



THE BULLETIN

December 2025



Cline River, 2025, photo by M. Garrett

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**Ranch Comfort Meets Wild
Country - A First for TRCR**

Volunteers With TRCR

HIGH COUNTRY MOMENTS RIDING THE ROCKIES IN 202

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FROM THE BOARD, WITH THANKS

DEAR RIDERS ANBD MEMBERS,

It is our pleasure to share with you the latest edition of our newsletter, celebrating some of the highlights that have made this year truly memorable. Inside, you'll find reflections on our May 25 Riding High fundraiser at the historic Centennial Round Hall in Bragg Creek; our first-ever "ranch-style comfort" experience in Waterton; and our inaugural adventure in David Thompson Country with McKenzie's Trail West Outfitters—an extraordinary eight-day backcountry journey launched by helicopter, taking riders deep into the wild Rockies, echoing the spirit of early western exploration.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER 2026

We are equally excited to share a glimpse of what lies ahead. Our Summer 2026 program is shaping up to offer something for every kind of rider—from those seeking a touch of comfort to those drawn to true backcountry adventure. Our trails will once again lead us through some of the most breathtaking landscapes in the Rockies, including Waterton National Park, Kananaskis and the Elbow Valley, and the timeless terrain of Banff National Park. Interested? Check out our brochure for all the details.

TRCR remains proudly a 100% volunteer-driven organization, sustained by our shared passion for horses, mountains, wide-open skies, and the rare joy of experiencing wild places together. For over a century, we have dedicated ourselves to curating exceptional riding experiences at the best possible value, grounded in camaraderie, authenticity, and a deep respect for the land.

Volunteering with TRCR offers a chance to become part of this enduring tradition. If this message sparks your curiosity, we encourage you read the next article and to reach out. Whether you join us from across the globe or just down the road, there is a place for you in the TRCR family.

Wishing you peace, warmth, and every happiness this holiday season.

TRCR's Board



VOLUNTEER WITH TRCR

Article and photos by R.Delorme



TRCR is proudly a 100% volunteer-driven organization, united by a passion for horses, mountains, wide-open skies, and the rare joy of exploring wild places together. For over a century, we've dedicated ourselves to creating exceptional riding experiences—rooted in camaraderie, authenticity, and respect for the land.

Volunteering with TRCR is your opportunity to step into that proud tradition. It's a chance to deepen your connection to the rides, support the community that makes them possible, and

contribute your unique talents. You don't have to be a rider to make an impact—writers, designers, planners, administrator, marketers, storytellers, artists, Emcees, and organizers all play vital roles in keeping our adventures alive.

Whether you join us from across the world or just down the road, there's a place for you in the TRCR family. Together, we can continue to share the magic of horses, mountains, and unforgettable journeys.



JOIN THE FAMILY

TO DISCUSS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO:

GARY AT GSANDBECK@GMAIL.COM

34 rides in 44 years from 1969 to 2013
Remembering
JOE MADERO

By Kim Webster

I had the pleasure of riding with Joe on many TRCR rides over the years, but the ones I remember most are 2004 (Cascade Valley), 2006 (Waterton), 2007 (Clearwater) and 2008 (Kananaskis).

In 2004, Joe took a photo on a misty cold day of myself and family members coming down a hill. He won the Townsend Trophy that year with that photo, which is now forever a part of the TRCR book that was created for the centennial.

I came out from Winnipeg by myself that year. On the last evening in Banff during our final dinner, I had to find a ride back to Calgary so I could catch my flight home the next day. Joe gave me that ride, and also invited me to stay at his house for the night. We had a lovely evening and an even better morning as we looked through his many photos and enjoyed a good hearty breakfast. He got me to the airport as we planned to go on many rides together again.

In 2006, both of my great Uncle Webb's grandsons were riding, Joe made sure they had a great week by setting them up with Josh. He had them helping with the horses everyday, like they were young wranglers in training.

In 2007 and 2008, Joe was the emcee on the ride. He had TRCR pins made for each of those years and gave them out to everyone on his rides! They were beautiful and had the year on them.

I can't remember how many rides we've gone on together, but Joe always made everyone feel like family. His sparkling eyes and full smile made everyone's day brighter. Just spending time with him any chance I had made my life all the better. Joe was a big part of my TRCR family, and considered to be a very special friend. He will always be remembered with fondness and will be greatly missed!

Photo by J. Madero



A SALUTE TO THE ENVIRONMENT

By Helen Boulton-Elliott of Virden, Manitoba, circa 1990's

The Highway to Heaven. Come ride with me. On a horse. For the enthusiastic, energetic and concerned inhabitants of our country, Canada.

