Web

<https://shoshonebch.org>

Officers

President:

Kathi Gimmeson

Vice President:

Rob McCray

Secretary:

Shannon Pils

Treasurer:

Cindy Geissler

Committees

Watch Dog:

Barry Reiswig

Activities:

Kandy Christian

Service:

Howard Sanders

Education:

Cathy Ringler

Publicity/Newsletter/Web:

Kathi Gimmeson

Social Media/Photo Gallery:

Randi Slaughter

Recruitment & Retention:

Connie Jack

WY-BCHA Delegates

Barry Reiswig

Kathi Gimmeson

Alternate

TBD

Past President:

Mike Blymyer



From the President, Kathi Gimmeson...

Greetings!

How wonderful to have received some much needed precipitation! I'm sure the vegetation will pop in the coming days, and the winter landscape will be transformed to a treat for the eyes and enticing green grass for our horses.

It's a good thing many of us are looking forward to being outdoors, since spring brings so many maintenance projects to be done! I know I'm behind getting my pasture harrowed, fertilized and ready for irrigation. My horses are due for worming, vaccinations and hoof care. Then there is corral cleaning and yard and garden work! I'm not complaining; to the contrary, I consider each of these tasks a blessing and a pleasure.

A recent trip to SE Utah was a fun adventure, and presented many amazing sights and experiences, but truth be told, it made me appreciate Wyoming all the more. We are so blessed to live in this beautiful, diversified portion of the state! And we get to be caretakers on horseback!

As you may have heard or seen in the email announcements, SBCH is gearing up for some early projects and activities. The Sunlight Ranger Station corral repair & gate replacement work will be April 9-11. Come for a day or stay and camp out. All help is appreciated! For more info, contact Frank Fagan (307-254-0012 / hanknfrank6013@gmail.com or Howard Sanders (307-754-8242 / sandershoan67@gmail.com .

New members who wish to help by using a chain saw for trail cleaning will need to contact Howard to see about being certified in order to meet our FS agreement requirements.

I look forward to seeing you at our clinics and work projects! Enjoy these beautiful spring days. Happy Easter!

Kathi Gimmeson
SBCH President

*Thank You to all who have paid
your dues!*

*If you haven't yet renewed,
please don't let your membership
lapse and miss out on all our
activities and news!*



Secretary's report by Shannon Pils ...

Following a potluck dinner, President Kathi Gimmeson called the March 19, 2026, SBCH monthly meeting to order at 6:37 pm at the Park County Weed & Pest meeting room.

New Members and Visitors: A'naka Smith of the Shoshone National Forest was welcomed as the evening's speaker and Shannon Pils was re-introduced to the group as the new club Secretary for 2026.

Secretary's Report: Kathi introduced 1 correction to the February 2026 meeting minutes – Bob Bessler (not Bob Childers) should be noted as having made the motion to pay the bills as presented by the Treasurer. Mike Blymyer motioned to accept the minutes as corrected. MSP.

Treasurer's Report: The February Treasurer's report was published in the March newsletter. Howard Sanders motioned to accept the report as printed. MSP.

New Bills: Cindy Geissler presented a bill from Kathi for postage & printing of \$85.47, and 2 from Howard Sanders for 2 steel gates (\$419.98) and crosscut saw maintenance (\$245.00). Judi Blymyer motioned to pay bills. MSP.

Watchdog: Barry Reiswig noted that the Wyoming resolution SJ0009 prohibiting the indiscriminate sale of public lands overwhelming passed in both chambers. Nina Webber supported it, our 2 Senators (Laurson and French) and Representative (Williams) voted against, despite huge support by Wyoming population for public land. The Resolution will be presented to Wyoming Congressional delegation. Multiple advocacy groups coordinated effort very effectively to get people to contact their local representatives.

