BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN
OF IDAHO
P.O. BOX 513
SALMON, IDAHO 83467

Sawyer Certification Program

The legal basis for Back Country Horsemen of Idaho to certify its volunteer members as sawyers is contained in the provisions of USDA FOREST SERVICE SAW OPERATIONS GUIDE July 14, 2016.

This document establishes the BCHI administrative procedures, saw safety, sawyer training and sawyer technical proficiency standards for certification of individual volunteer member sawyers as well as selection and certification criteria for BCHI Instructor/Evaluators.

1. **Administrative policies and procedures pertaining to the BCHI sawyer certification and the BCHI Instructor/Certifier program:**

    - BCHI Instructor/Certifiers will instruct and certify current members of BCHI.
    - BCHI volunteer sawyers will be certified for bucking only. Tree felling **<u>is not</u>** certified by BCHI at this time.
    - Completion of saw safety and "class room" sawyer training does not constitute certification. Each individual volunteer's technical proficiency with a crosscut saw and/or chainsaw must be evaluated before that individual will be certified by BCHI.
    - Individual sawyers certified at the "A" or "Apprentice" level must recertify each year. This certification level no longer exists in the crosscut sawyer qualifications. That level is called Sawyer Trainee and does not have a qualification process.
    - Individual sawyers certified as "B" or "Sawyer" level must recertify every three years.
    - Individual sawyers certified as "C" or "Journeyman" level sawyers must recertify every three years.
    - A current list of certified BCHI member sawyers will be maintained by the BCHI Education Chair or his/her designee. The list shall be provided to land management agencies as specified in the SAW OPERATIONS GUIDE.

2. **Safety is paramount for BCHI volunteers and Leadership utilizing crosscut or chainsaws to maintain trails on USFS and other public lands in the State of Idaho.**

- No saw operations can occur on any BCHI project unless at least one member of each saw set, that is sawyer or swamper, has a current First Aid card with CPR. Another form of First Aid/CPR training is Idaho Department of Labor and Industries recognized equivalent certificate of first aid/CPR training.
- Working jointly with the BCHI Education Chair, the BCHI Lead Instructor/Certifiers will develop a Saw Safety Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) for BCHI. Each year those individuals will update the Saw Safety JHA prior to Leadership Training.
- The BCHI saw safety JHA must be reviewed before each BCHI sanctioned activity where chain saws or crosscut saws will be used. All volunteers present for the activity must be familiar with the hazards of saw operations, the emergency communications plan and the immediate location of first aid supplies. All PPE will be worn by the sawyer and the swamper.
- All saw work will be done with the agencies' approval via a Volunteer Agreement form or Challenge Cost Share Agreements.
- Any sawyer who intentionally violates our safety protocols will have their sawyer certification card pulled. To obtain a certification after a card is pulled requires a complete redo of all training, classroom and field plus the level of certification will revert to "A" level.
- The Incident Corrective Action Committee (ICAC) will review all sawyer incidents to find a corrective action for these incidents. The BCHI ICAC will be composed of the Chairman, Vice-chair, Education Chair, and the Northern and Southern Saw Coordinators.

- Reporting requirements of accidents and near misses: The accident policies and responsibilities for investigation lie with the Forest Service where the sponsored work was occurring under the Volunteer Challenge Cost Share or Participating agreement at the time of the incident. All occupational injuries and fatalities are to be reported.

3. **Individuals selected to be Instructor /Certifiers must be members of BCHI.**

- Volunteers must agree to act as Instructor/Certifiers for a minimum period of 3 years to instruct and certify volunteer sawyers from Chapters in their areas.
- Individuals selected as Instructor/Certifiers will typically be those individuals who would be rated as "C" level or "Journeyman" sawyers. That is, they have many years of safe sawing experience and the technical proficiency to buck larger diameter logs bound in complex situations. Further, individuals selected as Instructor/Certifiers must possess the interpersonal relation and communication skills to effectively instruct and communicate with volunteer members seeking saw certification.
- Individuals selected as Instructor/Certifiers must possess the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to teach in the classroom and to conduct bucking field evaluations for up to 15 BCHI members seeking sawyer certification. In order to accomplish this, Instructor /Certifiers need effective communication skills, the ability to transfer and relate concepts to others, and the ability to alter training methods to fit the environment and student group.
- Individuals selected as BCHI Instructor/Certifiers must complete a comprehensive safety, safe saw operations and saw maintenance course as well as have their technical proficiency evaluated and certified by the BCHI Lead Instructor/Certifiers in order to certify BCHI volunteer sawyers. This course will be scheduled and conducted as needed by BCHI Lead Instructor/Certifiers.

4. **Sawyer training and technical proficiency standards:**

- At the time of initial certification BCHI volunteer sawyers must attend a comprehensive sawyer course that specifically addresses saw maintenance, safe sawing operations and emergency communications. They must have a current first aid/CPR Card.
- Sawyer Training Course Tech. Rep. 0667–2805 (Student) and 2804 (Instructor)–MTDC developed by the USFS Missoula Technology and Development Center or the NWCG S212 Wildland Fire Chain Saw Course. *Note: This requirement for BCHI certification is waived for individual BCHI members who have previously been certified by the USFS, WDNR or other State or Federal land management agency whose certification is recognized by the USFS.*
- Sawyer's must be at least 18 years of age.

- Following completion of the comprehensive sawyer's course described above, a BCHI Instructor/Certifier must assess each individual's technical proficiency with a chainsaw and/or crosscut saw. Although the technical evaluation is essentially a subjective process, Instructor/Certifiers will utilize the evaluation forms contained in both the Chain Saw and Crosscut Saw Training Course Tech. Rep. 0667–2805 (Student) and 2804 (Instructor)–MTDC developed by the USFS Missoula Technology and Development Center. In addition to technical ability the evaluation will assess the volunteer's safety attitude and actions in the sawing environment.
- BCHI Instructor/Certifiers will sign and issue provisional certification cards to volunteer sawyers on the date of the technical evaluation.
- BCHI Instructor/Certifiers must forward the evaluation form for each volunteer to the Lead Instructor/Certifier for his/her area.
- Lead Instructor/Certifiers are responsible to forward a copy of the paperwork of all certified sawyers in their respective areas to the BCHI Education Chair or to his/her designee. Training records will be kept by the Education Chair or his/her designee. Records with also be added or updated on the national sawyer database.
- Certification cards will be issued and signed by the by the BCHI Chairman or his/her designee. Certification cards are valid for one or three years (depending on the level of certification) from the date of certification.
- The normal class size for teaching/certifying sawyers will be 15.
- When the Instructor/Certifier takes the class to the field for the demonstration of skills there will be a smaller limit of 3 students per Instructor/Certifier when sawing. The jobs of each of the three students are as follows: one sawyer, one student responsible for maintaining constant communications with any and all persons surrounding the designated saw area and one student who is the swamper (student removing brush). The swamper and anyone else desiring access to the designated saw area will not be allowed into the saw area until the sawyer and the instructor/certifier authorize entrance. Before this is signaled to the swamper/other person the sawyer will set the chain brake (chainsaw) and so indicate that s/he is ready for access to the Instructor/Certifier.

- The sawyer and swamper for each saw area will always wear all PPE.

- To the maximum extent possible, BCHI sawyer training materials including downloadable parts of Chain Saw and Crosscut Saw Training Course, Tech. Rep. 0667–2805 (Student) and 2804 (Instructor)–MTDC developed by the USFS Missoula Technology and Development Center, the BCHI Saw Safety JHA, and other pertinent information and references will be posted on the BCHI website.

Bill Conger – Chairman Back Country Horsemen of Idaho