

DOUBLE DIAMOND AWARD

Back Country Horsemen of Central Arizona is the winner of this year's Double Diamond Award. The Volunteer Hours Committee chaired by Nick Martinez had a tough assignment when asked to select a winner from the five submitted projects. This year's winner titled their project the "Wupatki National Monument Packing Project" and involved bringing a diverse group of participants to complete a difficult job of packing an estimated 7,000 lbs of material consisting of 60 pound rolls of smooth wire, 70 pound rolls of barbed wire, t-posts, 60 lb bags of concrete, and the list goes on. Perhaps most remarkable was bringing together the National Park Service (NPS), for whom the project was designated, the National Forest Service (NFS), and a group of 20 students from the American Conservation Experience (ACE).

The NPS's project site was difficult to reach across NPS land. With the NFS's cooperation, mapping, and involvement, easier access was made available across NFS managed land. The BCH of Central Arizona along with the ACE students from Belgium, Sweden, Japan, Kosovo, and the U.S. used 9 pack animals to complete the project along with long hours and hard work. With the delivery of the materials the very grateful NPS supervisors and field personnel could begin their work in earnest. The students from the ACE had an experience they will perhaps never have the opportunity to experience again in their lifetimes. Gayle Higgs, President of the BCH of Central Arizona, has received letters from some of the students thanking her for the experience and expressing great praise for the Back Country Horsemen organization. Rewards also came in the television exposure for Back Country's efforts. A Flagstaff TV station filmed one of the day's work and aired it on the evening news.

The other projects submitted for the Double Diamond Award were all great projects and deserve recognition. All exemplify the purpose and philosophy of BCHA.

- **Windy Mountain Trail #454 - Charlie Russell Back Country Horsemen of Montana**
On National Trails Day, 28 Charlie Russell BCH members used horses and mules to pack 50 loads of fill, approximately 50 tons, to repair and reconstruct the deeply eroded trail resulting from 10" of rain. The trail was completely reconstructed making it safe passage once again.
- **Pioneer Girls Equine Demonstration – Lake Havasu Chapter, Arizona BCH**
An educational equine demonstration was presented to girls aged from 4 to 14 at the S.A.R.A. Park. Leave No Trace information was given to each participant as well as hands on educational experience stressing safety, anatomy, and horse behavior. Goals were to increase confidence, learn responsibility and caring, and develop emotionally and physically from involvement with horses firsthand. It was a very positive experience for the community.
- **Antelope Island State Park Project – Wasatch Front Chapter, Utah BCH**
Torrential rains washed out switchbacks on the Split Rock Loop trail on Antelope Island. The State Park's budget stretched as it was caused this area to be an unfunded project. Organized by the Wasatch Front Chapter, 60 riders from 6 chapters with 98 horses and mules packed sandbags to stabilize the trail slopes. Twenty-five to thirty loads of materials were packed 7.5 miles from the trailhead. BCHU completed with work project thus turning an unsafe and hazardous trail into useable and safe passage.
- **Fourteen Years and \$400,000 in Projects – Shoshone Chapter, Wyoming BC**
The Shoshone Chapter Back Country Horsemen of Wyoming is a relatively small chapter but exemplifies the true spirit of BCHA. Since its inception in 1993 a remarkable number of projects and work has been done and many volunteer hours recorded. Strong relationships have been developed and nurtured with the land management agencies.