Activities: N/A

Service: Howard Sanders introduced A'naka Smith from the Shoshone National Forest for an update on plans for the 2026 trails program field season. Howard and the whole group expressed appreciation for the work of and cooperation with A'naka and the rest of the Forest Service staff.

A'naka noted that Wyoming Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant funding from Shoshone National Forest may be an avenue for the club. This program is supported by fuels taxes. The maximum request for funding is \$50,000, with a 5% non-federal match in cash or labor at \$20/hour. The pre-application deadline is September 1 with the final application due October 1. In 2024, the Shoshone Forest was funded for \$48,000 but the 2025 season went a little differently. The SHBC stepped in and helped with construction of trail structures in 3 places in the Dead Indian/Elk Creek trail system. This included a 3-day project to build a 60-foot turnpike on the Dead Indian trail and similar structures on the 2 other trails.

A'naka showed cost comparisons for trail work. A Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) crew of 6 people for 8 days costs \$16,600, a Student Conservation Association intern costs \$17,300 for 18 weeks, and a Forest Service seasonal costs \$19,000 for 6 months.

In 2025, the Forest Service couldn't hire any additional help beyond the 4 permanent staff (A'naka, Dusty, Zach, and Jami). In 2026, in addition to the permanent crew there should be 6-7 seasonals and 5 MCC crews. Major work will be done on Ishawooa, Crandall, and Blackwater trails.

Volunteer projects will include help from the Amish Community on the South Fork slide area and a re-route in Eagle Creek, a Sunlight Sports volunteer day, and of course all the work done by SBCH.

The 2026 budget is still in flux, some GAOA funds are available for SHBCA logout work ahead of the MCC work.

Other future prospects include partnering with the Abasaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation, volunteer day with Sunlight Sports, and a potential partnership with NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) & Americorp in fiscal 2027 for very much less than MCC costs. Additionally, the Forest may explore a program with permitted outfitters to offset their fees in exchange for trail clearing, although with the new reduced fee structure this might not amount to much.

Howard detailed some of the upcoming work for this summer, he will send emails in regard to timing. Bigger projects include trail clearing ahead of the FS projects in Ishawooa, Blackwater and Crandall. Howard requests volunteers to help with those! Plans are also in place for work at Sunlight Ranger Station before the Rendezvous. This will involve moving gates and installing some new ones, with some concrete and welding work as well. Check your emails for those as well.

Secretary's report by Shannon Pils, con't...

Howard highlighted that new-to-us sawyers need to get certified by the Forest Service in accordance with our agreements. New crosscut sawyers can be taken along as trainees but to use a chainsaw you need certification.

Education: N/A

Publicity: Let Kathi know if you have an activity or anything for the newsletter

Social media: Randi Slaughter will post things if you have them.

Recruitment & Retention: Connie Jack said nothing to report this month

WY-BCHA Delegate: Barry Reiswig noted the State meeting will be in May in Rawlins and he will attend.

Old Business:

Kathi Gimmeson noted the appointments of committee chairman. Watch Dog – Barry Reiswig; Activities – Kandy Christian; Service - Howard Sanders; Education - Cathy Ringler; Recruitment & Retention - Connie Jack; State Delegates Barry Reiswig & Kathi Gimmeson, alternates Rob/Shannon, tbd. Cindy Geissler motioned to accept these appointments, MSP.

Kathi requested volunteers for the Rendezvous. Cindy Geissler is doing registration. She will be at Sunlight RS on Wednesday the 15th at 2:00. On the 16th folks will be coming in through gates, Connie Jack volunteered to help with that. Folks will be needed for setting up & taking down, helping with the designated parking spots, silent auction, and recreation. Monica Reiswig & Carol Olson will lead the food operation. There is a pie social Thursday evening. Saturday breakfast & dinner will be provided by Club. Registration will open April 1st registration on the website.

New Business:

Cindy Geissler presented the proposed budget for 2026. Youth funds, including a new \$350 donation from Sunlight Sports were identified, the contribution of proceeds of previous Governor's Tags were discussed, and the prospective contributions from the Forest Service were noted. Howard Sanders motioned to accept the budget report. MSP.

