



Mission:

To provide children, youth, and adults the opportunity to grow and develop through therapeutic, educational, and recreational activities with horses.

There are many volunteer opportunities at Bluff & Ridge, and we are confident you will find something you enjoy. Whether you become a side walker, horse handler, or barn help, every hour you donate to Bluff & Ridge helps our students move closer to improved health and greater independence.



Welcome to the BLUFF & RIDGE Volunteer Program!

We are grateful that you have decided to share your valuable time and talents with us.

Bluff & Ridge is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization funded through grants and contributions from individuals and the community, and through participant fees. As a nonprofit, we rely on the strength of our many dedicated volunteers to assist our riders and staff. Volunteers like you make it possible to provide therapeutic horseback riding and equine-assisted services to children and adults with disabilities from Monroe and surrounding counties (Adams, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Richland, and Vernon).

As a member center of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH), Bluff & Ridge is held to the highest safety standards in our industry. Due to the nature of our work and the people we serve, it is important that everyone be as knowledgeable and consistent as possible to uphold the highest quality and safety standards.

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Purpose of the Volunteer Training & Readiness Program

Safety is at the heart of everything we do. Horses are powerful, perceptive animals, and many of our participants have unique physical, cognitive, or emotional needs. To support both horse and human well-being, **all volunteers complete a generalized foundational training designed to establish shared knowledge, expectations, and safety standards across the program.**

This foundational training ensures that every volunteer—regardless of prior horse experience—understands our mission, safety practices, horse handling philosophy, participant support principles, and facility procedures. From this common base, **volunteers may then participate in role-specific trainings** aligned with their interests, abilities, and the needs of the program.

Volunteers are at the heart of our program. Whether it's for an hour or for a whole day, the gift of your time cannot be measured!

Benefits of Equine-Assisted Services:

Physical:

- Improve balance and posture
- Strengthen weak muscles
- Slow down muscle degeneration
- Relax tight muscles

- Improve fine and gross motor skills

- Improve hand-eye coordination

Mental & emotional:

- Social interaction
- Animal connection
- Coordination
- Structure and Routine
- Responsibility
- Motivation
- Self-esteem

- Autonomy
- Cooperation
- Sense of success
- Improve language skills
- Sequencing and Planning

- Processing
- Increase attention span and self-confidence

Some volunteer roles directly support our equine-assisted lessons and require additional training due to their impact on rider and horse safety. Other roles support the program in equally valuable ways outside of lesson activities, such as barn support, grounds care, or fundraising efforts. Each role has its own training pathway, responsibilities, and scope.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you have horse experience or a desire to work with horses there are several roles you might fill (all require special training).

- **Side Walkers** provide physical and motivational support for the rider.
- **Horse Leaders** have the primary responsibility of the horse during lessons.
- **Groomers** prepare horses for tacking prior to lessons (currying, brushing, picking hooves).
- **Stable support** volunteers assist in maintaining a healthy environment for the herd. Primary tasks include cleaning the stable, moving hay, and assisting with feeding.
- **Lesson Aide** provides support to the instructors and other volunteers to ensure lessons run smoothly.

If you'd like to help, but would rather not work directly with the horses, one of these roles might be for you.

- **Tack Team** helps keep our saddles and headstalls in top condition and makes sure the tack room stays clean and organized.
- **Maintenance Team** helps keep our facility, machinery and grounds in top shape.
- **Fundraising** help with support for our ongoing fundraising and special events.
- **Other VERY important areas** include professional services (legal, accounting, landscaping, photography, videography, etc.)

Whether you are new to horses or bring years of experience, our goal is to equip every volunteer with the tools, confidence, and understanding needed to serve safely and effectively. By training together and preparing intentionally for specific responsibilities, we create a consistent, supportive environment where our participants—and our horses—can thrive.

This manual will serve as a guide to volunteer expectations and opportunities.

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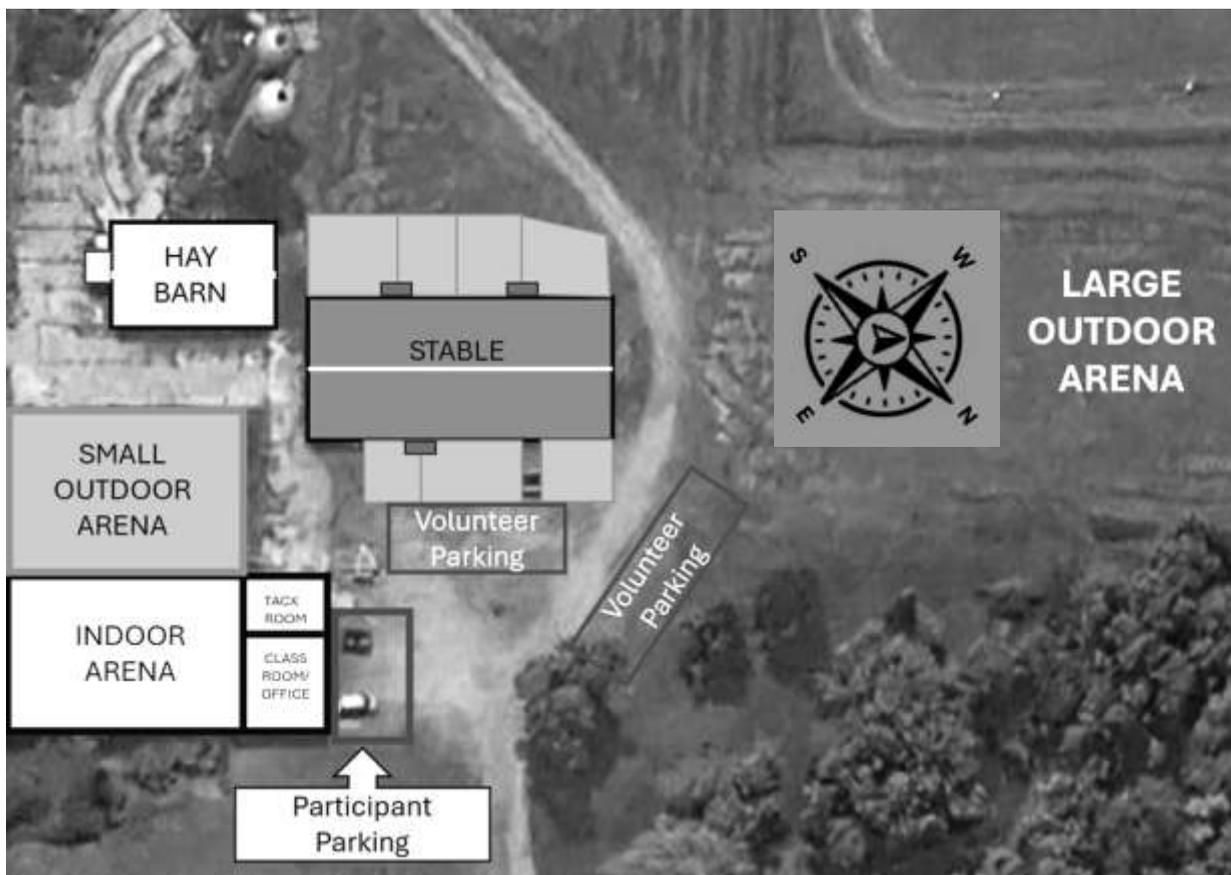
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Welcome to Our Home

Our Property

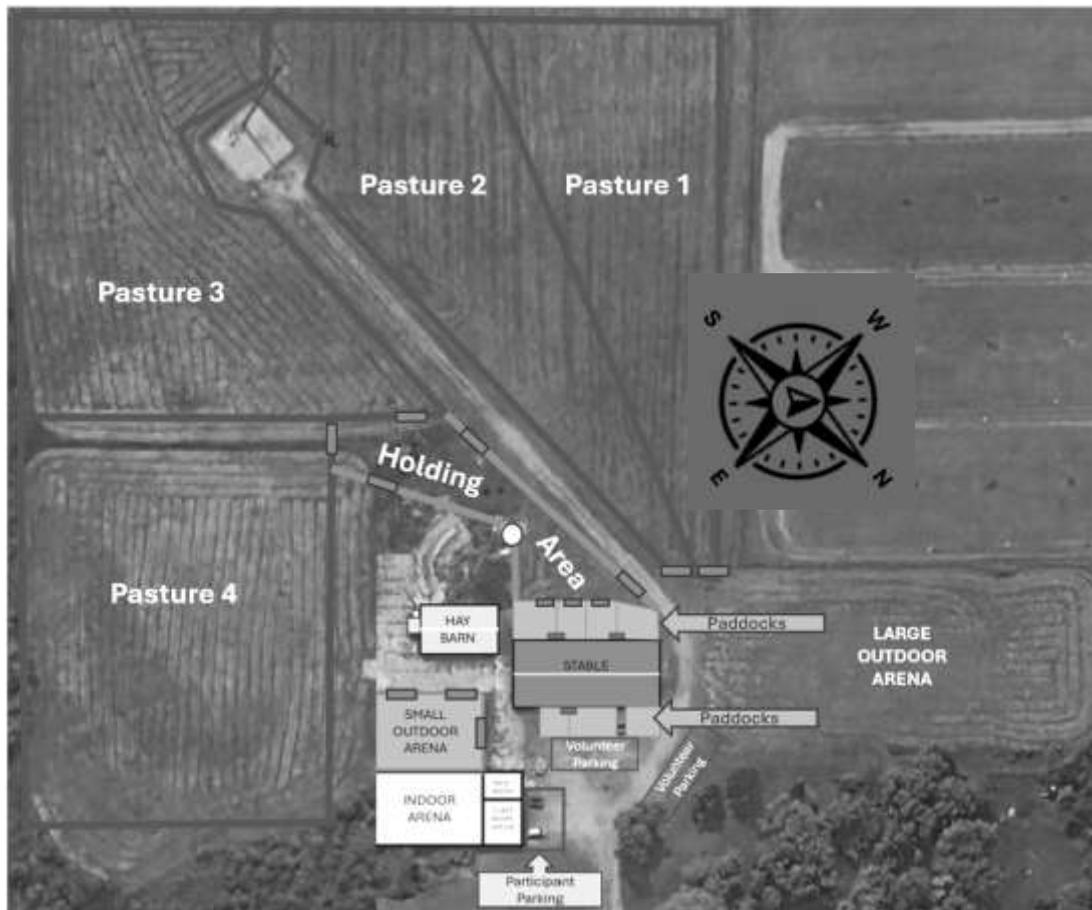
Our equine center is located at 23797 County Hwy CM in Tomah, Wisconsin, situated in Tomah Township at the southwest edge of town, immediately adjacent to the Monroe County Fairgrounds. The property encompasses 9 acres, with a total of 11 acres utilized, and is thoughtfully designed to support both programming and horse care.

The site includes a Main Building with our office, classroom, kitchenette, ADA-accessible restroom, **tack room, observation area**, and a small **indoor arena**, with attached **small outdoor arena**. A separate **stable** houses up to 13 horses and includes feed and tack rooms, hay storage, water, and additional areas for shavings, barn lime, and equipment. The stable also features four west-side **paddocks** and three east-side paddocks, all attached to the horses' stalls.



A third structure serves as the **Hay Barn**, where hay and additional equipment can be found (e.g., fencing supplies, lumber, lawn mowers, etc.).

The surrounding land is divided into four fenced **pastures**, with the west-side paddocks connecting through a secure holding area to Pastures 3 and 4, allowing for safe and efficient horse movement and turnout.



