WHY VOLUNTEER HOURS ARE IMPORTANT

♦ Volunteering helps keep trails open for all. It shows us as a good neighbor, with the community, kids and other user groups.

♦ Volunteering is our clout. Without them, our organization wouldn’t be what it is now. Legislators and land managers know that our volunteer hours are an asset.

♦ Volunteering gives credibility to BCH during discussions with land managers.

♦ Volunteers perform work that may not otherwise get done, because money is not available due to budget cuts.

♦ Volunteering has a positive effect when talking with land managers. It shows that as a user group we take responsibility for keeping our public land in good condition for future generations.

♦ Volunteering helps overcome negative opinions about sharing trails and enhances our image as equine riders on trails.

♦ Volunteering gives a sense of pride and brings a positive attitude to our chapters and promotes teamwork.

SMOKE ElSER’S SADDLEBAGS

Wondering what Wilderness outfitter and packer Smoke Elser carries in his saddlebags? Well...he has a small First Aid Kit, an extra pigtail, extra gloves, rubber goulashes, water filter, small flashlight with electrical tape on one end, a piece of bridle leather, a candle in a cigar cylinder, a deer antler awl and thread, matches, extra flashlight batteries, human sewing kit, lip balm, fingernail clippers, copper rivets & washers & metal set tool and 10-12 horseshoe nails...all in plastic bags. Never carry more than 12 pounds behind your saddle, including your rain slicker and/or coat.

Education is learning what you didn’t even know you didn’t know.
**HORSE HEALTH**

**Fixation of the Patella**

As the horse has evolved it has undergone a multitude of physical changes designed to help it survive. One such adaptation is the development of a locking mechanism in its stifle that keeps the hind leg in extension and allows the horse to rest while standing, with virtually no muscular effort.

This normal anatomical feature becomes abnormal only when the stifle inadvertently locks at the wrong time, or when the unlocking mechanism fails. When this happens it is known as a locking stifle or, more correctly, upward fixation of the patella (UFP).

UFP is the most common cause of stifle gait abnormalities, although it is not usually responsible for lameness. It tends to be seen mostly in young, immature horses and ponies, with Shetlands especially prone.

Why does it happen? There are various factors that increase the chances of a locking stifle and from these it can be understood why it is recognized more in young, unfit horses or those that have suddenly had to come out of training and are perhaps on box rest, leading to a rapid loss of muscle condition and tone.

Treatment options should include establishing a conditioning program aimed at increasing the level of fitness and strength of muscle tone such as trotting on soft ground in straight lines, walking/trotting up and down hills, increasing the scope/variety of feeds and worming.

In more severe cases, surgery may be required.