



Front Range Back Country Horsemen (est. 1996)
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Working to keep trails open to saddle and pack stock today and for future generations through education, service and voice.

Without trails, where would we ride?

March 2023 Newsletter



Next Meeting: Wednesday March 22nd 6:00 PM, at the Golden Library - 1019 10th St in downtown Golden, CO. Meeting to start promptly at 6 PM to complete by 8 PM.

Pres Sez I hope most of you had a chance to get down to the Rocky Mountain Horse Expo. It was a very good show this year, with some excellent clinics. I particularly enjoyed Michael Gascon, Cody Harrison, and Mike Brashear – and of course Robert Eversole’s presentations are always entertaining and highly applicable to us.

Thanks to all the volunteers at our booth, including **Kitty Bladt, Cyndi Foster, Donna Fleischer, Karen Chaney, Courtney Cowgill, Sharon Jayne, Wendy and Rick Goad, Sandra Bankhead, Valerie Walters, PJ Dyon, and Carolyn Knapp-Nelson**. A special thanks to **Joan and Jack Wealing** for bringing the booth panels all the way down from Buffalo Creek, and to **Karen Chaney** and **Kitty Bladt** for the help with the setup and dismantling of the booth. It takes this large group of dedicated volunteers to bring off this kind of effort, and make the time in the booth so enjoyable. We collected lots of names on an interest list, and signed up a few new and renewal members. I know that I enjoyed speaking to prospects about our Chapter and all the events we do. It was a great opportunity to get out our message and attend some great educational sessions!

We now have the calendar online, so please take a look and sign up for the meetings and activities you can attend. We’ll continue to find-tune and adjust the events, and thanks to **PJ Dyon**, we plan to have more regular Newsletters to keep everyone up to date. **Mike Brashear** suggested that we revise the name of our May 6 clinic with him to **Foundation Horsemanship**

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Deadline for articles
10th of each month!

- so we will use that name going forward. The clinic is now full, but you can get your name on the waiting list by contacting Karen Chaney if you didn't get a chance to sign up!

The next meeting had to be moved to Wednesday, March 22, as we could not get our regular Tuesday time reserved at the Library in Golden. Please be there by 6:00 PM to allow for a full meeting before the Golden Library closes at 8. Hope to see you all there!

--John Chase

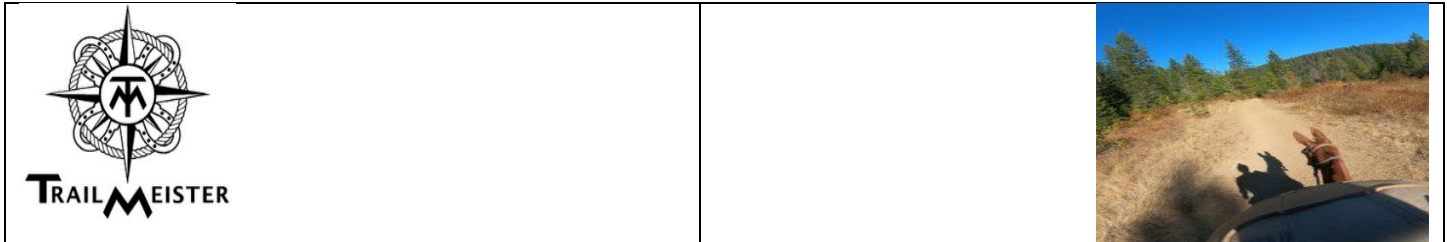
Scenes from the Rocky Mountain Horse Expo 2023



Each year, the Rocky Mountain Horse Expo is run by the Colorado Horse Council. This year's event was a wonderful event. Many more vendors, clinicians, and foot traffic than

last year were present. Consider your personal renewal to [Colorado Horse Council](#) for 2023. FRBCH has renewed our organizational membership, as a chapter in BCH. It's important for all of us to support their good efforts for equestrians in Colorado. Further, a membership includes \$1 million equine excess personal liability insurance.

Getting Past the Spook



October 11, 2022

We've all been there. We're heading down the trail, and our mount suddenly decides to exit the area posthaste. How we responded to that event determined whether the ride was over or if it was no big deal. My best-est boy mule, Ruger, encountered a mule-eating stump on a recent trail ride. Now I'd love to think that Ruger was doing his level best to protect both of us from the imminent danger that waits within a stump. It's similar to the dangers lurking in plastic bags, round bales, and mule-eating bears disguised as tiny white dogs. Unfortunately, that's not the case.

