



# Illinois Trail Riders

Dedicated To Keeping Horses On Our Trails

E-mail: [ILTrRdrs@illinoistrailriders.com](mailto:ILTrRdrs@illinoistrailriders.com)  
[www.illinoistrailriders.com](http://www.illinoistrailriders.com)

August, September, October 2009

## SETC Conference

Shared by Peter Veit

On behalf of Illinois Trail Riders and the Horsemen's Council of Illinois, I had the privilege of once again attending the Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference (SETC), this year held in Gainesville, Florida. This conference may be named the American or National Equestrian Trails Conference by 2011.

The conference, once again, gave us the opportunity to meet and renew acquaintances with other equestrian trail users and trail advocates. The total registered attendants was 182 of which 40 represented various land managers, including the US Forestry Service, US Park Service, The Federal Highway Administration, as well as numerous State DNR or Local Park Services. Twenty-two percent of attendees were the type with whom we want to work and whom we need to reach.

Due in part to its Southern location, a relatively high percentage of Land Managers were there on behalf of various parks or authorities within the state of Florida. That in turn presented a very interesting insight into one state's particular approach to equestrian issues. Florida is a state deriving much of its income from tourism and is therefore geared to accommodate tourists. Florida has also recognized the equestrian community as being a significant tourist **income base**. Thus, Florida has reached out to accommodate horses with many campgrounds, day lots, trails, and other amenities. They have also put heavy emphasis on volunteerism and are working in close cooperation with local equestrian groups for everyone's good. A number of presenters and attendees were representatives of those local parks or of trail advocacy organizations.

Throughout the two-day program, there were many informative speakers including Mary Hanson with the US National Park Services (River Trails and Conservation Program), who moderated all sessions and is a major trail player. Mary has her own horses.

Dr. Gene Woods of Clemson University, who started this whole thing, was not able to attend this year. We hope to see him in 2010 as he is a great asset and lets you know exactly where both you and he stand and what needs to be done to keep horses on the trails. We also missed hearing Rick Potts, Chief of Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Division US Park Service, and a veteran horseman. Rick, a fantastic speaker, has had the personal experience of pulling his string of mules along wilderness trails. Rick had a last-minute family emergency and had to cancel.

Also missed were Brian and Candice Bourne of the US Forestry Service (stationed in the Shawnee). Brian mod-

erated the last two SETC conferences and both were active in the recent OVETS program held in the Midwest.

There was Jan Hancock, who prepared the recent *Equestrian Source Book and Manual Guidelines for Horse Trails, Trail Head, and Campgrounds* which was distributed at last year's program.

Of primary interest, on a national scale, was Deb Balliet, the CEO of the Equine Land Conservation Resources (ELCR). Deb's presentation placed emphasis on a more general expanded outreach of the efforts of ELCR. They are not only concentrating on their original primary effort of preserving trails systems on private land by means of land conservation easements, but are also becoming more involved with all equestrian trail/land use issues.

As always, there was Christopher Douwes, who is the Trails Enhancement Manager for the Federal Highway Administration in Washington, DC. He has managed the Recreational Trails Program since its first inception in 1992 and the transportation enhancement activity since 2003. In that position, he manages contracts for research, technology development, technical assistance and training for all trail-related activities. Christopher's department, as in the past, has underwritten a large portion of the conference's expenditures. While active on all trail issues with all **trail users**, Chris appears to have a special fondness for "you horse people," even though, to the best of our knowledge, he himself has only been aboard a horse once.

Another major speaker was Terry Morrision, Chairman of the Back Country Horsemen of America. The Back Country Horsemen organization played a much larger role at this year's conference than in the past, not only by Terry's presentation, but also by the number of attendees and tabletop display. The Back Country Horsemen, as an organization, has long been a very effective outreach arm to the land managers with many of the chapters providing literally thousands of hours of trail maintenance and trail construction effort. Terry emphasized that BCH is currently active in 24 states and is working to develop a stronger working relationship with other trail user groups such as the American Hiking Society, The Wilderness Society, ELCR, and others. To this writer, this shows a continuing effort to build on the existing good will and respect which was earned by lots and lots of hard work.