Participant Requirements

Anyone over 4 years of age with a diagnosed developmental, physical, visual, cognitive, emotional, or social disability, whose condition or predisposition does not contraindicate equine-assisted services is eligible for Bluff & Ridge services.

A comprehensive list of precautions and contraindications developed by PATH Intl. guides Bluff & Ridge instructors in what activities are appropriate for an individual. Bluff & Ridge can accommodate most riders, provided they are:

- At least four years old
- Not a danger to themselves or others (no hitting, biting, hair pulling, etc.)
- Able to maintain an upright head and neck position
- An appropriate weight for the horses that are available

Every participant completes an application and screening form and undergoes an intake to outline participant and family goals. Lessons are created to meet the needs of each individual. The instructor teaches the skills of horsemanship and horseback riding and personalizes lesson plans to meet each student's goals. These goals may be to build core strength, balance, focus, executive function skills and/or socialization skills.

Who we Serve

According to research, individuals can gain physical, emotional, and mental rewards from horseback riding. A person with physical disability may experience improvement in flexibility, balance, and muscle strength through gentle and rhythmic movements of the horse. Individuals with mental or emotional disabilities often show improved self-esteem, confidence, and self-awareness. People with learning or developmental disabilities are motivated to increase their attention-span, patience, and discipline. These benefits translate into life-skills. Life-skills are behavioral, cognitive, or interpersonal skills that enable individuals to succeed in life. Some examples include: being able to think of multiple solutions to a problem, knowing how to develop healthy relationships and how to interact with others successfully, and dealing with emotions effectively.

Bluff & Ridge participants can be individuals with Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, trauma/PTSD, Multiple Sclerosis, and/or learning and/or behavioral disorders, among others. Bluff & Ridge utilizes mounted and unmounted equine activities to positively contribute to the well-being of these children, youth and adults.

Equine assisted activities and therapies can improve a participant's quality of life by providing an opportunity to bond with their horse, instructor, sidewalkers and peers. For individuals with limited mobility or difficulty connecting with others, adaptive riding offers a chance to participate in a sport and connect with others via a shared interest/activity.

Below are brief descriptions of some disabilities and conditions that you may encounter at Bluff & Ridge.

- **Autism Spectrum Disorder** is an impaired ability to relate to others. Characteristics may include impaired speech, poor social and communication skills.
- **Brain Injuries/Traumatic Brain Injuries**, are the result of a severe injury that occurred to the head that caused the death of brain cells. These individuals' motor skills, memory, or speech may have been affected.
- **Cerebral Palsy (CP)**. This condition is caused by brain damage that has occurred before, at or after birth. A lack of coordination and postural balance can result from this damage. Individuals with CP can have high or low tone. Low tone (hypotonia) means muscles are loose, floppy, and lack resting tension, making them feel "mushy," while high tone (hypertonia) means muscles are overly tense, stiff, and resistant to stretching, feeling tight. Low tone can cause poor posture, fatigue, and delayed milestones, whereas high tone leads to stiffness, difficulty with movement, and potential contractures, both stemming from neurological differences affecting how the brain communicates with muscles.
- **Developmental Disabilities** is the broad term applied to children that are functioning two or more years below their actual grade level. These children can have slow physical, mental, or social development.

- **Down's Syndrome** is a chromosomal disorder often recognized by the physical features (small head, flat back, upward slanting eyes) and low muscle tone. The individual's development and learning capacity may vary widely.
- **Emotional Disabilities** is any disturbance of emotional equilibrium as manifested in inadaptable behavior and impaired functioning, caused by genetic, physical, chemical, biological, psychological, or social and cultural factors. These individuals may display inappropriate behaviors, have difficulty with learning, coping, or have vast and dramatic mood changes.
- **Hearing Impairment** may be anywhere from a partial loss of hearing to the complete inability to hear (deaf). Individuals with a hearing impairment may communicate with sign language, lip reading, or communication devices.
- **Learning Disabilities** is a term used to describe individuals with difficulty processing information and problem solving skills. May not appear to have a disability.
- **Intellectual Disability (ID) or Cognitive Disability** is an impairment of intellectual functioning, social skills, communication, and skills in daily living, and personal care.
- **Intellectual Developmental Disorder (IDD)** is often used to encompass both intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **Multiple Sclerosis (MS)** is the chronic destruction of the myelin sheath throughout the brain or spinal cord or both. This interferes with the nerve pathways, causing muscular weakness, loss of coordination, and fatigue.
- **Muscular Dystrophy** is a condition causing the person's muscles to progressively weaken. As a result their muscles tend to become fatigued easily.
- **Paralysis** is the loss or impairment of the sensation of a body part, usually as a result of damage to its nerve supply. As a result, the person will lose the ability to move or function the affected area of the body.
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** is a common anxiety disorder that develops after exposure to a traumatic situation in which grave physical, mental or emotional harm occurred or was threatened. Family members of victims also can develop the disorder. PTSD can occur in people of any age, including children or adolescents. More than twice as many women as men experience PTSD following exposure to trauma. Depression, alcohol or other substance abuse or other anxiety disorder frequently co-exist with PTSD.
- **Sensory Integration** is the integration and interpretation of sensory stimulation from the environment by the brain. This disorder occurs when sensory input is not integrated or organized appropriately in the brain. As a result, problems in development, information processing, and behavior may occur.
- **Visual Impairment** is characterized by a moderate or total loss of sight.

Confidentiality:

Due to the nature of equine assisted services, it is the policy of Bluff & Ridge that any and

all information (verbal or written) pertaining to our participants, families, caregivers, staff and volunteers shall remain privileged and confidential. This information may include, but not be limited to, any medical, social, referral, personal and/or financial information that may be disclosed as a result of participation in this program.

Disclosure of any confidential information shall not be released to anyone not associated with Bluff & Ridge. Discussions involving any participant shall be limited to progress reports, appropriate mounted and unmounted safety guidelines and any other guidelines the instructor may deem appropriate in each situation. Volunteers will be given information concerning participants on a strictly need-to-know basis and in keeping with the confidential nature of our participant's records. Each participant shall be assured of record confidentiality and as such, only authorized staff will have access to a secured records location.

Bluff & Ridge employees and volunteers have an ethical and legal obligation to respect the privacy of our participants. **Please do not take pictures of our participants or post any information regarding our participants on social media.** The use of rider information/photographic materials for the personal use especially on public forums (i.e. blogs, webpages, Facebook, etc.) is not acceptable. All publicized materials or information must come from Bluff & Ridge or have approval from Bluff & Ridge. If it is reported to Bluff & Ridge that information about our organization, staff, participants, horses or other volunteers are being exploited via social media network you will be asked to remove it or it will be reported.

Failure to adhere to the Bluff & Ridge confidentiality policy by any staff or volunteer could result in their termination of employment or service.

Volunteer Background Checks: Bluff & Ridge is committed to creating a safe environment for children and adults with special needs. Criminal background checks are one strategy we use to ensure safety for our participants. Bluff & Ridge's policy is to conduct criminal background checks on all adult volunteers and to repeat criminal background checks every 3 years.

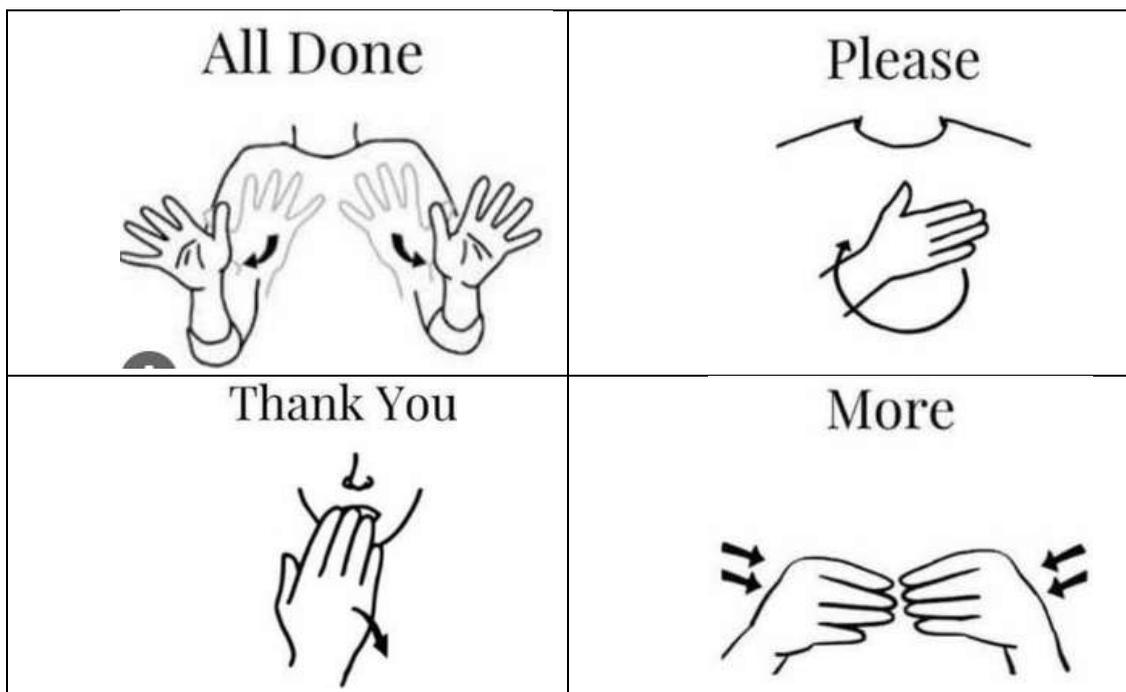
When You Meet A Bluff & Ridge Participant:

- Remember that the person with a disability is a person. They are like everyone else, except for the special limitations of their disability.
- Be yourself - Talk about the same things as you would with anyone else.
- Always ask if they would like assistance before you help (emergency situations are the exception).
- Be patient, let the person set his or her own pace walking or talking.
- Don't be afraid to LAUGH WITH THE PARTICIPANT!

- When speaking to someone in a wheelchair be aware of their personal space; if the conversation lasts more than a few minutes sit or kneel so that you are speaking to them at the level of the chair.
- If the person wants to tell you about their disability, **they** will bring up the subject.
- If physical assistance is needed allow the individual to hold your arm or elbow and walk one step ahead or ask if there is a specific way they prefer to be assisted.
- Don't make up your mind about a person with a disability ahead of time. You may be surprised at how wrong you are in judging their interest or ability.
- ENJOY yourself and your friendship with the person. Their philosophy and good humor may give you inspiration.
- SMILE!

Functional Sign Language

Many of our younger participants use functional sign language. This can be an essential tool for self-expression. Here are a few common signs used by our students:



You'll quickly become familiar with hand gestures/body positions that the rider may be using to represent words and concepts.

Volunteering for Bluff and Ridge

Volunteers benefit from a sense of accomplishment and enjoyment, pleasure in giving of yourself, and an opportunity to make a difference and see the results. You will also learn new skills and knowledge.

