

# Gila Chapter

## Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico | MINUTES

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2/18/2025 6:00 PM | Grant County Extension Office

Meeting called by	Cheryl Roth	Attendees
Type of meeting	Monthly business meeting	Lanay Addy, Joan Bacon, Carole Clark, Cindi deCapiteau, Gerry Engel, Fred Fox, Melissa Green, Clay Griffith, Becki Harrington, Jean Hill, Dave Imler, Nancy Imler, Rawlings Lemon, Michele McGorky, Mike Netharius, Richelle Price, Matt Rehani, Silke Schneider, Donna Tillmann, Tim Trofe, Laurie Wlosinski, Deborah Whittemore, Ted Whittemore
Note taker	Cindi deCapiteau	

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Call to order | Presenter Cheryl Roth

Before business, ice cream!

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Recognize guests and new members | Presenter Everybody

New faces tonight. Everybody present introduced himself/herself.

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Additions or changes to agenda | Presenter Cheryl Roth

No changes to the agenda.

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Approval of minutes | Presenter Matt Rehani

Minutes from the November 2024 meeting (the last one held for which minutes were taken) were approved.

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Financial & membership report | Presenter Dave Imler

Since the last report, the Gila chapter expenses and bank balances are:

Paid out: \$13,657.50 (various stuff)

Income: \$13,450.15 (donations)

Checking account balance: \$36,216.66

Gila Trail Fund (a savings account): increase of \$14,000 since November 2024

GBCH has 45 paid members

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Grant County Search and Rescue | Presenter Laurie Wlosinski

Laurie reported that the Las Cruces SAR has been busy, but the Gila SAR isn't busy at all.

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BCHNM | Presenter Joan Bacon

Nothing to report from the state chapter. We know that dues are set to increase, but nobody knows what the increase will be.

The state chapter will hold a meeting in March. Meetings are generally held in Socorro.

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US 180 Highway Cleanup | Presenter Matt Rehani

Matt Rehani will schedule the next highway cleanup detail (to be conducted in March) and will distribute an email announcement to recruit volunteers and suggest specific dates. The detail takes place on US 180 (west of town) between mile markers 108 and 109. Rag pickers meet at the Wind Canyon fire house at the intersection of US 180 and the Truck Bypass Road.

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**Action items**

**Person responsible**

Prepare highway cleanup plans; ship email to the GBCH list

Matt Rehani

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Continental Divide Trail Days | Presenter Gerry Engel

CDT Trail Days will take place April 18, 2025-April 20, 2025. Trail Days is an annual event sponsored by the CDT Coalition to celebrate the Continental Divide Trail. The event features vendors and demonstrations by USFS and other participants.

GBCH sets up a booth for one day (Saturday) is beloved for our branding of cookies. GBCH sets up a booth and equips it with chapter members who provide information and materials about the trails in the Gila and how GBCH takes care of them.

GBCH undertakes the popular activity, "cookie branding." Cookies are slabs cut from pine logs. Anybody who wants a cookie gets to brand it with branding irons for GBCH or the CDT. GBCH sets up a propane burner to heat the irons and supervises or helps participants burn a corresponding image into a cookie.

Grant County Search and Rescue sets up a booth (separate from the GBCH Booth) to show off its work and workers.

The celebration happens in Gough Park.

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**Action items**

**Person responsible**

**Deadline**

Acquire trees for Trail Days

Gerry Engel

April 20

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Trail Work | Presenter Melissa Green

**The Bear Creek trail** (north of Ft. Bayard) is a work in progress. More work is needed on this popular National Scenic Trail; the additional work has not been scheduled, but will be. The Bear Creek Trail is not suitable for vehicles and trailers, so workers ride or hike in from Ft. Bayard's Sawmill Wagon Road Trail (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/gila/recreation/recarea/?recid=2018>) or from Allie Canyon (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/gila/recarea/?recid=82193>).

**Pack Saddle Area and West Fork Corral Trail.** The Pack Saddle Area (<https://caltopo.com/m/6S0DQ1E>) is accessed from the Aeroplane Mesa trailhead and is suitable for both riders and hikers. Riders camp on Clear Creek and hikers camp at Stove Springs. The complex trail requires logging and the project depends on the availability of funding.

**CDT near Brannon Park & Big Timber Trail.** This project (<https://caltopo.com/m/NJP6C>) seeks to cover 5-7 miles of the Continental Divide Trail from Rocky Canyon toward Apache Creek (a.k.a. Big Timber) with logging in the

middle section. The trail is thick with willows that need to be cleared. Workers meet at the Sapillo Trailhead across Highway 35 from the Road to the Sapillo campground.

Water will be packed in as there is no water along the trail. The trail is suitable for both riders and hikers, but riders need to be mindful about water.

**Gallinas, Railroad, & Crest Trails.** (<https://caltopo.com/m/085JC1G>) Workers will dry camp, so camping for riders will be a challenge. That said, the project is delightful for a day ride up to Holden Prong.

Refer to the spring 2025 Gila Trail Projects document (<https://gilabch.org/trail-projects/>) for additional information.

**Red Canyon.** This canyon, which lies north of the dainty town of Alma, NM, is accessed from the trailer and horse friendly Deep Creek Road. The trail also provides access to Mineral Creek, which will be worked to prepare for future improvement by the Forest Service. Water is available.