Mr. Ben Pendergrass of the American Horse Council gave his presentation updating the latest legislative issues addressed by the American Horsemen's Council (AHC) activities in Washington, DC. He also briefly indicated that there is an effort underway for closer cooperation between the local state horse councils and the national body. Most (continued on page 5)

## ***Illinois Trail Riders***

**4873 Indian Hills Drive,  
Edwardsville, IL 62025**

**Voice: 618 656-2591**

**E-mail:**

**ILTrRdrs@illinoistrailriders.com**

**Website:**

**www.illinoistrailriders.com**

### **Officers & Directors**

#### **DENISE MAXWELL**

##### **President**

4873 Indian Hills Drive  
Edwardsville, IL 62025  
618 656-1129

#### **JEAN GREENLEE**

##### **Vice President**

2330 Rockton Road  
Caledonia, IL 61011  
815 292-3010

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Joliet, IL 60432  
815 726-5346

#### **SANDY POLETTI**

##### **Secretary**

8727 Rosewood Hills  
Edwardsville, IL 62025  
618 656-4712

#### **JoANNE GERNANT**

450 Highway 6 East  
Geneseo, IL 61254  
309 944-4317

#### **JERRY (BUCKWHEAT)**

##### **McKINLEY**

912 N. John Street  
Farmer City, IL 61842  
309 928-2484

#### **SARA RHOADES**

2372 N. 1500 East Road  
Seymour, IL 61875  
217 687-2654

#### **RON RHOADES**

2372 N. 1500 East Road  
Seymour, IL 61875  
217 687-2654

#### **PETER VEIT**

1041 N. Mill Street  
Naperville, IL 60563  
630 357-6465

## ***From The President***

Mulberries are out, blackberries are in, and I can't make it down a trail or through my pasture without stopping for a snack. It won't be long until I look for ripe Persimmons and the elusive Paw Paw. The weather has been superb in my part of the state for enjoying a trail ride. I have managed to spend time with my horse, but never as much as I want to. I seem to find something that needs to be done around the house and barn. Chores like putting up the hay, weeding the garden and dealing with the produce, painting something, fixing something, or just plain "clean-up work" becomes a stumbling block to my trail-riding adventures.

For years I lived to ride my horse like nothing else mattered. I went places and explored areas that begged to be seen and a pathway had to be put through. If the pathway which the hiker and horse created became popular, it turned into a trail. One day I woke up to find that I wasn't alone on the trails and that everyone wanted to do something with the quiet land I so often chose to ride on or visit. Sometimes it was a developer who wanted to build more houses and businesses or perhaps a City or County official who had designs for a better way to generate income or tax revenue. If we were lucky, a conservationist, preservationist or environmentalist would begin to eyeball the perfect trail as habitat or greenspace. Then, in no time, I found that there were no quiet trails anymore. Good land had gone down in pavement.

Adults suffered the most because they had memories of how it once was. Many children had never known the freedom to ride a horse, go adventure, build a secret fort, or even climb a tree without supervision and control. They didn't know what they were missing as they became more directed toward manicured sport fields and competitive play. Hikers, bird watchers, dog walkers, hunters, and nature lovers also mourned the losses of these open spaces and became active in a struggle to keep them, perhaps to share them. The best communities continued to purchase openlands, create parks, and provide a mechanism for all of the citizens to enjoy their leisure.

Then came the bicyclists. They had already been working for safer transportation routes, handy bike racks, and other ways to enjoy their leisure and exercise activity. Their numbers were large and their pocketbooks substantial.

