

CREATOR'S GAME EVENTS



HORSEMANSHIP CLINIC AND YOUTH RODEO

**SUMMARY
REPORT**


**SEPTEMBER
2022**



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We appreciate all of the prayers, time, and effort that went into planning the Horsemanship Clinic. For more information about this report, contact Spotted Bull Resource and Recovery Center at 406-768-3852.

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WHAT

SBRRRC led five horsemanship and bronc riding school events during the summer 2022 Creator's Games.

HORSEMANSHIP & BRONC RIDING SCHOOL

DATE AND LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS
May 27 to 30, 2022 Poplar Rodeo Grounds	60
June 16 to 17, 2022 Frazer Campgrounds	38
June 23 to 24, 2022 Brockton – Badlands Camp	43
July 07, 2022 Wolf Point Campgrounds	171
July 16, 2022 Poplar Rodeo Grounds	38
July 15 to 17, 2022 Poplar Rodeo Meals	199*

TOTAL 549

Instructors: Jon Eagle, Leon Stewart, Matti, Becker, Jessica Abatie, Jim Miller, Ed Fulgham, and Katheryn Hede

*Includes support services, food and meals offered to families and community at the event (see the table for info on presentation of data here).

THE OVERALL GOAL OF THIS EVENT WAS TO BUILD HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

STEP 1

Participant Sign-up and Orientation

- Parents signed consent forms. Participant station assignments and instructor introductions.

STEP 2

Horsemanship Education

- Clan leaders led participants through horsemanship stations, each with differing skill/education content (i.e. rider safety, horse nutrition, traditional horse stories, 4-H program introductions).
- Evening bonfires attended by community members, sponsored by the SBRRRC TOR program. Attendees included youth, families, and elders from the Fort Peck Indian reservation.

STEP 3

Safety and Basic Riding Skills

- Continuation of rider safety and horse riding from previous day.
- Evaluations collected.

The process is really important. We had 60 kids there, from 5 to 18 years there for the Rodeo School. We had four instructors. They were all separate, with three separate pens. The first pen was the young ones 5-8 years old. The second one was 9-12 years old, and these could not ride either. In the third pen, after they learned the safety things, they went into a third pen where they rode. They had education about the relationship between the horse and the individual. The fourth ones could ride outside of the pen, with someone walking beside them. On the second day, they could ride outside the arena with the horse leading them. That worked pretty well. Each instructor had their own way of teaching horse culture, attitude, safety, and what the eyes, and ears say. While they were in the pen, there were 12-14 people in a pen. There were two youth leaders that we recruited from the NDO Youth Council with them.

- SBRRRC Team Member, May 2022

HORSES AS TEACHERS

SBRRRC partnered with four instructors to teach horsemanship to participants. Participants learned about horse behavior, communication, tack fit, horsemanship, and how these relate to being a good relative.

Behavior

Learning about the behavior of the horse and what different things mean.

Mouth

Soft, wide, nervous, scared, angry, understanding

Eyes

Soft, wide, nervous, scared, angry, understanding

Ears

Neutral, curious, anxious, angry, listening

Body

Tension, fear, anger, frustration, relaxation, confidence

Tail

Frustration, confidence

Participants learned about these horse behaviors first.

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... know how a horse is feeling before getting on it and feel the horse through your seat as you ride and pick up on cues for their mood or understanding as you ride and train.

Learning the importance of communication and feel

Learning to listen to your horse and talk with them in a way you both understand.

- 1. Understanding the body language** the horse demonstrated.
- 2. Learning to demonstrate body language** a horse can understand.
- 3. Gaining control of personal emotions** – knowing the horse will reflect you at your core.
 - That could be confidence, fear, anger, stress, or anything else despite you trying to conceal what you are feeling.
 - The horse knows the truth and will reflect it.
- 4. Talking through energy.**
 - The horse will function off your energy emanations. That's how they survive.
 - The horse can feel the magnetic waves of our heartbeats from over six feet away.
 - How we feel affects the horse on a personal level.
- 5. Practicing communication on the ground with your horse** through different exercises such as:
 - Circling up
 - Hooking on
 - Moving hindquarters and front quarters
 - Creating bend and backing etc.
- 6. Beginning to have a “Feel”** which refers to talking to your horse in a way he can understand.
- 7. Building a partnership and relationship.** Never building dominance or a submissive relationship with the horse.





