

BLACK HILLS BCH of South Dakota scores a Hat Trick!!

We all know a “hat trick” refers to a hockey player who scores three goals in one game, right? In keeping with our mission Black Hills BCH members accomplished three “goals” in ONE day on May 18, 2024!

Goal #1- Keeping Trails Open for All – We held our annual work weekend at Iron Creek Horse Camp near Custer, SD where 17 members gathered to clear the trails in the Black Elk Wilderness. Recent high wind events had created numerous blockages on several of the trails. Despite that we managed to clear 19 miles of trail and removed 100+ trees over the course of a 3-day weekend. We also incorporated a crosscut saw certification into the mix and got 8 folks certified and one re-certified. This always a popular event with our group....a time to work and relax together in a beautiful setting despite the many hours spent with a whipsaw. Camaraderie is what its all about!



Goal #2 – Recruiting and Engaging Youth - We co-sponsored a Trail clinic and challenge with 4-H kids from the Black Hills region and surrounding areas at the Central States Fairgrounds in Rapid City. Black Hills Energy co-sponsored the event by donating \$500 to cover lunch expenses. The clinic involved working a set of trail class obstacles and demonstrating horsemanship skills while developing courage in their mounts. Twelve BH BCH members helped run the clinic and conduct additional training sessions on equine anatomy, conformation, hoof structure and tack and saddle nomenclature. All of these are requirement of the 4-H horsemanship program. We had eleven young equestrians participate. Lunch was served and prizes were awarded for first through third place. The clinic was free for participants and their parents.... without whom none of them could attend.

This was Part 1 of a two-part clinic. In two weeks we will be taking this same group of youngsters on a trail ride on the Black Hills National Forest....stay tuned for that story.



Goal #3 – Advocacy and Education - We were invited to attend the first ever Outdoor Fair held at Custer State Park in the southern Black Hills. Two more members set up a BH BCH booth at the fair to advocate for equestrian use and inform the public about the mission of BCH in the Black Hills. Along with other outdoor-related organizations and agencies, these ladies networked among the other attendees. We even learned about a new Rails to Trails project being proposed!



All in all, we had 31 members engaged in three different BH BCH activities on May 18, 2024!!

Many thanks to all our dedicated members!! Congratulations on a great kick-off to our summer season!

Submitted by:

Alice Allen, President

Black Hills Back Country Horsemen of South Dakota