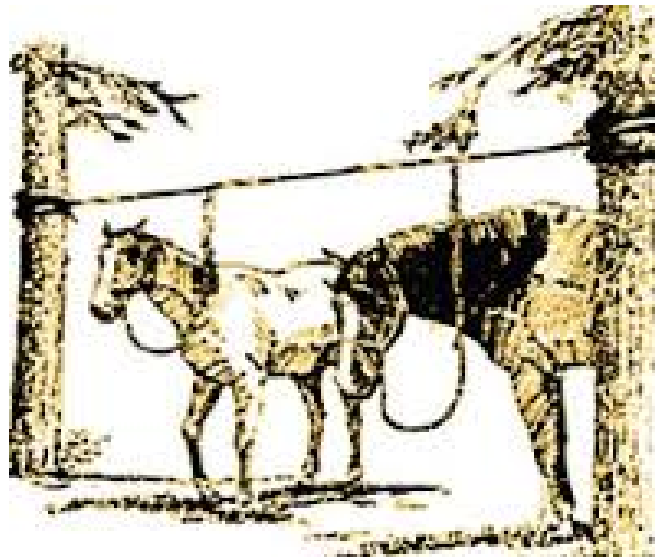


Guidelines for Securing Equines

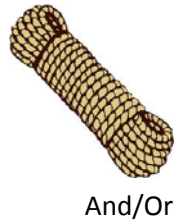


Leslie Mcleod

As adopted by Washington County 4H Wagon Train 2014

Introduction to Highlining and Other Means of Securing Equines

- Washington County 4H Wagon Train over the years has adopted the use of highlines as the primary means of securing equines when camped. This method has proven itself as a safe and effective technique as shown by its widespread use by many professional packing and outfitting services. It is an accepted “Leave No Trace” practice recognized by the Federal Forest Service and Oregon Department of Forestry. However it is not without its faults, which most can be eliminated by practice of both you and your equine prior to the trek and the group having an organized horse night watch while on the trek.
- The basic principle is to have a taut overhead rope or strap secured between two or more points. It should be high enough over a horse's head to not interfere with the animal even with the weight of a hay bag suspended on it. Along these lines are stationary points to secure equines with enough distance between other equines and trees. The highline should have a way to tighten it while in use as well.
- The single fixed overhead points allow an equine to have room to move, eat, and even lie down with the least amount of entanglement hazards. Typically an equine is fed from a haybag attached to this overhead line as well.
- There is no maximum amount of equines per highline as long as the distance between points safely accommodates the animals with the proper distances **and** the highline can be maintained tight. The highline can be secured to more than two trees and provide more than one leg to secure equines to.
- The other methods of securing equines overnight are tying teams directly to their wagons. This method is acceptable only when the logistics of the camp allow it **and** the Head Teamster approves of its use. Some or all teams may use this method when it is predetermined by the group leaders. This method is limited to teams, saddle animals must be highlined with the exception of tying to horse trailers on the first and last night at base camp. At no time shall animals be picketed or hobbled, or tied directly to trees for overnight purposes. Teamsters shall make every effort to utilize a highline as the primary means to secure their animals.
- Riders shall receive the following information from the Wrangler prior to arriving at the next camp:
 - Location for highlines in relationship to camp
 - Location of water source and hay trailer
 - Hazards and areas off limits
- Teamsters shall receive the following information from the Head Teamster prior to arriving at the next camp:
 - Approach and departure into camp for wagons
 - Locations for wagons to stop
 - Location of water source and hay trailer
 - Hazards and areas off limits
 - Who and where has the ability to tie to wagons
 - Location for highlines
- The Wrangler shall make rounds once everyone has settled into camp and ensure that equines are safely and appropriately secured for the situation each camp presents. Concerns shall be addressed and corrected at this time as well as plans and information for horse watch relayed and confirmed.
- When leaving an area scatter manure, remove excess feed, and fill in pawed areas. Manure forks are available from the hay trailer.
- Most importantly **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**



And/Or



½" or greater rope or 3" or wider strap. Rope or strap can be used for the main highline. A smaller ratchet strap or come along can be used in place of the trucker's hitch to make the highline taught when using rope. It is not recommended to use nylon, any rope with excessive stretch, melts easily with friction, smooth, or stiff rope. Old climbing rope, manila, cotton, or polyester rope works best. Be sure to preload your rope prior to use and make sure your rope is clean and dry when you put it away.

Hay Bag-preferably with netted or grid style opening to prevent hay waste and encourage slower eating. **Hay nets** are discouraged due to entanglement hazard.



Tree Savers – any combination of straps, belts, webbing loops with eyelets, rings, links, or carabiners designed to prevent damage to trees from direct contact with the main highline. Old cinches also work well.