Tack fit

The importance of knowing how to properly fit tack to the horse who are going to kindly carry us and be our partners.

1. **Saddle fit** - Standard fit.
2. **Cinch fit** – Ensure we do not cut off the abdominal vein.
3. **Headstall fit** – Ensuring we are not creating too much bull on the bit.
4. **Bit fit** – Sizing in the mouth, proper attachment to the headstall, proper bit for where the horse is at their training to provide clear communication.

Horsemanship

Taking all of the things mentioned above and combining into a clear, healthy, and natural way to communicate with the horse we have chosen to be our partner.

1. **Circling up**
2. **Creating bend**
3. **Asking for the hind and front quarters**
4. **Yields**
5. **Picking up feet**
6. **The back up**
7. **Forward motion**

These things create a good leader in the human and a willing and trusting partner in the horse, which in turn brings mutual respect, resulting in a safe relationship that can be grown, managed, healed, and worked on forever.

How

SBRRRC utilized elders, instructors, and multiple wellness programs/staff to implement the horsemanship event. Planning started in February 2022 with Ernie Big Horn leading outreach and communication efforts. Over the next three months, several programs and staff planned the agenda, conducted outreach, and signed up youth participants. SBRRRC utilized an online registration process led by Pamala Youngman-this was efficient.

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I think the success of what we did was divided into every program within SBRRRC had a responsibility. I worked and did certain things; my job was to make sure that the instructors and the people... can be taught to keep the children and the horse safe. We had someone who did the registration and the consent forms. They did this on their own. Another program provided snacks and water. Then we had someone who did all of the cooking. We had someone who took care of the horses. Everyone had a piece to making this successful. If someone tried to do this by themselves, it could not happen. I could not do this by myself.

- SBRRRC Team Member

“

Courage and Dale worked a lot of this stuff; they do a lot of the behind-the-scenes.

- SBRRRC Team Member

“

Food and prayers helped make this successful.

- SBRRRC Team Member



STORIES AND LESSONS

Courage Crawford reflected on the event during a recent interview.

There was an equine vibe...

Mr. John Eagle. He runs his own equine program that is Native based. He told some stories. Every day they would come in at 11 or 12 for lunch. We were not done cooking, so someone asked Ernie to pray. We gave him a spirit plate before he got up to speak. John got up. He's articulate and speaks the Lakota language. He spoke to the group in Lakota first. This is what he said...



Before I start.. I want to share a story with you. We offer a spirit plate, wocekiye (woh - chay - kee - yea), which means prayer in Lakota. We acknowledge all of the relatives both the ones who have gone on before us, the four-legged relatives, flying relatives, and Mother Earth. Now I am going to share a story about why. Years ago there was a small village of people that were very hungry. They only had a little bit of food. A visitor came to them. As a custom, everyone offered a little bit of food to the visitor. They offered him a pinch of food; in the end, he had a lot of food on his plate. He took that and accepted that from them. Because you offered this to me I am going to tell you where the animals are that you can harvest to get you through. Go to the north and you will find the animals to get you through the winter. The next morning, the visitor was gone. They remembered what the visitor said and went and found the deer and buffalo. They continued that spirit plate offering every time they got together to have a meal. They did this to save the village from starving. Now we go together, and we remember what he did, he took a pinch of food, pray with it, and give it to the north where the visitor went.

- Jon Eagle, Lakota



Courage reflected on what happened after Jon shared that story about the visitor.

Jon sang a song. It was prayerful and powerful. He thanked the Creator for all that we have, the weather, the animals, and the people that were there. He thanked everyone that survived the epidemic. He thanked our elders our veterans and acknowledge all of the youth that were there.

He quoted Sitting Bull. The most impressive thing about Fort Peck is that you all work together. There were multiple programs at the horsemanship event...everyone took ownership, we will participate, and create a team effort, it benefits everyone. When we put our minds together for our children this is a better world that we can make for them. After he said those words and offered prayer, prayed in four directions, the final direction was the north. He offered the plate to a relative and instructed him to place it by a tree in the north where the food would sit. Elders ate first, then visitors, then all of our children.

He shared some of the horse songs, the oldest horse song.

