Bull Hill Guest Ranch – June 2022 Blog

Sunday Morning June 19

46 degrees on the cookhouse porch
Looks like some light rain is in the area. Overcast sky.

Another adventure is underway.
Tom and Sabine flew into Colville Friday afternoon and were at the ranch for dinner on Friday night.
Les and I left Meadowbrook PA at12:30 pm on Friday and after going through Dallas, with flight delays, we landed in Spokane about midnight. We were in out motel room by the airport by 1 am. Since we were on east coast time we were on the road to the ranch by 6:15 am. By 8:30 we were at the cookhouse, in time for breakfast. Our cabin was not ready for us but we knew that was going to happen so we arrived at the ranch in riding clothes.

In the morning the four of us with Hunter did a nice 2 hour ride in the area. On that ride the saddle on Myrtle, who I was riding, became loose and slide to the side. Way to the side. I rode it all the way down to the ground. I finally "fell" about 10 inches to the ground. No damage done. But it was a Silver Buckle qualifying event.
There was rain predicted for the afternoon so just Tom, Les, and I rode with Hailey. Again a nice 2-hour ride exploring trails we rarely ride.

The ranch is full. All cabins and tents are occupied and there are lots of people at meals. We recognize lots of faces from before but there are many new guests. We will sort out who is staying for a couple of days and who are leaving after the weekend. There are certainly new friends to be made.

Hailey, who is now in her third year here, continues to bring organization to the operation. There is a blackboard on the cookhouse porch to keep straight who is riding when, where, and with whom. Notice the bottom entry.

After dinner last night, Les and I drove down to Tucker's where there was a family celebration of their daughter Lena's second birthday. Nice to see and talk with many members of the ranch family.

Today being Sunday means brunch at 10 am. In a few minutes I will be going out birding for a couple of hours.
No firm riding plans yet.

Good to be back!

Monday Morning June 20

45 degrees on the cookhouse porch
Very foggy. Again there is a forecast of scattered showers. High will be about 70

Yesterday, being a Sunday, meant that there was a brunch at 10 am and one ride mid-day. Tom Sabine, Les, myself, and another guest went on a ride with Hunter. It was a casual ride around Hoodoo and Cougar Mountain. It is amazing how many trails there are here. Late in the ride, the horse I was riding (Scout) started favoring one leg. Not a real problem but definite an issue. We worked our way back and the issue seemed to be less as we got closer to the barn. Scout will get the day off today. Maybe Scout had a plan.

There are 4 cooks who rotate here, plus a few kitchen helpers. Yesterday the cook was Tam. She put out two amazing meals – brunch and dinner. She only works one day a week and that day is a real treat.

Big change over day yesterday with guests leaving and new guests coming it. In spite of the significant number of people here, the barn continues to work efficiently. Start times are staggered and horses are pretty much ready to go.

The forecast for scattered showers yesterday was correct. There were occasional light showers with periods of sun in between. No real accumulation but on our ride we did stop and put rain gear on. The brush was wet but not a problem.

The thought today is to do a lunch ride to the base of Slim's Overlook. It will be about 4 hours in the saddle.

Tuesday Morning - June 21

48 degrees on the cookhouse porch
A clear morning and it appears that the scattered showers that have been around for a few days have moved out of the area. It should be a beautiful day.
Happy summer solstice. Lots of daylight hours!

There has been lots of moisture here this spring. And as a result there is lots of good grass for the horses and the cows.
In the Blizzard Meadow the grass is about 4 feet tall. Hard to see the trails but the horses manage.

Yesterday Tom and I resumed our annual horseshoe match. Hunter and Brent smoked us yesterday. Brent got hot and that made for a quick game. We will see what happens today.

Sabine went into Colville yesterday so it was Hunter, Les, myself, Tom , and Christi on the all day ride. We dropped down Hubbard's and rode over to Slim's Cabin for lunch. There were a few sprinkles from the "scattered showers" for most of the ride but about 30 minutes before our return, there was a sizable shower. But true to form shortly after we returned to the barn, it was sunny and bright. It was interesting to watch these little storms in the area as the afternoon progressed.

Our two long term friends, Beat and Debi from Switzerland arrived today. They have been unable to get here for three years because of Covid and it is good to catch up with them.

Today we plan to ride to Rose Ranch and return the "new" way back behind the Crown Creek Ponds. This is a trail that was opened last year and makes for an interesting ride. It will be a full day of riding.

