



Whatcom County Dressage and Eventing Association

General Meetings

The Board meets regularly and you're invited! We have general membership meetings about every other month so stay tuned for dates and locations.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, January 25th
Dinner at 6:30, Meeting at 7:00

Round Table Pizza Clubhouse
1145 E Sunset Dr, Unit 135,
Bellingham

Who is WCDEA?

This dressage and eventing (& working equitation) club is an all-volunteer group of local horse enthusiasts committed to furthering our knowledge of our disciplines and providing equestrian-related educational and competitive opportunities in the local area.

Meet your new Vice President, Deirdra Dong

Hello members!

I am looking forward to contributing to WCDEA as your VP. I've been a member off and on over the years and have always enjoyed the events the club has offered and it is my hope that the board and I can continue to offer some wonderful, fun and educational happenings!

A little bit about me; I grew up riding bareback on my neighbor's horses and tearing around on the trails as fast as they would run. In 1997 my family moved to Mt. Vernon and I was in my early teens. This was when I was able to get my first pony and joined Pony Club, needless to say, I was less than polished! I think I made a few of the pony club moms gasp on more than one occasion. But with some hard work I was finally able to ride in a saddle and worked my way up into the upper levels of Pony Club by begging and borrowing horses.

After Pony Club I did a little showing in eventing and a bit of dressage. Then a few years ago I was able to attend a working equitation clinic and I was hooked. I took a deep dive into the sport attending clinics and shows whenever I could as well as going to Las Vegas to attend a 5 day judges training seminar. Needless to say, I love the sport; it's opportunity to apply everything that I learned in dressage and eventing as well as learn lots of new skills that challenge my horses and me.

It is my hope that I can help continue the club's roots of dressage and eventing as well as introduce WE to it's members (I have SO much I want to share!). Here's to a wonderful 2023 filled with love, horses, friends, and opportunities.

Cheers, Deirdra
Deirdra Dong



Sunset Farm Park

Do you know that Whatcom County has an extensive horse park? It's an all-volunteer effort provided by [Friends of Sunset Farm](#).

- All-weather outdoor arena
- Miles of wooded trails
- Water element and bank jump
- Seasonal cross-country course with obstacles from Grasshopper to Training Level

*The park is at
7981 Blaine Road, Blaine, 98230*

The Friends of Sunset Farm, a non-profit organization, was formed for the purpose of providing assistance to the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Department in order to support, maintain and fundraise for the Whatcom County public equestrian park known as "Sunset Farm Park."

WCDEA hosts regular clinics and schooling shows at the Park. Keep an eye on the Park's [FaceBook](#) page and [Website](#) for real-time updates and happenings!

WCDEA now includes Working Equitation!

What is working equitation and why do we keep talking about it??

Many of you may hear the word "equitation" and feel a bit of horror fill your belly and think "No. Nope. No thank you, I'd rather eat a bowl of creepy crawlies thanks." But fear not, working equitation (WE) is not like the equitation classes that spring to mind where the rider has to sit just-so and the horse chugs along the rail at whatever gait the judge calls. Instead of equitation, think more along the lines of horsemanship, working horsemanship. WE is derived from working horses, horses who; move cattle, open gaits, navigate varied terrain, cross bridges, drag stuff, carry stuff, move stuff... Horses who are responsive, supple and hardworking.

WE has been developed to show case these working horses by testing them in 3 phases (and occasionally in a 4th phase). It is structured a bit like eventing, each phase tests the horse and rider in a different, challenging way with each phase building upon the last. The first phase is dressage, ridden in a small court 20mx40m, it's pretty similar to what we know from dressage dressage and eventing dressage. It is judged in a similar fashion but with less emphasis on spectacular gaits and more emphasis on horse and rider harmony.

The second phase is ease of handling (EOH). This is when the fun really gets started — when we get to ride the obstacles such as gates, bell corridor, bridges, side pass poles, slaloms, pick up a garrocha (a long pole), spear a ring, live stock pen, and many more! EOH should ride a bit like dressage with obstacles and flow like a beautiful

hunter round. Horses need to be supple, responsive, adjustable, and patient. Horses and riders will be tested on their ability to pick up things, make noise above the horse's head, side pass, back up, ride with one hand, cross bridges, open gaits, tight spaces, turns on the forehand, turns on the haunches, accurate geometry, jump and more!