General Rules for Bluff & Ridge Volunteers

- Volunteers must be at least 14 years old
- This is a drug-free facility. Volunteering while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol is prohibited and will lead to dismissal. No smoking, vaping or drinking of alcoholic beverages will be allowed at the facility.
- No Firearms allowed.
- No Dogs or pets, with the exception of service dogs, are allowed in the stable/riding areas as they can cause distraction to volunteers, students and horses!
- Unsupervised children are not allowed at Bluff & Ridge.
- Do not feed the horses; each has their own special diets. Do NOT hand feed the horses. If you have treats to give the horses, please talk to the instructor or volunteer coordinator.
- **Do not pet horses' faces and muzzles.** These are extremely sensitive areas that they use for exploring. This can be overwhelming, uncomfortable, or even painful, potentially causing them to flinch, pull away, or develop a habit of nipping as a defense or in response to overstimulation. It's better to focus on the neck or withers for gentle petting.
- Gates must remain closed at all times. If you open a gate you are responsible for closing it.
- Helmets are mandatory for all volunteers, staff, and participants when mounted riding.
- No running or shouting in and around the stable and riding areas.
- Visitors should be approved to be on property. If you have a friend/family member that is interested in volunteering or participating in some capacity please arrange a scheduled time with the Volunteer Coordinator. Visitors will be asked to sign a Liability Waiver.
- Off-limit areas are posted, authorized staff only.
- No littering. The stable area should always be kept clear of obstacles and potential hazards; equipment should always be put away after use. Please do not leave equipment on the ground outside stalls (including lead ropes, brushes/groom boxes, manure forks, etc.).

Volunteer Guidelines

Respect: Volunteers are to treat all Bluff & Ridge's staff (including directors, instructors, therapists, and volunteer/stable coordinators), peer volunteers, participants, and horses with respect. It is important for volunteers to adhere to directions given by the staff, while avoiding questioning and undermining authority to keep program activities running safe and efficiently.

Fairness: Be aware of individual needs and how to respond to individual differences. Bluff & Ridge is a place where everyone is welcome and treated with the utmost respect and courtesy including participants, horses, peers, instructors, therapists, and staff. A person with

special needs is entitled to the same dignity and respect that every person deserves.

Behavior: Volunteers are expected to lead by example and conduct themselves in a positive, cooperative, and appropriate manner. Foul language, inappropriate, unproductive or destructive behavior is unacceptable. Examples of inappropriate behavior include: any form of harassment, sexual innuendo, aggressive or abusive behavior, gossiping/slander, or hazardous/dangerous actions. Remember – Volunteers are a reflection of Bluff & Ridge.

Safety: Volunteers are expected to understand and follow safety guidelines and Barn Rules while on Bluff & Ridge property. Safety around horses, in the arena and stable is crucial. Horses are large, powerful prey animals that can easily injure people (or themselves) due to their flight instinct and stable environments have inherent physical hazards that make comprehensive safety protocols essential for preventing accidents, ensuring well-being, and maintaining smooth operations. Proper training, secure fencing, clear pathways, careful handling, and managing environmental risks are key to minimizing dangers for both humans and animals.

To ensure a safe environment while engaging in therapeutic interaction with horses the following expectations are required of all volunteers. Disregarding any one of these expectations will result in a warning, reprimand, or dismissal from the Bluff & Ridge Volunteer Program.

Physical Fitness: Volunteers should be aware of their own physical fitness levels. If you feel unable to safely participate in a lesson/session inform the Instructor or Volunteer Coordinator. If you feel that participation as a volunteer in the arena or stable is too physically demanding there are other volunteer opportunities available at Bluff & Ridge.

Communication: Volunteers are expected to be honest about their knowledge of horses and working with the Special Needs population. Volunteers are expected to complete tasks assigned to them to the best of their abilities. Be open and sympathetic to others' suggestions. If you do not understand or feel uncomfortable with something asked to do, inform the Instructor or Volunteer Coordinator.

Scheduling & Commitment: Volunteers are assigned depending on their specific roles. **We cannot over-stress the importance of a volunteer's commitment** as scheduled. These roles include horse leaders, aides and sidewalkers. Participants cannot ride without you. Please help us ensure that each participant receives the full benefit of his or her activities. If volunteers do not show and do not give us prior notice there is a chance we will not be able to allow the participant to ride. We will not ride in an unsafe environment.

Volunteers are to adhere to the assigned times as agreed upon for the entire length of the session (unless other arrangements are made with the Volunteer Coordinator).

Arrival & Routine

Expectations

Volunteers are expected to remain attentive, engaged, and within their assigned role(s) for the duration of their scheduled shift. Role-specific training, supervision requirements, and responsibilities are defined in subsequent sections of this manual and are required prior to performing volunteer duties. Volunteers should follow staff direction at all times and communicate any concerns related to horse behavior, participant safety, or equipment immediately.

Volunteers should arrive prior to their scheduled lesson time to allow adequate preparation of horses, equipment, and the environment. Timely arrival supports participant safety, horse welfare, and smooth lesson flow, consistent with PATH Intl. standards for program readiness and supervision.

Arrival time varies by role:

- **Groomers:** 30 minutes to 1 hour prior
- **Lesson Aides & Horse Leaders:** 30 minutes prior
- **Horse Leaders & Sidewalkers:** 20 minutes prior

Entrance & Parking: The speed limit on Bluff & Ridge property is always five miles per hour. During business hours, the gates are left open. If gates are closed during a scheduled volunteer time, open the gates, enter and close them behind you.

Please be aware of horses on or around the parking area and driveway. If a horse is approaching as you are driving, stop and allow them the right of way or allow them to move out of the way and wave you on. Watch for animals and children crossing the roadway.

To maintain safe traffic flow and clear access for participants and horses, volunteers must park only in designated areas.

- Park along the right side of the drive, inside the gate (not past the paddocks)
- Additional parking is permitted along the front paddocks
- Parking along the front of the Main Building is reserved for participants while we are in session.

Volunteers must enter the facility through the **tack room door** unless otherwise directed by staff.

Routine Upon Arrival

Sign-In Procedures: All volunteers must sign in upon arrival and sign out before leaving the property. To support a safe and well-supervised environment for our participants and horses, volunteers are asked to be on site only during scheduled volunteer times when staff

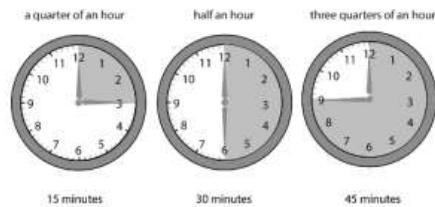
are present. If you are interested in additional volunteer opportunities, please coordinate with staff in advance.

Accurate timekeeping supports documentation, supervision, and risk management requirements.

- Sign-in sheets are alphabetized by last name
- Record the date and time in, using the closest quarter hour

○ Examples:

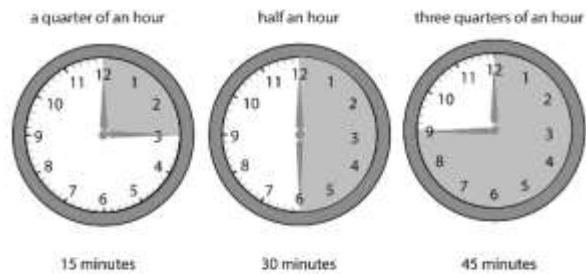
- 3:05 = 3:00
- 1:55 = 2:00
- 2:10 = 2:15
- 1:40 = 1:45



Sign-Out & Time Tracking : At the conclusion of your shift, please sign out using the closest quarter hour and calculate total time on site. Add time on site to the running total hours. Accurate hour tracking supports program documentation and volunteer records.

Time Conversions:

- 15 minutes = 0.25 (¼ hour)
- 30 minutes = 0.5 (½ hour)
- 45 minutes = 0.75 (¾ hour)



Calculating Total Running Time

Add your time on site to your total running time.

Date	Time In	Time Out	Today's Hours	Running Total
4/20/2026	2:15	4:45	2.5	2.5
4/22/2026	1:45	5:00	3.25	5.75
4/27/2026	2:00	4:45	2.75	8.5

Use this chart to help you easily add your hours:

Adding Time	Equals
0.25 + 0.25	0.50
0.25 + 0.50	0.75
0.25 + 0.75	1.00
0.50 + 0.50	1.00
0.75 + 0.25	1.00
1.00 + 0.25	1.25
1.00 + 0.50	1.50
1.00 + 0.75	1.75

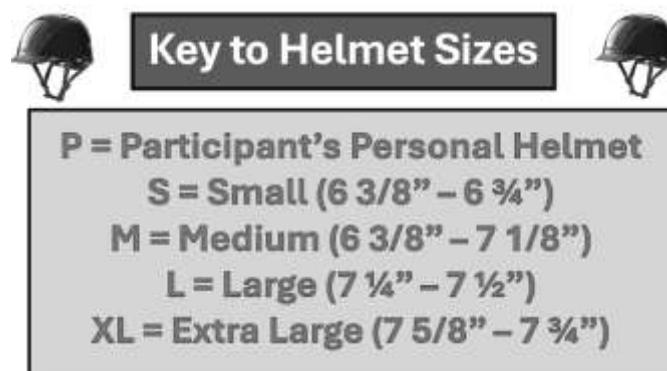
Volunteer Station & Assignments: Volunteers should check the **Volunteer Station** for

posted information, lesson schedules, updates, or additional tasks, and confirm their assignment for the day with staff or the posted schedule. Assignments may change based on horse, participant, or program needs. Lesson schedules are posted on the bulletin board at the Volunteer Station. Tack assigned to each horse and rider is identified on the schedule, gathered, and “staged” (set out in the arena) prior to the lesson to support a smooth and timely start.

Understanding Lesson Schedules: Lesson schedules provide essential information to support participant safety, horse welfare, and smooth lesson flow. Volunteers are expected to review the schedules upon arrival and follow staff directions if questions arise.

Understanding the Lesson Schedule Format: The lesson schedule(s) provides critical information, which may include:

- Day and Lesson Time
- Participant’s Name
- Assigned Horse
- Participant’s Helmet Size (Please See Key Below)
 - Some participants own their own helmet
- Assigned Tack
- Assigned Volunteer Positions/Roles or Each Lesson



This information is carefully planned to support participant safety, horse comfort, and overall lesson flow. Even small details—such as tack selection or volunteer role assignments—are important and should not be changed unless directed by staff.

If you are unsure how to read the schedule, do not recognize a term, or notice something that does not make sense, please ask a staff member before the lesson begins. Asking questions is encouraged and helps ensure everyone—participants, horses, and volunteers—has a positive and safe experience.

Identification: Volunteers must wear a **name tag at all times**. At the end of the day please

log out and put your name tag back on the display.

Personal Belongings: To maintain an organized, safe, and accessible environment, please help keep the tack room neat and tidy.

- **Water bottles:** Place on shelves near the arena door
- **Personal items:** Please do not place items on counters or work surfaces
 - **Lockers:** Available for volunteer use while on site
- **Valuables:** Leave at home or secured in a locked vehicle
- Personal items of volunteers are not the responsibility of Bluff & Ridge.

Attendance & Cancellations: Volunteers will be contacted in the case of Bluff & Ridge cancellations due to weather, observation of a holiday, instructor absence or any other facility cancellation. An announcement of such cancellations will be made through text message. When in doubt, call the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteers are responsible to contact the Volunteer Coordinator a minimum of one week in advance if they are unable to attend for a scheduled day in order to find a replacement. In the case of illness/emergency we require 24 hours notice to make accommodations for coverage.

Sexual Harassment: No volunteer should experience unsolicited or unwelcome sexual overtures from any employee, participant, family member/care taker of participants or other volunteers. If you feel violated in any way, communicate that the actions are not welcome and report any incidents of this nature in a timely manner to the Volunteer Coordinator or Directors for investigation.