Wednesday Morning - June 22

54 degrees on the cookhouse porch
A clear morning and we are in a dry warming trend. For the first time this trip we did not have a fire in the cabin's wood stove.

Tom and I got beat at horseshoes again last evening. It was closer but it was still a loss. Bruce Johnson would have said "I think the other team cheated"

Yesterday was a day of riding with a story that will last. I am still trying to put it all together. There are lots of pieces to it that are too complex to go into now, but here is a summary.
The plan was for Tom, Sabine, Les, and I to ride down to "Shafer's Pond" and meet Hunter and Brent. From there we would ride to Rose Ranch and come home the new trail behind Crown Crook Ponds. A trailer would be staged on Crown Creek Road to shorten the trip back up the hill. We set off with no problem. About ½ hour out, in the middle of Blizzard Meadows, my horse (Myrtle), balked. She refused to continue. I have not been riding with spurs since the June 2021 dismount and having spurs might have helped. I kicked, I pulled. I tried everything We tried lots of things. Including Tom getting off and trying to use the lead rope. We spent about 15 minutes with no success. Myrtle, which is the largest horse on the ranch refused to move along the trail. We finally gave up and Myrtle and I headed back. Les, Tom and Sabine continued but Les soon decided that I should have another rider with me. Unfortunately with the various trails back to the ranch she did not meet up with me. She got back to the barn before me and was obviously concerned. Myrtle had I had not taken the normal way back. We came up the road as a safety precaution. A couple of times on the way back Myrtle stopped and refused to move. I was finally able in get here going but it was a struggle. We finally made it back and all was well. Using

the radios all the wranglers were alerted to look out for me during my ride back. Tucker reports he was preparing milk cartons with my pictures on them. Missing rider cartons.
It was a memorable experience and was discouraging and embarrassing for me.
I will not ride Myrtle today.
For those of you not familiar with Myrtle, I have attached a photo from earlier in the trip.

We expect to do a recently opened ride again today. Up to the top of Mineral Mountain. It is said to have that best view of any location in the area.

Thursday Morning June 23

50 degrees on the cookhouse porch
The forecast is for another sunny day but I notice the wind has changed and is now coming out of the north. I am not sure if this means a significant change in the current pleasant weather pattern.

Tom and I stepped up and defeated Tucker and Brent in horseshoes yesterday. It was close but we prevailed. We now stand at 2-1 with Tucker and Brent ahead. Important game tonight.

Good day of riding yesterday and a special destination.
We, Tom, Sabine, Les, and I, were saddled up at 9:30 and we did a short ride down the hill to Joe and Erica's house. This was once referred to as the "White House". There we met Hunter and Brent. We loaded all the horses into the trailer and took a ride over to Mineral Mountain. This is one of the mountains to the west when viewed from the cookhouse porch. We drove Forest Service roads to get there and the ride over was about an hour. Slow travel with a trailer with 6 horses. We unloaded and rode up to the top of Mineral Mountain. This is the highest peak in the area and the views were spectacular. 360 degree panorama. Attached is a view from the top of the mountain looking back to Bull Hill. The top of Mineral Mountain contains the remnants of a fire tower that was used up to the 1940s.
The ride itself fell into two parts. The first part was up a Forest Service road and then we went "off road" up to the summit. It was a bit rocky near the top but very doable. Hunter and Brent established and worked on the trail for the past two years. It will not be a normal Bull Hill ride but it will be a special event. We were back to the ranch by about 3 pm. A great day of riding.

Today we will also be exploring a new trail. This one is over toward Moses. It will again require a trailer ride.

We have the long established "Silver Buckle Award" for an unplanned dismount. Based on my ride on Tuesday, Deidre Quinlan has suggested that we establish an award for any unplanned return to the barn, such as I had on Tuesday. Good idea, but it needs a name. Any suggestions. Right now I am thinking of it as the "Myrtle Award".

Friday Morning – June 24

50 degrees on the cookhouse porch
A bright clear morning here. Should be another sparkling day.
Yesterday was nice but when you were out of the sun and in the strong breeze it was a bit cool.

No horseshoes last night. Tucker was a no show.
Good day of riding yesterday and a special destination.