Food as medicine to heal..

Jon said these gatherings that we are doing again after the pandemic, the medicine we are using is food to heal each other. It is customary to share a meal with relatives when they come to visit. It was neat to think that this was something that he put out there for our young ones to listen to. It made it important to provide good quality meals. We opened up all of our snacks, people could get things any time, and take as much as you need.

Kids are instinctively thoughtful..

Of all the wrappers, that was the cleanest camp we have ever had. It's weird because these little kids are instinctively thoughtful, that does not belong there.. they picked up. I literally picked up two pieces of trash. That emphasizes the importance of being good relatives and doing what we do.

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Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.

- Sitting Bull 1831 - 1890



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You have to be able to take criticism.
Criticism is a good thing.

- SBRRRC Team Member



PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

31 participants completed evaluations of the event

4.7 OUT OF **5**

was the overall rating given for the event

Loved the most...



1. Riding horses (n = 9)
2. Learning culture (n = 7)
3. Interactions with others (n = 7)
4. Skills gained (n = 6)
5. Goat (n = 3)
6. Food (n = 2)
7. Adult teachers (n = 2)
8. Well organized (n = 2)



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...kids smiles, freedom of confidence, independence.

Want to learn more about...

1. Horsemanship skills in general (n = 14)
2. Culture and traditional stories (n = 11)
3. Nothing (n = 6)
4. Horsemanship as wellness/ treatment (n = 4)
5. Gender differences related to horsemanship (n = 2)

“

...traditional stories about native horse culture.”

Learned...

1. History and culture (n = 16)
2. Tangible skills (n = 11)
3. Values and connections (n = 6)

“

...history behind the horse, importance of family, lifeblood story.”

Enjoyed least...

1. Nothing (n = 6)
2. Goats (n = 4)
3. Cool temperatures (n = 3)
4. Poor behaviors of participants (n = 3)
5. Lack of community involvement (n = 2)
6. Lack of instruction/organization (n = 2)



Improvements...

Most participants had no recommendations for improvements

1. Implementation specifics (n = 7)
2. Riding horses / general (n = 5)
3. Outreach (n = 1)

*Note these data were collected from May 2022 participants. Evaluations were not collected at other events.



SBRRRC PARTNERS AND STAFF PERSPECTIVES

SBRRRC wanted to document staff and partner perspectives about the event. An online 3-question survey was sent to all staff and partners involved on June 2, 2022. The questions were:

- 1. How did the event support the wellness needs of the community?**
- 2. What can SBRRRC do better next time?**
- 3. What additional feedback or comments do you have?**

Three people responded to the online survey (an unknown number of people received an email invitation). These are the results.

Event Supports Wellness

- Provided a safe sober family atmosphere. The horsemanship school was very educational, and the rodeo school was very challenging for all.
- They did really well with the children. The basic horsemanship was really great for the people
- The event provided an opportunity for our youth and community to experience something that isn't always readily available, i.e. horses, and the opportunity for basic horsemanship skill development.

Doing Better Next Time

- We can provide some incentives and other activities like roping and trail riding.
- Learn that color of skin doesn't matter as my son was called a black boy by a clan leader. Very disappointing in my eyes.
- Advertising. We also need to ensure that the next event is for another age group like 12 to 18.

Other Comments

- More mobile events, in each community



OUTCOMES

The Creator's Game Events led to four outcomes that support a vision of wellness, healing, and culture on the Fort Peck Reservation.

- **#1 Revived horse culture**
- **#2 Increased community access to crisis support and mental health professionals**
- **#3 Partnerships elevated horse culture as a form of treatment**
- **#4 Integrated recovery groups and promoted belonging and purpose**

OUTCOME #1 Horse culture revived.

“Finding our horse people. Creating opportunities for our youth. We were able to bring in our relatives who know the horse culture. Jon Eagle and his wife (Standing Rock), Jim Miller and his wife (Pine Ridge) helped reconnect us to the horse culture. As Plains Tribes we are a horse culture, some of us lost it but our relatives helped us focus more on our own strengths as horse people. They brought us songs, and stories, and renewed our connections to the horse culture. The result for Fort Peck, was where we found our horse people within the community, for example, the Smoker family, Spotted Bird family, and other people who have helped us. They have helped us, and they have renewed their knowledge too. It awoke our horse people- it was transformative. We showed our community horse people, we brought in champion bronc riders and wild horse racers. By bringing in these respective people, we are able to show the youth that there are opportunities to use this knowledge

- SBRRC Team Member July 2022

OUTCOME #2 Increased community access to crisis support and mental health professionals.

