



Geauga County Chapter of The Ohio Horseman's Council

Horsemen Helping Horsemen <https://ohconline.com/>

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President's Letter

Greetings from the frozen tundra.

I hope you are all managing ok with the below average temperatures we've been having. Being at the barn takes on a whole new meaning in this weather.

Our planning meeting is set for February 17th at Mangia Mangia. I encourage you to come and have dinner and share your ideas for this year's riding season.

Big Dee's is having a hands-on tack cleaning seminar and workshop on February 28th.

Check your email for further information on these two events.

Regards,
Donna



2026 GOHC Committees			
Committee	Description	Current Contact	2026 Volunteers
Planning Year Round	Planning activities/events- main event is the late winter/early spring meeting which is intended to schedule the majority of the events for the year	Lead:	
Goodie Baskets	Assemble baskets of goodies to thank the Geauga Park District employees. Typically in the spring.	Lead: Donna Kennedy	
Nora Stanton Memorial Ride	Kick off the riding season. Lunch afterwards to award prior year trail miles	Lead:	
Flea Market	Host Flea Market; help with communications; collect fees,answer questions from perspective vendors; distribute flyers Day of event- help register vendors and direct traffic	Lead:	
Schneider Sale July	Event at Schneider Saddlery -Used Tack Sale -Reserve space for event-Collect items for sale from members-Schedule Volunteers to help with set up, selling, tear down	Lead:	
Fair Booth	GOHC booth at the GREAT Geauga Fair. Help with the following: theme, creating new material, set up and/or tear down	Lead:	
Regional Ride	Regional ride duties: planning and coordinating food, regional ride t-shirt and any other ideas that we have to make this a fun day.Typically in the fall at The West Woods	Lead:	
Annual Banquet	Plan and Organize Annual Banquet	Lead:	

FROM THE TRAIL DESK

While composing this note about our riding experience in 2025, I am thawing out from my barn duties. What a winter we have had! Here we go, now, to remember some fun from the riding season and forget momentarily about this frigid zone we currently enduring.

Our year end total for the miles ridden is reported at 11,594. Saddle hours amounted to 1300. Our membership for 2025 was reported to be 68, and 46 members sent in riding time. Good for us! The average for trail miles then calculated to 252 miles. The number of saddle hours reported by 27 riders averaged forty-eight. YES, many of the trail riders also reported saddle hours and that's good news for horses that need variety of entertainment.

The list of riders and their accumulated lifetime trail miles and saddle hours will be included in next month's GOHC Newsletter.

Here is the summary of miles in GEAUGA PARKS 2025

Beartown Lakes	74
Big Creek Park	291
Headwaters Res	105
Holbrook Hollows	283
Observatory Park	535
Swine Creek Res	183
The West Woods	3684
TOTAL	5155

Linda

Blanketing Horses: Do's and Don'ts

Fernanda Camargo, Animal and Food Sciences, Sarah Coleman, New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program

Blanketing can be a hot-button topic among horse owners and caretakers. Some people are adamant about blanketing and some people are the exact opposite: unyielding about not blanketing their horses in the winter.

So the question remains, do horses need to be blanketed when the weather turns cold?

Thermoneutral Zone

The thermoneutral zone (TNZ) describes a range of temperatures in the environment in which a standard healthy adult (in case of humans, naked, standing upright, in still air) can maintain normal body temperature without needing to use energy above normal basal metabolic rate. For humans, the thermoneutral zone is between 77 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit. Because different people have different metabolic rates, the TNZ for some people is lower than for others, and with light clothing, the TNZ decreases, and the comfortable temperature in a building with controlled temperature may be 65 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Horses' TNZ is considerably lower than humans' at 41 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit.

Two other important temperature calculations to keep in mind are the lower critical temperature (LCT), and the upper critical temperature (UCT). LCT is defined as the lowest temperature in the TNZ and is the temperature below which the horse must increase metabolic rate to generate heat to maintain normal core temperature (explained below), whereas UCT is defined as the temperature which horses must work to lower their core temperature (by dilating blood vessels in the skin, sweating, and increasing their respiratory rate).

Warm-blooded animals can maintain a body temperature higher than their environment by regulating their metabolic processes. Metabolism, the process that maintains all functions of the body working properly, and includes digestion, respiration, circulation, and all chemical reactions used by cells to break down and utilize nutrients, will generate body heat. For example, muscle contraction is a type of metabolic process that generates heat. This is why humans become hot and sweat when they exercise (and so do horses, whereas other animals, such as cattle, dogs, and birds, will pant instead of sweating)—because

that extra heat generated by the muscle contractions and increased circulation must be dissipated to maintain the internal body temperature in the stable range.

Conversely, when considering cold weather, the body must ensure it can minimize the loss of heat so it can maintain its core temperature. In general, horses have well-developed insulation in order to retain body heat, which includes their coat (fur), sub-cutaneous fat, and relatively large muscles and digestive system. When this insulation is insufficient to maintain body temperature, they may resort to several mechanisms to produce more heat, or decrease heat loss, such as:

Shivering: Rapid muscle contractions that stimulate metabolism to produce more heat. This is a moderate mechanism that can be maintained for extended periods of time.

Digestion: A horse generates body heat through the digestion on ingested foods. As the horse digests its forage, the gut activity will create heat and help warm the body from within. Therefore, it is important to offer good quality and increased quantities of hay to horses during cold weather.

Piloerection (same as goose bumps in humans): Characterized by bristling and raising of body hairs, which will increase the insulating effect of the coat by allowing more air in the space between the hairs. However, horses in rain or wet snow will lose their piloerection ability, allowing the water to reach the skin and cool the body.

Vasoconstriction: Decreasing the diameter of blood vessels of the limbs and other extremities (muzzle, ears) which limit heat loss.

Decreasing of the respiratory rate: By breathing less frequently, the horse will reduce the heat lost in expired breath.

While humans have a higher TNZ and will become cold, and possibly hypothermic when the environment goes below the LCT, and therefore need to add layers of clothing to maintain core temperature, horses are more adapted to tolerate cooler temperatures, and don't need to "hype up" their metabolism to keep warm until environment temperatures have dropped below 41 degrees Fahrenheit.

For the complete article, see:

<https://publications.mgcafe.uky.edu/files/ASC240.pdf>

Bridle Trail Fund

Please consider donating to the Bridle Trail Fund so we can assist monetarily in the development of more trails. When donating through the online form put “Bridle Trail Fund” in the comments section.

<https://www.foundationforgeaugaparks.org/pages/donate>



Foundation *for*
Gauga Parks

DID YOU KNOW?

The Foundation for Geauga Parks partnered with the Ohio Horseman's Association Geauga Chapter to raise more than **\$36,000** to construct the new **Tulip Trail equestrian and multipurpose trail** at the West Woods.



Foundation
for Geauga Parks

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