Dress Code: Bluff & Ridge Volunteers must wear their Volunteer T- Shirt while working at the facility. Clothing should be neat and free from holes, rips, and tears. Sneakers and closed toe shoes are allowed. Boots are recommended for additional protection. For safety reasons, dangling jewelry, clothing that makes a distracting noise; pants that are excessively long and open toed/backed shoes are prohibited while working with horses. Many volunteers wear a sturdy pair of work gloves to protect their hands. Dress appropriately according to the current season. Revealing or explicit clothing is prohibited. Avoid strong perfumes that could attract insects and/or distract some of our riders sensitive to smell. Keep in mind that horses shed hair, may slobber on you, and the stable and arena are dusty.

Non-Discrimination Policy: Bluff & Ridge volunteers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability.

Whistleblower Policy: A volunteer who believes that inappropriate behavior, including but

not limited to unethical practices, violation of state laws or regulations, violation of Bluff & Ridge policies, mismanagement, abuse of authority, or danger to clients, volunteers, and/or employees, is occurring should bring the issue to the attention of his/her supervisor. The False Claims Act protects employees from retaliation which states that no employee shall be penalized, disciplined, discharged, demoted, suspended, threatened, harassed, or discriminated against in any matter for participating in actions to report and investigate such claims.

Reassignment & Dismissal: Individuals who cannot adhere to guidelines and policies may be reassigned or reassessed as a volunteer for our programs. Our policies have been established to serve the best interest of the Bluff & Ridge community. Individuals who are not able to perform their volunteer role, cannot maintain volunteer commitment, or fail to abide by the rules and guidelines at Bluff & Ridge will be given the opportunity to discuss any situation that is a violation and be provided with potential solution or reassignment. Please keep in mind that horses are sensitive, intuitive partners who respond strongly to the energy and body language of the people around them. They do best with volunteers who are well grounded and remain calm, steady, and emotionally regulated, even in busy or unpredictable situations. We understand that many people deeply love horses and feel excited to be around them. However well-intentioned, some individuals may not be the best fit at this time. This does not reflect negatively on the volunteer—it simply means their strengths may be better matched in a different role within our organization. Bluff & Ridge reserves the right to reassign or dismiss volunteers at the discretion of the organization.

Bluff and Ridge Horses

Horses are Bluff & Ridge's key assets. Horses are considered special and uniquely suited for therapy due to their non-judgmental nature, sensitivity to human emotions, and the immediate, honest feedback they provide to clients. These qualities help individuals develop self-awareness, build trust, and improve communication skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Key Qualities of Therapy Horses

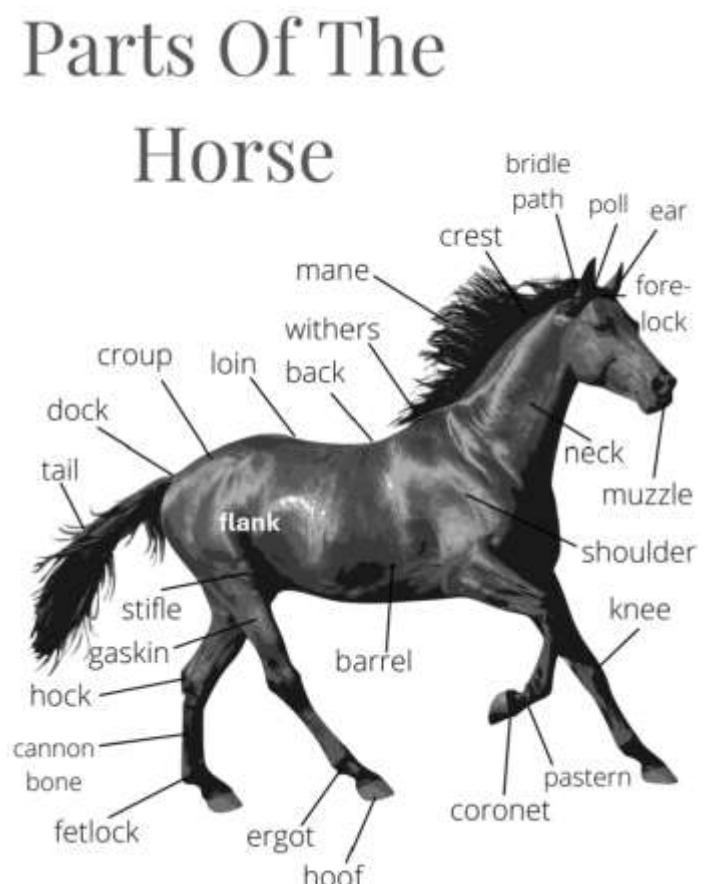
- **Emotional Mirrors:** As prey animals, horses are highly vigilant and sensitive to their surroundings and the emotions of others. They can sense subtle changes in human body language and emotional states, responding in ways that mirror the client's internal feelings without bias or judgment. This provides immediate and powerful feedback that helps participants recognize and process their own emotions in real-time.
- **Non-Judgmental Presence:** Horses do not have preconceived notions or past judgments about people, offering unconditional acceptance. This creates a safe space

for individuals who have experienced trauma or struggle with trust to explore their emotions and experiences openly.

- **Encourage Responsibility and Confidence:** Interacting with a large, powerful animal requires focus, patience, and clear communication. Successfully completing tasks like grooming, leading, or navigating obstacles can instill a significant sense of accomplishment, responsibility, and self-confidence in clients.
- **Physical and Sensory Benefits:** The rhythmic, three-dimensional movement of a horse during therapeutic riding can promote improved balance, coordination, strength, and posture. The physical activity involved in caring for horses can also reduce anxiety and improve mood by releasing endorphins.
- **Motivation:** For many individuals, especially children with disabilities, the opportunity to interact with a majestic animal makes therapy feel more like a fun activity than work, which can be highly motivating.

Ideal Characteristics for Therapy Work:

- **Calm Temperament:** They must be quiet, patient, and able to remain composed in the face of unpredictable participant behaviors, sudden noises, or unexpected movements.
- **Reliability and Consistency:** A dependable temperament ensures a safe and effective environment.
- **Physical Soundness:** Horses need to be in good physical health and free from chronic conditions that could cause discomfort and affect their ability to work.
- **Appropriate Size and Build:** Size is a factor for accessibility and comfort for clients of varying ages and physical abilities.
- **Tolerant and Forgiving:** The best therapy horses are forgiving of mistakes and patient with handlers who may be physically or emotionally challenged.



Body Language

Body language is the primary mode of communication for horses. Being prey animals, horses have evolved intricate body language to communicate with their herd members and navigate their surroundings. There are clues in the horse's body language that indicate its

“state of mind”. These clues are everywhere, from the tip of its nose to the tail, and they are very easy to spot when you know what to look for. When you can read a horse’s body language it offers clues on how to approach a horse at that particular time.

Every part of the horse’s body sends messages to you and other horses in the herd about their feelings in each situation.

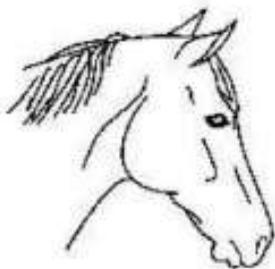
Ears: Horses can move their ears up to 180 degrees, allowing them to hear sounds in multiple directions without moving their heads. Watching their ears gives important hints about where the horse’s attention is directed and how they feel.

- **Ears pricked forward** signals the horse is paying attention to a movement or sound in the direction they’re looking.
- **Ears swiveled back, but not tense**, indicates the horse is listening to you when you are on their back or out of their line of vision.
- **Ears pinned flat to their head** is a warning sign to back off and give them space.

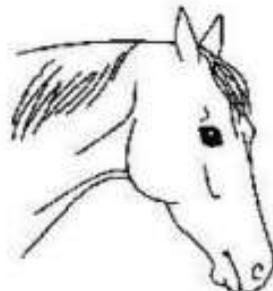
READING A HORSE'S EARS



Ears flattened against neck
Violently angry, in a fighting mood.
May fight, bite or kick.



Ears forward but relaxed
Interested in what's
in front of them



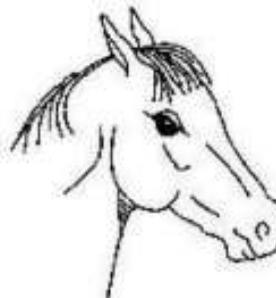
Ears turned back but relaxed
Listening to the rider
or what's behind them



Ears stiffly forward
Alarmed or nervous about what's
ahead. Looking out for danger



Ears pointed left and right
Relaxed, paying attention
to the scenery on both sides



Ears stiffly back
Annoyed or worried about what's
behind them; might kick if annoyed



Droopy ears
Calm and resting,
horse may be dozing

Eyes

A horse's eye is eight times larger than a human's eye! Their eyes can communicate a lot about how they're feeling in a given situation.

- **Soft eyes**, also called kind eyes, show the horse is relaxed and comfortable.
 - **Droopy eyes** suggest the horse is relaxed and may even be taking a nap.
 - **Wrinkles above eyes:** they don't know what to expect and are worried.

Tail

- **Strong tail swishing** indicates a horse is angry or irritated, even to the extent of a wringing of the tail.
- **Clamping the tail** is when a horse clamps his tail tight to his rump, which may indicate pain or anxiety.

Nose: Horses rely on their nose for breathing—they can't breathe through their mouth—and they have a stronger sense of smell than humans.

- **Flared nostrils** indicate excitement, exertion, or alertness.
- **Blowing or snorting** often signals curiosity, relaxation, or a way to clear their airways. **A curled upper lip** (the Flehmen response) means they are processing scents, particularly pheromones, and other smells.

Legs: The horse's legs communicate a lot about their comfort and intentions, from relaxation to annoyance, playfulness, and aggression.

- **Stomping** usually signals irritation, often due to flies or frustration.
- **Cocking a back leg** is the horse's way of resting.
- **Pawing** can indicate impatience, boredom, or anticipation, especially when waiting for food.
- **Striking** is an aggressive action, where the horse forcefully extends a front leg, often as a defensive or dominant gesture.

When you spend time learning equine body language, you can better understand what your horse is trying to tell you. Interpreting these signals is crucial for building trust, ensuring safety, and fostering a good relationship.

Horse Procedures

Approaching a Horse: Always speak to a horse to alert him to your presence before walking near; this avoids provoking his startle reflex. Approach from the side, to avoid his "blind" spots (directly in front of and behind him). Touch him first on the neck or shoulder, with a firm but gentle stroking motion. If approaching the horse from the rear is necessary volunteers should let the horse know they are there to avoid spooking them. When walking behind a horse, keep a hand on the body, or walk at least six feet behind the horse.

Handling: Volunteers should not handle horses without special training and permission.

Noise: Use calm, low voices around the horses and refrain from making loud noises. Loud noises such as yelling, music from the radio, abrasive ring tones on cell phone and car alarms have the potential to scare the horses.

Sudden or Large Movements: Horses are easily startled and may panic with big or sudden movements. Keep your body movements slow and intentional.

Working around Horses: Be aware of the environment while working with horses, anticipate the unexpected. If a horse is tied or being worked with in the stall avoid moving quickly, carrying large items around the horse or making sudden/abrupt movements.

Petting a Horse: Please do not pet the horses on the face, especially around their muzzles (can lead to nipping). A great place to pet a horse is on the neck or shoulder. Be aware of the horse's reactions; if they are indicating that they would prefer not to be pet at that time, be respectful of their space.

Horse Stalls: Volunteers are to refrain from entering horse stalls without specific permission.

