

The

# ROCKSPIRIAN

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**RE-OPENING ROCKSPIRE** for events after being shut down for over a year due to the pandemic has been a top focus in recent months. Because of new safety measures now in place at Rockspire, we're excited to announce that we plan to reopen Rockspire for events starting this **May!**

We should be able to accommodate these gatherings by observing the CDC's Covid19 guidelines plus having taken the steps below:

- Weather permitting, in-person events will be held outdoors as our first preference. We can do this because we've completed a new 600 sq. ft. entry canopy at the MobbyMac Carriage House. When the large doors at the front of the Carriage House are opened, this canopy extends the meeting area and creates an indoor-outdoor space for larger gatherings with fresh air circulation throughout. We anticipate this will allow us to accommodate up to 25 people while social distancing. As part of the canopy addition, we installed a wood burning fire pit which, along with the propane tower heaters, should allow us to stay comfortable on chilly nights.
- For indoor events, we've installed an advanced HEPA filtration system in the Carriage House which traps and reduces 99% of airborne particulates including those that carry viruses.
- We've expanded the kitchen facility at the MobbyMac Carriage House to allow for food preparation or re-heat and final preparation of catered food. We now have a full kitchen with direct pass-through to the exterior porch, which will allow for safe food and beverage service for events.
- We are installing ultra-high-speed, fiber-optic broadband internet service at Rockspire. This internet network will allow Rockspire to create live, virtual connections with those who cannot attend events in person. We anticipate this internet network will be fully operational by mid-summer. Look for updates at [rockspire.com](http://rockspire.com) and on our Facebook page as we progress.



***"I'm having fun building unique projects for Rockspire!"***

... says Eric Chapman, owner of **E&A Companies**.

Using Eric's fabrication and construction skills, Rockspire now has a beautiful canopy that was built in E&A's top-of-the-line 6,400 sq-ft shop in nearby Green Forest. The canopy is wood and steel, requiring custom fabrications. Eric and son Niq worked on the project during the pandemic shut down. We're happy to have a partnership with such a skilled, creative builder. For more information about E&A Companies visit their Facebook pages at [E&A Woodworking](#) and [E&A Graphics](#).



MobbyMac Carriage House Canopy  
Final Assembly  
Eric Chapman, walking; Niq Chapman on roof  
Photo by: G. Myers 11.10.20

MobbyMac Carriage House kitchen expansion  
Photo by: G. Myers 11.6.20

MobbyMac Carriage House in the snow.  
Photo by: P. O'Neill 12.13.20



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## ***HORSES & ALPACAS --- OH MY!!!!***

As we get closer to humans living full-time at Rockspire, we have started to think about the animals – particularly the livestock that complement sustainable concepts at Rockspire. In the interest of improving the soils and lowering the carbon footprint, we’re researching how to introduce horses and alpacas into the environment. There is a science to figuring out the optimal mix.

Apart from being great pets, horses and alpacas and other types of livestock impact the pasture and agricultural ecosystem differently.

### **Horses**

The maximum number of **horses** and **ponies** who should ideally be kept, to graze on any piece of pasture or acreage varies according to several factors, including:

- Soil type.
- Weather conditions and the time of year.
- How well the pasture has been managed in the past.
- Whether the horses are turned out 24 hours a day.
- How settled the group of horses is - a well settled group won’t churn the ground up as much as an unsettled one that gallop around or fight.
- Drainage.



The general rule is to allow at least **1½ acres** of grazing for the first horse and **1 acre** for each horse or pony after that. Provision also needs to be made for every part of the **pasture** to be **rested** for at least 6 weeks, twice a year.

Rockspire has three grazing pastures of approximately 3½ acres each. To allow for “resting” each pasture as recommended, only two should be used at any time, thus allowing the third pasture to be used to rotate horses and rest each pasture twice per year. Based on the general rule above, the maximum number of horses at Rockspire would therefore be **6** horses.

### **Alpacas**

Because alpacas are environmentally friendly and require so little pasture and food, you can usually raise from two to eight alpacas on an acre of land, depending on terrain, rain/snowfall amounts, availability of pasture, access to fresh water, etc.

The general rule is to allow 5 alpacas per acre. Therefore, the maximum number of alpacas that Rockspire could support is **45** alpacas. Bring on the shearers, spinners, and knitters to handle all that wool!



***If both horses and alpacas are living at Rockspire, a logical maximum mix would be 4 horses and 12 alpacas. If the horses and alpacas are segregated, the numbers would be 3 horses and 17 alpacas, maximum. If more horses are desired, the number of alpacas would be diminished by 5 for every horse added, i.e., five horses would mean 7 alpacas, maximum.***

Notes:

- *The general rule for horses stated above, also applies to cattle.*
- *Source: USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service*