Then began using the best pathways throughout the community. Equestrians turned to those who were known as leaders in trail creation. They told us that we needed to be organized and have a strong voice to save our trails and places to ride. We got a seat at the table when we were invited to join in planning efforts and present or exhibit at conferences. Grandfathers of the trail movement suggested we learn all that we could about trail resources, safety, design, issues, conflicts and solutions; then use that to keep our hoofs and horses on the trails that were so rapidly growing in number and popularity. Trails are no longer pathways but highly technical-designated transportation routes for those who come for exercise and the scenery. Experts asked us to come to the trail project with strong, "labor ready" backs and be willing to "pitch in bringing money, resources, and tools whenever possible. Many equestrians contribute to local trail efforts routinely, others are in the process of joining and learning.

Horse owners all over the country and state are working together like never before -- sometimes in a coalition with many other trail users, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, and environmental activists --.sometimes in competition with them. I know this because my email is bursting with Trail Rider business.

There are many things that we must share and work together on, if we are to meet our goals as trail advocates and keep abreast of the activities of a growing number of organizations. We may have to divide the load and each take a job if we are to keep up with everything there is to be done. Our natural spaces are shrinking and fences are often placed around the land that was "open" in the past. It takes money to save land and save trails for the future. That land must be "dedicated" as park or trail, wildlife area, or nature preserve to keep it from being abused by the forces of civilization. That trail must be managed, cared for, and loved if it is to last. Equestrians may need to take up the fight for trails and the right to ride, but it would be better if they could be equal partners sharing the valuable resources. I am glad that Illinois Trail Riders are doing the things that need to be done to preserve and create trails in their communities.

**Keep up the good work even if it sometimes keeps you from riding your horse!**

Denise

## ***Shawnee National Forest and Shawnee Trails Conservancy Partnership Awarded Significant Trail Improvement Grant***

**Harrisburg, IL, July 16, 2009** – The Shawnee National Forest Hidden Springs District Ranger Tim Pohlman today announced that through the efforts of the Shawnee Trails Conservancy (STC), a \$128,000 trail improvement grant has been secured that will be used to improve equestrian/hiker trails in southern Illinois. The STC applied for and received funding from the Illinois Equine Industry Research and Promotion Board to serve as a matching contribution. This made the partnership eligible to apply for funding from the Recreation Trails Program created through the National Recreation Fund Act. Patti Laubscher, representing the STC, helped write the grant application and submitted letters of

support from the Shawnee Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of America, Southern Illinois Tourism Bureau, Congressman Shimkus and Senator Durbin.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Administrator of the Recreational Trails Program for Illinois selected three segments of the River-to-River/American Discovery Trail on the Hidden Springs Ranger District as project locations for the funding. One trail segment, West Bay Creek, is located approximately three miles west of Eddyville. The other two trail segments, Buzzard Roost and Eagle Creek, are located to the east and west of High Knob Recreation Area near Herod. Total mileage to be improved is approximately nine miles.

The grant-funded trail work will be designed to protect sensitive natural resources, while providing a well-maintained equestrian trail through some of the most visited areas of the Forest.



### **Trail Maintenance Volunteers**

Justin Dodson with the Forest Service

### **Shawnee Trail Conservancy Members**

Jack Flammang, Randy and Linda Werkheiser, Fay Jennings, Lucy Walker, and Sue Perina working near the Hitching Post Trailhead at Herod

## ***Are You Chauffeuring Your Horse Legally?***

By Ronald Rhoades

Most equine enthusiasts in the state of Illinois think nothing of hooking our horse trailer to our trusty pick-up (or car!) and going down road merrily anticipating the outing ahead, whether it be trail riding, competition or vet visit!

We all know that many dangers lie ahead and pay close attention to those idiot drivers ahead of us that don't bother to think about anybody but themselves as they swerve into our lane and slam on their brakes!

But sometimes our downfall is a result of our own ignorance. Just how legal are you when you are pulling your horse trailer?

No discussion here of speed limits - it's 55 on interstates, 50 on everything else for ANYTHING pulling ANY trailer, no matter how small!

Driver's license. Be Careful! Just because you can drive a truck legally doesn't mean you can hook up a trailer and drive it legally. If you review the Rules of the Road (check it out on-line at [http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf\\_publications/dsd\\_cdl10.pdf](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/dsd_cdl10.pdf)), it looks like you need either a class A or B license (these are the only two classifications

that specifically mention towing a vehicle!). Violate this requirement and you can get a ticket for driving without a license!

