

Gila Chapter

Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico | MINUTES

Meeting date | time 10/21/2025 6:00 PM | Meeting location Grant County Extension Office

Meeting called by Cheryl Roth

Type of meeting Monthly business meeting

Note taker Cindi deCapiteau

Attendees

Joan Bacon, Pat Buls, Cindi deCapiteau, Becki Harrington, Dave Imler, Nancy Imler, Rawlings Lemon, Michele McCorky, Maureen McLeod, Jennifer Pelleman, Cheryl Roth, Donna Tillmann, Richard Waller, Laurie Wlosinski, Deborah Wittemore

AGENDA TOPICS

Agenda topic Call to order | Presenter Cheryl Roth

Discussion The meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Recognize guests and new members | Presenter Cheryl Roth

Although Michele McCorky is a GBCH member of long standing, she hasn't been around for a while. Cheryl acknowledged Michele's presence tonight. We also had a guest tonight, Jennifer Pelleman. Welcome Jennifer!

Miscellany | Presenter Cheryl Roth

- Elections for GBCH officers will be held in November. The current secretary expressed her intention to step down, so consider that office open and feel free to step up to fill it. Duties include serving on the GBCH board of directors and producing minutes for the chapter's monthly meetings.
- The Roadless Rule (a.k.a. *The Roadless Area Conservation Rule*), was enacted in 2001. It's a Forest Service conservation rule that protects the least-developed portions of our national forests from harmful roadbuilding and the resulting logging, mining, and oil and gas drilling that roads are built to enable. The USDA has proposed rescinding the rule, with the effect of opening millions of public lands acres to extractive activities. Public comments about the proposal ended in September and the USDA is now evaluating those comments. Gerry Engel expressed his opinion in the Silver City Daily Press in September. See page 4 to read his take on the matter.
- Correction: The September GBCH minutes announced a series of clinics to be conducted by Pat Buls. The announcement named the instructor incorrectly. Pat Buls is the instructor.

Financial report | Presenter Dave Imler

Dave reported that since his last report, GBCH has received no income, but has incurred expenses of \$29,680 for trail work. The chapter's checking account has a current balance of \$59,671.05.

Membership | Presenter Dave Imler

GBCH has 67 members as of tonight's meeting.

Laurie reported that GCSAR assisted a bicyclist from Thatcher who ran into a series of mishaps. He was unaware of last summer's wildfires in the Gila and rode into the burn scar after cycling from Ft. Bayard's Dragonfly trail up to Signal Peak and got caught in a summer storm. The searchers looked for him on the ground and air support searched overhead, but neither was able to locate him. The cyclist had had used up all the water he carried and ate hail from the storm, which wetted him thoroughly inside and out as he was wearing only cycling shorts and shoes. He had no flashlight, no food, no warm clothing. He couldn't find the trail in the torched landscape. Nevertheless, he was able to walk out.

Laurie's report was followed by a discussion of emergency contact devices. The problems with cell phones include sporadic service in wilderness terrain, inexperienced 911 operators, and limited battery life. The Garmin inReach (of course) is more reliable, so if you venture into the wilderness, make sure you have one that is charged up and you know how to use it. The inReach dispatches directly to Grant County emergency operators, who then activate emergency responders as appropriate. The internet has a lot of information about the inReach. It's well worth your time to investigate. Start at <https://www.garmin.com/en-US/search/?query=inReach> and consider the value of your life and safety.

BCH of America (the organization at the top of the hierarchy) has been invited to participate in the [National Museum of Forest Service History](#). BCHA wants to raise \$15,000 for this effort and has solicited contributions from its various chapters. GBCH has \$8,500 of discretionary funds in its checking account, so we have enough money to contribute something to the museum exhibit. Joan Bacon proposed donating \$500, as seconded by Nancy Imler. The matter passed by unanimous voice vote.

Sign at Woody's Corral

Last summer, the Gila chapter [installed eight stock enclosures at Woody's Corral](#), which is down the road from the Gila Cliff Dwellings. GBCH conducted a similar project several years ago at the [Upper Gallinas campground](#) and posted a durable sign on the corrals there to acknowledge our work.¹ Dave or someone like him proposed posting such a sign at the new corrals at Woody's.

Action items

Person responsible

Set up cost and specifications for Woody's Corral sign

Melissa Green

Corral access at Upper Gallinas

Speaking of Upper Gallinas, the 2013 Silver Fire pretty much trashed Gallinas Creek, which runs through the campground and divides the parking lot from the corrals there. As a result, the Forest Service closed the creek crossing to vehicle traffic. You can walk or ride across the stream to the corrals, but you can't put a truck, car, or

¹ (Sorry—the secretary has no photo of the sign. However, it is a sheet of steel with carved-out letters that acknowledge the Gila chapter's work. You can see it for yourself if you drive up 152 to the Upper Gallinas campground and hike across the stream. The sign is posted on the pipe-rail fence for one of the corrals up there. Take a photo while you're there and send it to the secretary.)

horse trailer over there. All these years later, the crossing is still closed. Gerry Engel is discussing vehicle access with the Forest Service.

Trail Projects | Presenter Melissa Green

As always, trail projects are ongoing in our beloved Gila. Be sure to keep up to date on GBCH trail work by visiting our web site at <https://gilabch.org/trail-projects/>.

