

Gila Chapter

Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico | MINUTES

Meeting date | time 1/14/2015 6:00 PM | Meeting location Gila Regional Medical Center

Meeting called by Doug Dexter

Type of meeting Monthly business meeting

Note taker Cindi deCapiteau

Attendees: Susan Austin, Joan Bacon, Dawn Byrum, Cindi deCapiteau, Dixie Dexter, Doug Dexter, Gerry Engel, Tim Heidrick (guest), Jean Hill, Mickey Lemon, Rawlings Lemon, Ted Miles, Cheryl Roth, Randy Roth, Nick Sussilo (guest), Laurie Wlosinski, Tim Wolcott

AGENDA TOPICS

Agenda topic Recognize guests and new members | Presenter Doug Dexter

Doug welcomed the chapter's newest member, Joan Bacon. He extended a kind howdy-do to the evening's guests, Tim Heidrick and Nick Sussilo, who represented the Silver City Fire Department (SCFD).

Agenda topic Education Segment | Presenter Tim Heidrick

In spite of the demands of Tim Heidrick's new job as Silver City's fire chief, Tim enthusiastically agreed to visit with the Gila BCH chapter. His visit was motivated by the phenomenal job chapter members did a couple of years ago in developing our equine evacuation plan. (In the event you have never seen or want to bask once more in the glory of this opus, download it from <https://gilabchnm.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/equineevacuation2014.pdf>).

Tim announced that the fire department, along with the Silver City community and various government agencies, is working on a plan to mitigate the effects of wildfire on people and property—the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Tim noted that the GBCH evacuation plan fits right in with the CWPP; when a fire emergency occurs, his department has its hands full with the incendiary battle and—beyond simply turning animals loose—can't itself deal with evacuating them. The department can, however, add evacuation to the plan so that others can handle it as part of a coordinated effort.

As an approach to developing the community-based plan, the fire department visits with communities outside the Silver City limits (that's where wildfires occur, doncha know). The SCFD started with Wind Canyon, a community whose members are familiar with fire department plans and procedures (several residents staff the Wind Canyon fire department). The SCFD has also begun preaching "fire wise" to prepare the community as a whole for wildfire protection. (**Firewise** is a key component of Fire Adapted Communities—a collaborative approach that connects all those who play a role in wildfire education, planning and action with comprehensive resources to help reduce risk).

Tim advised that the meetings in Wind Canyon discussed the residents' major concerns, which turned out to be removal of debris stemming from defensible space work. The Wind Canyoners had no problem with tree trimming, but ended up with piles of slash that needed to be removed. Tim reported that the community and the fire department held chipper days at which county and city volunteers spent the whole day breaking slash piles into mulch that homeowners could use.

The Wind Canyon discussions boiled down to defining a problem, analyzing methods to mitigate it, and implementing those methods. The CWPP is evolving and now includes feedback from residents of Indian Hills and Cold Springs Park, where the Wind Canyon model has been applied. Those communities have plenty of houses that need protection, as well as dense vegetation and narrow roads. The residents are concerned about how, in the

event of wildfire, they can evacuate on their limited-space roads to get out while fire apparatus is coming in on those same roads. SCFD has a meeting set up for those communities in early February 2015 to present some solutions and to get the residents thinking about the results they want to see coming out of the plan.

Tim stressed several times that the CWPP is not the fire department's plan. Rather, it is a community plan.

Nick Sussilo spread out a big map of Silver City and the closer-in communities outside the city limits. The map showed divisions drawn along major streets and roads that produced corridors in which the fire department identified communities and groups of homes where the department needs to get the process rolling.

Tim reiterated that in the process, communities define their own needs and the fire department consults with them to develop their own plans to mitigate the potential threat of wildland fire. He commented that the nature of the wildland/urban interface nature is that fires will occur; the threat can't be eliminated, but having a community-based plan in place means the disruption can be reduced.

Tim also noted that "community-based" means that the CWPP is not a one-size-fits-all plan. The evacuation approach for Wind Canyon is different from that for Cold Springs. His point is that, given the work to develop a plan means that if a fire starts, it has a better chance of staying small—and that is the point of community wildfire protection to keep fires small so they can be put out.

