

Gallatin Valley Chapter of Back Country Horsemen of Montana -- September 2024

In our ongoing effort to clear and maintain trails in our little part of the world the Gallatin Valley chapter members were able to work with the local Wilderness chapter, "Wild Montana" to address a section of trail crossing private land. The trail leads to Indian Ridge and the Spanish Peaks Wilderness. This section of the Little Hellroaring trail #400 passes through Turner Enterprises lands and curves fairly steep up through an open meadow. Over the years the trail had become a gully that funneled rain and snow melt downhill causing ongoing erosion and deepening of the gully/trail. Our BCH chapter trail crew had already spent 4 days cutting and packing native material in to lower sections of the trail to install water dams where needed. Our local trail coordinator for the Forest Service alerted us that "Wild Montana" was looking for a September project and it all came together. We used part of our RAC grant funds to purchase 30 ten foot by 8 inch diameter treated timbers direct from the local saw mill. We cut ten of them in to 42" lengths and packed in 28 of them approximately 2 miles using mules and horses over the course of two trail days. We lucked out the first day when Bill Holmes, a member of Wenass Valley BCH in Washington State offered to help. Bill was visiting and was camped at the trailhead. He jumped right in to help and rode his mule in to help unload as well. We also packed in 8 six foot by 7" diameter treated posts to use for water bars. On September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> "Wild Montana" members along with Forest Service personnel hiked in and installed the treated timbers in the most needed locations.

We are looking forward to getting back up on the #400 trail in the Spring to see how well the dams performed. Loading , unloading the 40 lb. logs on/off the pack animals was a lot of work but the pack animals and the "Wild Montana" crew definitely handled the hard part of the project. Working with the Forest Service trail coordinator Josh Kinsel and "Wild Montana" made the project possible.

Thank you to everyone that was able to help make it a success.

Dan Porter,

Director, GVBCH