Integrating Long-Ears Into Equine-Assisted Activities

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Who am I?
Besides The “Crazy Ass Lady”

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Author of “Starting The Donkey Book Series”: 
What is a Long-Ear?

Donkeys

Mule

Horse

Dam+Donkey

Jack

Hinny

Jennet

+Horse

Stallion
Ass
And Half-Ass Vocabulary

- Donkey: Equus asinus - Mare: Jennet, Stallion: Jack, Gelded Stallion: Gelding
- Mule: Sterile Hybrid - Jack + Mare = Mule. Mare Mule: Molly Mule, Gelded Mule: Gelding or Horse Mule.
Unique Evolution of Donkeys (And Therefore Half of the Mule)

- Horses- Flight Animal- Plains
- Donkeys- arid, desert environments, in the mountains and canyons of Africa and Asia.
- Running blindly in fear most likely would have been taken out of the gene pool by coming off a cliff or mountainside.
- Use the donkey's innate sense of self-preservation to our advantage in training, in a way that would not work with a horse.

Note: The Lack of Green Pasture On Which These Feral Burros Are Thriving
How Do Long-Ears Differ From Horses?

- More Dynamic Lateral Movement, Wider Base and Wider Body
- Higher Energy Diet (If Not On Specialized Diet)
- Less Stoic, More Flighty
- Most Mainstream Training/Care/Veterinarians/Farriers Cater to Horses
- More Tolerant of Mistakes in Training
- “Neurotypical” in Equine World
- Slightly More Prone to Injury and Illness
How Do Long-Ears Differ From Horses?

- Generally narrower body (if not obese), Narrower Based.
- More front-to-back movement than side-to-side (Lateral).
- "Desert" Diet/Hoof Care/Health Care Needs
- More Stoic
- Generally Less Flighty, Prone to "Balk" If Unsure
- Specialized Training
- "Neurodiverse" Equine in A World That Caters to Horses
- Teaches More Precise "Donkeymanship" and "Mulemanship"
Why Add a Long-Ear (Or More!) Into Your Program?

- They Bond and are Affectionate
- Intuitive Without Being as Flighty or Reactive
- Can be Less Intimidating, Bring Sense of Humor With Big Expressive Ears, Funny Voice, and Often Smaller Size
- Unique Body Type And Movement
- Get Good “Grass Mileage”
- Long-Ears Can Do Anything A Horse Can Do

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Special Considerations for Long-Ears

- Diet Restrictions (1.5% of Ideal Body Weight in Low Quality Forage Daily for Donkeys), No Green or Short Grass, Dry Lot
- Pair Bonding
- Bringing Everyone Up a Notch in Equine Handling Skills
- Slightly Different Farrier Needs
- Stoic
- Wood is Tasty
- Potentially Different Tack Adjusted Differently
- Education To Volunteers, Staff, Participants and Families When They Ask “Why a Long-Ear?”
Finding Appropriate Long-Ears For Your Program

- Tolerates Multiple Knowledgeable Handlers (Not One-Mannish) and Mellow/Curious Personality
- Oftentimes Easier to Train Your Own (Lawyer Contract)
- Kind, Affectionate, But Not Pushy
- Open, Not Shut Down
- Has Sound, Rhythmic Movement (Conformation Differences)
- Isn’t Impossible For Saddle Fit
- Can Be Difficult to find, But Worth It!

Photo Used with Permission of Angie Pierce “Equine Wise Services” in Alberta Canada.
So I Found A Long-Ear Suitable For My Program, Now What?

- Long-Ears Can Be Litigious, And Require Remuneration For Efforts, Especially At First
- Balking = Slow DOWN
- Watch Behaviors, Signs Of Stress Are Subtle At First (Tail Switch)
- Be Sure To Have Enrichment, Dry Lot, Correct Diet, Slow Feed, Good Companionship (Donkeys Get Bullied by Horses)
- Training/Education for Staff and Volunteers on Handling and Tacking
- Ear Rubs And Tail Rubs are the BEST

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Training Long-Ears

If It Works, Is Repeatable, And Safe, It is Good.
The Value of The Release.
The Affectionate and Curious Nature of Long-Ears
The “Tail” End Of The Presentation

Questions?

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