Collapsible water bucket

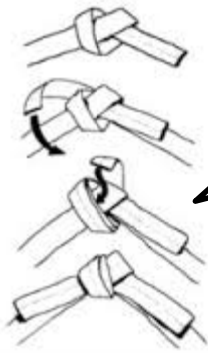
Misc. swivels, shackles, rings, and carabiners used to attach highlines to tree savers and equines to highlines. Ensure that these are rated for adequate weight. If they become deformed they may not open. Use what suits your situation best. Having a swivel for your equine to attach to helps to keep the line tangle free but do not use a swivel to attach the hay bag as it makes it hard to eat from.



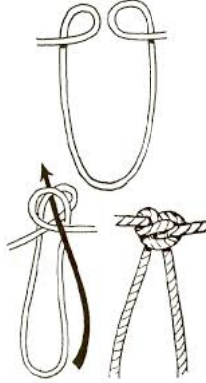
Folding hand saw



This hardware and these knots are designed to give you a stationary place along the highline to tie your equine and hay bag. Some are stationary and some become stationary once the highline is tightened. Use what best suits your situation. Remember to use a swivel when tying an equine to one of these and if necessary a breakaway device.

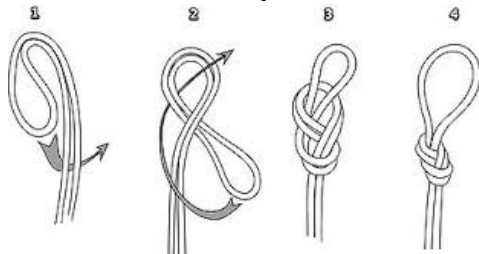


Water Knot – used to tie webbing together to form loops. Useful for making your own tree savers.

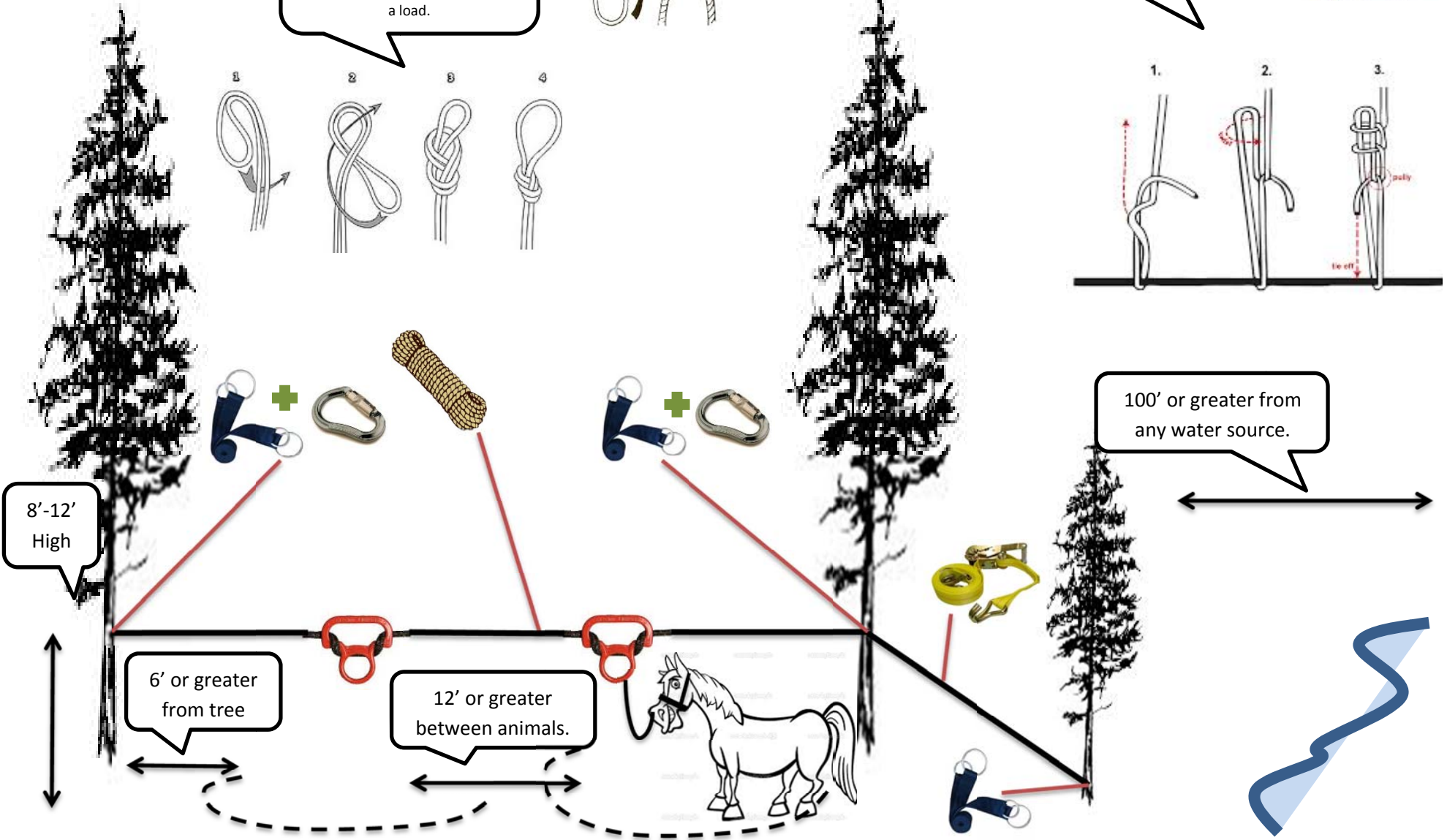
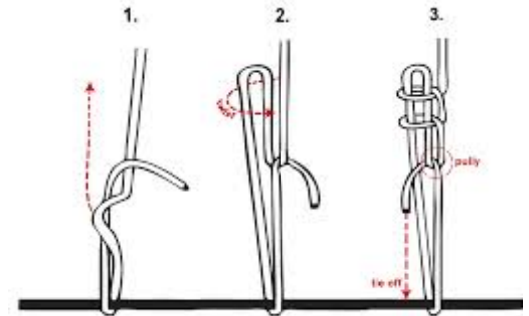


