

# Letter from the President

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December 2014, Issue 3

Northern Colorado Back Country Horsemen

It has been two years since I accepted the position of President for NCBCH, and has been my pleasure to work with many volunteers from NCBCH and other groups along the Front Range. We worked together building and maintaining trails, working a booth and displaying our tools at various fairs and expos, riding in parades, presenting educational programs to youth and adult groups, and attending our monthly meetings which included many fine speakers presenting a wide variety of educational material to our members. NCBCH also sponsored and invited other groups for a speaking engagement featuring CSU Professor Temple Grandin. We worked together and played at our annual trail challenge play day as well as enjoying some relaxing trail rides.

For me the most memorable of our accomplishments was the evacuation of some 40 head of horses from a ranch near Allen's Park after the September 2013 floods. We asked for some help and received over one hundred replies from other horse minded type folks from Cheyenne to Colorado Springs. People who didn't know us or the ranch owner volunteered to help move horses from the mountain ranch to a safe place near Loveland. We had plenty of help and the project still took all day to complete because the most direct routes were washed out. Trucks with trailers full of horses had to drive the detour route almost to Golden and then back through Boulder and then Loveland. We started the evacuation early Sunday morning and the last of the horses arrived about 9 PM that night. It was quite an accomplishment with many NCBCH members volunteering their time and equipment to help.

We also worked a great deal with other groups and the US Forest Service repairing trails that were damaged by the flood waters. Some of my favorite trails were severely damaged and are now open or will be next spring because so many helped to make the necessary repairs. It was hard work but rewarding knowing that we were helping to repair the trails that so many of us use. The floods damaged trails but that damage brought together horse and hiking groups to work together. I enjoyed the interaction and camaraderie we had on the trail. I hope that relationship flourished as we continue to repair and build trails along the Front Range.

I would like to thank the NCBCH Board of Directors for their support and hard work over the past two years. I know that sometimes asked more of them than is expected from volunteers and they always came through for me and the group. The Board of Directors is the back-bone of NCBCH and they do more work than most members realize so I hope you all appreciate them and thank them for their efforts.

I want to thank a couple of special people who helped me every time I asked for help, ideas or hands on involvement.

Dan Swenson was behind the scenes on many projects and was always only a phone call away to talk about plans or to help organize what Idea I came up with. Dan and his wife, MA, even set up a horse camp at the Boulder County Horsemen's Association annual horse fair last April. The day started out with blue skies and mild temperatures but turned into a spring blizzard by noon. They stayed outside at the campsite with their gear, horse and mule all day talking to visitors while we were tending the booth in a nice warm building. That is dedication to the cause.

The other person I want to thank is JoAnne Wortman. She deserves recognition for her behind the scenes work and efforts with NCBCH projects. She has done more to help me than I can tell you. She made flyers, wrote several articles for the news letter, presented Northern Colorado Back Country Horsemen

educational material at monthly meetings, prepared and presented educational programs to the public, helped organize the parades, and worked with me in a booth at several different events. JoAnne has been at my side and helping me while I was President and Vice President for the past several years.

Thanks to all of you who have volunteered your time, efforts, equipment, and experience to the NCBCCH projects. Keep up the good work and hopefully we'll see you on the trail next year. I hope to see many of you at the Christmas party on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>. Until then...

Adios,

Al Ohms, President



The National Park Service has long promoted Leave No Trace skills and ethics to park visitors, and has been under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (the Center) for nearly 20 years. Through this collaboration, the National Park Service is able to access relevant and area-specific Leave No Trace information to teach visitors how to enjoy parks responsibly. With nearly 300 million annual visitors to national parks, Leave No Trace information is imperative for ensuring long-term protection and stewardship of these shared lands.

The Leave No Trace Center teaches people of all ages how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly, and is the most widely used outdoor ethics program on public lands throughout the country. Through targeted education, outreach and research, the Center ensures the long-term health of our natural world. Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the Center works with over 500 diverse partner organizations, agencies and businesses to promote consistent minimum impact information.

When teaching people about Leave No Trace, an important piece is understanding *why* Leave No Trace practices are effective at minimizing impact to the landscape. For example, outdoor enthusiasts need to know *why* sticking to durable surfaces protects trailside plants and minimizes trail widening and *why* hanging food, trash and smellables keeps wildlife wild. Recent research further emphasizes the importance of providing the *why* behind the Leave No Trace principles.

