



# Back Country Horsemen of Middle and South Georgia

www.BCHSG.org



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## Back Country Horsemen Make a Difference

On April 29th, 2004 the Back Country Horsemen of East Tennessee and Back Country Horsemen of America filed an appeal of the Forest Service Plans for the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee and the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests in Georgia. The Georgia appeal contended that "Given the overbroad restriction on horse and pack stock activity pursuant to FW-127, the lack of sufficient environmental analysis related to the alternative containing that restriction and the other reasons set forth herein, the Regional Forester's decision was arbitrary, capricious and not in accordance with applicable law".

FW-127 restricted horses to designated trails and trailheads and numbered FS roads. In addition, the land manager for the Chattahoochee/Oconee National Forest imposed the additional restriction of no new trails, fixing the available trails to 262 miles in 865,000 acres.

On July 25, 2006 the Chief Forester issued a Record of Decision (ROD) on the appeals for the Cherokee, Chattahoochee, and Oconee National Forests. The decision (for the Chattahoochee and Oconee) stated that:

*"The Regional Forester is directed to either demonstrate that the analysis exists to support implementing Standard FW-127, or to conduct additional site specific analysis, including public involvement, regarding the need for and impacts of the decision to restrict horse and pack stock to designated routes. Until such analysis is provided or completed, Standard FW-127 may not be implemented, and is subject to modification depending on the outcome of the analysis.*

*The instructions regarding implementation of Standard FW-127 apply equally to horse and pack stock use within designated Wilderness."*

Please read the entire ROD for all the Southern National Forests at [www.fs.fed.us/emc/appllit/nhappdec.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/appllit/nhappdec.htm)

This means that for **the time being**, horses in the Chattahoochee, Oconee, and Cherokee National forests are again considered "foot traffic" and are not restricted to designated trails, trailheads, and Forest Service Roads for riding and camping.

We are extremely grateful to the Back Country Horsemen of America, Mike McClelland, President of Back Country Horsemen of East Tennessee and Kenny Higgins, Vice-president of Southern Appalachian Back Country Horsemen who put together the team that filed the appeal. FW-127 not only impacted our right to ride the National Forests of Georgia, but could have had a severe impact on land values and the equine industry as a whole.

This should be a wake-up call for all equestrians. It is hoped that the equestrians who ride our Southern National Forests will use good judgment when recreating there, practice "Leave No Trace" principles, and be considerate of other users. It is important that we built a strong state-wide trails organization and make every effort to be good stewards of our public lands. Note that as stated in the ROD, the FS could still implement this restriction if subsequent additional analysis justifies

## Volunteering Will Make a Difference

If you have any doubt about how gratifying and how much fun working outdoors on our horse trails is, we invite you to come work with us and see for yourself. But let's be honest, the days are long and the work is often physically demanding, but there is always something anyone can do.

BCHSG had its first workday in the Oconee National Forest on July 15th. We had a great turnout and cleared trails above

and below Wise Creek Hunt Camp.

We will have our next workday on September 23 at the new trail head. We will be allowed to camp Saturday night (and possibly Friday night as well) so plan to come and work on Saturday and stay late to ride. We will do a pot luck supper for those who stay over. For details call Tina t 706-319-0239.

We plan to have one workday a month, weather permitting. The following dates have been set through the end of the year. Location has not been set for the rest of the year. Details will be sent as they are available. If anyone knows of specific needs. Please let us know!

Put the following on your calendar and help us keep these trails open!

September 23  
October 21  
November 11  
December 2

Thanks to everyone who came out for our first workday. Together we can make a difference!



Thanks to certified sawyers Ron Cook and Randy Brown for running chainsaws on this workday!



## Right to Ride Bill Still Stalled in Senate

The US Senate version of the Right to Ride Bill, S. 781 is apparently tied up in the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee. Please help by contacting your Senator.

The message should start out with a request, e.g.: "I encourage you to support the Right to Ride Bill S. 781 and request your assistance to move the Right to Ride Bill S. 781 out of the Energy and Natural Resource Committee and onto the Senate floor." You may want to follow up with a personal anecdote, such as an example centering on the fact that there would be no trails in our backcountry without saddle and pack stock. And/or saddle and pack stock are used to pack in tools, and supplies to trail workers. Please ask your horse friends, bicycling friends, OHV friends, hikers and everyone else to help you with this campaign.

