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Enhancing the visitor's experience
Friends of Boggs Mountain

NEWSLETTER

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Many Thanks to Our Trail Maintenance Volunteers!

Tami, Zoe and Miranda Cramer, Nate Barnett, Mike Kasper, Gigi Stahl, Dale Gardner, Phyllis Murphey, Roy Stahl, Tom Rutledge, Brad May, Mike Horner, Eric Zeller, Brien Crothers, Boy Scout Troop 4 from Cotati: Doug, Julianna & James Fike, Eric & Gabriel Zeller, Logan Moody, and Grant Bramham.

Special mention to Mike Kasper for his work on Oct. 23rd removing dead branches that form "fuel ladders" along Game Trail.

Apologies if we've left out your name ... please let us know & we'll add it in the next newsletter!



Mosses, Lichens, & Liverworts. Photo courtesy Darlene Hecomovich.

Dear Friends,

It's been a busy summer and fall for your organization. If you have been to the forest recently you've hopefully noticed the old outhouse is no longer stationed in the parking lot and has been replaced by a beautiful new privy with a brand new stainless steel flush commode. Thanks to the expert skill of Bob Berg Construction and the generous financial support of Calpine, Bike Monkey and Friends of Boggs Mountain the project was completed late this summer. If you still long for the nostalgia of the old outhouse you will be happy to know it was relocated to Calso Camp so you need only visit the camp ground to experience the feel and aroma of the old days.

I want to shout out a sincere thank you to the Back Country Horsemen of California, Sarah Reid, State Trails Chair of the California State Horseman's Association, Tami and Jeff Cramer, owners of Main St. Bike Shop in Lakeport, The Kelseyville High School Mountain Biking Club, the Friends of Boggs Mountain volunteers and all that attended for making our "Wag, Walk and Wride" event on October 13th a great success. I would also like to, particularly, thank Gigi Stahl for her tireless effort in organizing the event. Without Gigi's painstaking preparation for this entertaining and informational program it simply would not have happened. Please see Gigi's synopsis of the day in the following pages.

The bright colors of autumn are now mostly on the forest floor but there is still no better time to enjoy the peace and beauty of Boggs Mountain State Forest. Trail maintenance will continue on the second Sat. of the month through the winter months, weather permitting, so please

TAKE A HIKE

The Friends of Boggs Mountain will be offering a 1.3-mile hike on Wednesday, December 11, at 9 am. The hike will be moderately paced on moderate terrain and will be led by Darlene Hecomovich. Winter has its special gifts and we will enjoy crisp, invigorating air, breathtaking vistas and an opportunity to exercise while enjoying the wonders of nature.

It is a time when pinecones are on the forest floor rather than up in the tree tops and leafless trees display their silhouettes to their best advantage. It is in winter when mosses and lichens flourish. Hopefully, we will have some rain that will prompt the mushrooms to appear. Do come and enjoy it all!

Wear sturdy shoes, dress appropriately for weather conditions and bring water and enthusiasm. Meet at the Parking Lot Kiosk promptly at 9 am. The Forest entrance is located off Highway 175 just 1½ miles north of Cobb Village. Turn at the blue State Fire Station/Boggs Mountain Forest sign. For further information phone Darlene at [707-928-5591](tel:707-928-5591) or email at dheco@me.com.



Dogwood in Spring,
Photo courtesy of Darlene Hecomovich

consider joining us for a little mildly aerobic workout clearing and maintaining trails. Our January Board meeting is tentatively planned for January 9 but is subject to change so please feel free to join us in planning the events and projects for 2014 and let your voice be heard. Check our web site often for updates on meeting dates and times.

Have a great holiday season!

David Thiessen
Board President

The Many Faces of Mountain Dogwood *Cornus nuttallii*

The Mountain Dogwood is stunning in all seasons in Boggs Mountain State Forest and is easily recognized in spring when in flower by the large, conspicuous, white petal-like bracts and in fall by its clusters of bright red fruit and brilliant red and yellow foliage. It is a deciduous usually small single-stemmed tree or substantial shrub, but Boggs has two exceptionally showy large specimens at the beginning of Gail's Trail which is also the end of the IT. The understory along the Houghton Creek Trail is mostly comprised of Mountain Dogwood that is typical of the smaller-sized tree.