Why Spooks Happen

Horses, and mules, are prey animals with an instinct to look for potential danger and flee when they find it. This "fright and flight" response has kept equines of all flavors alive for millennia. Horses evolved in wide open spaces where animals that ran first and thought about it later lived long enough to reproduce and reinforce that behavior. One of the many reasons I'm partial to mules is that donkeys have less of a flight response than horses. Of course, you'll have to figure out which half (horse or donkey) you're riding that day. While these historical facts are interesting, I would argue that knowing the root cause of the spook doesn't make riding one out any easier. Ruger certainly listened to his horse side when we encountered the terrifying stump and the tiny white bear.

Before the Spook

I'm a big fan of proactively controlling spooks. I think of every ride as an airplane flight where I'm the pilot. Pre-flight checks work for aviators and horsemen; they'll save you from an accident. We can learn a lot about what kind of day our animals are having if we take the time to look and listen before we head down the trail. Ty Evans taught me an excellent pre-ride checklist I run through before every ride.

Pre-Ride Checklist:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand still to mount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear front
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lateral flexion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On course/loose rein circles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move the hinds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll the hinds and return to the circle

If we can't complete these few simple items before the ride, it may be time to change our plans and work out whatever kinks are in the system while we're still in a relatively safe area and not on a narrow mountain trail. Forging ahead without a solid handle is a sure route to an eventful ride.

Listening to our Animals Doesn't Stop at the Trailhead

During a ride, watch for potential monsters that might spook your horse. I watch for pricked ears pointing at something of interest. Sometimes I can find the beast; usually, I can't. To be honest, my seeing the monster is irrelevant. I don't have the same perspective as my animal. Whether I understand or not, whatever he's experiencing is very real to him. When I notice any indication of Ruger becoming overly concerned, I try to put him to work. I'll run through that checklist and give him something else to think about besides the monster. Once he's relaxed and listening again, we'll continue down the trail.

The One Rein Stop

After two and half decades in the saddle, I've determined the following. Most people will wait until the horse is in a full-out run before they decide to do something. By then, it's too late. Worse, after the dust has settled, they blame the one rein stop for the wreck. You must train and prepare yourself to react as soon as the beast wants to take off, not once the critter hits 100 miles an hour. For the one rein stop to work, it must be an ingrained habit that is practiced and refined regularly. It is an area where simply knowing the theory won't do. To me, the one rein stop is a fundamental tool everyone should have on their horse. Horses need to learn this emergency brake before being ridden outside the arena, and it can be a lifesaver.

A side benefit of practicing the one rein stop is that when a spook does occur, you'll be better prepared to sit deep and stay somewhat more relaxed instead of getting tight and hauling back on both reins, each of which only serves to make a bad situation worse.

Thank You for the Opportunity

After the spook has occurred and you've put the one rein stop to work, it's time to address whatever monster you've encountered. You've been gifted a fabulous training opportunity, be sure to take advantage of it.

Early in my riding career, I would have pointed my horse at the scary monster and tried to convince him that all was well with lots of pats and consoling talk about how it was ok and that all would be well. I don't think this approach worked then, and I don't believe it works now. Here's a better system that works for me. Once you're back in control of the situation, put the horse's feet to work. Using one rein, bend him. It's much harder for a horse to return to the reactive side of his brain when he's redirecting his feet. If you're in a safe area, go back to Ty's checklist; flex his head, move the hinds, and clear the fronts.

Please spend a few minutes getting him soft and relaxed again before you continue the ride. This will be time well spent, help bring him back to focus, and help ease your nerves. Be patient; after all, you've just avoided a dangerous stump full of gremlins.

Well, there you go, my thoughts on avoiding spooks in the first place and ideas on addressing them when they do occur. As horse and mule owners, we're responsible for guiding and protecting our mounts. When our animals get scared, it's our job to give them the appropriate guidance to keep them safe.

For more information on trail riding and horse camping, please visit www.TrailMeister.com.

Roxy **A Memoir of Dan Shier's father, George Shier**

In 1910, when I was about four, Father bought a bay Shetland pony, round as a barrel, short legged and with a mind of her own. My older brother, Hurlburt, was too small to saddle her with a rather heavy saddle, so Father rigged the saddle on a rope through a pulley above her stall and Hurlburt lowered the saddle to her back, while she shied away from it. Hurlburt was strong enough and active enough to learn to boss the pony that we had named Roxy.

