

**Back Country Horsemen of the Virginia Highlands**  
**January 11, 2020**

The meeting was held at the "Trailside" home of Nancy Sluys and was called to order at 7:06 pm by Nancy Sluys, President.

**Members in attendance:**

Ron Anderson	Nancy Sluys, President	Renee Stillwell
Theresa Anderson	Bill Sluys	Dawn Theisen
Twillia Anderson	Charlie Smith	Byron Wallace
Gina Hagis	Susan Smith, Secretary	
Anne Lemere	Curtis Stillwell, Vice President	

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the December 7, 2019 meeting were distributed and reviewed. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes as presented.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dawn reviewed the attached Treasurer's Report, noting the following:

- Administration Account: Credits included dues, totaling \$290. There were no debits. The ending balance for the Administration Account as of 1/11/20 was \$4459.17.
- Trail Fund Account: Credits included two donations, totaling \$70. The ending balance for the Trail Fund Account as of 1/11/20 was \$10,903.12. Nancy added that several trail project options were discussed at the last meeting with the Forest Service. Another meeting will be scheduled soon to discuss further which projects are feasible. Discussion was held regarding empowering youth by involving youth groups in trail projects.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the report as presented.

**State Meeting Summary:** Nancy reported the following from the Back Country Horsemen of Virginia meeting. Virginia Highlands attendees included Nancy Sluys, Susan Tomaselli, Diane Cherry, and Susan Smith.

- The following officers were elected for 2020: Nancy Sluys – Chair, Jane Eckes – Vice Chair, Kerry Beard – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, Marge Lewter – Secretary, and Candy Lansford – Treasurer.
- Each chapter reported their activities and focuses:
  - Virginia Highlands: Highlighted the Raccoon Branch project and meetings with the Forest Service planning for 2020.
  - Golden Horseshoe: Meeting resistance in working with a ranger that is not always favorable to equine concerns/issues.
  - SWVA: Working on establishment of additional helicopter landing areas because of issues with landing in Hungry Horse field.
  - Eastern Divide: Partnering with multiple organizations and Town of Blacksburg in development of new trail system.
  - Nancy stated that following the state meeting, Jane Eckes sent her an example of a memorandum of agreement that is currently in use between Back Country of the Blue Ridge and the Forest Service in Pisgah National Forest. Discussion was held regarding development of a similar agreement for our chapter since we have a good working relationship with the Forest Service. If we can be successful with an agreement with the Mount Rogers District, it could assist Golden Horseshoe and other chapters with their Forest Service districts. We have a

- volunteer agreement in place. A committee was formed to review the NC agreement example and research expanding our current agreement to include the use of mechanized equipment. Curtis Stillwell will chair the committee, with Gina Haggis, Ron Anderson, and Nancy Sluys as members.

**Election of State Delegates:** Nancy explained that we need to elect two State delegates and an alternate.

- State Delegates: Nancy Sluys and Susan Smith were nominated. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve Nancy Sluys and Susan Smith as State Delegates.
- Alternate State Delegate: Renee Stillwell was nominated. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve Renee Stillwell as Alternate State Delegate.

**2020 Meeting/Activities Planning:**

- Meetings: It was agreed to have meetings every other month, including March 21 (location to be determined), May 9 (camp out at Triple C).
- Dates to note:
  - March/April: Hugo's Meadow sign placement
  - June 6 – National Trails Day
  - June 19-20: NATRC Ride
  - July: Horse and Hound Festival – Volunteers are needed. Percentage of funds based on number of volunteers.
  - August 28-29: Endurance Ride
- Weekday Warrior Group: Nancy suggested forming a "Weekday Warrior" riding group. She will send an email to see who is interested.
- Trail Work Day: Nancy will send an email to see if anyone not at the meeting would like to host a trail work day.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Susan Smith, Secretary