The dramatic bloom that emerges in spring is comprised of 4 to 6 showy white bracts that surround the actual flower which is the dense, rounded light green center of the whole affair. These flower centers develop over the summer into the clusters of tightly grouped berries that add red color to the tree by fall. These berries provide food for birds such as the Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker and Band-tailed Pigeon. The leaves are 3 to 5 inches long with a broad elliptical shape.

The *Cornus* of the Latin name derives from the Latin *cornu* or horn referring to the hardness of the wood. The *nuttallii* refers to the Englishman Thomas Nuttall (1786-1859) a botanist, ornithologist and curator of the Harvard Botanic Gardens. His name is also the source for the Nuttall's Woodpecker, another denizen of the Forest. Over the years, it has had utilitarian benefits as well. The Native Americans used Dogwood as a remedy for fever and as a soothing restorative tonic for stomach ailments, and they also made use of the wood for harpoons. Early explorers boiled the dried root or bark for tea and used this tea as a replacement for quinine when that medicine was in short supply. In more modern times, the wood has been used to make piano keys and golf club heads. For the users of Boggs Mountain State Forest, Mountain Dogwood is a treasure to be enjoyed in all seasons.

Darlene Hecomovich

Wag, Walk, Wride at Boggs! – By Gigi Stahl

On a stunning autumn day in October, the Friends of Boggs Mountain (FOBM), the Lake-Mendo Unit of the Back Country Horsemen of California (BCHC), Main Street Bicycles, and the Clear Lake and Kelseyville High School Bike Team came together to hold the “Wag, Walk and Wride” trail etiquette event at Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest.

BCHC President, Paul Villanueva, kicked off the program with a brief description of the Back Country Horsemen’s mission and goals. Paul explained their core mission is to preserve and protect existing trails, support multiuse where it already exists, and help foster goodwill among all trail users in Lake and Mendocino Counties. The BCHC also provides a valuable service for government agencies such as the Mendocino National Forest that avail of horse and pack stock to haul equipment in and out of the backcountry where motorized vehicle access is not possible.

In addition, the BCHC strives to educate trail users on proper trail etiquette to minimize user conflict. For instance, Paul recommended stepping off the trail on the downhill side to let equestrians pass as horses may consider someone or something above them a predator. Another helpful tip was to calmly talk to the horse and rider as you approach to help assure the animal that you are not a threat.

On some occasions, people will step aside and wind up behind a brush or tree thinking they can avoid disturbing a horse altogether.

“What might be considered courteous could actually result in agitating a horse on a trail,” Paul warned.

As prey animals, horses are always on the lookout for predators, and something unseen that makes a movement or noise near the trail can spook them. Paul emphasized that because hikers and mountain bikers need to yield to horseback riders, it’s often best for the equestrian to communicate with other trail users and guide them in a way that keeps their horse calm. In addition, it is recommended that young or green horses are slowly introduced to multiuse trails, and even experienced horses should be desensitized to many different objects and animals. Paul enjoys seeing his grandkids have fun riding their bikes around his horses, as it’s a great way to get them used to bikes on trails.

Sarah Reid, State Trails Chair of the California State Horseman’s Association, was next to speak, and gave a broad picture of the California trail system. She also discussed steps taken at Annadel State Park in Santa Rosa to avoid conflict in a region that sees considerably more trail traffic than Boggs. As a member of the Mounted Assistance Patrol, Sarah and other volunteers serve as “trail ambassadors” ready to lend assistance or to provide gentle reminders on trail etiquette to park visitors.

