This notebook describes techniques used to construct and maintain trails. It is written for trail crew workers and is intended to be taken along on work projects. Numerous illustrations help explain the main points. The notebook was printed in 1996 and has been revised slightly during three reprintings.

**Hints for Locators**

- Large trees often have natural benches on their uphill side. It's better to locate your trail there than on the downhill side where you'll sever root systems and generally undermine the tree. Your specifications will tell you how close you can build to the tree.
- Look for "natural platforms" for switchbacks. This saves on construction and better fits the land.
- Cross ravines at an angle rather than going straight down and up the ravine banks.
- Be sure to flag locations for grade dips or Coweeta dips.
- Where vegetation is generally dense, patches of sparse vegetation are a good indication of shallow bedrock.
- The more difficult the terrain, the more critical it is to flag the centerline location.
- Don't trust your eyeball guess for grade; use your clinometer.

**BACKCOUNTRY FLORA**

**A Sure Sign of Spring**

First Bloomer: **Sagebrush Buttercup** (*Ranunculus glaberrimus*)

Family name, Ranunculaceae is Latin for "little frog"; poisonous;

**Shooting Stars**

(*Dodecatheon pulchellum*)

**Yellowbells**

(*Fritillaria pudica*)

**JUST FOR FUN**

Has it been a long hard winter and you’re bored? Try “Creative Horse Clipping”!
**Treatment of Stock**

Abuse and excessive, unfair discipline of stock in the back country should never be tolerated. This is a sensitive subject that we all struggle with when it comes to interfering with or commenting on another rider’s behavior.

One thing most people agree on is that discipline, in one form or another, is absolutely necessary. In fact, if you do not have a handle on discipline, even with a well-mannered horse, his behavior can, in time, slide down the slippery slope from nuisance, to problem, to dangerous. Even well-mannered horses need discipline when they attempt to step over boundaries. Failing to discipline a horse for unacceptable behavior is an invitation for the horse to test those boundaries even more.

Discipline can lean towards psychological or physical; these elements are interwoven and support each other. If a physical action is appropriate, like pushing a horse’s nose back out of your space, it needs to be immediate. More than three seconds after the infraction is too long and the horse will not understand what the punishment is for. Although it may satisfy your anger, it adds fear and confusion, reduces trust and respect, and undermines the value of your actions in the future. Do not believe that because your horse is big and strong you need to counter with big and strong discipline. Respond with the least amount of discipline to get the job done. However, you absolutely must win the moment and the horse must be worked through the bad behavior or you will lose your status.

~REMEMBER, A HORSE HAS NO EGO~

**Cleaning Your Tack**

Proper saddle care is important to keeping leather in good repair and extends the life of your saddle, headstall and other riding equipment along with saddle attachments i.e. breast collar, crupper, hobbles, etc.

One thing is for sure, there is a lot of information and products on the market, along with cleaning wisdom on “how” to clean your tack!!

All agree you should take your saddle apart at least once a year to deep clean and inspect the leather, etc. Many recommend using a warm, slightly damp cloth to wipe off dust and dirt before using saddle soap to clean (one site says to use ivory soap and not a glycerin based soap). Never oil your saddle or tack without cleaning it first.

Did you know?

♦ If your saddle has mold or mildew you can clean it with Scrubbing Bubbles?

♦ Castor oil is a great “fixed” oil that can be used on leather after cleaning to make it supple and deters animals in the back country from chewing on it! It also softens your hands!

**USFS REGION 1 INFORMATION**

~BLASTING PROGRAM TO BE PHASED OUT~

Over the next two years the blasting program will be phased out across the country. The chief engineer of the USFS feels that there is a storage, security and safety issue. This could mean problems for hazardous trees, rock slides and dead stock in the back country and how the Forest Service will handle removal. The blasting would need to be contracted out at a huge expense or ask trail crews to help with removal. How well can you swing a sledgehammer?

Comments could be sent to Deputy Regional Forester voicing your concerns.

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**HORSE HEALTH**

Winter Dehydration

(Tips from BCH member, Betsy Rogan, D.V.M.)

You should place a heater in their water tub to prevent it from freezing. Horses don’t like to drink water that is too cold, and this will warm the water just enough to help them drink. Dehydration is a significant issue in winter with our horses not moving much, giving them no incentive to drink.

A good salt lick will also help give them the trigger to drink. Keep a block of salt near their water tank and if possible feed hay close to the tank instead of out in the field. Sometimes horses won’t travel back up from the field to drink, especially if snow is deep or if it’s icy. Also keep water clean.