Reprimanding Horses: Reprimanding horses at any time by Volunteers is strictly prohibited. If a horse is disregarding their leader, appropriate corrections should be applied. Behavioral corrections should never be made while a rider is mounted on the horse.

Unusual/Unsafe Behavior: Volunteers are expected to report all unsafe/unusual behavior seen in horses. If uncomfortable with the way a horse is acting/behaving, if someone else is mistreating a horse or if a horse is inappropriately interacting with others, there may be a concern and staff will evaluate the situation.

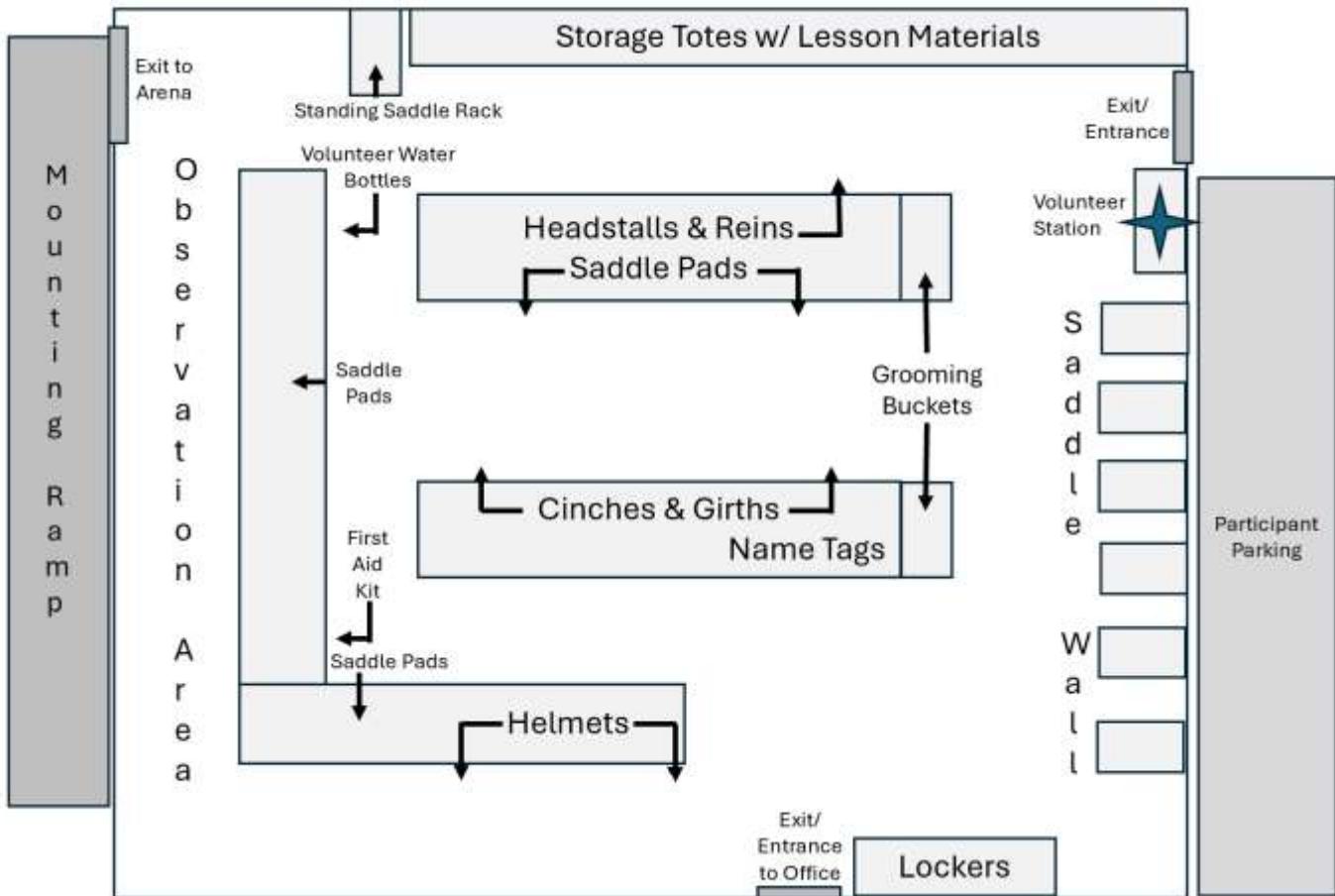
Refrain from making negative comments about the horses. Horses have individual personalities, good days and off days. You can quietly let the instructor know if a horse is having an off day. Please do not openly refer to the horse as "mad," "grumpy," "bad," or "naughty." Instead, emphasis should be put on understanding horse behavior. This is a supportive space to share experiences and learn without judgment. Negative comments can reflect poorly on everyone. Try to maintain a positive and encouraging tone.

The Tack Room

The tack room is organized to promote safety, efficiency, and consistency. Volunteers are expected to return all equipment to its designated location after use and handle all tack respectfully by keeping it clean, organized, and off the ground. Proper handling and storage of tack supports horse comfort, maintains equipment condition, and contributes to a safe and

professional environment for participants, volunteers, and staff.

Diagram of tack room layout:



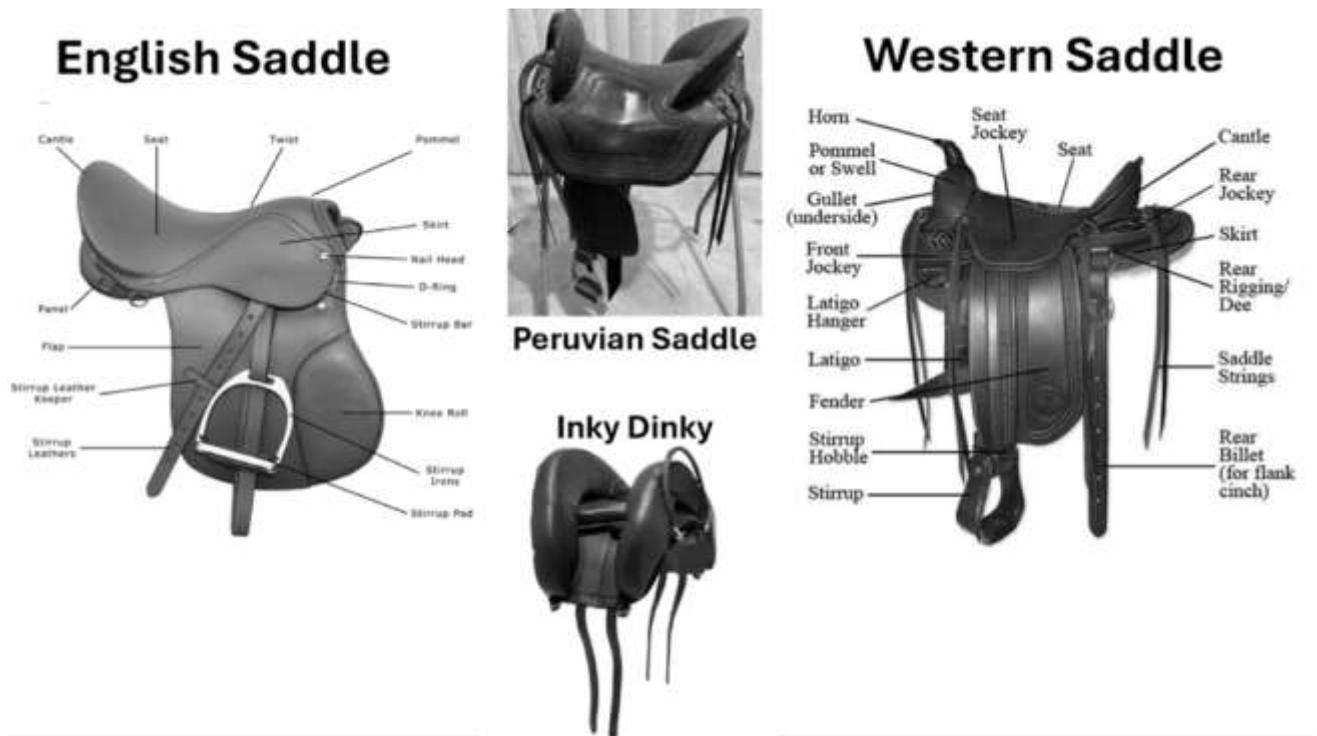
Saddles – Saddles are located on the saddle wall, the standing saddle rack, and on free standing saddle racks; each saddle rack contains an ID tag indicating the saddle to be stored on the rack. Each western saddle is identified by its leather tag, found on the “onside” of the saddle.



Types of Saddles

- **Western:** (on saddle wall)
 - Organized numerically (BH 101, BH 102, etc.) then alphabetically (e.g., American, Circle Y, etc.) from left to right
- **English :** (on standing saddle rack)
- **Other:** (on standing saddle rack)

- “Inky Dinky” saddle: used for younger riders requiring additional support
- Peruvian Youth Saddle: used exclusively on Peruvian Horses



Saddle Pads

Purpose and Use: Saddle pads play a vital role in both horse comfort and rider safety. Their primary purpose is to provide cushioning between the horse and the saddle or rider, protect the horse’s back from pressure and friction, and help distribute the rider’s weight evenly. Proper pad selection and placement reduces pressure points, allows full shoulder movement in the horse, and contribute to a more comfortable and effective lesson for both horse and rider. Because each horse, tack setup, and lesson type is different, volunteers should use only the pad(s) assigned for that specific lesson.

Types of Pads

Western Saddle Pads

- Thicker and more cushioned
- Designed to provide support and weight distribution for western saddles, which are typically larger



and heavier than English saddles

- Commonly used for long-distance, ranch work, or therapeutic riding

English Saddle Pads

- Thinner and more contoured to the horse's back
- Designed to allow closer contact between horse and rider
- Commonly used for precision riding disciplines such as dressage or jumping

Bareback Pads

- Used when riding without a saddle
- Provides comfort for horse and rider and grip for rider
- Helps distribute rider weight evenly and reduce pressure points
- Allows for more direct contact with the horse, requires rider to balance without the aid of saddle seat or stirrups

Underpad

- Placed between the horse and the saddle pad.
- Helps absorb sweat and dirt, protects the primary saddle pad from wear, and extends the life of our more expensive pads.

Care and Storage Notes: Taking a moment to store pads correctly helps preserve our equipment, supports horse comfort, and shows respect for the care that goes into maintaining our tack. **Regarding underpads:** The dirty side of the underpad should **never** be placed against the clean saddle pad when storing. It transfers sweat and debris and defeats the purpose of using an underpad.

Cinches & Girths

Purpose and Use: Cinches and girths fasten the saddle to the horse and help prevent them from slipping, shifting, or twisting. When properly selected, positioned, and tightened, they keep the saddle correctly positioned while allowing the horse to move comfortably and freely. Because an improperly fastened cinch or girth can cause discomfort or create a safety risk (e.g.; a loose cinch or girth can allow the saddle to slip and may cause a rider to fall), it is important that volunteers understand how to identify, select, and handle these items correctly and follow staff direction when tacking the horse.

Types of Cinches & Girths

Western Cinches

- Used with Western saddles
- Attaches to the saddle using an offside billet
- Tightened using the latigo on the onside
- Designed to provide broad, even contact to help stabilize the saddle

English Girths

- Used with English saddles



- Attaches to the saddle using two offside billet straps
- Tightened using two onside billet straps

Some girths may remain with their assigned saddle or saddle pad to ensure proper fit and consistency.