They had a continual war. He carried a small whip to urge her along. She would rear on her hind legs and lay down and roll, sometimes in mudholes to get him off her back. Then he would hang to her bridle with one hand and switch her with the whip to teach her to behave. Many a time I was put on Roxy with him, behind the saddle. She would buck until I was thrown off, but Hurlburt in the saddle could usually stay aboard.

Finally, one day, to keep me out of Mother's way, Father took me to the field with him. For a while, I rode Roxy, round and round the field behind his drill. Then along came stinging bot flies. Roxy, bucked and ran for the barn with me hanging to the saddle, yelling bloody murder. When Father caught up, Roxy was calmly nibbling on the Osage orange hedge in the yard and I was still yelling. For a while, I refused to have anything more to do with Roxy. (Editor's note: Go figure!?!)



Thanks, Dan, for sharing!

The Outside 285 Partnership is a planning group focused on making recommendations for improvement of the Indian Creek trail system near Sedalia. The group represents local government, Forest Service, Denver Water, and user groups including equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers and trail runners. We are representing the equestrian interest to the planning group; John Case, Joan Wealing and Chalice Coward have participated in the

virtual and in-person planning sessions. John has an extensive slide presentation and notes from the last planning session if any FRBCH members have interest in the details.

Outside 285 has released a survey to look for additional input on pending changes at Indian Creek. This survey is still open – so please fill out the short questionnaire so that the ideas of more equestrian users are included!

Thanks for your effort to preserve our access to this great trail system.

[View this email in your browser](#)



Seeking Input on Indian Creek



Are you familiar with the trails at Indian Creek? If so, we'd love your input.

The Outside 285 Partnership is working with the Forest Service and other partners to re-envision and improve the Indian Creek Trail System. We aim to enhance the visitor experience, protect wildlife habitat, and address maintenance issues while preserving the rugged, remote, and backcountry feel that folks love about the Indian Creek trails.

We need your help in building our understanding of the habitats and preferences of visitors to Indian Creek and would greatly appreciate it if you took a few minutes to fill out this [short survey](#).

Thanks for your time and ideas!

INDIAN CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM USER SURVEY

Stay Informed

This newsletter is sent to all of the community stakeholders identified during the O285 master planning effort. *Please forward to anyone you think might appreciate periodic Outside 285 Partnership updates.*

If you have any questions about the O285 Partnership, please direct them to project consultant, ERO Resources: CTanner@eroresources.com



What Is Shadow Mountain Bike Park, FKA Full Send Bike Ranch?

The Bike Park, [if approved by the Jefferson County Planning Commission, Jefferson County Commissioners and the State Land Board](#), will be a 250-acre lift access downhill mountain bike park just West of Conifer on Shadow Mountain Drive and South Warhawk Road, see the map below.

To find out more details, check [Stop The Bike Park](#).



BCH National Newsletter

As a member of the FRBCH, you should have recently received your copy of the BCH March Newsletter. If for some reason you did not, please follow this link: To catch up on historical newsletters or to read the upcoming newsletters please go to <https://www.bcha.org/blog/newsletter/> There's great info here!



Upcoming FRBCH Chapter Events

Here's several upcoming rides and events that will be both trail-clearing adventures and fun recreational rides. Get onto the chapter Signup Calendar and join us for the fun and camaraderie!

- April 15, Saturday Horse First Aid Clinic
- May 20 & 21 weekend Indian Creek Camp Trip & Recreational Ride
- June 3, Saturday Recreational Ride @ Wealing Ranch
- June 7, Wednesday Trail Clearing Ride
- June 12, Monday Trail Clearing Ride

Use this full link to view the complete detailed list and for sign up
<https://signup.com/go/seVyPnj>

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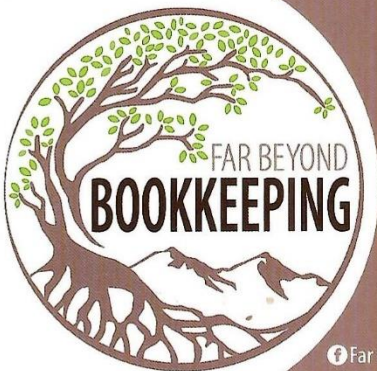
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 Far Beyond Bookkeeping Tools and Tips

Thank you for your patience and persistence for reading all the way to the end of my first attempt at the newsletter. PJ Dyon



"Maybe she's
barn with it...
Maybe it's
neighbelline"