

autumn

The TJCAA Quarterly

2023
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Blowin' in the Wind

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With hurricanes in the news, we frequently check in on our staff in Florida. When storm preparation is in order, Caitlin Williams, a structural designer with TJCAA since 2022, needs to consider the needs of

the equine family members along with the humans and structures.

How do you prepare horses for a hurricane? In general, the horses' human caregivers must decide whether to shelter the animals in a stable or barn, turn them loose, or evacuate them. Caitlin explains that when a hurricane is approaching and their horses stay in the pasture, they make sure the animals have a break-away halter to allow escape if the animal becomes entangled. In addition, her family paints their phone numbers on the horses with reflective paint, so that the animals are not only visible in car headlights, but also identifiable if their fences become damaged and the horses leave the property.

The family stocks up on the horses' medical supplies, food, and water in case their well and/or electricity are compromised, just as they do when planning for the human family members. Caitlin explains that it would become a bit more complicated if an evacuation were required.

"Over the 29 years of owning horses, we have not yet had the need to evacuate the horses," Caitlin tells us. "It would depend on the category and direction of the hurricane. If there was a need for evacuation, we would reach out to the local community for assistance. Who do we know in other states that would be willing to shelter our horses until the hurricane has passed? It is not a small matter to travel long distances with horses. If the horses are not in the best medical health or are not accustomed to traveling hours at a time, being in a trailer can cause health issues for them. In addition, all vaccination and medical documents need to be up to date to cross state lines."

Caitlin's relationship with horses goes way back. She started riding when she was 4 years old and grew up riding English style in the Tampa Bay and Brooksville, Florida area. She was part of a club that taught young riders technique and equine care, and acquainted them with equestrian gear and veterinary medicine. These clubs competed on a regional basis, with the goal of reaching the championships in Kentucky or Virginia.

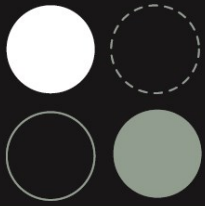
Competitions for Caitlin included "eventing." The United States Eventing Association describes eventing as, "an equestrian triathlon. The sport originated as a cavalry test and comprises three phases: dressage, cross-country, and show jumping. Eventing tests horse and rider pairs more completely than any other." (discovereventing.com)

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To bring riders into the sport, USEA has many levels of competition. Caitlin competed nationally at the fifth of seven levels, which included jumps of up to 3 feet, 7 inches, while the most advanced national level has jumps of 3 feet, 11 inches. Caitlin explains, "USEA starts riders at lower levels of difficulty that beginners and kids can compete in." USEA describes its entry level as an experience that should be "safe, inviting, and educational to build confidence and a desire to progress." Caitlin tells us that one of the entry levels was called "Poles on the Ground."

While growing up, Caitlin and her horse were an unconventional entry. "My parents thought it would be comical during this time to sign me up in the group where professionals would compete and train their younger up-and-coming horses. Somehow, my backwoods rescue horse, a 15.1-hand Appaloosa (a very short horse and an odd color for dressage) and I had some skills, and we held our own, ending up 2nd through 5th in most events.



Caitlin has been with TJCAA since November 2022, and she works on designing steel and concrete structures for treatment plants. She also provides engineering services during construction. Even if there are no hurricanes involved, and you need to learn about preparing for or designing your project, give us a call.

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