Tacking Authorization Policy

- In accordance with PATH Intl standards and risk management practices, tacking and untacking horses is restricted to appropriately trained and authorized staff and volunteers.
- Tacking—including the placement, adjustment, and securing of saddles, saddle pads, cinches, and girths—may only be performed by volunteers who have:
 - Successfully completed **Horse Leader Training**
 - Received explicit authorization from program staff

Volunteers who have not completed this training or who have not been authorized shall not tack or untack horses, regardless of previous horse experience or familiarity with equipment.

Headgear & Reins

Purpose and Use: Headstalls, halters, and reins are essential for guiding, controlling, and communicating with the horse during lessons. They provide volunteers and instructors with a secure way to give cues, maintain control, and support participant safety. Proper selection, placement, and adjustment of these items also protect horse comfort, prevent pressure points, and allow participants to experience a safe and effective ride.

Each headgear holder is clearly labeled with the horse’s photo, name and color to help with quickly and accurately selecting the correct equipment.

Rainbow reins remain with the side pulls used in lessons. Extra Rainbow reins are stored on the right side of the headstall storage wall.

Types of Headgear

Halters (Nylon or Rope): Flat nylon and rope halters provide gentle, direct control of the horse’s head. Unlike a bridle, which can apply pressure through the bit, these halters rely only on light pressure on the nose and poll, giving cues safely and comfortably. They are ideal for leading, groundwork, and preparing horses for lesson tack, supporting horse welfare and participant safety. Most Bluff & Ridge horses wear flat nylon halters for daily use.

- Halters are stored in the stable on the horses’ stall doors with the lead rope attached.
 - Please hang halters by the noseband

- Used to lead horses from stable to arena for lessons, to pastures, or on walks or trails.



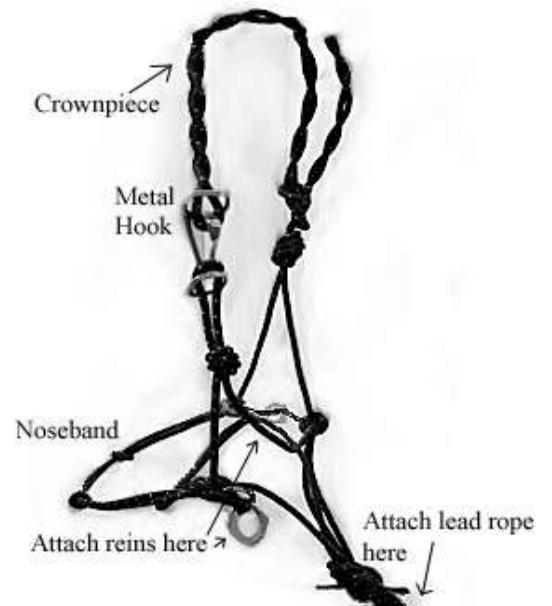
Nylon Halter



Rope Halter

Side Pulls

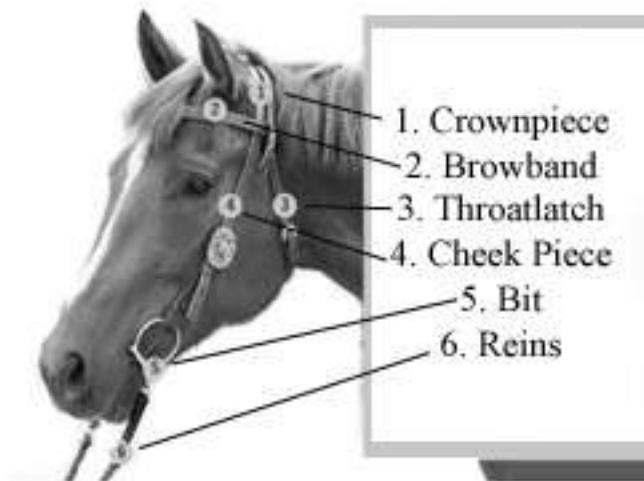
- Designed to allow light directional guidance without leverage, suitable for participants who do not require or are not ready to use a bridle for cues
- Often used with rainbow reins, which attach directly to the side pull to allow participants to communicate directional cues
- Please connect the crownpiece to the buckle and store/hang using the crownpiece



Bridles

- Provide greater control and precision.
- Used when the participant skill level necessitates more advanced guidance.

Western Headstall (Bridle)



English Headstall (Bridle)



PATH Intl–Volunteer Policy

Changing, fitting, adjusting, or attaching reins to head gear is considered a safety-critical task. In alignment with PATH Intl standards and risk-management practices:

- Only volunteers who have completed Horse Leader Training and have been explicitly authorized by program staff may change, fit, or adjust, headstalls, halters, bridles, and attach reins.
- Volunteers who are not trained or authorized must not handle these items in a lesson setting, even if they have prior horse experience.
- Proper fit and adjustment are essential to reduce risk of injury, ensure horse comfort, and maintain participant safety.

Grooming Buckets

Purpose and Use: Each horse has an individual set of grooming tools stored in a bucket that corresponds to the horse's assigned barn color and labeled with their name and photo. Using horse-specific grooming tools helps prevent cross-contamination, supports skin health, and maintains consistent care routines in alignment with PATH Intl risk-management practices.



Note: The color system is used consistently throughout the program to identify the horse's equipment, including grooming tools, hay nets, feed pans, and halters when possible.

Please keep the flat side of the grooming bucket (with the horses' pictures and names) facing front, along with the bail (handle) of the bucket. Please also refrain from placing any personal items (water bottles, gloves, etc.) or extraneous items on these shelves.

Contents of Grooming Buckets

Each grooming bucket contains the following tools:

- Rubber Curry Comb
- Stiff Bristle Brush
- Soft Bristle Brush
- Mane & Tail Comb
- Hoof Pick

Only the tools provided in the assigned grooming bucket should be used for that horse.

Important

- Always use the correct, color-matched grooming bucket for each horse
- Do not mix grooming tools between horses
- Ensure all tools are returned to the bucket before storage

- Report damaged or missing grooming tools to staff

Consistent use and proper handling of grooming buckets helps protect horse health, supports safe lesson flow, and maintains program standards.

Grooming the Horses

Begin grooming the on side of the horse. Work from the neck to the tail using the first brush. Move to the offside and work from neck to tail. Return to the on side and repeat with the next brush.

1st



- **Curry Comb:** Use a curry comb to loosen dirt, sweat, and loose hair from the horse's coat. Move the brush in a circular motion. Do not curry the flank, legs, or head.

2nd



My bristles are rough and strong. They do not easily bend.

- **Stiff Bristle Brush:** Use a stiff brush to remove debris from currying. Use a "stroking motion" in the same direction the hair grows. Add a little "flick" at the end of the movement.

3rd



My bristles are soft and bend easily

- **Soft Bristle Brush:** Use a soft brush to remove finer particles of dirt and dust, and to add shine to the coat. The motion used is the same as the stiff bristle brush.

4th



- **Mane & Tail Brush:** Use a brush to remove tangles and debris from the mane and tail. Begin at the bottom of the mane and tail and work your way up to the neck and top of the tail. This prevents excess hair from being pulled out.

5th



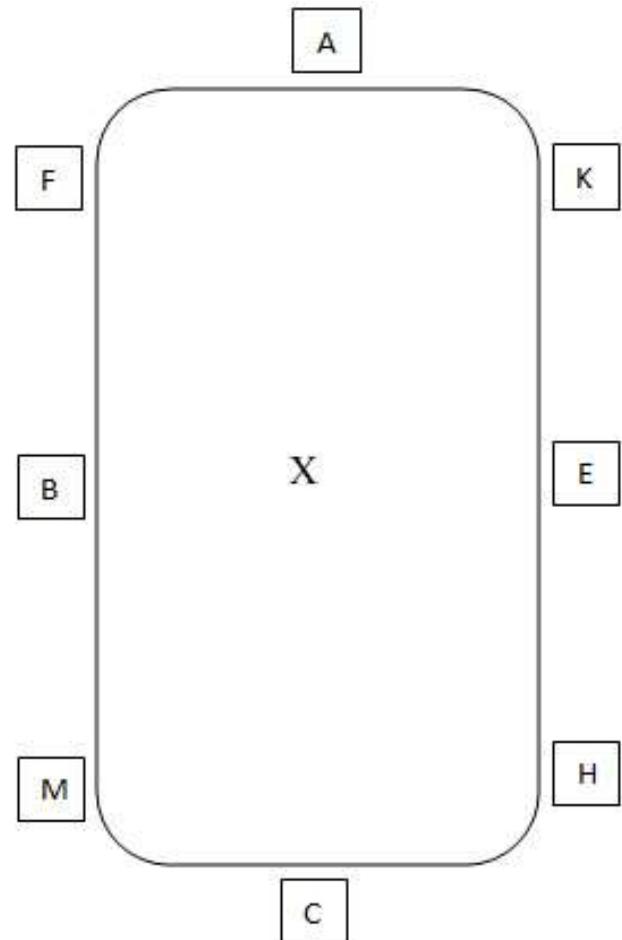
- **Hoof Pick:** Begin by cleaning the horse's hooves with a hoof pick to remove any loose rocks, mud, or debris. Start at the "heel" and move towards the "toe." **This has already been done prior to lessons. No hooves are cleaned in the arena.**

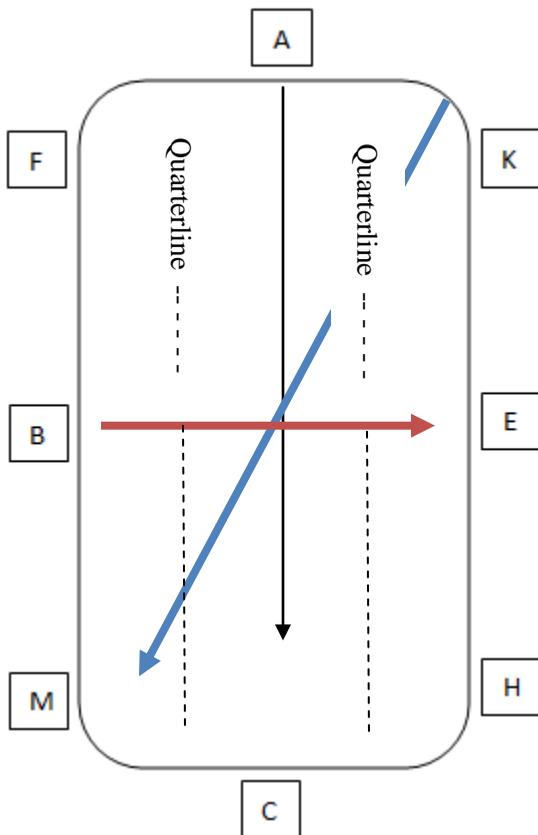
The Arena

The indoor arena is set up with letters around the walls or rail. These letters are used in the discipline of dressage as markers for specific movements and gaits during a dressage test. For consistency sake, Bluff and Ridge uses the same letters in the same places, though we are generally not completing dressage tests during our lessons (even though it might make more sense to some to just do letters in alphabetical order). In lessons, instructors often use these letters to indicate where a rider should halt, circle, walk, or trot. Instructors might say something like “cut across the arena from E to B”, “come down the quarter line” or “stay on the C side of the arena”.

Here are some common terms you might hear instructors use in a lesson. If you’re in a lesson and encounter a term you have not heard before, ALWAYS ask!