In a manner similar to the approach used to help communities develop their plans, the fire department is also working with state foresters and the US Forest Service. Fires that start in the forest can move into communities, which is cause for these agencies to be concerned. On the other hand, a fire that starts in a community can move into the forest, so involvement from both communities and the forest authorities is essential.

The most important facet of the CWPP is that it is community driven. The fire department doesn't know what Rosedale needs unless the department talks to the Rosedale Residents.

Every corridor on the map presents unique challenges. For example, the notorious Quail Ridge fire (south end of Silver City, 2011) was stopped by grassland where the grass was so short the fire ran out of fuel. Tall pines characterize the terrain north of Silver City (in Piños Altos, for example) and a fire up there is less likely to put itself out, so the evacuation protocols and firefighting strategies are different from those employed in Quail Ridge.

Tim reported that the fire department has reviewed the GBCH evacuation plan and found it to be a great asset as an addendum to the CWPP.

Doug Dexter commented that the GBCH's current challenge is to develop maps that show where our members' can take their animals during an evacuation emergency. We need access to public areas, as well as local ranchers who are willing to accommodate evacuated equines. We need help from the fire department to identify these places and people and we also need standing authority to use them. Does the fire department know of anyone who would help us talk about this? Karen and Ralph Gauer (on Fleming Tank Road west of town). Nick agreed to provide details.

Tim commented that the local emergency planning committee is a good resource (Doug is already in contact with these folks) and Tim's assistant chief Jeff Feld attends their meetings.

Nick observed that the chapter's evacuation plan is laid out well. In addition, it raised a lot of questions in his mind. Nick mentioned that he has completed extensive evacuation planning with an eye toward coming up with ways to get out in a 10-minute time frame. He noted that in a theoretical exercise without a real threat going on, one of his neighbors was asked to evacuate in 10 minutes, at which time her mind went blank. So what Nick began thinking that the fire department, having lots of practice under its belt, could get out in time, what if he was a trying to evacuate with an animal? How much time would he need then? The GBCH plan has a set of considerations to help measure how much time does somebody have, such as is the fire far off in light wind or close by on a windy day? In addition, considerations about the road-worthiness of one's trailer and knowledge of a particular animal might make a viable option out of simply turning the animal loose, especially if time is short.

Nick complimented the GBCH for the plan and noted that the department would like to coordinate over time with us to exchange and refine ideas. Our plan, he observed, is a real asset to the community.

Ted Miles observed that Wind Canyon has only one road for ingress and egress and asked how residents coordinate with emergency workers to take trailers out while fire apparatus is coming in since there's not room for both to occupy the space at the same time. Tim responded that the best answer is "don't wait." If there's a fire that could threaten you, if you have the slightest doubt about your safety, leave at once. In fact, Tim added, that's the most significant advice that fire agencies are starting to push and it is a change from when they advised residents to "stay put we'll tell you to get out." The truth is emergency responders don't have time to tell you to leave, so you shouldn't necessarily expect an evacuation order—instead, leave right away. You can always come back. Fires are so fast that there's not time for the firefighters to do anything but fight the fire.

Ted asked if it's possible to have a designated contact within the community whom the emergency authorities can advise that "We're dispatching two trucks." Tim responded that the best way would be for a community's designated contact to initiate communication with central dispatch and then relay the received information to the community, or—even better, make sure that everybody is signed up for Grant County's reverse 911 service. A reverse 911 call will hit everybody at the same time with an evacuation order. The incoming firefighters can report the location at which they will enter the fireground and request a follow-up reverse 911 call that provides that information as well as instructions for evacuating residents.

Ted commented that in Wind Canyon, some roads used to go through to the highway, but property owners have now blocked those egress routes off. Tim replied that unless a property owner agrees to allow access for emergency purposes, the fire department can't do anything about that. The community needs to work out agreements with neighbors for this sort of thing. In addition, Tim said, some possible egress routes are too rugged to be reliable; high-centering is a real possibility and high-centered vehicles block the road. The fire department can ask property owners to maintain the road, but can't force anybody to do that

Nick commented that in the past the department has been focused on firefighting and has paid less attention to loss prevention. The fire chief has been authorized to give significant attention to fire and loss prevention.