Mike Blymyer brought up a potential issue seen recently in the newspaper, with an article with a hard-to-interpret map of proposed multi-purpose trails on the BLM near Cottonwood Campground. The Club made improvements in the Campground several years ago. The trails are proposed for mixed uses of mountain bikes, hikers, and horse back riders, with a large state grant to develop the system. Howard Sanders volunteered to follow up with the BLM and Bighorn Forest.

The desensitization clinics are currently full but they are keeping a waitlist.

Howard Sanders moved to adjourn at 7:39, MSP.

MSP= Motion Seconded & Passed

Service by Howard Sanders

SBCH APRIL 2026 SERVICE REPORT

April starts the projects. Beginning with the Sunlight Ranger station Corral update.

There are trails that we can get to for clearing, so watch for scheduling times. I am sure that with the winds we have had the past few months, there will be plenty of trees down.

Take advantage of the nice weather days and exercise your ponies.

Respectfully,

Howard Sanders, Service

"Life is short. Do not forget about the most important things in our life, living for other people and doing good for them." ~ Marcus Aurelius



Horsemanship, Etiquette & Trail Tips

We will soon be out on the trails, enjoying springtime weather, legging up our horses and preparing for summer riding activities. Now is a good time to increase our horsemanship skills with upcoming clinics and training exercises. We have a responsibility to work toward making our horses as responsive, desensitized and safe as we can. The more we work with our animals, the better they will act, with increased confidence and control. The result will be a safer, more enjoyable ride.

Group riding brings many challenges, especially for novice horses or riders. Safety and ability are crucial to an enjoyable outing. Take into consideration your abilities and those you will be riding with, as well as the type of terrain you'll be in and what you may encounter. Be alert to what is going on around you, look and listen for potential problems that may arise.

At the Trailhead:

- * Arrive early enough to be tacked up and ready to ride on time; park considerately.
- * Most group rides do not allow dogs or stallions, ask the trail boss in advance if you aren't sure.
- * Alert others if your horse kicks and give yourself and others extra space on trail and when tying up.
- * Wait until everyone is mounted and ready before moving off.
- * Clean up hay, litter and manure (or disperse away from parking & foot traffic areas) before you leave. Practice Leave No Trace on and off trail.

On Trail:

- * Most group rides are *walk only*, if you must speed up, alert others first and ask for permission. If your group is mixed with fast and slow paced horses, consider dividing into two groups and ride in the group that fits your horse's speed and conditioning. Allow the faster group a head start to put enough distance between groups to prevent slower horses from feeling left behind. While it is tempting for the faster group to slow down and wait for the slower group, it can cause anxiety for the slower horses when the faster group speeds away again. Try not to seesaw your riding speed and distance. Undivided groups should pace themselves to the slower and less experienced riders/mounts.
- * Don't crowd the horse in front of you. Be mindful of your horse's comfort level and his reaction to nearby horses, as well as the reactions of horses in front and behind you. To avoid dominance issues and herd dynamics, place your horse near compatible horses, if possible. Try to leave a horse length between horses, even at stops. Allow extra space between horses on steep or difficult terrain and keep moving.
- * Leave gates as you find them. If a rider dismounts to open a gate, *everyone* in your group *waits* until he/she has remounted before leaving.
- * When crossing water, allow the first horses to drink, then move up the trail and *stop!* Repeat until all horses have had a chance to drink. The group *waits* until all have watered and are ready to move on. When crossing moving water, rather than watching the water, fix your eyes on the opposite bank where you want to come out to avoid becoming dizzy, disoriented or drifting downstream with the current.
- * When tying up, get off the trail far enough to allow others safe passage, and separate your horse from others to prevent horses or people getting kicked. Choose trees at least 8" in diameter, if possible, and tie high enough to prevent horses from getting their feet over the rope. Train your horse to stand quietly and hobble them if they tend to paw.
- * Be courteous to other trail users, initiate greetings and conversation and watch for areas that allow safe passing. Generally, horses have the right of way, with smaller groups yielding to larger groups or pack strings, and slower groups yielding to faster groups. Backpackers, hikers and bikers can be scary to horses, so greet them and encourage conversation. If they don't know to step off the trail to let you pass, ask them to step off on the downhill side. Explain that this is less threatening to the horses, safer for everyone and prevents horses from destroying the tread edge, which causes erosion and trail damage.
- * Practice Leave No Trace (LNT), stay on trail, don't cut across switchbacks and avoid damage to the environment. Dispose of waste properly, including human waste; pack out litter.