**Mimbres River.** The trail along the Mimbres River is accessed from Forest Road 150 (see map at <https://caltopo.com/m/R1FNG15>). Trail workers ride from the trailhead to Signboard Saddle. There is plenty of water and good camping on this trail. See the 2025 spring trail schedule for more information.

**Brushy Mountain.** This project will build trail to Brushy Mountain (see <https://caltopo.com/m/1URKPJB>). There's no water along the way, so the project is best suited for hikers, but the steep trail will benefit from future pounding in by horses.

**Sycamore Canyon.** This project will be in the Sheep Corral area and is scheduled to occur on the Sunday after Trail Days (April 20). The work involves brushing and will be completed in one day. See map at <https://caltopo.com/m/4LO7HLV>.

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### Fall Trail Schedule | Presenter Melissa Green

Trail projects continue after the monsoon rains (if any!) end in September. Melissa will develop the fall trail schedule and release it later.

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### Food for Trail Workers | Presenter Melissa Green

One of the best features of GBCH trail projects is the food. Food is prepared by volunteer cooks, then sealed and frozen in individual packets. The food gets placed in coolers that are packed in to the project campsite, where a camp cook heats the packets for hungry workers.

This magnificent effort has been coordinated by our beloved Mickey Lemon, who left us in January. The cooks are still available, but GBCH needs someone to replace Mickey. Melissa can provide more information. Contact Melissa by email at [groundworktrails@gmail.com](mailto:groundworktrails@gmail.com).

## Action items

## Person responsible

## Deadline

Volunteer to coordinate cooks

Everybody

Right now

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### *Give Grandly | Presenter Cheryl Roth*

[Give Grandly](#) is run by the Grant County Community Foundation to help Silver City nonprofits raise money to fund their missions by holding an annual fundraiser. It is a multi-day event that employs on-line and in-person giving. In 2024, Give Grandly produced \$2,245 for GBCH coffers. See <https://www.givegrandly.org/> for details about the 2024 gathering.

The effort runs in 2025 from April 28 through May 3. The Give Grandly in-person event in Silver City, NM, is scheduled for Saturday, May 3, 2025. The event is usually held at Silver City's Main Street Plaza, but the 2025 location has not been announced.

GBCH sets up a booth there, staffed by volunteers. It's a great way to enjoy the company of Grant County's non-profit organizations and the people who make them happen. More information will be forthcoming as the date approaches.

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### *Rodeo Arena | Presenter Cheryl Roth*

One of Silver City's popular facilities is the rodeo arena, privately owned and operated by the Southwest Horseman's Association. The Association puts on the annual Wild West Rodeo (<https://wildwildwestrodeo.com/>) as well as various livestock events. The arena is not open for overnight horse and rider lodging, mostly due to misbehavior from the public. People who join the Association, however, have access to the arena during times when the facility is not otherwise engaged. Curious people can call [\(575\) 534-4122](tel:5755344122) for more information.

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### *GBCH Websites | Presenter Melissa Green*

GBCH has had a presence on the world wide web for several years and the website has gone through a couple of iterations. The latest iteration has gone live. There are two websites—one for GBCH itself and one that links to trail information. Please take a look at <https://gilabch.org/> and <https://gilatrailsinfo.org/>.

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### *Woody's Corral | Presenter Melissa Green*

Woody's Corral (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/gila/recarea/?recid=82304>), located a mile or two south of the Gila Cliff Dwellings on NM Hwy 15, is a large horse facility operated by the US Forest Service that provides access to trails including Little Creek, Granny Mountain, the east and west forks of the Gila River, Little Bear Canyon, Woodland Park, and many other trails in the Gila National Forest and wilderness area. This facility is a frequently-used staging area for GBCH trail projects. The site is about to undergo an expansion of facilities due to the initiatives of the Gila chapter and the organizational skills of Melissa Green.

The four existing corrals will be augmented by additional corrals and expanded capacity for water. Work is tentatively scheduled to take in the spring/summer of 2025. Volunteer workers will dig trenches, set fence posts, pour concrete, and take care of other tasks to support the work provided by paid contractors. Keep your ears open for more information.

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*A better trailhead* | Presenter Melissa Green

The Forest Service renovated the trailhead at Redrock Road, formerly famous for difficult and crowded parking, but now leveled, de-rutted, and expanded to accommodate horse rigs. The trailhead provides access to Saddle Rock Canyon and the Continental Divide Trail. (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/gila/recarea/?recid=82265>)

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*Upcoming projects* | Presenter Melissa Green

The following projects are planned for spring 2025. Some details are available on the current project schedule (<https://gilabch.org/trail-projects/>) will be provided as Melissa develops the trail schedule.

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*Trump administration cutbacks* | Presenter Gerry Engel

The new federal administration has destructive plans for the Gila region. Twenty-seven Forest Service employees have been relieved of their duties. The USFS trail crew that served the Gila has been dismembered. The seasonal forest service employees no longer exist. We expect to see more terminations and fewer services from the federal government.

This is serious business. You have a chance to influence the outcome. Contact your federal and state elected leaders and respectfully ask for their intervention! Here's a link to get you started:

<https://www.270towin.com/elected-officials/new-mexico>

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*Announcements* |

Next Meeting: Grant County Extension Office, March 18, 2025, 6:00 p.m.