

The Gallatin Valley Chapter of BCHMT

The Gallatin Valley Chapter of BCHMT has been fielding Wednesday and Saturday trail crews for many years to maintain trails in the Spanish Peaks Wilderness as well as adjacent national forests. There is always more work to be done, either clearing deadfall or maintaining tread so when the riding season ends for the most part in October/November we are already looking forward to next year. In 2024 our chapter purchased 20 "nominal ten foot by 8" treated logs to use for water dams in areas that were becoming gullied out and where native material was not readily available. We also received a donation of treated posts and rails from one of our members who owns a fencing company. We precut the 8" posts into 42" lengths and over several weekends packed approximately 40 "dams" into locations that needed help the most. We also identified a tread problem at the Deer Creek trailhead where the switchback right at the beginning had been shortcut over time, creating a steep ugly scar. After consulting with Josh Kinsel, the local trails coordinator for the Custer Gallatin National forest in our area, we came up with a plan to revive the grassed over and unused switchback and install a rail fence to block the shortcut.

Enter the "Wild Montana" crew. We had helped them out in the past on their "Cliff Creek project" in Park County and then worked with us installing 20 of the first water dams on the Little Hellroaring Trail # 400. They were now looking for a new project for 2025, and we were ready to help them out. On September 6th of this year, they fielded a small crew of 6 volunteers to install 8 water dams on the Cherry Creek Trail #401 that we had previously packed in. On that same day we packed in another 8 dams for installation farther up the trail.

The next day, September 7th I and one other GVBCH member met a second "Wild Montana " crew at Deer Creek. Together we revived the switchback, installed "Please don't shortcut the trail" signs provided by the Forest service, covered the shortcut scar with brush and rocks, and built approximately 50 ' of 2 rail fences. This was a great little project that we were all happy to be a part of and hopefully will have immediate and lasting benefits to all trail users.

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