

## Back Country Camping

### Spotted C Ranch

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A Backcountry trip offers a great deal of pleasure, but sometimes there are hazards involved. Knowledge of acceptable ways of dealing with these hazards can help keep you, your stock and other backcountry travelers out there safe. We believe lots of trails miles and wet saddle blankets are the best training aides. This develops a horse's confidence in you and your confidence in the horse.

We have three basic guidelines - Stay safe, Have fun, and Try not to loose your temper.

### Planning & Preparing for the Humans

Here are some tips:

- Condition you body.
- Prepare yourself mentally for the back country.
- Communicate everyone's roles to develop understanding within the group beforehand.
- Know everyone's trip goals and be prepared to do some compromising.

- The trip leader needs to communicate the daily plan and explain why to get buy-in. This is good to do at camp the night before.
- Determine who is riding where in the string, what's the best fit and stick to it. People can always change positions throughout the trip.
- Discuss the possible obstacles out there and have folks practice at home. (More below on this)
- If you have health issues, bring what you might need and let the others going with you know about them.
- Prepare the trip food menu before hand and get everyone's buy-in. Food allergies, diabetic issues, vegetarian requirements need to be addressed in the menu. If there will be new types of food on the trip, get everyone including stock introduced to this before you leave.
- Carry Health information forms.
- Leave your agenda with someone at home.
- Sign in at the trail head.
- Bring communication media that will work for you and ensure more than one person knows how to operate them.



- Make sure your tetanus immunity is up to date, check with your Doctor or the District Health Dept. If you are not up to date you have 72 hrs after the wound to get a shot.
- Check all the gear and make sure it ready for the trip.
- Ensure all tack in good repair and fits the animal.

## Planning & Preparing the Stock



A good mountain horse needs to be trained to deal with what ever they might encounter in the back country. Terrain they may encounter may include bogs, streams, bridges, deadfalls, trees, and narrow trails. A green horse with a rider may likely follow a more seasoned companion. It's a good idea to pack a green horse the first time out so they can learn and develop confidence without having a rider. Make sure you horse is trained in the following:

- Loading and unloading from the trailer.
- Standing tied for an extended period of time.
- Hobbles, Pickets and other stock containment methods.
- Crossing Water, Streams, and Bridges.
- Rope under the tail.
- Britchen under the tail.
- Crinkling noise of maps or rain gear.
- Fly repellent and spray bottles.
- Sudden movement of birds, dogs, and wildlife.
- Sudden appearance of hikers with large packs above their heads.
- Motorcycles
- Encountering other animals on the trails, to include llamas.
- Loud airplane noise and gunfire.
- Always turn your stock with their head to the downhill side.
- Getting on and off of both sides, and reaching under your stock.
- Sudden appearance of bees and other insects.

## Planning & Preparing- the Medical perspective



There are some common medical issues you and your stock may encounter in the back country. No matter what, it is important to stay calm and make sure the scene is safe.

First, let's Review a First Aid kit, where we pack it and what we have at our trailer.

Wounds- Control bleeding with pressure, don't remove the dressing - reinforce. Irrigate, wash with soap and water, steri-strips, or glue, antibiotic ointment if glue is not used, and clean dressings. After 12 hrs, a wound usually won't be able to be sutured.

Abrasions: Clean with soap and water, antibiotic ointment, dressing. Head wounds bleed a lot - use pressure and clean.

Sprains/Fractures: Immobilize with Sam splints, sticks, Shirts and even a belt.

Snake Bites: Have huge chance of infection. Wash with soap and water.

Rattle Snakes: Currently Idaho has no coral snakes but three types of rattlers have been sited. Babies rattlers can inject more then adults as they do not control their venom release as well. You may not hear baby rattlers as

their buttons are immature. Make sure the scene is safe. Know where the snake is, as it may be waiting for the prey to die.

- Keep patient calm and you stay calm.
- Remove jewelry and tight clothing.
- Wash wound, note time and monitor swelling. Mark the wound with a line and **get** medical help.
- Medical literature says not to cut the wound, do not suck out the venom, do not give painkillers, no ice or cold water, no tourniquet, no electric shock and no alcohol.

Beestings: Don't squeeze the stinger, but try to flick it out. Wash with soap and water, and/or cover with Adolph's meat tenderizer. Give Benadryl. If someone is allergic you may need to help them with their EPI or bee sting kit.

Hives: Benadryl & apply cool damp cloth to the affected area.

Ticks: Use fine-tipped tweezers and grasp firmly very close to the skin. With steady traction pull away from your skin, tent the skin, and wait for the tick to come loose. Clean with soap, water and alcohol.

- Rocky Mountain spotted fever: symptoms show up within 14 days: fever, headache, body aches, and upset stomach, with a light rash on extremities. Can be fatal and is treated with antibiotics.
- Lyme disease: Usually within 3 to 30 days can get a circular rash at the bite sight. Symptoms such as: fatigue, chills, fever, joint pain, headaches and swollen lymph nodes. Treatment is antibiotic and the longer it goes untreated, the longer it takes to cure.

Low Blood Sugar: Symptoms of sweating, tremors, weakness, irregular heart beat, dizziness, cool, pale, clammy skin, confusion. People may be mistaken for being drunk. This can be treated with non-diet Soda, honey, PB & J sandwich, candy bar, and OJ. Important to also follow up with some carbs, so they don't crash again when the blood sugar drops.

Giardia- parasite in water and be prevented by always filtering your water.

### Humane Destruction of an injured stock

Colic/Tying up - the symptoms here can be similar. We use Banamine. Can be avoided/minimized with:

- Proper conditioning.
- Introducing new feed gradually.
- Letting the animal cool down a bit before watering.
- Bring a small mineral block to help your stock replenish lost nutrients.

## Planning & Preparing the Camp

So let's find and set up a safe camp that will meet our recreational and stock grazing needs and avoid/minimize backcountry emergencies.

- Choose the site carefully.
- Try to choose a location that is between the trailer and the grazing area.
- Handle and store food appropriately even if you're not in a designated bear area. Think about doing this even when you are away from camp on a short day ride.
- When it comes to grazing, know your animals and use what methods you need, to limit their travel during grazing. When they start moving too much or start *the mountain siesta*, they are probably full. Rule of thumb 2 to 3 hours.
- Keep your camp clean and try to minimize spreading of germs.
- Leave your camp area better than you found it to reduce wildlife encounters.

An ounce of prevention just might keep you safe out there. So remember to stay safe, have fun, and try not to lose your cool.

For more information on this topic visit [www.bchi.org](http://www.bchi.org) and go to the Education Manual or email us at [spottedc@speedyquick.net](mailto:spottedc@speedyquick.net)