

# Gila Chapter

## Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico | MINUTES

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9/6/2023 6:00 PM | Grant County Extension Office

Meeting called by	Matt Rehani	Attendees
Type of meeting	Monthly business meeting	[Cindi deCapiteau, Melissa Green, Dave Imler, Nancy Imler, Rawlings Lemon, Mike Natharius (USFS – Guest)
Note taker	Cindi deCapiteau	Matt Rehani, Cheryl Roth, Donna Tillmann, Ted Whitmore, Laurie Wlosinski]

### AGENDA TOPICS

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*Recognize guests and new members | Presenter Matt Rehani*

Mike Natharius, the Gila National Forest's Soil Scientist/BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response) Coordinator, joined the meeting. Introductions all around.

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*Financial & membership report | Presenter Dave Imler*

The Gila chapter incurred expenditures of \$23,302 for the past period. The money went for:

- Liability insurance (\$200.48)
- Melissa Green (\$4434.45) for mileage and hard work as the chapter's trail project coordinator
- Outslope Trail Solutions(\$12,359.06), a group that worked with Melissa Green on one of our recent trail projects.
- Credit card purchases (\$356.54).

GBCH received income of \$15,534 as follows:

- \$13,934.90 from USFS to cover trail work support from Outslope Trail Solutions
- \$1,000 from a frequent donor
- \$860 from last summer's Give Grandly effort

Leaving the chapter with these balances:

- Checking \$23,381.20
- Savings 15,581.08

Chapter membership of 57 active and paid members is unchanged from the August report.

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*Agenda topic Guest Speaker | Presenter Laurie Wlosinski*

Laurie Wlosinski, a GBCH member of Grant County Search and Rescue (SAR), provided information about the Garmin satellite communicator, inReach. The handheld device is an essential piece of equipment for back country visitors. Even in the absence of cell service, inReach allows two-way communication, which means that you can both send and receive messages with it. It also is connected to an emergency response center for use when situations require support from rescuers (SOS).

The Garmin inReach devices are among several satellite communicators from various manufacturers. Laurie found an article that rates the ones an outfit called Switchback Travel considers the best on the market (see <https://www.switchbacktravel.com/best-satellite-messengers>); Garmin's inReach Mini 2 model received the highest rating.

Every Garmin device equipped with inReach technology<sup>1</sup> can send and receive text messages and can transmit/receive messages over connections with the satellite constellation and wifi.

Laurie spoke about what happens when a user activates an inReach SOS signal. inReach devices have a dedicated SOS switch protected by a shield that prevents accidental SOS activation. When the SOS is activated, inReach automatically connects to Garmin Response, an international dispatch center that is staffed 24/7, with which it's possible to exchange text messages and which can activate local emergency agencies (such as Grant County Search and Rescue). Incoming messages to Garmin Response are automatically accompanied by the GPS coordinates of a user's location. The coordinates are also attached to text messages for emergency contacts set up on the user's Garmin Explore website and/or app. (<https://www.garmin.com/en-US/p/614327> for more information). Garmin Explore is required for user to manage various inReach capabilities (e.g., preset messages, emergency and non-emergency contacts, email addresses, and a user's location on a map), but is provided at no additional cost as part of the inReach user's chosen subscription plan.



The inReach service requires a monthly or annual subscription with Garmin, which offers nine subscription plans, ranging in price from \$11.95 per month (subscription with annual commitment) for a consumer safety plan to \$249.95/month for a flex team max subscription (see <https://www.garmin.com/en-US/p/837461/pn/010-06003-SU> for details).

The inReach connects to Garmin Response via the Iridium satellite constellation (<https://www.iridium.com/network/>), a group of 81 satellites that continuously circle the Earth at a low-earth orbit of 780 kilometers (480 miles). The constellation means that for any location on the planet, a satellite passes over about once an hour.

Once an inReach has been activated, and Garmin Explore has been set up with contacts (including email addresses and phone numbers), a user's contacts can follow a user's track, can send messages to the user's inReach, the Explore app, email, or cell phone.