From the back of a horse, riding the mountains and valleys of the lower Rockies, as high as 7,700 feet, one can see the fragile nature of this wonderful mountain country. Although the trees are big and tall, the ground they root in is only inches thick.

A close-up of the havoc of the clear-cut areas, which appears like a great scar, shows the amount of the damage done. It does not heal. New growth of any kind takes years to reappear, if at all.

Not so a forest fire. Despite any arguments to the contrary, new growth appears the following season or during a wet season. Fire is necessary to pop open the many dormant seeds fallen from various vegetation. Deadfall and dry rubbish are returned to the soil in the form of ash. Habitat for moose and elk reappears, and new evergreens sprout vigorously.

Riding the marked trails, only 12 inches wide, is done at a leisurely pace; walk and climb.

Wildflowers are in abundance, despite the late time of year, August and September. Most are easily identified, or one can resort to the wildflower book back at camp. Bluebells, deep blue larkspur, daisies and asters in many shades of mauve; a patch of twin flower, dainty as a little girl's party dress, the yellow artimas and the ever-friendly brown-eyed susan. It's a great day, with lots of sun, a light wind, with time for snapshots and a chat with other riders at pit-stop breaks.

I was surprised to learn that the hikers of the Rockies often take a pack mule (or horse) to carry their heavy gear. Mules take less feed and are very hard workers, but watch their hind feet and tempers! Horses have been great during the past century (how time flies!) in developing and discovering the many trails used by all, both wildlife and humans. The horses have carried the rider and his ax and saw, so necessary to remove the deadfall, find the best trails through the forest, and bring the rider home safely.

The Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies are very conscious of the need to protect the trails, riding one area only once in five years.

Every bit of refuse is put into a bag for return to camp, and from there back to designated refuse collectors. Woe betide a careless one who drops a candy wrapper or tissue. One of the wranglers is sure to spot it and find the culprit; then the fine – the price of a six-pack.



Cline River, 2025, photo by M. Garrett

Comradeship is great. Friends are made from all over the world. Imagine coming from Tokyo to spend one week riding in the Rockies, getting a bird's-eye view of our Canada. People come from New Mexico, Connecticut, California, all of the Canadian provinces and territories, even Siam (Thailand) – the king and his wife, no less! Wilf Carter got his start here in 1935 as the musician for the riders.

Camping in tipis, sleeping on the ground in various warm bags, a big cook tent with old-fashioned oil drum stoves and the best food, as well as gallons of coffee. Square dancing and sing-a-longs after supper, 'til bedtime; and of course card games, especially cribbage.

It is sad to say goodbye, but there is always next year – old faces and new. So come ride with me, the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies.

It had the pleasure of riding with Helen for several years from 1990 - 1995 with the Trail Riders. She was into her 70's when she started riding with the TRCR. There was a ride that my mother came on in 1991. The two of them bonded quickly and shared stories all day long. I remember one day my mom and I were chatting by the cook tent and all of a sudden, there was Helen... coming out of her teepee in her bathing suit and bright red cowboy boots, making her way down to the creek for a swim. The water was freezing but that never stopped her!

My great uncle Webb and Helen were constantly bantering at each other, all in good fun, sharing stories about growing up in the countryside, where every kid should get the chance to do. They would also be the ones that lay down under a tree during the lunch breaks for a little nap. If Helen couldn't find a good spot that she could easily get up from, she had no issues dropping herself right on top of a small bush for her nap.



Cline River, 2025, photo by M. Garrett

Helen lived in Virden, directly on my route out to Alberta every year for another ride. In the late nineties and for quite a few years, I would stop there for lunch and to catch up. I met quite a few great people riding with the TRCR over the years, and Helen was one of my favorites.

Always happy and carefree, living life to it's fullest, Helen made younger riders look twice and envy her vim and vigor. She passed away in 2017, just a short time after celebrating her 100th birthday. She sure made a mark on this earth that she loved so much, I will always miss her.