Lots of interesting people here. I believe today there will be a sizable changeover but I am not sure. The ranch remains fully booked for this summer and next year is filling up fast.
Last night the Sunday cook, Tam and her husband Trent, came up to the ranch after dinner to socialize. It was great to talk with them at length. Interesting people.

Our ride yesterday was another special ride. It was on another new trail that will eventually be worked into the group of rides available to guests. To save time, we had left our horses down at Pete's the night before. So our ride started by driving down to Pete's. There the six of us saddled up and rode toward Pepoon Lake but stayed to the right and went up Flagstaff Mountain. We had lunch near the top. After lunch we worked our way down a Forest Service road until we switched over to an old logging road. It was overgrown and bushy but was rideable. After about a mile in the bush we came out right behind the overlook on Moses. From there it was a straight shot (pictured) down to the base of Moses where the trailer had been prepositioned. We loaded up and drove back to Pete's where the horses spent another night. An interesting fun ride. Lots of variation. It was about 11 miles.

Today is our last full day ride. Tom and Sabine will leave tomorrow afternoon. We leave Sunday. The plan for today is to drive down to Pete's, pick up our horses, and then do a river lunch ride. We will explore some new areas along the Columbia River. The river is actually Lake Roosevelt in this area.

Les continues to take horse pictures for the Bull Hill horse data base.
These weeks go by so fast.

Saturday Morning June 25

46 degrees on the cookhouse porch
Another bright clear morning here. Should be another sparkling day.
Yesterday was perfect riding weather

Saturday already. Amazing.

Yesterday we did a river ride. One that was a bit different. We picked up our horses at Pete's and quickly dropped down to the river. Most "river rides" are really rides down to the river and then back up. But since we got to the river so fast, our ride was several miles along the river. A nice ride. We ate lunch at Bute Cove where the highlight was an active Bald Eagle nest. Two adults and two young birds. We ended up at China Bend Road where Flat Creek enters the river. A trailer was staged there. A wonderful ride thanks to Hunter and Brent.

My phone is going screwy. Rebooting on a regular basis. Twice yesterday it dialed 911 unexpectedly. Not good.

We played our final game of horseshoes last evening. Tom and I won again. Eliminating no-show forfeits, we tied at 2-2. Seems fitting.

Today is our last day of riding. The four of us will do a casual 2 hour morning ride with Hunter. After lunch Les and I will drive Tom and Sabine to the Colville International Airport for their trip home. It works better for them to have an afternoon arrival in Tacoma because of weather.

Great bunch of wranglers here this year. Hailey is the lead wrangler and is ably assisted by Elizabeth, Megan, Brooklyn, Cody, Joey, Luke, and Pete. Joe G dies a bit of wrangling but is primarily focused on maintaining the ranch property. A wonderful group.

FYI Upcoming dates
2022
September 9/17 – 9/25
2023
June 6/17-6/26
September 9/16 – 9/24
2024
June 6/15-6/23

Sunday Morning – June 26

50 degrees on the cookhouse porch
Sparking morning here. A great day to ride but we will not be here to enjoy it. Travel day for us.

We did a nice 2 hour morning ride yesterday. Hunter led Tom, Sabine, Beat, Debi, Les and myself along various trails up here on the hill. Hailey joined us for part of the ride. Near the end of the ride Hailey and Les split off to do some loping. During one of the lopes, Les lost her glasses. She was not able to refind them.

My cell phone went funky on Friday after our river ride. It kept rebooting which was a problem. But more of a problem was the fact that when it did boot successfully, it would for no reason dial 911. I became quite familiar with the 911 dispatcher for Stevens County. I shut it down Friday night and on Saturday morning, all seemed to be OK. But when I was over at the lake about 6:45 am, it again decided to call 911. I again had a nice chat with the dispatcher and assured that there was not an emergency. I have not turned the phone on since. When I get home I will replace it.

Yesterday after lunch, we drove Tom and Sabine to the Colville airport where they fired up Air Plumley and headed home. This morning Les and I will shortly finish packing and we will head to the Spokane airport. Assuming Delta Airlines comes through we will be home by midnight tonight.

Over the next couple of days I will process and edit the general and the bird pictures we took. We will let you know when they are posted. I has been a great trip and we look forward to the next adventure in September.

Attached is a general morning picture from earlier in the week.

We look forward seeing many of you in the future. Please be aware that the ranch fills up quickly. If you are thinking of coming, now is the time to make a reservation. Don't delay.

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