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Fall/Winter Newsletter 2015

Cleanup On Penitentiary Trail

A few downed trees across the trail were no match for a hard-working BCHNG crew. On Saturday, Nov. 21, Molly Ford, Dewey Campbell, Jim Holland, Junior Kyle, Bob Wagner, Dawn and Gary Davis rode in on horseback with their hand saws, ready to clear any deadfalls on this beautiful woodland trail. Thank you!



Before cutting trees, the crew discussed safety procedures.



Many hands make short work of this tree.

Riding Into The Devils Den

On a sunny Saturday in mid-September, Nanci Tarrant, Kathy Czeschin, Linda Richards, Marti Nunn and Debbe Kraemer headed out on adventure-filled BCHNG ride on the Devils Den Loop. This road afforded a fast pace for some and leisurely pace for others – with everyone enjoying gorgeous views and waterfalls. The 3 ½ hour ride started and ended at Marti’s barn.





Note from the President:

Hello All,

We are nearing the end of another year and I hope it has been a good year for everyone with many memories to hold.

I would like to touch base on a couple of topics that we discussed throughout the year. One of these is why we are a member of the state and national organization. As a member of the National Organization, as with most groups, clubs, organizations, herds, etc. there is strength in numbers. In this case, that means we have a louder voice and a better chance of being heard (with positive result) when issues of importance arise that have the potential to limit, change or prohibit our use of public lands.

Remaining an active member in these organizations insures that when difficult situations arise, that we have a large group to draw information from who have experienced similar problems in the past. If we remain current and in touch with chapters from all across the United States, we have a line of

communication that holds almost limitless solutions, tools and knowledge that lead to them. Last, a big plus that comes from The National is having legal advocates. I myself do not have time to sit and monitor every bill that is going on in our government. Our National organization is excellent at monitoring these and informing us of points of interest that are coming up. They also then let us know how to legally respond and what actions to take. This in itself is a huge benefit.

In the upcoming year we are going to organize work days and get them on the calendar so everyone can make plans to come out and enjoy a day of good fellowship – while contributing to much needed upkeep. We will also have quarterly rides as well as other activities and updates.

Thank you for all you do in supporting our great organization and may the New Year bring you and your families nothing but blessings and joy. May it also have many days in the saddle in store for you.

With kind regards,
Melinda Wagner, President
(706) 455-2921

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On December 8th, The Sun Goes To Bed Early

If you open your 2016 edition of the Farmers' Almanac, (you have yours, right?) you'll see listed on the calendar pages for December 2015 (page 132), among the astronomical data, that the earliest sunset for 2015 occurs on December 8th. But wait, if the winter solstice, which happens on December 21st, is the shortest day of the year – how can this be?

Due to a discrepancy between our clocks, which mark off nice, neat 24 hours every day, and the actual rotation of the Earth on its axis, we experience a phenomenon where the earliest sunset of the year does not coincide with the shortest day of the year, but occurs nearly 2 weeks prior in the mid latitudes.

Whereas the astronomical day goes from solar noon to solar noon (a description which marks the highest point of the Sun in the sky at a given latitude, regardless of the date), these solar days aren't exactly 24 hours every time. They're close—most everywhere but polar regions—but in the weeks approaching the solstice, an astronomical day is more like 24 hours and 30 seconds. The only time our days are exactly 24 hours long are between a solstice (when we experience the longest or shortest day of the year) and an equinox (when day and night are more or less of equal length.)

The reason for the discrepancy in time is twofold. First, the Earth is tilted 23.5° on its rotational axis relative to the plane of our path around the Sun. In the winter, those of us in the Northern hemisphere are tilted away from the Sun.

Second, the orbit of the Earth around the Sun isn't a perfect circle. It's a bit of an oval, or ellipse, and at some points in the orbit we are closer to the Sun, causing the Earth to speed up a bit in the winter, and slow down in the summer. That's enough to put our clocks a bit out of sync around

the solstices, to the tune of about half a minute per day.

And so, because the time on our wristwatches or on our smartphones doesn't match exactly with the time we observe by looking at the actual movement and position of the Sun in the sky, the earliest sunset of the year falls 2 weeks prior to the solstice at latitudes of 40° N.

While the Sun sets a little earlier at the 40° N. latitude on December 8th (in New York, sunset occurs at 4:35 p.m.), the day itself will be longer in hours (9 hours and 23 minutes) than on December 21st, the shortest day of the year (9 hours and 21 minutes); it's just that the sunset will come earlier on the clock.

If you are wondering when the earliest sunrise occurs, the pattern is a mirror image of what happens in the winter. The earliest sunrise in 2016 arrives on June 13th, about 2 weeks before the summer solstice, which is June 20th at 6:34 p.m, EDT.

Edward Higgins is a freelance writer, artist, home chef, and avid fly fisherman who lives in Yarmouth, Maine. He studied at Skidmore College and Harvard University.

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