Once an inReach SOS has been activated, the SOS signal transmits to the closest satellite and then to Garmin Response. Since the message is accompanied by the user's GPS coordinates, Garmin Response staff instantly know where the message came from; the coordinates tell the staff which emergency authorities must be alerted to the incident. Garmin Response also sends a confirmation message to the inReach user. If the user responds that the message is intentional, then Response Center activates its response protocols. Response time from the center is quick.

In New Mexico (unlike in other states) search and rescue is free of charge (although transport to definitive care by air or ground ambulance will likely incur an expense to the subject of the incident).

The inReach benefits (compared with other satellite communicators) are numerous. The inReach system has the best satellite coverage and offers speedy two-way communication. Garmin Response is the most robust support A

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<sup>1</sup> Garmin offers two standalone inReach models, the inReach Mini 2 and the inReach Messenger. Garmin has incorporated inReach capabilities into four of its handheld GPS units, so for those of us who now carry both an inReach and a GPS, it might be necessary to carry only an inReach-equipped GPS when the time comes to upgrade. See <https://www.garmin.com/en-US/c/outdoor-recreation/satellite-communicators/#satellite-messaging-devices> for details.

Although the inReach battery has a very good charge life, a significant drawback is that its battery is built in and cannot be revived with fresh batteries, a factor that also affects legacy inReach devices. As a result, users must carry a battery charger (which might or might not itself be rechargeable with fresh batteries). (Laurie carries multiple chargers for her inReach.)

In summary, an inReach can communicate in various ways:

- From one inReach to another inReach
- From inReach to email
- From inReach
- From inReach to mapping on the Garmin Explore website or app (so contacts can view a user's location)

When setting up an inReach for the first time, a user must specify emergency contacts to receive notice of an inReach SOS activations. Note that an inReach must be synced with Garmin Explore periodically to transfer new contacts and system updates to the device.

Although it's not easy to accidentally set off an SOS, when carrying an inReach in the field, it's best to store it where it's out of the way of accidental SOS activation.

Other satellite messengers do not offer real-time tracking and are not connected to an emergency response center. The iPhone 14 can send SOS messages at no cost, but is connected only to local services. inReach connects to the Garmin Response center.

Laurie advises against purchase of a used inReach because its battery might be depleted and the device will have to be returned to Garmin for repair.

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#### *GCSAR Activity | Presenter Laurie Wlosinski*

Grant County Search and Rescue (GCSAR) has been involved recently in:

- A welfare at the Gila Cliff Dwellings
- A mission in Belen (no victim found)
- GCSAR was notified about a horse that fell into a narrow crevice, but was unable to respond because the New Mexico Search and Rescue Act allows SAR for humans only and not for animals. GCSAR can assist by referrals to people and agencies that can help.

If you're in the back country with an inReach and you encounter an emergency, if you have any doubt about the appropriate emergency response, send an SOS. Melissa has info about horse stuck in a crevasse.

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#### *BCHNM Update | Presenter Cheryl Roth*

The first BCHNM Rendezvous since COVID starts the weekend of September 9 at Ft. Stanton. The schedule is not robust, but will feature an auction, a group breakfast, and a couple of rides. The Rendezvous is an opportunity for BCHA members from the different chapters to meet one another and share trail experiences. Nobody from GBCH will be attending, but Joan Bacon got some goodies from JD's feedstore for the auction.

BCHNM is hinting that the Gila chapter should host the Rendezvous in the future. The only practical location is the Celebration site located between Mimbres and the Sapillo Campground on NM highway 35 (map on page 5).

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#### *Public Service | Presenter Melissa Green*

The GBCH trail crews conducted a few day projects in August (posted on Facebook) and have been working on the Crest Trail (map on page 6). At the end of September, mounted and ground crews will work out of Willow Creek (map on page 7).

We are helping with Outslope Trail Solution's assessment of last year's Black Fire by way of shared funds from the Forest Service. Mike Natharius commented GBCH is helping the Forest Service assess wildfire damage to facilitate opening trails. The USFS appreciates GBCH involvement in getting trail work done. Outslope Trails has a lot of experience working in fire areas and the organization helps takes care of fire access and recreational use. Outslope Trails is currently assessing where work is needed so operations can crew assignments can be activated.