We are in constant crisis every day. At the first horsemanship clinic, we had mental health professionals on board, we were in a preventive mode. Guest speakers spoke with SBRRC staff about how to respond to a crisis. Jon Eagle came in for the Horsemanship Clinic and talked with the staff about the importance of using Equine for a mental health crisis. We were able to connect individuals with a support system, be it professional or peer, during our events; the horse spirit helped make this happen.”

SBRRC Team Member July 2022

OUTCOME #3 Partnerships elevate horse culture as a form of treatment.

“Horse culture has been dormant for a while; we are bringing it back to life as a community. We have an instructor who is a nurse at the hospital, she comes, and her father comes. We partnered with a lot of organizations other than tribal organizations. That was exciting. At Wolf Point we partnered with their community organization, the college, Native Connections, Health Promotion Disease Prevention, ourselves, Red Bird Woman’s Center... these were partnerships we have not seen for a long time because of COVID. Partnerships are the reason why we are able to move this forward so fast. We have these events going, we are showing the community that we can come together for the people. That is the accomplishment. There are partnerships happening and will support SBRRC’s holistic treatment service and support approach, where multiple partners and people in the community help individuals and families when they are in need of treatment.”

- SBRRC Team Member July 2022

OUTCOME #4 Integrates recovery groups and promotes belonging and purpose.

“SBRRC hosts weekly Medicine Wheel groups. These are self-help volunteer groups that meet every Friday. We targeted these groups and brought in Jon Eagle and Jim Miller. We encouraged the Medicine Wheel group to support the activities, set up equipment, take down

equipment and be part of security. The Medicine Wheel group has actually been a huge support for the project. This project filled a lot of gaps and supported the recovery community by giving them a sense of purpose, being included in community events, an participating in sober activities.”

- SBRRC Team Member
July 2022



FUTURE WORK

The horsemanship event was a tremendous success because everyone contributed to it. Youth participants learned about horsemanship, families participated (opposed to just dropping their kids off and picking them up). Lakota stories, language, teaching, traditions, and practices were the cultural anchors. SBRRC plans to continue horsemanship events in every community throughout the summer 2022.

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Everyone had a piece to making this successful. If someone tried to do this by themselves, it could not happen.

- SBRRC Team Member



APPENDIX A

Horsemanship Clinic Agenda

Instructors: Jon Eagle, Leon Stewart, Matti Becker, Jessica Abatie, Jim Miller, Ed Fulgham, Katheryn Hede

Participants: Ages 5-12

Registration: Pamala Youngman

Clan Leaders: Nakona/Dakota Youth Council

	Activity	Place	Description
Day 1	Participant Sign-up & Orientation	Spotted Bull Recovery Resource Center	Parents will sign consent forms for their participants. Participant station assignments & instructor introductions.
Day 2	Horsemanship Education	Poplar Rodeo Grounds	Clan leaders will lead participants through 8 horsemanship stations, each with differing skill/education content (i.e., Rider safety, horse nutrition, traditional horse stories, 4-H program introduction)
Day 3	Safety & Basic Riding	Poplar Rodeo Grounds	Continuation of rider safety & horse riding.

Spotted Bull Recovery Resource Center will provide breakfast, lunch & dinner for participants.

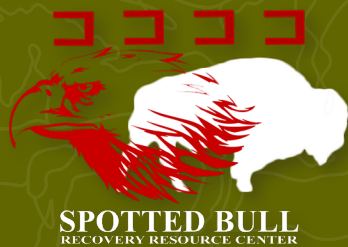
Breakfast 7:30 AM-8:00 AM

Lunch 12:00 PM- 1:00 PM

Dinner 5:00 PM- 6:00 PM

Snacks & water provided throughout the day

Ernie Bighorn is available for any questions or concerns at (406)853-663.



SPOTTED BULL
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For more information visit,
<https://www.spottedbull.org/> or call, 406-768-3852