Laurie Wlosinski (who has been working on the collection of residence locations for the long-anticipated maps that show where GBCH members live and where their animals are located) observed that the evacuation plan contains personal data, so if our maps are included in the CWPP, how can we prevent unauthorized unknowns from appearing at our door? Doug commented that the personal information is not included in the evacuation plan document that would be attached to the CWPP and personal information won't be published in the CWPP.

Cheryl Roth asked if the CWPP could include the idea that people within a corridor can create their own communication strategies. Tim responded, that's why this is a community based plan—to let communities do exactly that.

Laurie observed that our evacuation plan does not address the fact that we know people who own horses but have no trailer. Could the CWPP develop a list of people who are willing and available to transport animals? Tim replied that her proposal sounds like a spinoff on a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team). In a CERT-type organization, somebody could show up at Incident Command and say "I'm here to help evacuate animals." On the other hand, it's a significant problem at scenes of emergencies when people go into uncontrolled situations and make a mess.

Dawn Byrum asked for strategies about how to identify the owners of animals that are let loose? Doug replied that the GBCH evacuation plan addresses this matter.

Tim Advised that the fire department is currently working on an emergency plan for Silver City. Grant County has such a plan that Randy Diaz (#2 in the Silver City fire management office, as well as head of the county LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee).

Susan Austin commented that if everybody were trying to call the LEPC in an emergency, the agency would be overwhelmed, so it's a better approach to have a contact within a given corridor. Tim agreed and observed that communities have to decide what is the best way to get information out to the people who need it? Central dispatch calls in resources as they are needed. Dispatch has its own emergency plan (based on the much-loved Incident Command System—the ICS) that helps them divide up their work. For the CWPP to tie in one more concept—that of large animal evacuation and rescue—it's easy to expand the ICS.

Tim concluded his presentation by thanking the group for inviting him. He left us feeling cheerful about our evacuation planning efforts, as well as a pile of pens and brochures on "Firewise."

Action items

Person responsible

Provide details about Karen and Ralph Gauer's ability and requirements for receiving evacuated animals.

Nick Sussilo

Agenda topic Additions or changes to agenda | Presenter Doug

Some wise guy (Doug?) commented that the agenda needs to display the correct year, now that 2014 is over the hill.

Cheryl Roth noted that three GBCH horse owners have purchased hay from a farmer in Las Cruces. The farmer has lots of grass hay and alfalfa. Cheryl made his business cards available for anybody interested.

Dawn Bynum requested the addition of a competitive trail-riding event she is sponsoring

Agenda topic Approval of Minutes | Presenter Cindi deCapiteau

Minutes from the November 2014 meeting were approved.

Agenda topic Financial report | Presenter Jean Hill

The chapter's October 2014 balance was \$5,216. Since then, some members have cashed reimbursement checks for trail work. Membership payments and proceeds from the 50/50 raffle at the Christmas party netted a December deposit of \$1,450. See attached report for details.

Agenda topic Membership | Presenter Jean Hill

The chapter now has 10 single 13 family memberships, as well as one new member tonight (Welcome Joan Bacon!). The current number of people who have paid memberships is 36, so the count is down, which is typical for January—the number will increase over the coming weeks as folks pay up, so check again in March.

Doug asked Jean to provide last year's membership number and financial balance to compare to the current numbers.

Action items

Person responsible

Provide 2014 year-end membership and finance balance

Jean Hill

Agenda topic Publicity | Presenter Ted and Mara Miles

Ted Miles has updated the GBCH web site with the names of the chapter's new officers. He also has eliminated personal information from the online membership roster, so those data are no longer accessible on the web site. Ted mused that he needs to send a note to the state BCH about our new roster of officers.

Action items**Person responsible**

Send note about new chapter officers to state BCH

Ted Miles

Agenda topic *Public Service/Communications* | **Presenter** *Gerry Engel*

Gerry Engel reported that the chapter contributed 1200 volunteer hours last year and covered 81 miles of trail. Our work was valued at an hourly rate that totaled \$58,000.

Gerry noted that he recently rode the Continental Divide Trail south of Lordsburg and discovered that fences without gates impede the pathway and the trail north of Lordsburg has no gate into the Gila Forest; although it has a walk-through for hikers, there is no access through which horses can pass. He will write to the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to see if these conditions are intentional. The chapter might be able to help by putting in gates.