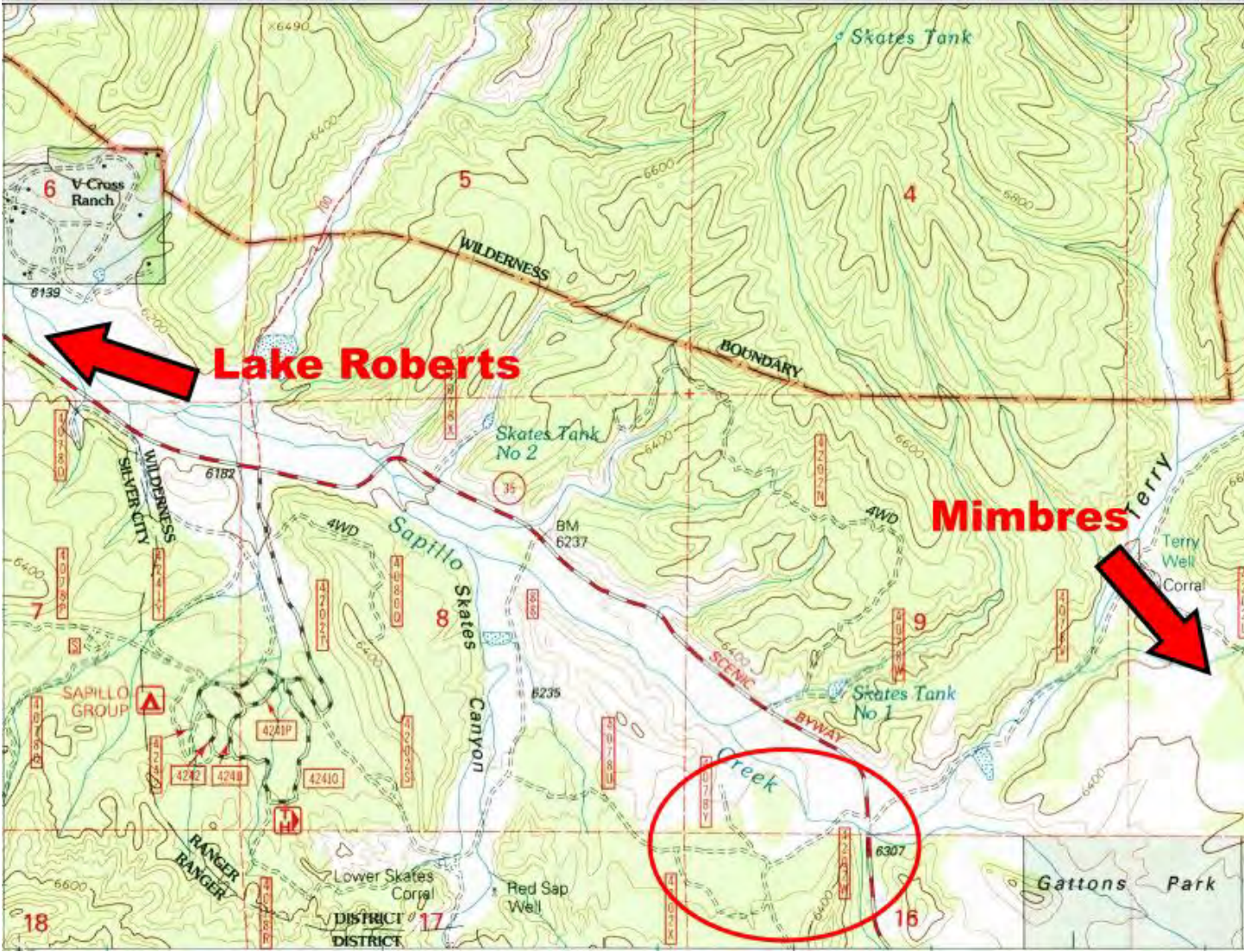
According to Cheryl Roth, Thomas Shelley, a Grant County rancher, commented favorably on the work GBCH has done on Rain Creek (map on page 8).