The next phase is speed. This is a timed round around obstacles but you are not just up against the clock, there are still rules and guidelines that need to be followed. This phase really tests the rider's ability to think quick, remember their course, and strategize the best way to get a 10 second "bonus" off their time. Now you may think that this is a balls to the wall ride and it doesn't need to be nor should it be; this phase can be ridden at the pace the horse and rider are comfortable with. There is no penalty for taking "a bit longer" to navigate the course, this is where the horsemanship really shows. If the rider has done the training correctly; the horse's agility can really shine by asking the horse to go forward and extend their gaits between obstacles and then quickly collect before the next obstacle. A well ridden speed round really showcases the rider's dedication to a soft and adjustable horse. Additionally, speed rounds can be won at the trot if the horse and rider are savvy enough.

The last phase that may or may not be offered is a cattle phase. This is a team phase where 3 or 4 riders work together to separate a designated cow (determined by a draw) from the herd and move the cow to a holding pen while keeping the remaining herd in their designated area. This is a super fun phase but offered on a very limited basis due to facility requirements and access to cattle.

Still not sold on the sport? That's okay, here are a few other things that people love about WE above and beyond the phases. WE is a very inclusive sport; since it was developed based on a working horse. the "fanciest" horse

The Board

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may not win, the sport does not require the brand new tack, or show attire- just needs to be clean and workmanlike and appropriate to the discipline you ride. Wait, discipline? Huh? Well, you can ride in any tack you like as long as it's within the same style- Western, English, Portuguese, trail saddle; they are all welcome and compete together! WE also lends itself to helping create an all around horse. It is a wonderful complement to dressage, some of the obstacles can help you with teaching changes of bend, flying changes, backing up straight, etc by giving both the horse and rider visual parameters. WE complements eventing by helping build confidence, quick adjustability, and challenge a horse in a similar manner without needing a cross country field year around (because, well, Washington...). Trail horses get the opportunity to show their skill set, confidence and obedience and hopefully learn a few new tricks. And lastly, camaraderie. There is not a more welcoming and supportive group of horse people; it's a newer sport that many of us are trying to learn and learn together. Plus, it's just fun to ride next to someone who has had a totally different riding journey, can share their experiences and still support one another. Plus, its just dang fun!

Now that you want more info on this super cool sport, what it has to offer, and all that it entails- check out the USA WE website to find out more about requirements, events, rules, etc. www.usawe.org

Also stay tuned as we will show case an obstacle a month, how to set it up, break down the training and what the judge is looking for.

Club Happenings!

- ✱ *Check your email for a member survey that was just sent out! The Board wants your input about what you'd like to see, learn and do this year. If you didn't get the email, let us know and [click here instead!](#)*

- ✱ *Mark your calendar for the upcoming General Membership Meeting: Wednesday, January 25th. Dinner at 6:30pm and meeting from 7:00-8:00pm. Round Table Pizza in Bellingham's Sunset Square Plaza.*





Whatcom County Dressage & Eventing Association

2023 Membership Application ****Complete & Submit for New & Renewing Members****

Name _____

Address City, State Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Birthday _____

Emergency Contact Name _____

Emergency Contact Phone _____

____ New member ____ Renewing member

____ Junior ____ Adult Amateur ____ Trainer ____ Professional

Volunteer areas: ____ Events ____ Board/Programs ____ Outreach ____ Wherever needed!

Description	Cost/year/person	Qty	Total
WCDEA Membership - includes full membership in the WCDEA, voting rights in WCDEA affairs (for members 18 years of age and older), reduced rates for WCDEA sponsored activities, and email delivery of the monthly newsletter	\$20		
Additional Family Members - must reside at same address, list names here:	\$10		
PayPal Transaction Fee (per person ONLY if paying with PayPal)	\$1		
		TOTAL	

Make checks payable to WCDEA. Memberships can also be paid via PayPal (whatcomdressageandeventing@gmail.com). If using PayPal, please include the following, so we can match your application to your payment:

PayPal ID/Username: _____

Payment//Transaction #: _____

**New & Renewing Members, mail completed application (and check if applicable) to:
Shanna Lealand, 3909 H Street Rd, Blaine WA 98230**

The Whatcom County Dressage and Eventing Association (WCDEA) is a not for profit organization founded in 1984 for the promotion and education of dressage and eventing for enthusiasts in Whatcom County and surrounding areas.