

The Buckhorn Ranger Station

By L Jay McDonald

The Buckhorn Ranger Station, high in the Roosevelt National Forest west of Ft. Collins, Colorado, was constructed in the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and is an historic place. It was originally established in 1906 as a small log cabin as a remote ranger station and was improved and enlarged by the CCC. Forest Rangers used horses and mules to patrol and manage the area in and around the station until forest service roads were built. The station suffered from a period of neglect in the latter part of the 20th century. The U.S. Forest Service recognized the historical significance of the station for its role in multiple use land management over the past 100 years and committed to restoring the station and its buildings. As part of that restoration, Northern Colorado BCH chapter (NCBCH) was asked by the Roosevelt Forest Service to rebuild the perimeter fence. During the initial meeting at



the site, we saw the remains of a make shift corral in the southeast corner of the enclosure and asked if we could rebuild it historically correct. The Forest Service was very happy with our offer. Over the course of the spring and summer, NCBCH crews made numerous work party trips to the station finally finishing on August 2nd.

The corral area had become overgrown with shrubs and small trees. These had to be cleared and the site made safe for humans and animals. Next, many holes had to be drilled for the new treated corral posts. This was a difficult task. We don't call them the Rocky Mountains for nothing. A tractor mounted auger and jack hammer was needed to drill the holes. Other members of the crew began installing barkies for the rails. Everything was put together with lag bolts. Meanwhile, another crew was working on the perimeter fence. It too had become severely overgrown and required several days to be opened enough for the fence to be restrung. A few trees had grown up in the fence and had to be cut out. That was accomplished by an NCBCH certified sawyer. The fence stayed in the original line where it was installed almost 100 years ago.



Over the course of 5 months, Northern Colorado BCH members donated hundreds of volunteer hours, hundreds of travel miles, many power and heavy equipment and skilled labor hours and the chapter furnished some of the supplies. The posts and barkies were funded through a grant. The Forest Service supplied barbed wire and allowed crews to camp at the site. The result was an enormously successful partnership between the Arapahoe/Roosevelt Forest Service and the Northern Colorado Back Country Horsemen. Today the Buckhorn Ranger Station has been rebuilt and future

generations will be able to utilize the site thanks to the efforts and partnership between the United States Forest Service and Back Country Horsemen of America.

NCBCH volunteers were Steve Ray, Marsha Eilert, Rick Farasyn, Chuck Peterson, Gerry Cole, Al Ohms, JoAnne Wortman, Jenifer Nordstrom, Ramzee Valland, Ellyanna Valland, Gary Jorgeson, Pat Douglas, Jay McDonald and Nancy McDonald. Our chapter president is Vickie Buchannan. She and her friend Chris provided two fantastic lunches for the crews. And we wish to express our deep appreciation to our Arapahoe/Roosevelt Ranger District partners for their cooperation and allowing us to be part of the restoration of this historic ranger station.

