

## **GBCH Meeting notes 5.19.26**

**Members attending:** Nat Williams, Cathy Brett, Melissa Green, Silke Schneider, Cheryl Roth, Dave and Nancy Imler, Cindi deCapiteau, Laurie Wlosinski, Donna Tillman, Gerry Engel, Michele McGorky, Deborah Whittemore, Jennifer Pellerin, Maureen McLeod, Bill Pellerin, Becki Harrington, Rawlings Lemon, Carole Clark.

Meeting started at 6:10pm

### **Welcome and Agenda Items:**

The meeting began by welcoming new members and visitors, Nathaniel and Kathy, who are associated with the Backcountry Horsemen. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved. New items were added to the agenda: a discussion on the Hermosa area led by Gerry, and a presentation by Carole on New Mexico Wild and the roadless campaign.

### **Treasurer and Membership Report:**

The treasurer, Dave, reported expenses of \$41,970 and income of \$25,879, with the majority of income from USDA/Forest Service reimbursements. The current checking account balance is \$45,164. The current membership count is at 59.

### **Llama Desensitization Plan:**

A plan was discussed to help desensitize members' equines to llamas. Llama-owning members have provided wool for scent familiarization, and signs will be posted on trails when llamas are present. A clinic for direct interaction between horses and llamas will be organized later in the year.

### **Search and Rescue Report:**

Two back-to-back missions for CDT hikers occurred on May 13 and May 14, 2026. The first hiker, suffering from heat exhaustion, was successfully walked out. The second, in a difficult location, was airlifted and is expected to survive. Water scarcity on trails was noted as a significant problem.

### **Rodeo Cleanup and Participation:**

The rodeo is scheduled for the evenings of July 5th and 6th, 2026. The group will receive a \$500 donation to clean up the grounds on the mornings of July 6th and 7th. Volunteers are needed and a signup sheet was passed around. If you were not present at the meeting and would like to volunteer, contact Michele McGorky. Also, the Exceptional Rodeo for individuals with disabilities will take place on July 6th, and organizers are seeking very calm horses for participants.

### **New Mexico Wild and the Roadless Rule Campaign:**

Mark Allison from New Mexico Wild contacted the group regarding the USDA's proposal to rescind the roadless rule. New Mexico Wild is seeking support from trail groups to defend the rule and plans public hearings, a digital media campaign (#HikeRideRunForRoadless), and an op-ed. A "Day of Action" is scheduled for Tuesday, May 26th, encouraging members to post photos of themselves in the forest on social media using the campaign hashtag. A toolkit was distributed via email previously and will be sent again to the membership with the link to the toolkit should you decide to participate.

### **Projects and Trail Work:**

**Hermosa Facility:** Jerry provided background on a facility in Hermosa acquired by the nonprofit "Natural Curiosity," which focuses on environmental education and trail work. The nonprofit is interested in collaborating with the group on barn restoration and trail projects and may make new corrals available for the group's use. This area is also close to the Buffalo Soldier Monument in Massacre Canyon which can offer access to Animas Creek.

**Forest Service Chainsaw Use:** A newspaper article reported that the U.S. Forest Service is considering allowing chainsaw use in wilderness areas.

**Upcoming Projects:** Cheryl's project is scheduled for May 20th, and the McKnight project is planned for the end of the month. Project planning for the fall will occur in June.

### **501©(3) Nonprofit Status and Compliance:**

Lynae presented the responsibilities of a 501©(3) nonprofit, including maintaining proper records, public transparency, and annual filing requirements with the IRS and state. It was clarified that the organization can educate and inform members about public policy but cannot endorse candidates or tell members how to vote. Members acting in a personal capacity should identify as an "active member," while only the president, Cheryl, can officially represent the Gila Chapter BCH. To maintain compliance and avoid unrelated business income tax, funds received for volunteer activities, such as rodeo cleanup, will be categorized as donations rather than payments for services.

### **Other Chapter Business:**

**License Plate Pick-up:** Most license plates have been collected; Clay, Jaynie, and Kristen Munson still need to get theirs.

**New Animal Introductions:** Members shared news about new animals, including Michele's Walkaloosa mule, Donna's Rocky Mountain horse, and Cheryl's Peruvian Paso Fino gelding.

**Chapter Award:** The chapter won the "double diamond award," tying with a chapter from North Carolina. A new plaque has been ordered, and a celebration will be planned upon its arrival.

**Upcoming Activities:** Pat Buls is holding formation riding on Friday, May 22, 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 7:08pm