

Western Trails Riding Stable

A Family Tradition
at Deep Creek Lake, Maryland

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"No hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle." — Winston Churchill



Gene Schenk and his beautiful roan quarter horse, George.

Since 1970, Western Trails Riding Stable has offered hours of riding pleasure, year round, to equestrians of all ages and sizes. The stable is open daily during the summer season and by reservation the rest of the year.

Located about two miles from the Glendale Bridge as the crow flies, the 170-acre horse farm was established in 1968 and run by Fredlock Schenk, with help from his son Larry. In the early years, the Schenks also maintained a dairy barn, and later added horse shows.

"We've offered trail riding from the start," says Gene Schenk, the farm's third-generation owner. "We get lots of repeats, plus first-timers." Western Trails also welcomes groups for birthday parties, church outings, and scout trips, among others. Three trail ride options are available, varying from ½ hour to 1½ hours. Hand-led pony rides are fun for little tykes and adults with special needs. Private and semi-private riding lessons run the gamut from beginning to expert

levels. Hayrides followed by a star-lit campfire afterwards are always popular.

Riders are often treated to the sights of deer, wild turkeys and the occasional bear as they ride uphill and downhill through fields and forests, with an occasional glimpse of Deep Creek Lake.

Gene has added horse breeding and training to the stable's list of services. Horses are available for purchase. Currently Western Trails has about 50 horses — a mix of Appaloosas, Paints,

Quarter Horses, Belgians, Pintos, minis and draft horses. The stable also takes in some rescues. Gene does his own haymaking and horseshoeing, with some help from family, friends and volunteers. From March through November, he's occupied with breaking and training at all levels, from the backyard horse to top-level show horses.

"I have 20 years experience with breeding, which involves working with bloodlines, discipline and trends," Gene says. Quarter Horses are his specialty. He's active in the American Quarter Horse Association and often travels long distances to participate in Western Pleasure, a western-style competition emphasizing slow, controlled movement.

"We're always competing," Gene says.

Western Trails
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