

Front Range Back Country Horsemen est. 1996  
P.O. Box 150521 Lakewood, CO 80215

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*Working to keep trails open to saddle and pack stock today and for future generations through education, service and voice.*

*Without trails, where would we ride?*

## October 2020 Newsletter



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Deadline for articles  
15<sup>th</sup> of each month!

**Next Meeting: Wednesday October 28 6 PM, via Zoom.**  
Link will be sent out via eMail.

## Pres Sez

WOW the summer has flown by. Sure hope everyone has been able to get out and enjoy the beautiful fall colors. They have been spectacular to say the least!

With everything going on now a days we did get a lot accomplished this summer. We had a lot of rides clearing trails and we completed the final sections of the Colorado trail.

At this time we are planning to have our annual Christmas party. It is reserved for December 13 at the Grange. This is the same place as last year. We will be having our elections in December. There are a couple positions that will need to be filled. If you are interested in serving as a board member please contact me. Courtney has so graciously offered to coordinate our silent auction again this year. More on that coming.

We will continue our next 2 meetings through Zoom and hopefully all will go well with being able to get together for the Christmas party. Our next meeting will be October 28<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. The Zoom info will go out a couple days before that. Please join us!

Happy Trails

Sharon



### **Reminder on current restrictions**

The advisory below for recreation is useful but does not necessarily apply to our trail maintenance which is an essential activity for assuring safety of all users on the trails.

- Trail crews should consist of 2 to 4 persons.
- Using our big crosscut saws requires lots of heavy breathing at a distance less than 6 feet, so plan to wear a mask during this work.
- On returning from a day in the field, put all your tools, gloves, mask, etc. somewhere undisturbed for at least 3 days for any coronavirus to die from exposure.

- On a personal diary, record the date and the names of the crew should this ever be required.
- We have three complete sets of tools. Bill Klink will be keeping and using one set for the summer. Anyone else who can use a set to good effect can also acquire a set temporarily or for the season.

For more information on the restrictions, please check out the following website:

<https://covid19.colorado.gov/safer-at-home/safer-at-home-local-and-personal-recreation>

**Report on the Colorado Trail Ride**  
**Little Molas Lake (Molas Pass) to Durango**  
**August 17-21, 2020**  
**Susan McKelvey**

Thirteen horses and mules and their riders rode out from the campground at Little Molas Lake TH for the Colorado Trail and turned south. Riding the shoulder of summer, just before it turns distinctly fall-like in temperature and weather, the sun shone and views of the magnificent San Juan Mountains were spectacular. Riders soon separated into two groups of 7 and 6 riders depending on the gait speed of their horses. Somehow, despite the disparate speeds, the groups remained within about 30-45 minutes of each other along the trail. The faster group stopped periodically to wait for the riders behind them to assure all was well with everyone. Amazingly the horses all seemed to settle into the trail and got along with each other even when circumstances put them in close contact that often is uncomfortable for some equines.

FRBCH (Front Range Backcountry Horsemen), an organization dedicated to keeping the national and state trail systems open to equine stock as they have been historically used, had sponsored an annual foray on the 485 miles of the Colorado Trail over 6 years starting in 2013. Two years had been a forced sit out with the ride cancelled due to trail conditions, late melting snow and physical problems of the ride leader. This year's planned ride was fraught with the sudden advent of the Covid 19 virus and the restrictions imposed to limit infections, the concern for access to campsites following forest fires and landslides and injury to one of the ride leaders, so actually getting on the trail was no small miracle!

Among the riders were 5 people who had persevered on all the mileage but the final 72-75 miles, and were hoping to complete their passage starting with the sunny, sparkling morning leaving Molas Lake. The trail in this part of Colorado is placed on high between 10,000 and

12,000 feet along the spine of the San Juan Mountains that stretch north to south. Intersected by other trails along the way that originate on both the east and west side of the mountains, the roads coming up from the valleys were mostly goat trails and better traversed with ATV's and jeeps than the support crew of 7 volunteers who drove their personal trucks up and down to meet the riders nightly with hay for the horses, food and shelters (tents) for the riders. Nothing about this trek could be considered easy.