Sarah also demonstrated some ways to read the body language of a horse. Lake County Horse Council president, Virginia Vovchuk, led her lovely Morgan horse, Shalako, toward center stage. Pointing out Shalako’s lowered head, the cocked position of her hind leg, ears slightly to the side are generally signs of a relaxed horse, Sarah explained to the captivated audience.

To illustrate a horse’s startle response, Sarah rustled the BCHC banner behind her, and Shalako suddenly raised her head, her ears spun toward the sound, and her muscles stiffened. “Buckin’ Benny”, Paul’s trusty pack mule that appeared to be dozing nearby, also gave a start. This demonstration was a reminder that equestrians have a responsibility to be able control a half-ton animal as best as they can, as well as for other users to be mindful of how they might elicit this response when approaching horses from around blind corners or from behind.

The Clear Lake and Kelseyville High School Bike Team were next on the program. With the help of four members of their team, Coach Tami Cramer briefly covered the history of the co-ed team and their plans for the future, which included growing the team through “interest rides” at Boggs this Fall.

To assuage trail user concerns about the training they do at Boggs in the winter and spring, co-coach Jeff Cramer emphasized that team members concentrate on technical riding, not speed. The young cyclists then explained the policy they strive to observe in interacting with other trail users, consistent with the trail courtesies discussed in the earlier part of the program.

Jeff went on to describe the arduous physical training mountain biking requires and how the experience helps to shape the kids’ attitude toward exercise and the outdoors, as well as instilling confidence.

One of the highlights of the day came as bike team members took turns riding on a different kind of saddle – courtesy of Shalako. Virginia helped them get a feel for what it’s like to be 8 feet off the ground, and to put themselves on a mount that requires a different kind of skill and knowledge.

Every boy grinned from ear to ear, enjoying the higher elevation, but confessed some apprehension of “not quite being in control”. Hopefully, this realization gave them a more empathic understanding of the horsemanship skills required to handle a horse, especially on a multiuse trail where all sorts of things can unexpectedly come at or behind you.

Finally, Paul and another BCHC member, Debbie Watson from Willits, took back the reins of the program and gave a terrific hands-on demonstration on how to pack a horse or mule for an extended backcountry trip. They described the use of “panniers” – larger versions of road bike luggage - how to securely strap them on a pack saddle, the necessity of balancing the weight, and “smart packing”. Since Paul often spends weeks in the backcountry, the ability to carry everything you anticipate needing along with a few Macgyveresque skills and tools is critical.

The Cramers, who also own Main St. Bicycles, got Specialized Bicycles to provide free water bottle giveaways stuffed with Halloween treats and Clif Bars. After refreshments, several participants took off for a “wag, walk and wride” to enjoy the rest of the Indian summer day.

I went to an event like this at Montaña De Oro State Park near San Luis Obispo earlier this year,” explained Gigi Stahl, event organizer and FOBM volunteer, “and admired the camaraderie and trail stewardship in that group. FOBM feels that as more and more visitors come to Boggs each year, we need to develop a trail culture that is inclusive and prepared to handle heavier use in a diplomatic and informative way. Kids and adults in our local community are our trail ambassadors, and we’re grateful to Sarah Reid, other out-of-county as well as local participants who came to show their commitment to trail user education.”

“The Lake County Horse Council is a strong supporter of safe trails and education,” Vovchuk added. “It was great to share information about our horses with other trail users, and learn what we have in common.”

To keep the momentum going, the Friends of Boggs will be rolling out a trail etiquette brochure in early 2014.



Debbie Watson and Paul Villanueva of the Lake-Mendo Unit of the Back Country Horsemen demonstrate how to pack a mule for the backcountry. Photo by David Thiessen



Tom Smythe gets acquainted with Shalako who stands by her mistress, Virginia Vovchuk, while members of the Clear Lake and Kelseyville High School Bike Team take turns to experience what it's like to be on a different kind of saddle. Photo by David Thiessen



Sarah Reid, Trails Chair for the CA State Horsemen's Association, provides clues to reading a horse's body language. In the background, note Virginia Vovchuk's horse, Shalako, as she cocks her rear leg in a relaxed pose, with head lowered, ears turned to the side.