Did you know that almost ALL pick-ups with ANY license plate classification, B or above, pulling just about ANY horse trailer (8,000 pounds or above) must pass an Illinois Safety Lane Inspection every six months? This involves taking your truck to a local safety inspector and paying a few bucks to have them inspect lights, wipers, suspension and brakes and getting your pretty sticker that sticks on your front window so that you can avoid paying the almost \$100 fine if you don't have it! You can look at [www.dot.state.il.us](http://www.dot.state.il.us) (Safety Information/Safety Lanes) to find a testing location near you.

Trailers can also be required to pass an Illinois Safety Lane inspection (if they are not plated RV). If a trailer is plated at more than 5,000 pounds, it too must pass an Illinois Safety Lane Inspection!

Penalties. Yes, there are penalties for not following the rules! Minimum \$50 fine for first offense, \$100 fine for second offense and can go way up (\$500/30 days in jail!!)

There are many more rules. Stay tuned to future newsletters for more information!

Be Safe! Be Legal!

## Newsbits

**Mid America Trails & Greenways Conference** - Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is now accepting registration for the 4<sup>th</sup> Mid-America Trails and Greenways Conference to be held October 25-28, 2009 at the Kalamazoo Radisson Hotel Plaza and Suites in downtown Kalamazoo. Join trail planners, builders, and advocates from eight Midwest states as all aspects of trail building, operation, and maintenance are discussed. All conference information is available at [www.michigantrails.org](http://www.michigantrails.org). For general conference questions, call Barry Culham at 517-485-6022 or email at [barry@michigantrails.org](mailto:barry@michigantrails.org) or call Rory Robinson at 330-657-2951 or email at [Rory\\_Robinson@npa.gov](mailto:Rory_Robinson@npa.gov). The pre-registration deadline is September 25, 2009 to receive the discount prices. **There is no on-site registration.**

**OVETS 2009** - Begun in 1998, the Ohio Valley Equestrian Trails Symposium has provided a forum for educating trail riders and groups who care about the care, maintenance and preservation of the horse trails located in the Ohio Valley, which includes Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia and Tennessee. The Summit features speakers from a variety of organizations who are involved in trail preservation and maintenance, including State and National Park Managers, officers from other large state trail groups, universities, and local trail groups. It will be held at the Beaver Creek Scout Ranch in Metamora, Michigan October 1-4, 2009. Sessions in the morning, ride in the afternoon, enjoy the campfire in the evening. It is produced by the Michigan Horse Council with support from the Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and Wisconsin Horse Councils. Contact the Michigan Horse Council at P.O. Box 22008, Lansing, MI 48909-2008, [www.michiganhorsecouncil.com](http://www.michiganhorsecouncil.com).

**Models For Equine-Based Use Of State Fish and Wildlife Lands** - In June of 2009 the Equestrian Land Conservation Resource examined three models, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New Mexico, for equine-based use and enjoyment of state game lands (commonly known as Wildlife Management Areas or WMAs) and formulated general recommendations for horsemen in other states seeking access to the same. In New Jersey, horsemen have the opportunity to purchase specific horseback riding permits and ride on designated WMAs. In Pennsylvania, horsemen and other non-hunting, non-motorized users are allowed to use designated routes on game lands. Those routes may be expanded by permit, approval of which is contingent upon a credible maintenance plan to be carried out by the applicant organization. In New Mexico, horse riders and other non-consumptive users of wildlife may purchase a permit that allows access to many WMAs under certain limitations and conditions. That permit system is derived from a gubernatorial and legislative initiative to promote interest in wildlife by non-hunting user groups. You may access the full version of the report at [www.elcr.org/resources/resc\\_31.pdf](http://www.elcr.org/resources/resc_31.pdf).