Alpine Knot – three direction knot. Can be tied using the highline to create a spot to tie your animal. Can be tied in the middle of the rope.

Figure Eight w/Bight – used to form a loop at the end of a rope. Easy to untie, has no tight bends that may damage the rope under a load.



Truckers Hitch – used to take the slack out of highline. A ratchet strap, rope, or cable come along can also be used for this purpose. Whatever is used be sure that you are able to retighten your highline once it is up and has had animals on it.



8'-12' High

6' or greater from tree

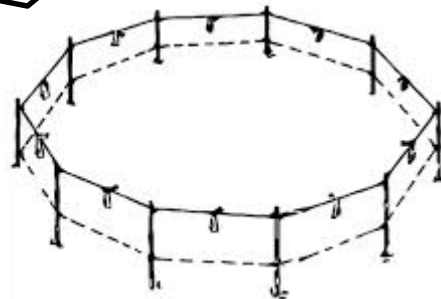
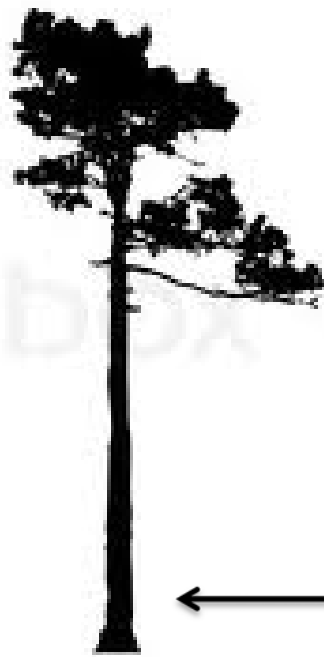
12' or greater between animals.

100' or greater from any water source.

No animals shall be picketed or hobbled. However use of a portable electric fence is acceptable during the day on layover. Ensure that the animal is used to this method of confinement prior to wagon train. It is encouraged to use existing corrals at horse campgrounds if available. Make sure that the animal groupings are taken into account with safety in mind when using any of the suggested confinement methods.

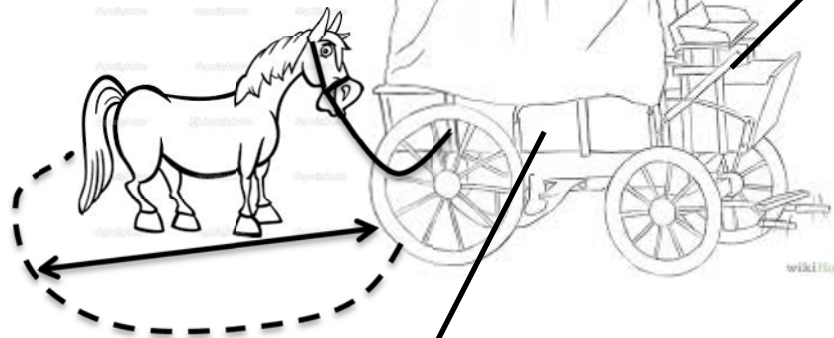
It is up to the discretion of the Wrangler and Head Teamster to determine if all or some of the draft stock can utilize their wagons as means to secure their teams when there is space to do so. The Wrangler shall coordinate in advance with the Head Teamster and confirm with the Scout regarding the layout of the next campsite. Saddle animals must be highlined.

Please exercise caution when choosing your highline area and ensure that the trees are live that you tie to as well as around you. Make sure that the ground is free of limbs or other entanglement or trip hazards. Dead branches or broken limbs can be removed from the lower parts of trees to prevent injury to equines.



Confirm that nothing is enticing for equines to chew or eat is within or on the wagon. This includes rope, canvas, lunch leftovers, etc.

Make sure that the brake is set.



Ensure that there is approximately 12' of space for the equines 6' away from trees. Also make certain that there is adequate room for the wagon and equines off the main thoroughfare when choosing this method of securing the animals.

When tying stock to the wagons, tie through the wagon wheel to the wagon box itself.