Cal Fire Corner

Boggs Mountain Forest Management Note:

Forest staff has been working on timber harvest preparations in the general area between Ridge Camp to Rd. 300 and Road 200, 220 to 400. Timber harvest could start as early as next year and will be done selectively to enhance forest productivity and health. Outlined are also some small areas of about two acres in which all mature trees will be harvested. This will set perfect conditions for natural regeneration of Ponderosa Pine –the species best suited for the conditions on Boggs. Starting from seeds of surrounding trees, seedlings will have all the conditions and light needed to excel against competing species like Douglas Fir which would have the upper hand otherwise. Forest visitors will have the opportunity to experience active forest management and observe forest habitat dynamics as time progresses and regeneration takes off.

CalFire crews have manually unplugged culverts and cleared brush along most forest roads. Road 300 has undergone significant repair and reconstruction and will remain closed till spring 2014 to give the new surface time to settle.

Most roads were graded and we are currently awaiting suitable weather conditions to proceed with repairs on Road 500.

Prescribed burns are planned during the winter/spring season as apt conditions arise. Visitor access to some forest areas or trails might become temporarily restricted. Notifications will be posted.

The forest has been popular as ever. We see increasing numbers in visitors, overnight campers, special events and day users. Hikers, hunters, equestrians, mountain bikers and everybody beyond and between.

Boggs Mountain forest staff likes to use this opportunity to express our thanks to Friends of Boggs Mountain for all the help and devotion to making the forest a one of a kind positive recreation experience.

Providing visitor maps and up to date visitor information as well as improvement projects like the new restroom are quite significant to say the least. Ongoing activities like the monthly trail maintenance and especially prompt responses from the volunteer network as to removing hazards like downed trees are truly contributive and appreciated.

Boggs Mountain Forest Staff

Katie Johns
Boggs Mountain Forestry Aid

Boggs now has an archery range!



Thanks to the Kelly Fletcher and his team we now have an archery range at Boggs.

The range is located by going up through the gate to the west of the Ranger's office and follow the dirt road for 1/4 mile until you see the parking lot on the right. Signs will be put up in the future.

There currently are three target mats set up for archery, one at 20 yards, the next at 33 yards and one other at 50 yards. Benches and bow racks are also installed. Bring your own targets and clean up after use. **NO BROADHEADS ARE ALLOWED** as they tear up the mats too much.

Only field points and target points are allowed.

Donations are requested to help fund the further development of the archery range. These can be deposited in the "users of Boggs donation box" at the entrance.

Currently there are 12 acres set aside for the development and donation funds and volunteer work will help to expand the small practice course into a full walk-through range.



- Thank You, Trail Stewards!
by Gigi Stahl

Many of us have a deep attachment to Boggs. For some it is their back yard, a short ride from their home or worth the long drive to be in a wonderful refuge where one can hike or ride for hours and meet few souls, if any at all, on the trail.

And what about those trails, eh? They've seen a lot of TLC from wonderful trailwork volunteers over the many years that Boggs has been in existence. Boone Lodge has been a huge advocate and recruited many (including this author) to devote time to clear brush from trails, build drainage structures, and help repair damaged trails.

Over the past year, we've had 'regulars' appear at our trailwork days: Phyllis Murphey, Brien Crothers, Obie Porteous, Matt Kolasinski, and Brad May. Board member Mike Kasper has been especially attentive to the 'fuel ladders' in certain areas, and has collaborated with Forest Aide, Katie Johns, and Forest Manager, Gerri Finn, to target specific trails that needed immediate attention.

We also had a lot of help from out-of-county visitors – a crew of seven from Boy Scouts Troop 4 from Cotati who visited Boggs to camp and mountain bike on an October weekend. Even before setting up camp, they immediately joined us on a Saturday morning to clear sightlines on a 2-mile segment of Gail's Trail south of Road 400.

