

Horses and tourism

Being that tourism is a close second to agriculture in our state, I must enlighten readers about the horse. It was because of the horse that railroads were built. The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman war chariot. The chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the

back ends of two war horses.

Loads of mined zinc and lead were drawn by mules and horse-led wagons out of Carroll County. Livestock-drawn wagons traversed across our nation to bring settlers. Horses today are used for pleasure such as rodeo, polo, dressage, racing, and my favorite, trail riding. This is how I spend my "church time" seeing God's beauty out in the woods and wilderness, mostly in Arkansas, specifically the Buffalo River where there are designated horse trails, and other surrounding state and national parks.

I am a member of Back Country Horsemen of America, whose mission is to perpetuate the common-sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness; to work to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use; to assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource; and to educate, encourage and solicit active participation in the wise use of the back country resource by horsemen and the general public commensurate with our heritage.

Being a member of our local Buffalo River and northwest Arkansas chapters, I can attest to the thousands of hours dedicated by our members who have cleaned, maintained trails and picked up loads of debris. It is easier to pick up and move debris using horses than by foot.

Equestrians bring loads of money to our state; our horse trailers are pretty nice, horses eat, we eat! So, don't forget the horse when speaking of Arkansas tourism.

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