The first day included views of Engineer and Flat Top Mountains and intersected several streams for watering the horses, plenty of ups and downs, and ended at pristine Celebration Lake just below Bolam Pass where the intrepid support crew met them. Tent sites were quickly claimed and set up and horses tucked in on high lines strung between trees. Meals that had been thoughtfully planned and prepared, frozen, and reactivated nightly to match the menus were soon served. Each morning, a hearty breakfast was offered as well as myriad components for lunches which each rider and volunteer made for themselves were spread out. No one went hungry!

The second morning had atmosphere distinctly different from the first day. Smoke from fires north and west smudged the air and created blue and softer views of the distant craggy peaks. The sun arose red and kept that hue all day, the light was eerily orange and its reflection on trees and rocks was very unusual! The trail wound along the east and then the west knife edge of the San Juan's overlooking Hermosa Park laid out below steep slopes covered in yellowed skunk cabbage and wild flowers. The equines enjoyed periodic grazing on lush green grasses or the closer knit cover on the above timberline plants. As they rode south, water for the horses became less dependable, and permitting them to eat some grass along the trail added needed moisture.

The Campsite that night was near where the Big Bend Trail intersected the CT. It was amazing to anyone who had covered this section of the trail before, how warm the evenings were even at such high altitudes. Riders and volunteers had an opportunity to sit, eat and chat and jokes and stories were both funny and interesting. We were lucky to have warm and steady weather for the trail.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> day was the toughest one of the 4 days on the trail for the horses. With the promise of a day off as an incentive, the riders set off about 8 AM and soon began climbing on the section of the CT called the Highline Trail. Again, distant downhill...way downhill views, of the valleys were offered from Indian Trail Ridge that led to a narrow land bridge between peaks. The trail often had the riders clattering over hillsides of shale that clanked like potsherds of crockery beneath the horses' hooves.

The actual Indian Ridge was about 6-10 feet wide across a football field length with long distance views to both the east and west side of the San Juan's. The drop from that web of

land was to be calculated in 1000's of feet! That impressed the riders but the horses seemed unimpressed!

A quick turn around a rock outcropping and below was the Cumberland Basin and Taylor Lake. The trail then descended quickly down through some gnarly rocks on the cliff face that the horses had to jump down and land carefully and accurately. All horses and mules negotiated that hazard handily and riders gathered at Taylor Lake's shoreline for a much needed drink...water for the horses and something a wee bit stronger for some of the riders. All cheered in celebration of accomplishing 3 days of riding so successfully!

Another uphill to Kennebec Pass and then gently down to camp which was at the top of Junction Creek Road that starts in Durango. Riders beat the volunteers to the campsite but waited patiently for them to arrive. All the roads leading up to the campsites selected were rough, rocky and not driven any faster than about 5 mph. Camp was quickly set up, horses highlined and some permitted to graze nearby on the plentiful grasses. The next day was one of mini-tours in the ATV (Kawasaki Mule) driven by either Jack or Joan Wealing. Others figured out how to wash up hair and bodies, some walked and took pictures of wildflowers and distant views. Everyone relaxed and horses rested.

The final day on the CT was through forested areas, with streams bisecting the trail often for horses to drink, more hikers and even bikers met us and with a few uphill passages, most was downhill. Grazing cattle met some of the riders which offered some entertainment and the temperature became steadily warmer as the riders came down from on high.

Final end of the trail was at the base of Junction Creek Road and the 5 people who had completed the whole trail celebrated with pix at the TH signage and cheers from fellow riders. Completers were: Nadine Sinclair, Laura Scarafiotti, Ken and Denise Bachmann and Sharon Jayne. Finishing the trail for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time was Susan McKelvy, who led the riders. Others on the ride were both Joe Brown and Rick Goad who shared a mare as Rick's horse had passed from colic just before the ride started. Sharon Strong, Patti Malmquist, Donna Fleisher, Sherrie Thompson, Katie Minkler and Joan Wealing rounded out the riders. Sharon Jayne and Joan Wealing accepted the responsibility of leading/safety riding as well as Sue McKelvy.