RIDING HIGH

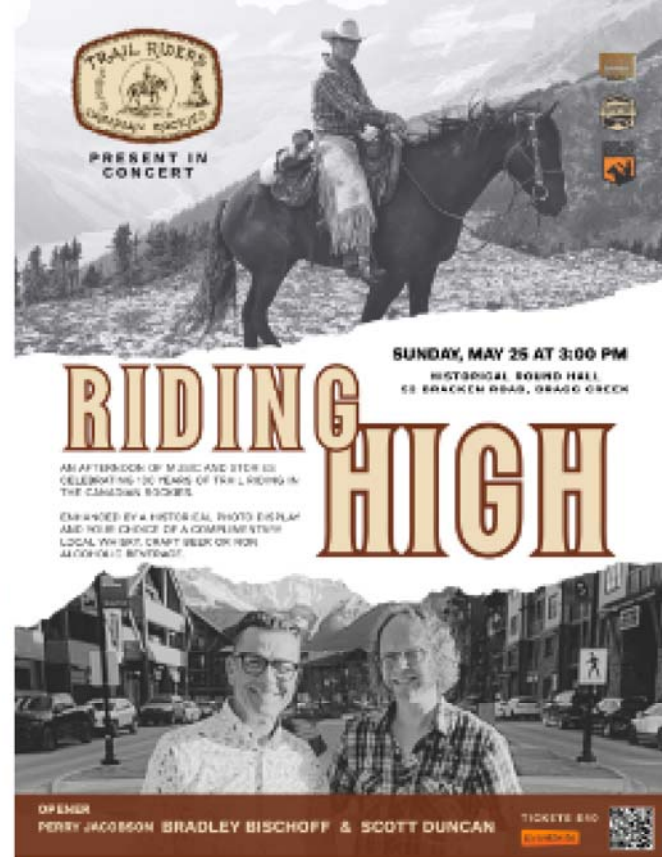
A CENTURY IN THE SADDLE

By Renée Delorme

Spring arrived on a high note in Bragg Creek with a May 25 fundraising concert at the historic Centennial Round Hall, a fitting setting for a late-afternoon celebration of both music and mountain heritage. Riding High paired live performances with a striking TRCR photo exhibit spanning the last 100 years, bringing the spirit of the backcountry indoors on a blue-sky day that begged for adventure.

The concert opened with Perry Jacobson—cowboy poet and retired Chief Park Warden of Banff National Park—setting the tone with stories shaped by wild places and long horizons. The stage then welcomed featured charismatic artist, singer-songwriter Bradley Bischoff, himself a retired warden and long-time friend of Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies, joined by fiddler extraordinaire Scott Duncan. Their music echoed off the Round Hall's timbers, built in 1923 by local settler Jack Fullerton, the very year TRCR was founded, linking past and present in every note.

The photo and poster exhibit revealed a simple truth: a century on, much remains the same. Horses and camps, friendships forged on the trail, vast landscapes, and that enduring pull to experience nature in a privileged, intimate way. In a troubled world, the need to escape into big mountains and reconnect with the land feels more vital than ever. The afternoon was pure joy: music, memories, and community. Thanks to our remarkable musicians, dedicated volunteers, Barb Tegtmeyer for sharing her incredible hall, and our generous sponsors for making it all possible.



photos by R.Delorme



HIGH STAKES

HEAVY PACKS, AND HELICOPTERS

By Renée Delorme

TRCR is always on the lookout for new corners of the Canadian Rockies—places that promise fresh perspectives, big horizons, and adventure. Last summer, that curiosity led us to McKenzie Outfitters in David Thompson Country, where an eight-day backcountry adventure delivered all of the above, plus a few surprises no packing list could predict.



Cline River, 2025, photo by S. Grob

The journey began with a 15–20-minute helicopter ride to our first base camp—a thrilling start that came with one small detail: strict weight limits. Very strict. This became abundantly clear when two riders' duffels were flagged as significantly overweight. The culprit? Alcohol... Eight days in the forest necessarily come with evening libation rituals to relax, share tales of the day, and take in the majesty of the surroundings. A solution ought to be found. The libation could not stay behind.

What followed was a masterclass in teamwork under pressure. Bags were opened, bottles emerged, and wine, beer, and tequila were rapidly redistributed among riders who still had precious grams to spare. No one hesitated. We all understood the mission. The collective benefit was obvious—and it paid dividends that very afternoon. Hungry, tired, and running on distant memories of breakfast, another rider and I each cracked open a beer during a short break. The result? Instant light-headedness, uncontrollable laughter, and what can only be described as the

happiest final two hours of riding imaginable.



Once grounded—both figuratively and literally—the real adventure unfolded. Riding deep through Coral Creek and Job Valley, with two nights camped along the mighty fast-running Brazeau River, a majestic waterfall, moving from valley to valley, staying in three exceptional backcountry camps. Pack horses hauled our gear and food, while a top-tier team of wranglers, guides, and a cook who clearly understood the importance of morale took care of both humans and horses alike.

Cline River, 2025, photo by S. Ware



Cline River, 2025, photo by
C. Mckimney

Evenings brought some of the trip's quieter magic. Horses, bells softly clinking, wandered freely through camp, grazing on local vegetation and drinking from nearby creeks—completely at ease, and satisfied with life.