A 2013 article published in the *Journal of Interpretation Research* specifically explored factors that were thought to influence future Leave No Trace behavior in visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park. Findings from the research indicated that perceived effectiveness of practicing Leave No Trace has a strong influence on whether or not people adhere to the Seven Principles in the future. According to Ben Lawhon, Education Director for the Center, these findings are very important for increasing the effectiveness of Leave No Trace educational efforts. "We have known for years that people need to know *why* we're asking them to pack out their trash, *why* we're asking them to stick to trails, etc. but now we have peer reviewed research that further confirms this notion. If educators can convey to others *why* and *how* Leave No Trace practices are effective at minimizing recreation-related impacts, those people are more likely to practice Leave No Trace in the future."

The results of this study were used to create new messages for visitors to Grand Canyon National Park. For instance, the park's Center of Creative Media recently developed a website that not only lists basic trail courtesy practices, but also incorporates the *why* and *how* behind each one. ([www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/courtesy.htm](http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/courtesy.htm)). Grand Canyon National Park will promote the newly developed educational message via numerous means including signage, social media, the park website and other printed materials. Both the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics and park managers will continue to look for other ways to get the information to trail users over the coming months. This messaging has also been integrated into the park's social media outlets prior to and during peak periods of visitation.

Example of one of Grand Canyon's Trail Courtesy Practices that Leave No Trace Peter Pettengill, Outdoor Recreation Planner for the Grand Canyon, notes the importance of these messages. "For decades Grand Canyon's corridor trails have embraced diverse recreation activities and diverse user groups. Working with Leave No Trace not only assures minimum impacts to park resources, but also encourages everyone to be considerate of others, regardless of whether they are walking, riding a mule, or running."

While this messaging is new in the park, Leave No Trace is not. Many of the park's staff are Leave No Trace Master Educators, and that is in part thanks to a course hosted at Grand Canyon each fall. Together, with the Center, the National Park Service at Grand Canyon looks forward to continuing a productive partnership.

# Northern Colorado Back Country Horsemen attend Boulder County Horse Fair

submitted by Al Ohms, NCBCCH President

originally printed in Backcountry Horsemen of America national newsletter

The Northern Colorado Back Country Horsemen, a chapter of COBCH, participated in the annual horse fair in Longmont, Co. sponsored by Boulder County Horsemen's Association on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The Boulder County horse group is very active and uses the horse fair as a membership drive and invites vendors and other horse groups to participate in the annual event. The event was well attended even though the weather brought a wind-driven snow storm, typical for Colorado in the spring.

NCBCH set up a booth with our banner, slide show, brochures, trail tools and other items for display. Many folks stopped by and asked questions about our local group and Back Country Horsemen of America. This opened the door for us to explain what we do and why we need members to join our cause of keeping trails open for stock use around the country. Those folks who stopped by to talk were impressed with the goals and mission statement of Back Country Horsemen of America.

The Boulder County group asked if anyone can give a presentation on something horse related. Two of our members, Al Ohms and JoAnne Wortman, who camp with horses in the summer and fall gave a seminar called "Camping with Horses 101." It was a presentation of information on three types of horse camping utilizing the improved horse campground set up, dispersed camping (wherever you can take your truck and trailer), and back country camping (packing in your gear and supplies to a remote area or wilderness area). A slide show was also shown, as well as many pieces of camping equipment. We had 29 attendees at this presentation, and it was well received, with many viewers asking more questions after the show and later at our booth.

Other members who enjoy camping and packing in the mountains set up a horse camp with high-lined horse and mule, a tent, a fire-pit, a timber saddle rack and other camping utensils they use on the trail. Thanks to Dan and MaryAnne Swenson for donating their time and equipment for this display. They didn't have it quite as easy as those of us inside the building with heat and shelter. They actually experienced the wet, cold spring storm with wind and snow but they toughed it out for several hours while folks kept coming out to see their campsite.



## Tips for Preparing Your Older Horse for Winter

Fall is here, which means it's time to prepare your aging equine (15 years or older) for the winter ahead. Horses, like people, are typically faced with more challenges handling the cold weather as they age. Thus, preparing them ahead of time and providing proper care throughout winter is important.

With the cold weather almost upon us, we must take into account several important considerations for preparing and maintaining older horses throughout the cold season. Some of the most important points to consider include body condition and nutrition, vaccination status, parasite control, dental and hoof care, housing, exercise, and health monitoring.

