

August 2018 Update from
Equine Spirit Sanctuary
13 Los Caballos Road, Ranchos de Taos, NM 87557

Dear ESS Friends,

It's been a very productive summer here at ESS. Over the past two months we've done a smaller number of therapeutic riding lessons, but with significant, rewarding outcomes. It's always exciting to see the kids make good progress with their lessons. We've given regular riding lessons as well, many done with Lady, a new addition to our lesson horses. Lady is a beautiful Missouri Foxtrotter mare that came to ESS a couple years ago. After restarting her training using our methods designed to make safe therapy horses, she has blossomed and is a wonderful addition to the programs. We are now working with her daughter, Lucky, also. She, too, is a beautiful, young, healthy mare with great potential as a program horse.

As a follow-up to clinic we held ESS in June veterinarian Tomas Teskey, we have continued to work on our herd management and educational opportunities. Keeping in mind Dr. Teskey's philosophies on how dental and hoof care effect all aspects of health and performance issues, we had dental work done on three of our horses. And local barefoot trimmer Mark Eden came out on Saturdays in June to work on our horses' hooves. We invited anyone interested in learning more about trimming and hoof care to come out and observe, or participate, in the trimming. We had several people that came for the classes. It was great to have Mark's expertise for the horses and people.

Another follow-up to Dr. Teskey's clinic was to build a track system that would enable our horses to get more exercise as they move about the property rather than being confined to small turnouts. Our management practices at ESS are excellent but the horses need to move more for optimal health, especially hoof health. This is a big project, but we got a good start on it with a test track created from the two turnouts below the main barn. We had a group of AmeriCorps volunteers along with our regular Saturday volunteers that spent hours taking out the dividing fence line, putting in new posts and running electric tape for the track.

Already I see the benefits of the system as the horses move around the continuous track, especially at feeding time as I spread their hay out in small piles along the entire track. After getting this small track figured out, the next project is to set up a larger track on the other side of the acequia for the other horses.

Depending on how well it works out, someday maybe we can join the two tracks so the horses have lots of space to move about and to live as a small herd. We are still keeping the small turnouts for special needs horses and those for whom it would not be appropriate to be put out in a large group.

Our new picnic / break area is ready to use, thanks to the grant from the Taos Garden Club and many helping hands and donations of time and materials.

Last month we sent out an appeal for donations for hay, which is a challenge this year due to the drought. We really appreciate the donations we've received. It's good knowing that with some serious pre-planning and contracting the coming months' hay, it will not be a crisis next year as we await a better growing season.

Thank you for all your friendship and support! And remember - visitors are always welcome!

Ruth Bourgeois
Exec. Director