Following is contact information for Georgia's Senators; Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson.

Saxby Chambliss  
Chambliss.senate.gov  
416 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
Fax—202-224-0103

Johnny Isakson  
Isakson.senate.gov  
120 Russell Senate Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
Fax—202-228-0724

## Yellow Jacket Season in Georgia

If you trail ride, you are probably going to encounter bees and wasps at one time or the other, and this time of year through fall they are most protective of their nests.

To avoid bees and wasps, you should:

- ? stay on well traveled paths
- ? avoid dead tree and logs
- ? keep an eye out for nests in trees
- ? save the perfume & scents for the dance.
- ? avoid floral patterns which might be mistaken for a flower.
- ? stay away from bright, bee attracting colors.
- ? avoid bright jewelry or noise making implements.
- ? do not squish a yellow jacket, the scent will invite more, angry yellow jackets.

But if you trail ride, chances are you will encounter these angry creatures at some point, and you should have a plan of action ready.

If you are in a group decide before you ride out how you will handle bees or wasps. Designate a code word such as "BEES" . Hearing this word (shouted loudly) will signal everyone to move out quickly for at least a quarter of a mile.

If the lead horse is attacked, the rest of the group should head to the rear and the lead horse should move forward. Try and stay on your horse and get away from the site of the attack. If your horse bucks you off get away from the bees as fast as you can and look for your horse later.

Should your horse be stung severely the best treatment is hose them off with cold water, and check with your vet. An antihistamine, banamine, or a steroid may be necessary.

If riders in your group have bee allergies they should carry appropriate medicine. Carrying a cell phone may increase your safety, provided a signal is available.

### National Trails Reclassification Comment Period

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is currently conducting a review of their proposed National Trail Classification System (TCS), including the Trail Class Matrix and Design Parameters, and proposed implementing directives. The USFS is accepting public comments through September 1, 2006. This is an opportunity for you to inform the USFS of your concerns regarding how the TCS affects trails access, closures and other management issues that affect the riding community.

Be sure to read this in your national newsletter. This is BCHA in action.

### From the President

Part of the mission of BCHSG is to educate trail riders in the principles of Leave No Trace. Riding is a privilege and we need to constantly be aware of the impact of our riding and camping on the environment.

Please take the time to learn the basics of low impact camping and share your knowledge with others in a positive way. Taking the time to show someone how to properly tie stock and return the camp site to its original condition will pay off in the end.

BCHSG will be scheduling some LNT trainings in the future. We hope that you will come and bring a friend so that we can spread the word about low impact riding and camping.

*Tina Maddox*

## BCHSG is a 501C(4) Non Profit Organization

Just to clear up any confusion about our tax status. BCHSG will be a 501C(4) tax exempt organization under the umbrella of BCHA. We are classified as a social welfare organization.

Donations made to BCHSG are not tax deductible. However we, as an organization do not have to pay taxes.

This designation allows us to be politically active. Through the Public Liaison Committee, BCHA works to maintain visibility with legislators in Washington.

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this action. Let's make sure it doesn't. Tell your friends, give them a copy of this newsletter, encourage them to join BCHSG or BCHNG or both. We are only as strong as our membership.

### Upcoming Work Days

*Put these dates on your calendar*

September 23—Oconee National  
Forest, Work Day and Camp

October 21

November 11

December 2

For details call 706-319-0239

### Membership Form

Membership is good for one year—You will be notified when your dues are due  
Individual—\$30.00 year    Family—\$40.00 year

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Email

Phone / Cell Phone

### Welcome New Members

A big "**THANK YOU**" goes out to the following new members!

Gloria English  
Wayne Provost  
Anne and Gene Ensminger  
Flinn Anderson  
Darryl Tew

Betsy Gilman  
Ronnie Pesserilo  
Marilyn Vanne  
Sharon Burckhalter

BCHSG  
P. O. Box 3535  
Eatonton GA 31024

**Come On, Be a Part of the Solution!  
Join BCHSG Today!**