**Partners for Parks and Wildlife** is a grassroots coalition working to secure and increase funding for open space and park acquisition, natural area preservation, wildlife habitat protection and recreational opportunities in Illinois. Individuals who are active in like-minded organizations can introduce the membership to this initiative and ask them to sign up to join **Partners for Parks and Wildlife (PPW)**. A \$25 fee is requested to help cover costs of web page operations. A link

will be provided to your organization's web page on the PPW web page and it is requested that you put a link to the PPW site on your web site. PPW needs your help, your commitment, your time and your energy to promote and help build a coalition of supporters, educate elected officials and the media, and to be active in support of a dedicated funding source for open space. For more information, visit [www.partnersforparksandwildlife.org](http://www.partnersforparksandwildlife.org).

### **Promote Your Trail Warriors and Trail Savers**

Contact: Terri Folks *Trail Blazer* Magazine  
Associate Editor/Trail Advocacy [www.trailblazermagazine.us](http://www.trailblazermagazine.us)

**Nominate a Trail Saver** - *Trail Blazer* magazine wants to help publicize your trail organization efforts. For more information on what information to send and how to nominate a deserving volunteer or group, contact Terri Folks. *Trail Blazer* magazine dedicates a section to trail advocacy.

**Nominate a Trail Warrior** - Someone in your trail organization who is a champion of the trails, a volunteer, an activist or is always there when you host trail work days?

Put Terri on your e-newsletter list if that will simplify things at either one of her addresses or pick up the phone and give her a call. Editor **TRAILTown USA**, [terri.folks@trailtownusa.com](mailto:terri.folks@trailtownusa.com), 928-254-3569, Fax: 405-340-6912. Right now you can sign up **Free** as a charter member at [www.trailtownusa.com](http://www.trailtownusa.com), a new equine community.

## ***A Trail Ride You Cannot Miss!!***

By Ed Lawrence

**Mark your calendars for September 24-27, 2009!! That's the date of the big Lincoln Bicentennial Horseback Holiday Ride** put on by the Illinois Quarter Horse Association (IQHA) at Panther Creek, Chandlerville, IL (near Springfield).

This is truly the ride you can't miss, but the camping spaces and number of horses is limited. Each year the IQHA plans and hosts an all-breed, all-discipline, trail ride in different areas of the state. Proceeds go to a worthy charity. We have the best time -- lots of scenic riding, hilarious antics of some old-school horsemen, good food, nightly parties, a Tim Boyer horsemanship clinic, and lots of riding, while enjoying the pleasant company of some pretty good and responsible trail riding folks. Cowboy Church with Dave Davis! Oh, and did I mention, **lots of riding?**

We are returning to Chandlerville to help raise funds for the Horse Park at Panther Creek, the IQHA Horseback Riding Programs, and the AQHA Foundation for equine research and therapeutic riding programs. You can help us sustain or improve this Horse Park and have a whale of a lot of fun while doing it.

Hey, next time you are on the TROI web site, *The Trail Riders of Illinois Social Network* <http://horsebackillinois.ning.com>, take a closer look at the picture in the top-left corner of the masthead. That was taken at Panther Creek in 2008! Irene W. snapped that photo and I must get 2-3 messages a month commenting on that beautiful paint horse. Who knows? Perhaps a similar lasting memory is waiting for your horse at Panther Creek.

Reservations and discounted early-bird registration can be made by contacting the Ride's Co-Chairs, Pam Sigler or Bob Chatterton. See more about the ride on the IQHA web site at [www.iggha.com](http://www.iggha.com). Click on Recreational Riding for the trail and horseback riding pages. Please take a look and sign up right away if interested. The number of horses is limited.

## SETC Conference (continued from page 1)

attendees were aware of the fact that there has been some dissatisfaction with respect to policy emphasis that is being placed by the national body as opposed to the things that are important to the statewide affiliates. The tone of his presentation was generally optimistic that this will be accomplished.

Dr. Stith T. Gower, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, an avid endurance rider, presented the results of his latest research on "The Spread of Invasive Species on Trails – Are Horse Villains or Victims." This work seems to indicate, once again, that we may not be as bad as is claimed by some. We are trying to get reprints of his paper for possible inclusion in a future ITR *Newsletter*.