### Body Condition and Nutrition

Start by assessing your horse's body condition score (BCS). Is he too thin, too fat, or just right? You must make the call now and feed appropriately to prepare for the winter months ahead. If you don't feel comfortable in making this call, involve your veterinarian or nutritionist in body scoring your horse. Be sure to get your hands on him or her as well, because a growing winter coat can hide a lot. Horses at a BCS of 5 or greater will have some extra fat stores that can provide insulation during the winter months; but your horse should not be overweight for the breed, as insulin resistance (IR) could become a problem. If you are worried about IR, have your veterinarian perform an oral sugar test to determine if your horse is IR or simply check basal insulin levels for an indication of hyperinsulinemia.

If your horse has a BCS below 5, increase his calorie intake slowly to improve his BCS score going into winter. If you are worried about putting weight on your horse because of IR, or perhaps because your horse has PPID (pituitary pars intermedia dysfunction, also known as equine Cushing's disease) and you think he might be IR, it is best to not guess or worry, but instead have your veterinarian check your horse's insulin levels so you know it's safe to add calories to his diet.

In developing a feeding strategy for the horse that needs to put on weight, first consider increasing your horse's hay intake to meet his energy needs. Hay is digested in the gastrointestinal tract by fermentation, which produces heat that the horse can use to maintain core body temperature. But there is a limit as to how much hay a horse can consume daily. In most cases horses will consume between 2.0-2.5%; however, during times of harsher weather conditions, they might require upwards of 3% of their body weight (BW) per day. For example, if your horse weighs 1,000 pounds and is eating 2% BW per day, he should be consuming 20 pounds of hay per day. Be sure to accurately weigh your hay and grain using a scale because estimating can lead to under- or overfeeding. Allowing hay consumption throughout the day is important to provide the continuous calories your horse needs to keep up with the energy demands of staying warm when temperatures drop. It is important to feed a good-quality hay that's free of mold, dust, and discoloration. Consult your county extension agent about hay sampling and testing. An analysis will give you an estimate of energy content and will help you determine how to supplement effectively.





If your horse can't consume enough hay due to poor dentition, adding a grain concentrate and/or a fat source such as oil to the diet is important to provide enough calories.

Consider feeds designed for older horses, as most provide additional fiber and fat that are important energy and health considerations for older horses. In fact, University of Kentucky researchers recently conducted a study in collaboration with Purina to determine if a new formulation of Equine Senior might reduce inflammation and improve older horses' immune responses to vaccination. The results were positive. The new Purina Equine Senior product will become available Nov. 7. Regardless the feed brand, this study is an important example of how quality nutrition can improve aged horses' health.

It is also important to provide a salt/mineral lick throughout the winter and be sure these are always available and not covered by ice or snow. In addition, adequate water intake ensures adequate feed intake. If possible, keep the water source warm to prevent freezing. Researchers have noted that water warmed to 39 degrees Fahrenheit (4 degrees Celsius) resulted in greater water intake. If your horse does not drink well during the winter months, feeding water-soaked feeds (one to two gallons of water per feeding) will help increase fluid intake. It is critical to monitor older horses' water intake. If your horse drinks less, he or she might eat less and, more importantly, be at an increased risk of impaction colic.

Overall, remember that you might need to increase your senior horses' daily feed to meet his body's increased demands during harsh winter weather conditions. It is critical to assess BCS regularly to ensure you've provided enough feed to maintain weight throughout winter. Consult your veterinarian, equine nutritionist, or geriatric horse specialist with specific questions.

### **Vaccination Status**

Cold temperatures can stress older horses and potentially set them up for illness. Here at the University of Kentucky we have shown that older horses have reduced immune responses to vaccination and are at risk for increased susceptibility to respiratory illness, in particular influenza (EIV). Moreover, we have recently shown that older horses with PPID are likely to have an even further reduced immune response to vaccination. Thus, it's important to make sure you maintain your old horses on a regular vaccination program. At the minimum, make sure they are up-to-date on core vaccines recommended by the American Association of Equine Practitioners. If you have a higher risk senior (an older show, trail, or 4-H horse), consider having your veterinarian administer a booster for risk-based vaccines, including EIV, equine herpesvirus-1, and potentially West Nile virus, every six months, especially if your horses are showing or co-mingling with other showing horses during the stressful winter months. Consult your veterinarian with specific questions.

### **Parasite Control**

Parasite control is an important part of caring for and managing horses. We have recently conducted an experiment to evaluate whether aged horses demonstrate statistically higher fecal egg counts (FEC) compared to middle-aged adult horses and to investigate whether they respond differently to the dewormer moxidectin compared to horses treated with pyrantel pamoate. This study's results indicated that old horses have significantly higher FEC than middle-aged adults. FECs declined significantly following anthelmintic treatment in both age groups. In summary, older horses are likely to harbor more parasites; however, it is important to perform FECs in order to determine if your older horses fall into this category. In our hands, both dewormers were effective at reducing FECs, but test your dewormer's efficacy, and use ones that work on your farm. It might be beneficial to deworm your horse after the first frost and perhaps two to three times per year. Again, let the FECs tell you what is appropriate for your farm. It is also wise to involve your veterinarian in your deworming program.

