



**Kansas Back Country Horsemen Annual Meeting Minutes**  
**January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 1PM , Overbrook Library, Overbrook, KS 66524**  
**Lunch at 11:30**

**Call to Order**—Stephanie Huss Chair at 12:29 pm

46 people in attendance

Stephanie Huss announced the nominees for voting consideration.

Stephanie Huss has nominated Laura Smyth for Chair

Diana Skinner has nominated Stephanie Huss for National Director II

Cheryl Thomas Has nominated Pattie Stalder for Secretary

**Minutes from previous meeting**—Minutes were emailed to members 24 hours prior to this meeting and are available online.

**Treasurer's Report**—Treasurer, **Sheila Watkins** - the current balance is \$6,080.08. More dues funds will be coming in as KHC processes them.

**National Committee Reports** –

National Director Report-Diana Skinner

There is a government hiring freeze for park employees; bikes on trails is still an issue and no mechanical tools including bikes are allowed in wilderness areas.

It's time for support grants to be submitted to BCHA, info is available at [bcha.org](http://bcha.org). Youth grants are also available.

In CO & IL last year 1500 acres were fenced off and claimed by a sovereign group of individuals but it was undone by BCHA members removing the fencing.

E-bikes in national forests on non-motorized trails is still a major issue in DC and continues to be addressed by BCHA.

There has been a nationwide decrease in membership. The \$5 dues increase has helped offset that financial loss. It's the first increase in 15 years.

The National board mtg. will be held April 14-16 in Prescott, AZ. Everyone is invited.

At the American Horse Council convention, the KS Trail Advocacy dual membership program was shared and celebrated.

Diana Skinner requested auction items for the national meeting.

Public Lands- Jim Thomas

KS is in the northeast region w/8 other states, most of which are heavily involved with US Forest Service and BLM lands so a lot of their concerns don't really affect us (chainsaw certification, required work agreements, detailed work day notifications).

Kansas is recognized and praised for our high number of volunteer hours and our Trails Advocacy joint membership with the Kansas Horse Council.

Volunteer hours and their financial equivalency value are shared with KS Director of State Parks, Linda Lanterman and she is very grateful and praises the work we do.

Membership Data Coordinator- Sheila Watkins

Dues were increased by \$5.

In 2023 we had 90 individual memberships and 63 family. This past year (2024) we had 75 individual and 58 family. We need to focus on increasing our membership in part by engaging the younger generation.

Discussion was held on notifying potential members about the benefits of joining. Possibly, the need to add member benefit info to our website landing page.

It was also suggested to post more signage that trails are maintained by BCHKS volunteers. Possibly discuss at next meeting: have small flyers to put on windshields in parking lots acknowledging that trails are maintained by BCHKS volunteers.

Volunteer Hours- Cheryl Thomas

Benefit trail rides are an important means of raising funds for trails & improvements.

Volunteer Summary report was shared. 2024 was a phenomenal year with 4400 hours equaling \$350,000 worth of work. Diana shared that BCHA members do more than \$12million annually across the US and with the new budget cuts it will be needed more than ever.

Lexi Studebaker suggested getting BCHKS members on the Red Couch on a Topeka television station. Cheryl Thomas is submitting articles to KS magazines. It was suggested to use KPR public radio out of Lawrence as an outlet.

Lexi Studebaker agreed to chair a new Marketing Committee. This will be discussed more at our next meeting.

### **State Committee Reports**

Fundraiser/Event Committee **Stephanie Huss**

Murder Mystery fundraiser Ride at Pomona on April 26. Only 36 riders will be accepted; 6 teams of 6.

### **Chapter Reports**

Reports were printed and handed out to all attendees and also emailed to members.

In addition, Big Hill reported they are working on getting covers for some of the pens. They are holding negotiations with Del Shields (Best of America by Horseback) about doing an event in Oct.

Chisholm Trail is working on a fundraising ride for El Dorado campground.

UHCA race will be held at Lake Perry.

Saddle Ridge is building an obstacle course.

### **Old Business**

National Board meeting- registration is now open. April 14-16 in Prescott, AZ

Saddle Raffle – Drawing will be a 4 pm Saturday at EquiFest. Sign up via QR code. The saddle will be shipped to the winner, so you do not have to be present to win.

### **New Business**

Trail Warrior Awards – This is a new annual award for member recognition. There will be one winner selected from statewide nominations. Requirements include: a minimum of 100 hours of trail work (documented), each chapter can nominate one member, and the chapter must submit essay on why the candidate should be considered. The first award will be given at 2026 annual mtg. Chapters can continue to present their own awards.

Equifest- March 21, 22, 23 - Volunteer Roster: Diana Skinner will schedule the BCHKS booth. To promote the saddle raffle there will be some laminated sheets to advertise the raffle.

Welcome guests:

Several members of the Johnson County 4H Horse Project were in attendance. Their youth members are very active in competitions, fund-raising and attending meetings. Stephanie Huss suggested ways to help fund 4-H Horse Project members including letting them use the obstacle course to put on shows and fund-raisers. Stephanie Huss wants to begin a Youth Project Committee. She can put chapters in touch with the KS State 4-H Director to help BCHKS chapters get in touch with their local 4-H clubs.

Jim Thomas introduced Bailey Ham of Eisenhower State Park who expressed Eisenhower State Park's appreciation of all the volunteer work BCHKS does across the state. Bailey is also an equestrian.

Happy Birthday was sung to Jim Thomas!

*Horse Trails of America* is closing. Susan asked if there was any discussion about that being taken over by another group. Cheryl Thomas said there will possibly be a much smaller version managed by Circle Y. Monica Chapman said there may still be a Horse Trails of America FB page with maps.

Susan Johnson stated that the obstacle course at Pomona's Black Hawk campground is open to day rides and activities.

Elections:

Jamie Studebaker for Alt. Director

Laura Ward Smyth for President

Stephanie Huss for National Director II

Pattie Stalder for second term as secretary

Diana Skinner nominated Eileen Gronniger for VP, seconded by Stephanie Huss, accepted by Eileen

Unanimous Ballot, all passed

Drawings were held to give away \$25 Casey's gift cards and a camp stove.

**Other discussions** - none

**Move to adjourn** – moved by Susan Johnson, seconded by John Leighty. Meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm