

## Back Country Horsemen of Illinois (BCHIL)

On June 17, 2024, Back Country Horsemen of IL had a pack day in Lusk Creek Wilderness in Shawnee National Forest (SNF). We are working to keep the trail up out of the mud by building structures/turnpikes and adding water bars to divert the water away from the trail. On our pack day, we moved approximately 15,600 pounds of rock in about 4 ½ hours. We were able to move that amount of rock in a short timeframe due to it being a short round trip from the staging area to structures on the trail and back to staging area. The short round trip also puts more demands on the crew at the rock pile to keep up with shoveling rock into buckets and having buckets ready.



The Forest Service has a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) group working for 6 weeks this summer. The crew consists of local high school Juniors and/or Seniors. They worked as ground crew on our pack day along with the SNF trail crew, 2 members of River to River Trail Society – Sam Morales and Chris Drone, and BCHIL members – Rick Yates, Cricket Simons, Pam Jones, Ken Napodamo and Gloria Heggy. We had 9 pack animals and 6 lead horses. Our wranglers were BCHIL members – Sue Erdman, Caroline Gilje, Glen Schmidt, Dwight Pray, Evan Lewis and Vicki Simons.

The ground crew at the rock pile shovels rock into buckets. 4 buckets of rock are dumped into the rock bags on each pack animal, and then are led down the trail to where the rock is dumped out the bottom of the rock bags. The ground crew out on the trail has 2 people work together to open the bags simultaneously and dump the rock and then spread the rock out in the structure.



We had a great ground crew, pack animals/wranglers, lead horses, and good to see high school kids working in the forest.

Thanks to all our workers for a successful pack day.

Submitted by Vicki Simons

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