## **Dental and Hoof Care**

Have your veterinarian examine your older horses' teeth at least twice a year. One of these exams should happen in early fall. Normal dental care will help your horse chew and consume hay adequately, which will allow him to utilize the energy sources needed to stay warm and maintain body weight. This is especially important for older horses that tend to drop grain or quid (store a bolus of food in the side of the mouth, or drop food after a few bites). Proper dentition will also help prevent problems such as choke and colic.

Keep your horse on a schedule when it comes to hoof care. You might consider pulling the shoes or changing shoes to prevent slipping on winter ice or adding borium and/or snow pads to protect the sole from bruising due to ice or frozen ground. It all depends on winter's effects on your terrain. Most importantly, clean your horses' feet daily to remove ice accumulation or what we call "snowballs."

## **Shelter and Blanketing**

Providing shelters or wind breaks such as a barn, three-sided shed, rolled bales of hay, or plywood on fence rows is critical for older horses. Keep these areas dry, clean, and well-ventilated. Providing shelter will help older horses tolerate more severe weather temperatures and might help reduce his energy requirements slightly.

Consider blanketing the senior horse when temperatures or wind chill drop below 5 degrees Fahrenheit if there is no shelter available, a chance the horse will become wet (not usually a problem with snow, but much more of a problem with rain, ice, and/or freezing rain), the horse is bodyclipped, the horse has not been acclimated to the cold (i.e., recently relocated from a southern climate), or the horse has a BCS of 3 or less.

If you do blanket your horse, make sure it fits properly. If the horse is blanketed continuously, you should remove the blanket daily to check that no sores or skin conditions develop and to inspect the blanket for damage. Keep blankets dry, and do not blanket a wet horse; wait until he is completely dry before blanketing. Keep in mind a horse will continue to develop a natural winter coat until late December, while days become shorter. Thus, blanketing before Dec. 22 will decrease a horse's natural winter coat.

## **Exercise**

Low grade, non-intensive exercise is important for the aging horse. In fact, in human medicine researchers have shown this type of exercise to be anti-inflammatory for seniors, which might impact or improve age-related conditions such as arthritis. During the winter months it is important to prepare your horse for exercise with ample warm-up and cool-down periods. Cool the horse out completely with the help of coolers. Warm the bit before bridling him. Use common sense when judging riding conditions, as older horses do not adjust well to stressful conditions.

## **Health Monitoring**

Because older horses face changes that naturally occur to the immune system with increasing age, it is important to monitor them more closely for health conditions you might not have considered previously, including respiratory illness, skin conditions, signs of colic, and arthritis. We have shown that as horses age, a phenomenon called inflamm-aging occurs and is defined as low-grade, chronic inflammation. We have recently shown that season impacts the levels of inflammation and that levels are quite high during winter. Currently, we have ongoing research to determine safe, effective levels of natural anti-inflammatory treatments that might help reduce this inflamm-aging, thereby improving age-related conditions such as arthritis. It is important to consult with your veterinarian and get a therapy plan on track so you can optimize your horse's mobility during winter. Summary

In preparing for winter, make sure your horse is up-to-date on vaccinations and deworming and is maintaining a proper body condition score. During winter you should provide your horses with warmed water, additional hay and/or concentrate during extreme cold, access to shelter, regular hoof and dental care, and regular body condition assessments. Also evaluate your shelters and their ventilation frequently. Horses, given the opportunity to acclimate to cold temperatures, often prefer and are better off outdoors with access to shelters.

## Northern Colorado Back country Horsemen 2014 Christmas party

It was a great success and lots of fun...we had forty party goers at this years NC BCH Christmas party. Most were members but we shared the fun with guests from the Larimer County Horsemen's Association and friends and family members including some little folks.

Dale Bratton and JeanAnn Steffens deserve the credit for this years party. They made the arrangements for the caterer, Barbeque Bob's from Loveland, and the entertainment by local singer-songwriter, comedian, Gary McMahan. The food was great and the entertainment was... entertaining. Actually, it was very good and we all enjoyed it very much. Gary played his guitar, sang songs, some that he wrote, and told stories about his adventures of working cattle and riding horses on the ranch. It was something many of us could relate to.