Lord Fauntleroy, the Great American Mule

Ninety-one teams lined up at the start of the Great American Horse Race. The mounts included ten pedigreed Viking horses, Arabians, Islandic Horses, Quarter Horses, Appaloosas, Thoroughbreds, Connemaras, and even a Russian Orlov stallion, (the only one in America.) In the middle of this mix, standing calmly and taking it all in, was Lord Fauntleroy (LeRoy), the mule.

The year was 1976. To celebrate the nation's 200th birthday, The Great American Horse Race was billed in the *Western Horseman* as the "Adventure of a Lifetime." The brainchild of Chuck Waggoner and Randy Scheiding, the 3,500-mile route incorporated parts of the Oregon Trail, the Pony Express Trail and the Donner Party's journey.

Beginning in New York and ending in California, the riders were to cover 3,500 miles of challenging terrain in fourteen weeks. Like the Tour de France, the race was run in stages, usually covering thirty-five miles a day. Riders were allowed two mounts. Vets checked the horses every ten miles. Any horse that wasn't sound had to be loaded in a trailer and receive penalties, while the rider continued on their alternate mount.

People from all walks of life entered. There were graduate students, nurses, physicians, chiropractors, cowboys, World War II veterans, a university president, and even an Austrian count. The youngest entrant was an 18-year-old country western singer from Oregon. The oldest, a 69-year-old horse trader from Tennessee.

Confident in the ability of his two good mules, Virl Norton stepped up and paid the \$500 entry fee. Born in Wyoming in 1916, Virl broke wild horses as a teenager and sold them to neighboring ranches. Later, he became a steeplejack, traveling the county painting tall structures such as smokestacks and towers. Virl's only crew member was his sixteen-year-old son, Pierce, who had received his driver's license one month previously.

On May 31, 1976, the starting gun fired and most of the riders rushed ahead. Virl, however, subscribed to a different strategy. He planned to ride the course slowly and steadily to avoid injuries and penalties. After a few days, Pierce began to wonder if his father's plan would backfire. Many of the other horses were hours ahead, but as Virl predicted, in time, these horses and riders started pulling out because of lameness or injuries.

Leroy was described as "*a seventeen-hand mule slash puppy dog*" (1), while Virl was known as a kind and considerate contestant. Always willing to help another rider, Virl stopped often in the small towns for children to pet LeRoy. He made up the time by skipping water breaks and continuing steadily down the trail.

About a quarter of the way into the race, in Kankakee, Illinois, Virl Norton and Leroy pulled ahead of their closest competitors, the Arabians.

"He'd always said that he hadn't planned on taking the lead that early. Everyone ran their horses down a little bit sooner than he thought, I guess," Pierce says. "You know, soon as we got into the lead, there was a long way to go. But we were going in the right direction. The lead was getting longer." (2)

And so, days before the finish, it became clear that a mule was going to triumph in the Great American Horse Race. Leroy won by a landslide with a total of 314.5 hours in the saddle. Second place went to an Arabian stallion who finished at 324.6 hours.

Virl picked up his \$25,000 check. (Worth about \$100,000 today) at the State Fair in Sacramento. He then trailered Leroy back to the green pastures of San Jose where the mule lived for the rest of his days as the grand champion of the Great American Horse Race.