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### *Announcements* |

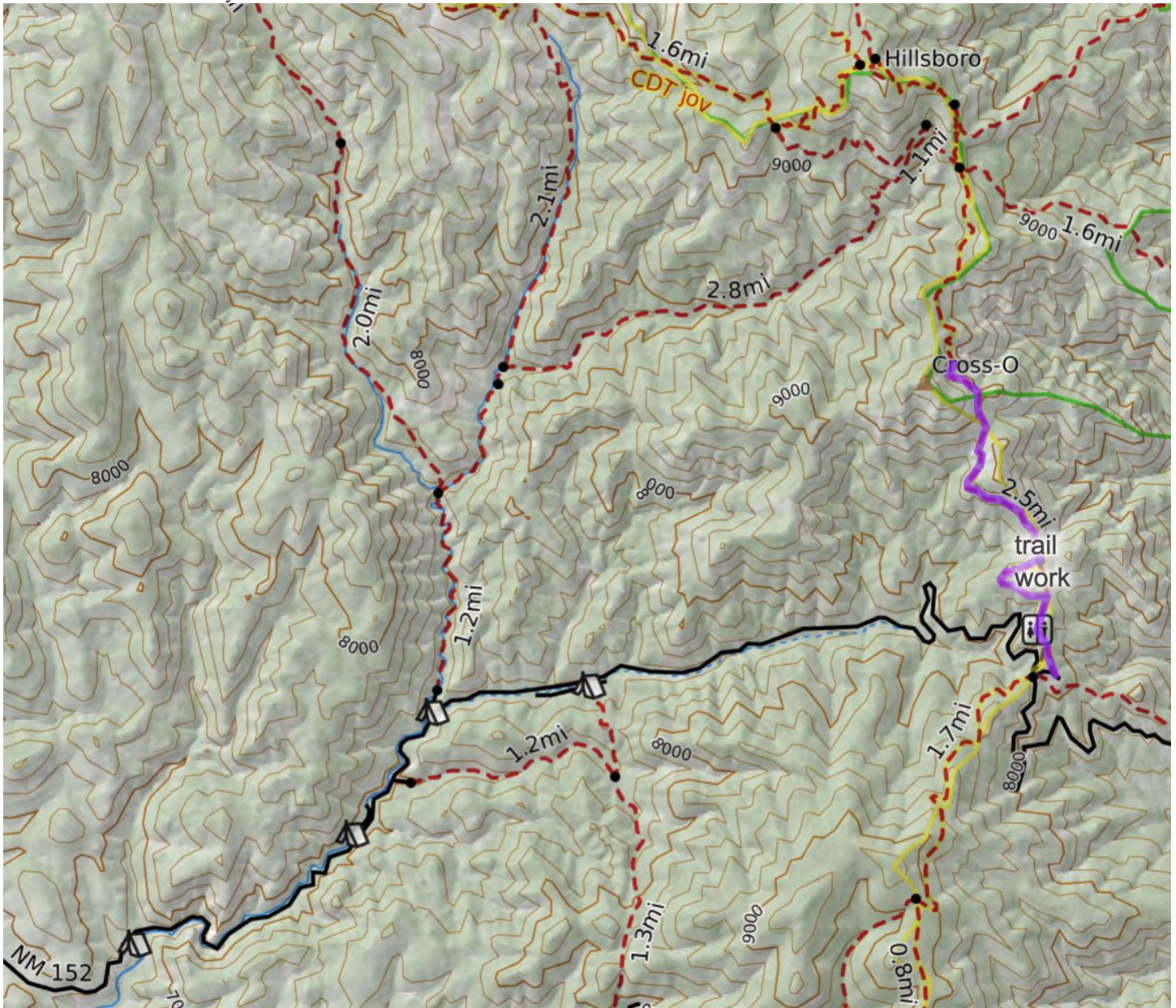
Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 11, 2023







Crest Trail from Emory Pass





Willow Creek Campground