Doug commented that Teresa Martinez (Continental Divide Trail Alliance) might be able to advise. He added that the thru-hikers from last summer's Walk-Off-the-War hike didn't traverse the CDT through Lordsburg. Gerry added that some hikers go to Deming and up to the Black Range, but the actual BLM portion of the trail has signage and signage only—no trail!

Gerry has checked with the Forest Service on the possibility of grants from the Rural Schools Title II program, but there's no money for it in their budget this year, although it's possible money might become available from other sources. The chapter will continue its work, Gerry added, as though we don't have any money, but if we get it, we'll reimburse for expenses wherever we can.

Gerry promised to set up the trail schedule earlier this year than he did last year.

The chapter's fearless leader of trail crews great and small commented that he received an email from one Tammy Crawford who is looking for a boarding facility for her horses and specifically for a facility that will work the steeds. Gerry sent Tammy the phone number for the Silver Equine Center and also told her he would mention it to the Gila chapter members.

Doug reported that Ray Torres (Wilderness District Ranger—the head honcho and al-around fine fellow at the ranger station up on Rt. 35 west of Mimbres) has expressed a fervent desire to make the forest more horse-friendly and Ray will get in touch with Gerry about this.

Action items**Person responsible**

Check with BLM and Forest Service about CDT gate issues

Gerry

Agenda topic *Equine Evacuation Mapping Status* | **Presenter** *Doug Dexter*

The assembled masses were delighted to hear that the chapter's mapping project is back on Doug's calendar. (This project, as you will no doubt recall, is intended to provide one or more maps that show the locations of GBCH members who are able to accept equines during an emergency requiring evacuation.) Doug reported that he has sent to Laurie Wlosinski the GPS coordinates for everybody for whom he has physical addresses. There are 10 members for whom Doug has no coordinates and he'll be contacting them directly.

Action items**Person responsible**

Contact remaining 10 members to get GPS coordinates for the breathlessly anticipated evacuation maps.

Doug Dexter

Agenda topic *GCSAR – mounted training update* | **Presenter** *Laurie Wlosinski*

The Grant County Search-and-Rescue's mounted division will hold a meeting in the immediate future. The group's next training will be held at Ft. Bayard and when details about the event are finalized, Laurie will convey them to us.

Action items

Person responsible

Report details about upcoming GSCAR mounted training event

Laurie Wlosinski

Agenda topic *Christmas Party recap and discussion* | **Presenter** *Doug Dexter*

Because the 2014 Christmas party is fresh in everybody's mind, Doug solicited impressions from the group about the good cheer, and outrageous fun potential for past and future such parties. Somebody commented that the 2014 party was fun and asked if we could have another one in July.

Doug mused in a more specific vein that he thought the 2014 party lacked energy and asked specifically if anybody had ideas about how to increase the event's sprightliness. He suggested music, a raffle, and free drinks? Cheryl Roth commented that the Bear Lodge facility is crowded and doesn't exactly lend itself to lively communication or movement of people. A bigger gathering space, she suggested, might be helpful.

Doug suggested imposing a party rule that prevents spouses from sitting together, since pretty much everybody tends to sit with people they already know and love. He asked the group to let him know if they have any thoughts about this.



Gerry made a comment, enthusiastically received, that we should do another summer horse camp this year.

Left: A refreshing image from one of the rides during the 2014 GBCH horse camp. See what you missed if you didn't come along?

Agenda topic *Tucson Parade Feb 26th* | **Presenter** *Cindi deCapiteau/Cheryl Roth*

The Silver City Arts and Cultural District is part of a statewide initiative to enhance regional economies and quality of life through the support and promotion of an area's unique artistic, cultural and historic assets. Linda Brewer, a mover and shaker who represents Silver City arts and conservation communities on the Arts and Cultural District, invited the GBCH to participate in the upcoming [2015 Tucson Rodeo Parade](#). The district believes Silver City would be well represented by GBCH riders and offered to assume the cost of some expenses for participants. (Note that as of this writing, we aren't sure what those expenses are.) Camping is available for parade participants at a cost of \$20 a night and \$12 a night for a horse stall.)