Sources:

1. *The 1976 Great American Horse Race Was Won By A Mule Named Lord Fauntleroy*. Carol Giaimo. August 8, 2016
2. *How a Steeplejack, a Mule and a Teenager Won the Great American Horse Race*. Martin Kessler. September 16, 2016

Some observations from Ron Ostrom...

"Animals get good at what they do most.

If they stand in a corral most of the time, that's what they get good at."

One sure way to have a more enjoyable ride through the beautiful mountains is to spend the time it takes to make your mount and yourself comfortable and being able to relax and enjoy the scenery.

Training- the more we work with our animals, the better the animal will act

Experience- this plays off of training. Confident riders have confident animals and comfortable rides.

Learn from everyone and everything. The best riders never stop learning and asking questions.

I've heard many things all my life to help me out, one sticks in my mind as to this subject:

*"Money can buy you everything but love and time,
your horse and mule need your time,
which turns into love."*

There is No replacement for your time.



Tack Sale

The Cody Boot & Bottle Club is having a tack swap, May 2nd at their clubhouse. If you have tack you'd like to sell, reserve a table for \$15.

For more information, call Vicky Snider at 307-250-8603



Back Country Horsemen Commandments

1. The horseman shall not keep horses longer than it takes to unpack or pack them in any campsite normally used by hikers.
2. The horseman shall not tie his stock, for more than a short period of time, directly to a tree.
3. The horseman shall not cut switchbacks.
4. The horseman shall not leave a campfire unattended.
5. The horseman shall properly dispose of all manure, baling twine, wire and waste hay in camp areas, trailheads or loading areas.
6. The horseman shall abide by the administrative rules and regulations affecting the area he/she is in.
7. The horseman shall recognize the fragility of the back country environment and practice minimum impact techniques at all times.

Coming Events

April 16 - SBCH Monthly Meeting at the Park Co. Weed & Pest Bldg, off Hwy 14A at 1067 Road 13, Powell, WY. Potluck dinner at 6:00, with meeting to follow.

April 11-12 - SBCH Desensitizing/Spring Tune Up Clinics, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, and Ron Ostrom Arena, 258 Lane 10, Powell. Space is limited to 10 riders per clinic.

April 25 - 26 - Call Marty Morris soon at (307) 899-7510 to reserve your spot!

May 2 - Tack Swap at Cody Boot & Bottle Club

July 16 -19 - SBCH hosts the State Rendezvous at the Sunlight Ranger Station
Plan to attend, volunteer and have fun!

July 31 - August 2 - Big Creek Trail Project

MISSION & PURPOSE OF BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN of AMERICA

- .. TO PERPETUATE the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness lands.
- .. TO WORK to insure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.
- .. TO ASSIST the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.
- .. TO EDUCATE, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise and sustaining use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage and Leave No Trace" principles.
- .. TO FOSTER and encourage the formation of new state Back Country Horsemen organizations.

Shoshone Back Country Horsemen Membership

Membership is \$40 per year

Name (print) _____

Mailing address _____

e-mail address _____

Phone number(s) _____

How would you like to receive the newsletter? by mail _____ -or- by e-mail _____

Mail completed form with your check to: SBCH, P.O. Box 465, Powell WY 82435

When your dues are paid, it is noted on your newsletter mailing label after your name (PD 2025 or 2026). *If you receive the newsletter via email, you can write to:*
shoshonebch@gmail.com *to check if your membership is current.*



PO Box 465
Powell, WY 82435
shoshonebch@gmail.com

"When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive -
to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love. ~ Marcus Aurelius



NEXT SBCH MEETING:
April 16, 2026
at the Park Co Weed & Pest Bldg,
Hwy 14A at 1067 Road 13, Powell, WY
Potluck Dinner at 6:00 with the
Meeting to follow.