On a lighter note, there was an interesting presentation and tabletop exhibit of the "Cracker Horses," a unique breed which almost died out when confiscated by both sides near the end of the Civil War. There was a subsequent large shipment to Cuba. There has been a major comeback in the last few decades through a controlled breeding program. They even brought a live sample for us to see. It is a smaller, but nicely put together horse, probably serving a similar function as did the Morgan horse further up North.

Throughout the conference there was always great emphasis on 1) share the trails, 2) multiple-use trails, 3) courtesy, 4) making proper use of, and showing proper appreciation for volunteers, and 5) there is need for all of us; land managers, politicians, equestrians, and general trail users to work together to improve and enjoy our environment.

For me, one of the greatest sights was a pick-up truck in a parking lot with bold and **totally official** signage on its side:

**"Village of Wellington  
Equestrian Public Works Department"**

**Time somebody, on a local level, paid attention to us!!!**



**Horse Owners "Dream Come True"  
A good use of local tax money!**

## Northern Illinois Horse Fest

The Northern Illinois Horse Fest will be held on August 29 and 30, Boone County Fairgrounds, Belvidere, IL. Two full days of family excitement for owners and enthusiasts!

There will be trainers and clinicians, booths, vendors, crafts, seminars, demonstrations, competitions of dressage horsemanship and a trainer challenge.

Special Events include Dressage Horsemanship Competition with J.P. Giacomini Trofeo Mundi; Midwest Challenge Drill Team Competition with 15 Drill Teams from Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio; World Equestrian Games Pavilion with representatives from the FEI games and Kentucky Horse Park; World Class Stallions and Breeds with Great Performances; Baroque Horse Pavilion; and Night of the Horse Show featuring World Class acts.

It's also a good time to stop by the numerous vendor booths to find some new items and pick up those that need replacing.

Visit [www.illinoishorsefest.com](http://www.illinoishorsefest.com) for more information or call 317-874-4887.

**Illinois Trail Riders again will have a booth at the Fest and will be sharing it again with Horse Council of Illinois and TROD's Emergency Rescue Techniques group, who will be giving a talk that weekend. Look for us and stop by to chat.**

**If any of you would like to help at the booth, give Jean Greenlee a call at 815 292-3010.**

## Changes At Middlefork Campground

By Ron and Sara Rhoades

We recently attended a meeting of equestrian groups and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) personnel at the Kickapoo Park office to discuss the changes that are planned and currently in progress at the Middlefork equestrian campgrounds A, C, and D. IDNR is using the campground guidelines published in the recent Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) publication, *Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trail, Trailheads, and Campgrounds* by Jan Hancock.

The campgrounds A, C and D at the Middlefork FWA are designated for the exclusive use of the equestrian camper. To date, campground infrastructure development has been limited and has not kept pace with changes in equipment size, user demands, and design standards. Capital improvements to the equestrian campground are needed to upgrade the park roads, campsites, and utilities (including electric and water). (Note: the issue of campground infrastructure development not keeping pace with changes in equipment size, etc. is found not only at the Middlefork, but at many private, state and federal sites.)

**Demand for equestrian camping is greater than the site can physically accommodate.** The limitations of the site must be considered in conjunction with equestrian campground development and operations. Partially because of being under the scrutinizing eye of environmental groups, the existing campground design has been reevaluated and modified to accommodate the number of campers the site can safely support while meeting Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) concerns and without negative environmental impact. Besides Public Health and environmental regulations, other applicable federal, state and local regulations need to (continued on page 6)

## Changes At Middlefork Campground

(continued from page 5)

be followed including the Americans with Disabilities Act (of 1990) and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) construction specifications.