After the entertainment, we held an auction of some very fine pastries that were donated by members and guests. I played the role of auctioneer while Kate sauntered her way around the floor showing the various goods for sale. Dale prepared the next item for sale and we rolled through all the pastries selling everyone of them. NC BCH made almost \$200 from the auction that will be put to good use on items we need to do trail work or other activities related to our mission statement.

Sandy Chapin presented me with a special gift for my time spent as president along with some kind words. The gift is a model 110 Buck knife that celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of this model from the knife maker. Since I'm a knife collector this is a very special gift that will be cherished for many years.

My time as president has come and gone. I gave it my best and now it's time for new leadership for NC BCH. We don't have a president, at present, but we do have a very active and talented vice president. Kate Kattnig, our new VP, will be in charge of meetings and other president and vice president duties. The BOD and I will also be active in the operation of the club and help Kate with her duties as needed. Please support your club and BOD by being active, attending meetings and participating in work days, trail maintenance and having fun with the group. It's been challenging at times but always a pleasure to be part of such a fine group of hard working horse folks. Hope to see you on the trail.





## Camping with Horses at Laramie River Road

submitted by JoAnne Wortman

Three methods of horse containment, and three types of camping, were utilized at the August 2014 event, camping with horses, hosted by NC BCH president Al Ohms. Also in attendance were members JoAnne Wortman and Barrie Nelson, and a guest, Deb Rua. Attendance was hindered by quarantines imposed by the vesicular stomatitis outbreak. Boarding facility managers informed boarders that they were welcome to take their horses off the premises, but they would not be allowed back.



Al and JoAnne kept their horses in a corral consisting of light-weight portable panels attached to their trailer. Deb's horse was happy in a rope corral, and Barrie's mare was high-lined.



Saturday's ride took us across the Laramie River and along the trail adjacent to the irrigation ditch in the forested area west of the river. This was great training for 2 of the horses, who were young and inexperienced, and would not step in a puddle before that ride. By the end of

the day, both horses were calmly crossing the river, and the 4-year old was splashing and playing like a kid in a bathtub. The presence of the 2 experienced horses assisted in building their confidence. Moose were also seen along the trail.



Sunday's ride took us past the Rawah Guest Ranch and along the Rawah Wilderness Pack Trail, where we crossed wooden bridges. In many places, the trail is narrow, steep and rocky. This was also a good learning experience for the 2 green horses.



Camping facilities were a pop-up camper, tent, and sleeping quarters in the front of a goose-neck trailer. The weather was perfect for cooking outside.

As usual, we brought weed-free hay to feed our horses, removed trash left by previous campers, practiced Leave No Trace, and left the area better than when we found it. Unfortunately,



when we arrived Friday evening and selected our camp site, 2 men from a nearby site accosted us about our choice of sites. Apparently they were unhappy having to share the National Forest with others; this during peak summer season, when most of the camp sites in the area were already taken, and several others arrived after us to claim the remaining sites. In retaliation they promised to be loud and obnoxious, using foul language, and playing loud music. Perhaps they kept their promise, but we could neither hear nor see them because they were over 200 feet away, obscured by trees. I suppose this is a testament to the impact of increased population along the Front Range, and further emphasizes our need as an organization to cooperate with other

users of our trails and camping areas, so that we do not find ourselves and our horses excluded from these areas.



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## Upcoming Events for 2015



Always check the website:  
[www.ncbch.org](http://www.ncbch.org). Use this  
page for your notes and  
dates of events.

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**I hope 2015 brings more participation in NCBCH, and articles for the newsletter.**

**Is there anyone who would like to take notes at the meetings and possibly take a few pictures? Please let me know if you are interested in doing this. Next Newsletter will, hopefully, be the end of March, 2015.**

**\*\*\*REMINDER\*\*\***

**CHECK OUT WWW.NCBCH.ORG OUR AWESOME WEBSITE**

NCBCH Advertising Rates .. Ads help to support the clubs cost for the website

Advertising rates are \$15 a quarter (3 months), \$50 annually (12 months) for both the newsletter and web pages for the business card advertisers (<http://ncbch.org/Advertisers.html>). The business card advertisers will also have their name and website listed on the Resources page (formerly Favorite Links). The business card and the listing on the Resource page will link to their appropriate website. The Resource page would have two areas identified; Government and Not-For Profits, and For Profits. A member and/or a business can pay a \$5.00 annual fee to have that business listed in the For Profit section of the Resource page (<http://ncbch.org/Resources.html>).