

Until state certified weed seed free hay is readily available throughout the state of Washington members who are cited at Wilderness trail-heads for the remainder of this year and through 2008 and on any National Forest system lands thereafter, until such time that the State adopts and implements a weed seed free certification program, BCHW members are urged to NOT pay the issued citation but instead request a mandatory appearance before the federal magistrate in whose District the infraction occurred.

Certified weed seed free hay IS NOT readily available anywhere in Washington including those counties with "formal" certification programs (Asotin and Pend Oreille). The argument that certified pellets or cubes are readily available does not hold up well either. Telephone calls to local feed stores reveals that the pellets and cubes available for purchase today (8/27/07) do not have a weed seed free certificate attached to or printed on the bag or bulk storage container.

The Federal Government (USFS) has imposed an arbitrary law that we as citizens cannot comply with even though we want to.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture is telling us they will not create a program over the objections of private interests. We are caught in the middle... As an organization, BCHW has done about all it can do including persuading local county commissions into allowing private contractors and or county weed boards to locally certify fields as weed free. At this time our only redress appears to be through the Federal Court system.

Robert Gish, President
Backcountry Horsemen of Washington