GBCH Elections | Presenter Dave Imler

Elections for GBCH officers and board members occur every year at the November business meeting. Now is a good time to review the chapter bylaws to find out about the various jobs and duties of these intrepid people. To that end, the pertinent bylaws section is included on page 5.

You can nominate right now people you would like to see in these offices. Send or phone in names to Cheryl Roth. Note that Dave Imler is not running for treasurer, but Dave is training Lynae Addy for that role. Cindi deCapiteau, who has served as secretary for over a decade, will be happy to turn the reins over to a new secretary.

Officers serve as the chapter's board of directors, which controls chapter business, including funding for trail projects and the people who work on them.

Just because somebody has served in a GBCH office for a long time doesn't mean the chapter can't benefit from new voices.

Action items

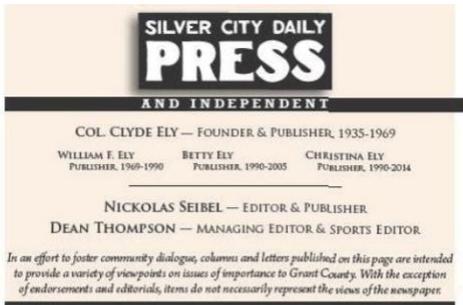
Person responsible

Read up on GBCH officers and their duties

Everybody

Nominate yourself for the office of your choice!

Anybody



Readers' Forum

Elimination of the roadless rule

Dear editor,

I do not usually comment publicly on proposed government rule changes but rescinding the roadless rule could affect management of almost 60 million acres of national forest land nationwide, with 1.6 million acres of that being in New Mexico and 730,000 acres being on the Gila.

After being involved in the roadless area inventory and analysis on the Gila National Forest during my 30 years working for the Forest Service, and after having used many roadless areas as a hunter and backcountry recreationist, I felt I must provide my opinion on the recent proposal to eliminate the Roadless Conservation Rule.

For those who do not know, the 2001 rule protects inventoried undeveloped areas of greater than 5,000 acres, generally road-free, in national forests by placing these areas off-limits to most logging and road construction. The final rule continued to allow management actions that did not require the construction of new roads, including activities such as development of valid locatable mineral claims, grazing of livestock and off-highway vehicle use where specifically permitted. Any existing classified roads in inventoried roadless areas could be maintained and used for these and other activities as well.

Forest health treatments, such as vegetation modification for the purposes of improving threatened, endangered or sensitive species habitat or maintaining or restoring the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure, such as reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects, were allowed where access could be gained through existing roads or by equipment not requiring roads.

The Gila National Forest administrative unit has approximately 730,000 acres managed under the existing roadless rule. I suspect that most folks who recreate on the forest have used some of these areas without even knowing it. Many trails, including parts of the Continental Divide Trail, exist within these areas. The areas are important for many non-motorized recreation activities, wildlife and watersheds.

The existing roadless management rule was developed over an extended period of time and was adopted after an extensive public involvement period involving approximately 1.6 million responses. About 95 percent of those responding favored maintaining these remaining areas as roadless.

The proposal to eliminate the rule has provided only Aug. 29 to Sept. 19 for initial public response. After that period, the Federal Register indicates that a draft environmental impact statement will be prepared by March 2026 and a final EIS by late 2026. That is a very short time to evaluate the environmental effects of changing management on almost 60 million acres nationwide. It feels like this process is being pushed through with minimal public involvement.

I personally do not feel it is necessary to repeal the roadless rule, and going through this process is a waste of my tax dollars. Regardless of your interest, if you are concerned about the future management of these inventoried roadless areas, provide that information through the following address: regulations.gov. Commenting now should insure you are able to be involved in the rest of the decision making process.

(s)Gerry Engel
Silver City

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

Section 1 The Chapter shall elect annually the following officers of the Board of Directors: PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, TREASURER, two (2) STATE DIRECTORS and one (1) DIRECTOR –AT-LARGE.

Section 2 The PRESIDENT shall preside at all Business Meetings, shall appoint such committees that may be necessary and appropriate, and shall serve as ex-officio member of all committees.

Section 3 The VICE-PRESIDENT shall assist the President as needed and is to preside at meetings when the President is absent.

Section 4 The SECRETARY shall record and keep the minutes of Business, Board and Special Meetings.

Section 5 The TREASURER shall keep records of income, expenses, disbursements, and any other financial records required for the operation of Chapter business. The Treasurer shall collect dues and maintain the list of members in good standing.

Section 6 The STATE DIRECTORS shall represent the Chapter at BCHNM quarterly meetings and report BCHNM activities to the Chapter.

Section 7 The DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE shall perform the duties assigned by the President.

Section 8 Election of Officers shall be held at the November Business Meeting.

Section 9..... Elected Officers, except the State Directors, terms shall begin January 1 of each year following the November elections and terminate December 31 of the same year.

Section 10..... The State Directors term of office shall be two (2) years beginning January 1 of the year following the November elections and terminating December 31 of the next year.

Section 11..... Vacancies of an office shall be filled by election at a Business Meeting.

Section 12... Officers may be removed by a majority vote of members at a Business Meeting. Notification of action to remove an officer must be made at the Business Meeting preceding the meeting that the action is to take place. Notice shall be made in writing to the officer in question ten (10) days prior to the meeting where action may take place.