Horses were soon loaded into trailers and taken to several locations to spend the night. A gala party of celebration was held at Charlie and Katie Minkler's ranch near Ignacio. Not enough can be said in gratitude of the volunteers who met the riders daily at various elevations and negotiated the awful roads to get there. Thanks to Jack McKelvy, Jack Wealing, Tim Clark, Linda Mackety, Kitty Bladt, John Case and the tag-team of Joe Brown and Rick Goad. A special thanks to Laura Scarafiotti who hosted the 3 people who checked out the roads and possible campsites in late June in preparation of the support crews driving them and helped organize the final catered party. And we all have a renewed and deepened appreciation of our horses and mules...extra rations for them!

## Fall Social Ride on Uneva Pass Trail

With the fall weather so warm and dry, several of the chapter members decided to do a fall ride – just for the fun of it! Sue McKelvy, Joan Wealing, Linda Mackety, Nadine Sinclair and John Case all met at a rest stop on I-70 close to Copper Mountain for a ride into Eagles Nest Wilderness. The trail led from next to the highway at 9700 ft up into the forest, quickly losing the constant highway noise of I-70. After climbing to 11,000 the group enjoyed a wonderful lunch at Wheeler Lakes. Continuing up the trail a bit further to Lost Lake at 11,600, the team decided to turn back. All told, a beautiful day in the fall forest, with no mishap – and even cleared one leaner tree along the way!



# FRBCH Activity Schedule for 2020

## October

- 28, Wednesday - General Meeting via Zoom, 6:00 pm – Link to be emailed.

## November

- 17, Tuesday - General Meeting, Morrison Inn (or virtual via Zoom), 6:00 pm social, 6:30 meeting

## December

- Christmas Tree Ambassadors
- Parker Carriage Parade
- 13, Sunday Christmas Party

Normal meeting locations:

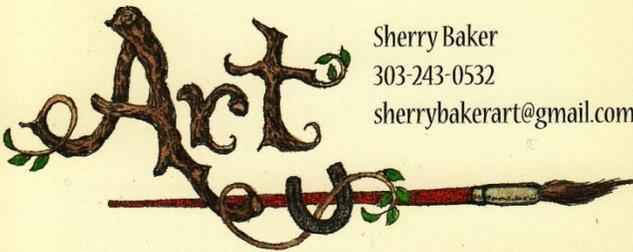
South Metro Fire & Rescue Headquarters is located at 9195 East Mineral Avenue in Centennial. The meeting room is downstairs (take the elevator).

The Morrison Inn is at 301 Bear Creek Avenue in downtown Morrison. There is additional parking east of the restaurant.

These venues will be replaced with Zoom virtual meetings until the COVID pandemic abates.

updated 10/20/2020

Thanks to our Sponsoring Members!



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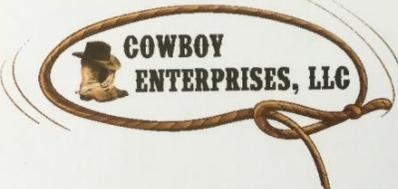
The image shows the word 'Art' written in a decorative, calligraphic font using dark brown paint. A paintbrush with a red handle and black bristles is positioned horizontally across the bottom of the letters. Small green leaves are scattered around the artwork.



Julie Chaney  
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**Back Country Horsemen of Colorado**  
PO Box 1524  
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*Preserving historic pack & saddle stock access*  
[www.bchcolorado.org](http://www.bchcolorado.org)

The logo is circular with 'COLORADO' at the top and 'BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN' at the bottom. Inside the circle, there is a silhouette of a pack train with horses and a person on a horse.



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The logo features a cowboy hat inside a lasso that forms a circle.



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**THE KIKER TEAM**  
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The image is a professional headshot of a man with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie.



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The logo features a silhouette of a person riding a horse, set against a background of stylized mountains. Below the silhouette is a horizontal arrow with a feathered tail.