- **Change Rein:** Change directions
- **Half circle, tear-drop or half-volte to reverse:** these are used to change direction.
- **2-horse space:** To maintain safe spacing, there should be enough room for two horses between each horse.
- **On the rail:** horse is walking/trotting within a couple feet of the wall
- **Track Left/Track Right:** tracking left is when the horses right side is against the wall (on the outside). Tracking right is when the horses left side is against the wall (on the outside).
- **Across the diagonal:** When tracking left, should occur from H to X to F to change direction. When tracking right, should occur from M to X to K to change direction.
- **On the Outside:** relating to the side of the horse that is closest to the wall
- **On the Inside:** relating to the side of the horse that is closest to the arena center
- **X is an “imaginary” letter** in the middle of the arena between B and E, and C and A.





Down the Centerline: imaginary line from C to A or vice versa

Across the Centerline: imaginary line from B to E or vice versa

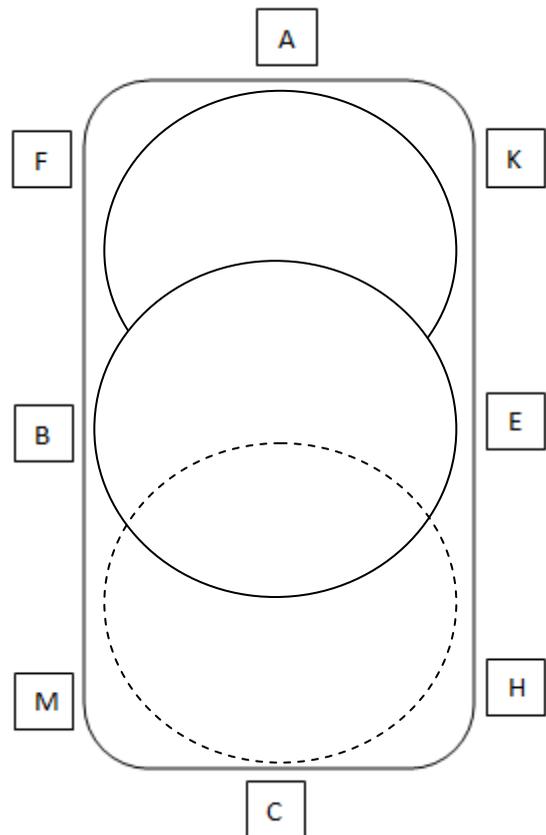
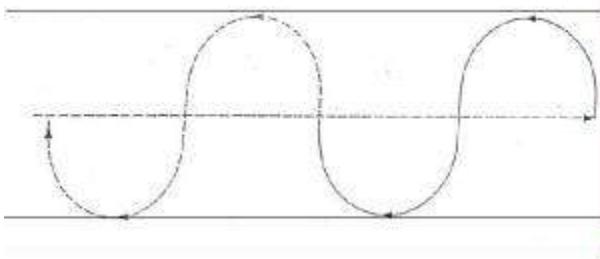
Across the Diagonal: Riding from one letter on one long side of the arena to the letter on the other long side of the arena (e.g. K to M, F to E)

Quarterline: These lines run parallel to the centerline on either side, exactly half-way between the centerline and the wall (rail).

20 Meter Circle: Can be defined by the wall (A or C) and the centerline or B and E.

Serpentine: a serpentine is a series of half circles connected by a straight line

You can use poles, cones, barrels – anything you want to help guide the rider in the pattern.



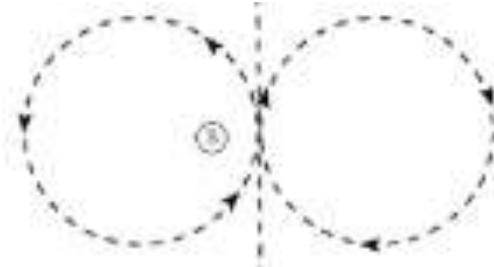
Weaving:

Weaving between poles or cones (tighter and freeform)

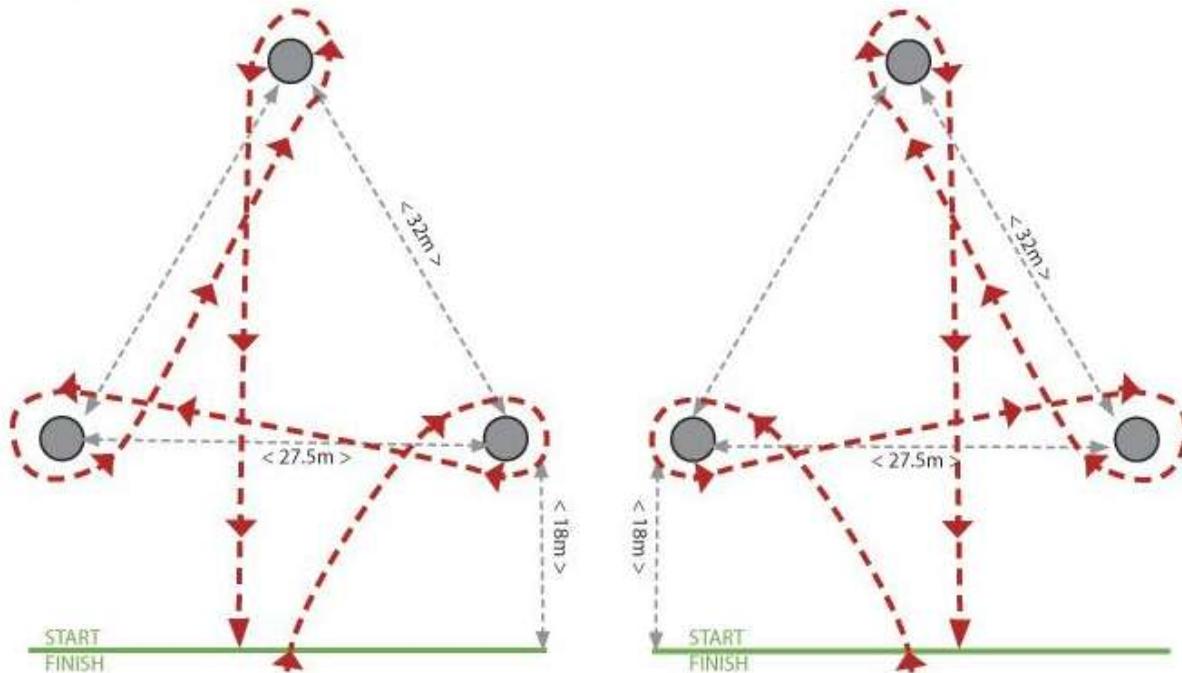


Figure-Eight:

Two circles in opposite directions = a figure-8.



Cloverleaf Pattern: three barrels are set up in a triangular pattern and each rider must turn each barrel in a clover leaf pattern as fast as they can. Riders may choose to run a pattern that requires one right hand turn and two left hand turns or vice versa.



Arena Etiquette and Safety

- The first rule of the arena should always be **courteous!** Remember that everyone has a living animal and not every movement is always under control. Be prepared and notice what is happening around you.
- When leading a horse through a door or gate, announce your entry (say “horse coming”).
- Close gates/doors behind you.
- If you don’t have to be in the arena - stay out of the arena.
- Above all, **Communicate** (but not on your cell phone – **mute it when in the arena!** Keep your attention in the arena – if you need to text/answer a call when leading or sidewalking, let someone know so that you can leave the arena to reply).
- **Announce Your Intentions:** Tell the other riders what you plan to do: "passing on your left/right", “passing on the inside/outside”, "leaving arena", "entering arena". Call out your path if there is any doubt that other riders don’t understand (“inside!” or “outside!”)
- When you encounter someone going the opposite direction, pass to the right - Left Shoulder to Left Shoulder.
- **Slow on the Outside, Fast on the Inside:** Slower riders should ride against the rail.
- When going the same direction around the arena and you need to pass someone, pass on the inside or, **preferably**, make a large circle back to the inside or cut across the arena to avoid passing.
- Leave **at least two horse lengths** between horses even when standing still.
- Try not to pass between a horse and the rail, if you must, announce your intentions. When passing don’t return to the rail until there is at least a horse length between you.
- Dismount in the center of the arena.
- If you need to stop while everyone else is moving (for example, to adjust your tack, or to give your horse a “thinking” break), go to the center of the arena where you will be out of the way of other riders. Don't stop to chat, rest, or fix something while on the rail-go to the center or outside of arena.
- If someone’s horse is uncontrolled, stop until they get the horse under control.
- **In an Emergency:** If a rider falls off, power failure, and/or a horse gets loose, all riders must stop and be dismounted.
- **Manure during lessons:** don’t leave your team if you are a sidewalker – let someone know: “pick up on aisle 4”.

A Closer Look at Volunteer Roles

Sidewalker: The primary responsibility of a sidewalker is to ensure the safety of the rider during lessons. It is also the volunteer role that is the most interactive with the rider. Bluff & Ridge tries to provide as independent an experience as possible for each rider. The sidewalker helps the student maintain balance and control by walking beside the rider and

using specific holds to keep the rider safe on the horse. The sidewalker helps to interpret the directions given by the riding instructor. They assist with mounting and dismounting the horses. Training is provided.

Horse Leader: This person primarily works with the horses in lessons. The horse leader has developed an adequate degree of horse experience to be responsible for the horse's behavior while a student rides. Sometimes the horse leader leads the horse and at other times, remains within reach of a mounted student who is riding independently. This person also helps with grooming, tacking, mounting, and dismounting, depending on the level of abilities. Training is provided.

Groomers: Groomers prepare horses for tacking prior to the start of lessons (currying, brushing, picking hooves) and observe the horse for any new concerns (signs of injuries - cuts/scrapes/rubs, swelling, tenderness, heat, etc.). It is important that groomers understand horse behavior and body language as well as how to examine a horse for any physical concerns. Groomers form special bonds with the horses. Training is provided.

Stable Support: Stable support volunteers assist in maintaining a healthy environment for the herd. Primary tasks include mucking (stalls, paddocks, and holding area), sweeping/blowing the aisle, cleaning & organizing (feed/tack room, storage areas, automatic waterers, water troughs, water buckets, feed pans, etc.), moving hay, and assisting with feeding. Cleaning stables also offers significant personal benefits, acting as moderate-intensity exercise that burns calories and improves cardiovascular health, while also providing mental benefits through connection with animals. It's a great quiet time or a time to think things through. Training is provided,

Lesson Aide: The lesson aide provides support to the instructors and other volunteers to ensure lessons run smoothly. Responsibilities may include watering the arena and staging tack prior to lessons, assisting instructors with supplies during lesson blocks, maintaining clean and orderly shared spaces (including arena waste management), and supporting efficient transitions between lessons. This role does not involve direct horse handling or participant support. Training is provided,

Tack Team: The tack team helps keep our saddles and headstalls in top condition and makes sure the tack room stays clean and organized. Clean and organized tack is crucial for horse and rider safety, preventing accidents from weakened gear; it ensures horse comfort, avoiding skin rubs from dirt; it extends the life of expensive equipment; and it improves efficiency, saving time finding items and making the tack room a pleasant, functional space. This is so important to our staff, horses, participants and volunteers.

Facility Maintenance and Site Work: This includes assisting with painting, minor

construction projects, minor repairs, lawn, and garden care, etc. These are great family opportunities. Workdays occur when needed and are announced frequently. If interested in helping in this area, specify on the volunteer application form and you will be contacted.

Special Events and Fundraising: Help is needed to schedule, plan, organize and execute our fund-raising activities. Help is always appreciated in reaching out for donations, sponsorships, products, and raffle and silent auction items! You can be a representative to community businesses, groups, and clubs. If you enjoy marketing, we need help with publicity, social media, video-marketing, and pictures.