Our trailwork efforts this past year have focused on eliminating blind corners and improving sightlines as much as possible. Brushing the sides as well as the top to get a vertical clearance of 10-12 ft for equestrians is part of this effort. In July, members of the Clear Lake and Kelseyville High School Bike Team helped us clear a problem area where the manzanita had grown very thick at the first switchback on Mac's Trail.

As for trail hazards, many thanks to David Thiessen, Joan Hume, and Phyllis Murphey who got all western on the poison oak along the Interpretive trail this past June. Now that's what I call dedication! Next time we're going to make sure that we provide Tecnu and paper towels for our volunteers. Oh, and just remember that poison oak "sticks", meaning the reddish bare branches and stems you see sticking out of the ground in the cold months are also covered with the offensive oil (Urushiol) which can trigger a nasty rash.

When the rains arrive, we'll look into developing drain dips as alternatives to rock water bars where possible as the latter require greater maintenance. Drain dips serve as catchments that funnel water (if correctly placed) to a natural drainage area.

To sum up: a huge THANK YOU to all our trailwork volunteers, especially to those who keep returning! And to the "unsung heroes" – those who quietly do their part, especially cleaning up the forest as they go about their walk or ride - what you do is deeply appreciated. Removing a discarded can or bottle or any kind of rubbish from a trail corridor really does enhance our experience in the forest!

We would love to have more help in keeping our trails in great shape – especially from equestrians who have a higher reach than the average hiker - so please mark the second Saturday of each month from 9-11 a.m. as the Boggs trailwork day. After trailwork, you can set off for your hike or ride with a great feeling of being a trails steward. If you can't volunteer but see something that might be an issue on the trail (downed tree, eroded area, etc.) please do not hesitate to contact us at fobmtn@gmail.com or leave a message with the forest manager at [707-928-4378](tel:707-928-4378).

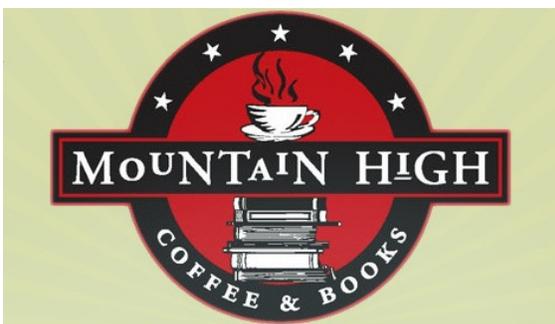
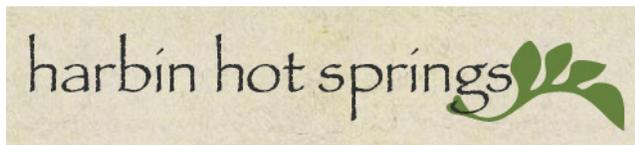
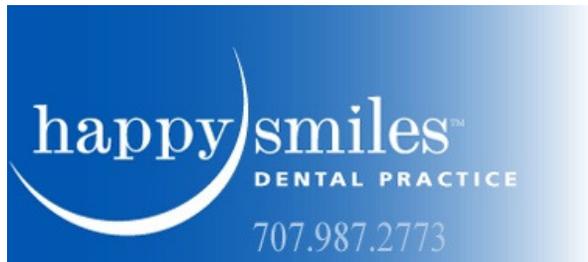
JUST IN >>> There will be a shooting area cleanup day on Sat., Dec. 7th, and the area will be closed from dawn to noon. Please contact the forest manager for more info: [707-928-4378](tel:707-928-4378).

We are very grateful to acknowledge the following new and renewing members

Terry Balestriere, Fairfax
Corey Dahline, Angwin
Reikor & Saro Deacon, Cobb
Deborah Doran, Belmont
Mike Kasper, Cobb
Dawn Quinlivan, Novato

Thank You for Your Support!

The Friends of Boggs Mountain appreciate the support of our Business Members !



The Friends of Boggs Mountain newsletter was edited by Gigi Stabl. Please send comments/corrections to fobmntn@gmail.com.