The weather, true to mountain form, kept us guessing: pounding rain, surprise snow, and stretches of hot, dry sunshine—all in the same trip. Spirits never wavered. Cold mornings and evenings were tamed by the woodstove in the cook tent and a reliable outdoor fire pit. When rain pinned us down, a newly invented poker tournament—complete with official TRCR currency—kept competition fierce and laughter loud.

On warmer days, glacial lakes and pristine rivers provided bracing swims that instantly reset tired muscles and foggy minds. Refreshing doesn't begin to cover it.

In many ways, this was a return to the roots of western exploration—travelling through wild country much as early explorers once did, criss-crossing rivers, negotiating steep hills, putting on our slickers while on our horse on a moment's notice, ready to face

the menacing rain cloud. Add in TRCR traditions like skit nights, campfire music, exceptional food, and midnight pauses to stare up at a Milky Way so bright it hardly seemed real.

Eight days. Three valleys. One helicopter. Zero regrets. The ride of our life. But, next time? We're weighing the alcohol first.



Cline River, 2025, photo by M. Garrett



Cline River, 2025, photo by M. Garrett



RANCH COMFORT MEETS WILD COUNTRY – A FIRST FOR TRCR

Waterton, 2025, photo by R.Delorme

While TRCR is known for its backcountry campsite, complete with tipis and an improvised outhouse, setting up this way was not possible in the Waterton Park area this year.

TRCR is known for its backcountry campsite, tipis pitched deep in the backcountry, campfire meals, and an improvised outhouse under big skies. Setting up this way was not possible in the Waterton Park area this year. After a windstorm the previous season damaged our traditional camp, we were forced to rethink what our expedition could look like. The result? A bold pivot—and an unforgettable first.

Instead of backcountry living, we set up base at a working ranch in the rolling hills near Waterton: a sprawling ranch house, an in-house cook, and long, family-style meals. It wasn't roughing it. It was comfort, and it was exceptional. The ranch owners checked in on us with genuine warmth, often accompanied by their friendly farm dog and many local stories. We witnessed one such tale one morning when an escape-minded bull wandered into the farmyard, ignoring all calls to return—until, on his own terms, he decided the grass really was greener back home.

A private passenger van shuttled us between the ranch, stables, and trailheads, giving us the freedom to adapt daily plans around fast-changing mountain weather. That flexibility paid off. Day after day, we rode deep into Waterton Lakes National Park, tracing trails that delivered soaring peaks, crystal-clear lakes, and cold, rushing streams—a front-row seat to some of the Rockies' most dramatic terrain.

When the weather turned truly foul one afternoon, the group leaned into adventure of a different kind, visiting the Remington Carriage Museum in Cardston—the world's largest

museum dedicated to horse-drawn transportation in North America. Another evening took us into the town of Waterton itself for supper, soaking in the atmosphere of this UNESCO-recognized destination.

The riding days didn't disappoint. Backcountry routes delivered awe-inspiring vistas, bracing swims in glacial lakes, and pulse-quickening moments sheltering low on the mountain as thunderstorms rolled through in full alpine drama.

Evenings were all about unwinding—laughter, shared stories, and refreshments of choice. A standout highlight was a special steak-and-wine pairing dinner that redefined farm-to-table dining in the most literal way.

This was a first for TRCR. And judging by the enthusiasm around the table and in the saddle, it won't be the last. The "Ranch-style comfort" experience struck a chord—proving that adventure doesn't always mean sacrificing comfort, and that sometimes, thinking outside the box leads to something truly special.



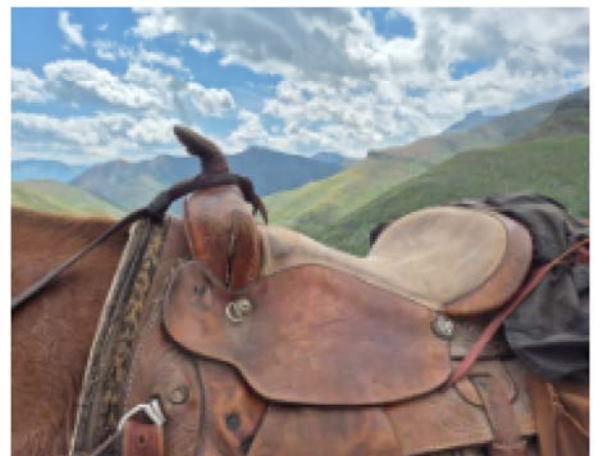
Waterton, 2025, photo by R.Delorme



Waterton, 2025, photo by J.Fleetham



Waterton, 2025, photo by R.Rodger



Waterton, 2025, photo by R.Delorme



20 Ride

26 the Rockies

Banff National
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