Professional Services: Bluff & Ridge can benefit from various forms of professional assistance and advice from landscaping to legal! Skills-based volunteerism involves volunteering your professional skills to help Bluff & Ridge with specific projects or challenges. Your expertise is a valuable resource. Professionals in fundraising and finance help build stable foundations that can weather economic changes and support long-term goals. Photographers, videographers, construction and engineering - all have expertise Bluff & Ridge can use. And... no training is involved. Skills-based volunteers can help Bluff & Ridge achieve its strategic goals, increase efficiency, and ultimately enhance our capacity to serve our mission.

Safety Information

The safety of our riders, families, volunteers, and horses is our most important concern.

- The First Aid Kit is available in the tack room of the main building.
- Horse First Aid Kit is located in the stable feed room.
- Fire Extinguishers are located in the tack room and stable. We will review the R.A.C.E fire plan.
- Emergency contacts and information are posted in each building by the entrance doors.
- Center Occurrence Report forms are located in the filing cabinet in the office. Ask Bluff & Ridge staff to assist you if one is needed.

It is the policy of Bluff & Ridge to report and document occurrences (incidents), regardless if the occurrence is large or small, or a 'near miss', in a timely manner to the appropriate staff member. They should be made aware of accidents or injuries or adverse behaviors that have occurred involving participants, parents, volunteers, guests, employees or animal behaviors. All participants, parents, volunteers, guests and/or employees involved must complete an Occurrence Report as soon as possible after the incident/loss occurred.

FIRE SAFETY

In the event of a fire emergency, your responsibility as a volunteer is to R.A.C.E

R = RESCUE

A = ALERT

C = CONFINE the fire

E = EXTINGUISH the fire, if safe to do so

R- RESCUE: This means only HUMAN BEINGS who are in the immediate danger of being injured by the fire as you are LEAVING for safety. Absolutely no attempt should ever be made to ENTER into a burning building to rescue anyone, anything or any ANIMAL! Volunteers and riders will assemble at the designated area (big outdoor arena). Do not go to the parking lot, this will enable a clear path for rescue vehicles. ** **ONLY STAFF MEMBERS** are authorized to attempt to rescue animals. Special procedures have been developed to ensure fire evacuations of the stable.

A- ALARM : Call 911. Continue to “sound the alarm” and alert everyone of the fire – activate all emergency response systems or make sure someone responsible has made the call to proper authorities. Emergency numbers are posted by building entrance.

C- CONTAIN - If possible to safely smother the fire with water, sand , fire extinguishers, etc. BEFORE it becomes out of control, do so as you leave. NEVER continue to try to extinguish any fire that is rapidly developing – REMOVE yourself from the danger immediately! Remember – HAY and WOODEN structures can ignite in seconds! SAVE YOURSELF and others– the buildings can be rebuilt YOU CANNOT BE REPLACED!

E- EVACUATE - Again, as a volunteer this means only assist in evacuating **PEOPLE** (not horses or other animals). Staff are responsible to implement animal fire evacuation only. Direct all people to meet at the designated area in the big outdoor arena. Instructor will take roll call to ensure safety of all volunteers and riders for that day (one reason it is important to sign in each time you are on property).

Familiarize yourself with the locations of all fire extinguishers on the property. Fire escape routes are clearly marked in the building. Review how to safely “operate” at fire extinguisher.

Use the PASS acronym:

P = Pull the pin. This unlocks the lever.

A = Aim by pointing the nozzle /extinguisher at the base of the fire.

S = Squeeze the lever (or press button for some extinguishers) to release the extinguishing agent.

S = Sweep from side to side. Continue to aim at the base of the fire while sweeping back and forth. Move carefully toward the fire sweeping and aiming at the base.

REMEMBER – STOP-DROP and ROLL in the event that anyone actually catches on fire (clothes, etc). Water hoses are also located in the indoor arena (by the walk-through door), in the stable (near isolation stall), near large outdoor arena and on main building (front and center).

Tornado

- In the case of unexpected severe weather pending, evacuation of the site is preferred, if time allows.
- If on site, move out of any structures and stay away from trees.
- Get down into a low place and cover your head.
- Assist staff with moving participants and visitors to a safe place.
- If you are leading a horse, remove lead rope and turn horses loose in the paddocks or pasture.

Client or Volunteer Injury

- Do not move the person unless it is necessary to save their life.
- Clear other riders, volunteers and all horses from the area.
- Instructor will designate someone to call 911, if appropriate, and tell them who, what, where, when and the situation.
- If anyone is injured, find the emergency contact name and number from registration application form and call the person listed as their emergency contact.
- Fill out an Occurrence Report form with the assistance of the instructor.

Seizure Protocol: If a rider has a seizure while mounted, stop the horse and remain calm. Many seizures are very mild and will not negatively affect the rider once it is over. If it is a tonic-clonic (grand mal) type (major shaking, losing consciousness) support the rider on the horse with an over the thigh hold until the instructor can dismount the rider or assist you in dismounting them. Place the rider on their side on the ground away from the horse or any obstacles. All other horses will remain stopped until given directions by the instructor. If the horse senses panic in the team (leader and sidewalkers) it may panic as well. Remain calm. If the horse does panic, a emergency dismount may be necessary. Otherwise refer to the “Spooked Horse” protocol.

If a horse begins to panic in such a situation, we should have protocol listed. I'd also suggest adding note on absence seizures - especially since we have participants who exhibit these.

Emergency Therapeutic Riding Dismount

In the event of an emergency therapeutic riding dismount, please follow these guidelines:

- Instructor or horse leader signals the need for an emergency dismount.
- Horse leader immediately stops horse and stays close to the horse's head to calm the horse.

- If stirrups are being used, the sidewalker(s) would immediately free the rider's feet.
- The sidewalker/instructor on the horse's left side grasps the rider firmly around the waist and pulls the rider off and away from the horse, while assisting to moving the rider's leg over the horse's mane.
- Horse leader turns horse's head toward the side to which the rider is dismounting so that the hindquarters automatically swing away from the rider.
- The instructor will give directions to take rider to a safe, quiet area and check for any injuries or emotional instability. In the event of any problems, call for help.

If A Rider Falls During A Lesson

Although rare, falls from the horse occasionally do occur, if this happens, STOP! Remain as calm as possible. Follow these steps:

- If a rider appears off balance and about to fall or jump off of their horse – inform the horse leader to stop and call for the instructor immediately.
- If a rider has fallen, remain calm and do not move the rider; the instructor must check him/her for signs of injury.
- Horse leaders will bring all horses within the arena to a halt with horses clipped onto their lead lines.
- The horse leader will be directed to move the horse carefully away from the fallen rider by the instructor.
- The instructor will determine if the rider is able to remount and finish the lesson.
- If the rider remounts, give him/her time to rebuild his/her confidence.
- Other mounted riders must remain at a halt until directed by the instructor.
- No one is allowed to enter the arena, including parents and additional volunteers unless summoned by the instructor. If summoned, please enter at a walk and remain quiet/calm.
- The instructor will determine whether to continue or end the class.
- If circumstances call for the arena to be evacuated, other mounted riders will be dismounted by the instructor.
- The sidewalker(s) will escort the rider(s) out first and the horse leaders will then escort the horse(s) back to the stable.

Spooked Horse

Should a horse become frightened, sidewalkers are to apply a thigh hold to their rider. The horse leader should attempt to halt and calm the horse. The horse leader must always try to stay with the horse. The sidewalkers should attempt to stay with their rider and maintain the supportive hold. Listen for directions from the instructor and follow directions.

Loose Horse

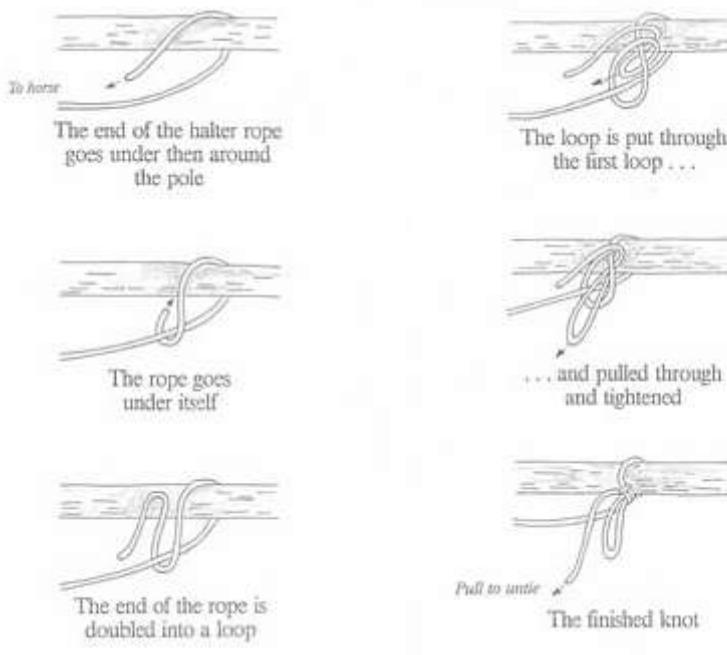
If a horse should become loose in the stable or while in the ring - DO NOT chase after the

horse. If they feel you are a threat they will run more. Keep calm. The horse will eventually stop. One person will be designated to approach the horse to catch them. The instructor will give the instructions and who is to be designated to get the horse. If you are in a lesson with another team, as a sidewalker, calm your rider. If horse becomes loose in the stable - do not chase - but do alarm by announcing - "Loose Horse" to alert others in stable. Just get to a safe area out of the horses path until the horse stops.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are used to minimize contact with blood and body fluids by taking steps that may prevent non-intact skin exposures of individuals to specific organisms such as Hepatitis B and Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS). When you follow universal precautions, you assume that all persons are potentially infected with blood-born pathogens.

- Wear disposable latex or vinyl gloves when it is likely that hands will be in contact with bodily fluids. Gloves are located in the tack room and stable feed room.
- Protect clothing with an impervious material when it is likely that clothing will be soiled with bodily fluids.
- Wear masks and/or eye protection when it is likely that eye and/or mucus membranes will be splashed with bodily fluids.
- Wash hands often, before and after participant care, paying particular attention to around and under fingernails and between the fingers, even if gloves are worn. If unanticipated contact with these body substances occurs, washing is done as soon as possible.
- Resuscitation masks should be used for CPR.



Safely Tying Horses: the Quick Release Knot

This is a fast and easy knot to tie, but the true value of the quick release knot lies in its ability to be quickly and easily untied in the event of an emergency. If a tied horse panics and pulls back on the rope, a single tug on the end of the lead will free him. Always use a quick Release knot!

Horses should be secured at withers-level or slightly higher to a sturdy, fixed object, such as a fence post (never a fence rail), or tie-ring screwed

into the wall. The lead rope should be tied to allow just enough slack that the horse can hold

his head normally, but not so loose that he is able to lower his head to the point that he could potentially get his leg over the rope. Two to three feet of lead rope is about right for most horses, and ponies should be tied shorter.

To tie this quick-release knot, start by putting the working end (free end) of the rope around the post or pole (with the working end coming out over the top of the pole). Then bring the end of the rope under the part that's coming away from the post or pole, and double it into a loop to put through the first loop—and pull until the knot is tight. The free end of the rope that comes out from the knot is what you'll pull on to untie it.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

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Web Site: www.bluffandridge.org

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