An email was distributed to the GBCH membership back in December 2015 announcing this, um, opportunity, which was received like a load from an overturned rock dump by all members except Cheryl Roth and Cindi deCapiteau. According to members who expressed their regrets about parade participation, Cheryl and Cindi are insane, reckless, or merely half-witted.

Nevertheless, the plucky ladies will ride in Tucson and announced their plans to carry the flags of the Back Country Horsemen and the Great State of New Mexico. Cindi produced a mock-up of the BCH flag (see attachment), but ruefully commented that the national BCH office wants an arm and a leg (well over \$300) to manufacture one bearing the BCH logo. The resulting flab would not even bear the chapter's name and location (*well I never!*). Various members offered alternatives:

- 1) The chapter has a GBCH banner (somebody mentioned that it's a table drape)—last known location was with Michelle McGorky, but Doug Dexter believed he might have it and will look for it.
- 2) Morning Star Screen Printing might be able to supply a flag for a good price.
- 3) A Las Cruces outfit called Synergy would be worth calling.

Cindi said she would look into the alternatives.

The New Mexico flag costs \$30 and Cindi has ordered it. Both flags will be 3x5'. The GBCH flag must be double-sided so that the text doesn't read backwards on the off side, which makes increases the cost of the flag. The group authorized the chapter to pay for the flags, although somewhat reluctantly given that we don't know what the total cost will be.

Doug observed that the Silver City Arts and Cultural District would probably like to have its contribution acknowledged; Cheryl noted that the parade application requests a six-line announcer's script in which the District can be mentioned.

Action items

Person responsible

Find drape, talk to arts council about funding.

Doug

Investigate vendor alternatives for the flag.

Cindi

Agenda topic *Education Segments and Ideas* | Presenter *Cheryl Roth*

Cheryl asked the group to send her suggestions for equine-packing-safety-curiosity-health-riding-etc.-related topics we would like her to address.

Agenda topic *Announcements* | Presenter *Dawn Byrum*

Dawn Byrum announced a competitive trail ride in Las Cruces March 21-22 at Isaac's Ranch, sponsored by the American Competitive Trail Horse Association (ACTHA). The two-day event consists of two separate rides, each having a distance of about six miles. The rides are judged.

Participants who are not ACTHA members can attend the first ride and their participation fee is less than that for the two rides. If you're not an ACTHA member, you don't receive an award for your stellar riding, but you do get to ride. ACTHA membership dues are \$34 a year. The Isaac's Ranch ride costs \$54 plus the cost of stalls. There's no charge for camping, but there is a ranch fee.

To register, contact Dawn directly or visit <https://www.actha.us/ride/7108/view> for more information.

(includes December data also, bank statements available at meeting)

Bank Balance October 16, 2014 \$ 5,216.58

Credits

11/16 \$.51 interest

Debits

four checks \$ 2,131.65 reimburse miles/nights/food

Bank Balance Nov. 16/17, 2014 \$ 3,085.44

Credits

12-15 \$.29 interest

12-15 \$ 1,439.00 Xmas party/memberships/raffle *

Debits

12-9 \$ 100.00 cash for Xmas party change

five checks \$ 1125.60 reimburse miles/nights/food

Bank Balance Dec 15, 2014 \$ 3,299.13**Transactions After last Bank Balance:**

Debits

12-16 #1274 \$ 460.00 Xmas party facility cost

Balance January 14, 2015 \$ 2,839.13

(These balances include two checks issued for reimbursing miles/nights/food totaling \$55.12)

* Xmas party details:

37 people paid for dinner @ \$10 \$370.

One person made a donation to our chapter \$ 25.

The 50/50 raffle and other raffles gave us \$ 74.

\$469.

Our cost for BML was \$460.

Still waiting for some food receipts to be reimbursed. \$??

Memberships paid for 2015 included 36 people - 3 new and 33 renewing, 10 singles and 13 family memberships, total of \$820.=====
Membership Update/Email List

Our 2014 paid membership was 60. We had 20 single and 20 family memberships.

We are still using the 2014 email list with all those members, and have added the new folks, and begun to delete those who are not renewing.



GILA CHAPTER
SILVER CITY, NM