The Site is seeing the following changes:

- More clearly defining vehicular circulation patterns. Lengthening, realigning or eliminating problem sites for better vehicular circulation and access.
- Providing all campsites with gravel pads thereby reducing the total number of campsites by 2 or 3.
- Providing concrete fire pads at each campsite.
- More clearly defining where horses are allowed by providing hitching posts/tie rails for every site to separate camper living areas and horse-use areas. No horses or gear are to be tied to trees or other places not designated.
- Provide convenient structures and tools for sanitary manure disposal in the campground.
- Where possible, grass living areas at end of the pads (on right hand side of vehicle) are being expanded.
- Providing more shade and performing selective tree trimming.
- Adding or repairing picnic tables throughout.

**There is a need to foster a stewardship attitude by users. Conversely, park operators don't know what equestrians want unless we tell them.** This meeting allowed a two-way conversation that enabled park operators to learn that trail riders appreciate the following:

1. Large areas to park larger rigs.
2. That the old-fashioned grilles are not good for fires. Flat pads work better.
3. Gathering areas for groups that want to meet together.
4. Tie-rail arrangements that are substantial and stand up to livestock abuse. Some users like tie rails, some like picket lines. An arrangement that provides both is being built.
5. Some trail areas that are more rugged to provide more variety.

### Illinois Trail Riders Handbook Of Trails, Camps and Services

**Over 300 pages of information on Illinois trails and trail riding. A total of over 24,000 rideable miles.**

Each listing contains pertinent information on each area including directions to the facility, a description of the trails, a detailed map, camping facilities and a contact name and phone number.



All this for \$20.00 (plus \$5.00 postage and handling)

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Many other equestrian items were discussed at the meeting, but this report deals with the topics the meeting was called to discuss – namely the campground revisions.

The meeting ended with the understanding that the changes being made to the park were more to meet the demands of safety agencies or environmental concerns and were not just arbitrary decisions.

## Equine Issues and the Farm Bureau of Illinois

Illinois Trail Riders (ITR) was represented by board members Ron and Sara Rhoades at the recent Equine Roundtable hosted by the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) in Bloomington, Illinois on June 26, 2009.

Many equestrians are probably unsure why the Farm Bureau is talking horses, but here is a good example of how numbers speak! The horse industry produces an economic impact of \$3,800,000,000 in Illinois – that is 3.8 BILLION dollars – that is a LOT of zeros! This encompasses \$1.3 billion in direct sales (feed/hay/etc.) and \$2.5 billion in ancillary industries (feed store staff, fuel sales, etc.), but do NOT include vehicle purchases or repair! These numbers were garnered from a report generated by the Horseman's Council of Illinois (HCI) and an industry study performed by the American Horse Council (AHC). The animal husbandry portion of the Illinois agricultural industry (exclusive of equines) produces an economic impact of \$2 billion dollars (with another \$8.1 billion thrown in from crop production). These numbers come from the IFB and the website "StuffAboutStates.com". And the biggest component of the \$2 billion dollars of non-equine animal industry is hosted by Hogs at ONLY \$1.1 billion (almost!!)

So... the Illinois Horse Industry is the LARGEST animal industry in Illinois!! Why shouldn't someone set up and take notice of HORSES???

But we digress. We started out reporting about the Illinois Farm Bureau Conference.

Besides ITR, many different industries were represented, including the trail riding community of the Shawnee area of Illinois represented by Gerry Jenkins of the Williamson County Farm Bureau, the Illinois Appaloosa Horse Club by Garry Connolly, the Standardbred Association by Sam Hillip, whose main focus was on horse racing.

A report was given on last year's discussions (past summaries of the Roundtable discussions can be found in the Newsletter archive at [www.IllinoisTrailRiders.com](http://www.IllinoisTrailRiders.com)). They included:

1. More than one attempt has been made to request funding of an Illinois specific economic impact study with assistance from the Equine Promotion Board, all of which have failed because the grant requests need to be tweaked and resubmitted. The Roundtable voted to proceed with the grant request changes and resubmit.
2. A lobbying/educational trip related to the unintended consequences concerning the ban of horse harvesting had been previously proposed, but felt that the trip was no longer needed.
3. Public education on the realities of horse ownership has always been a continuing concern of everyone present and was voted to continue.
4. The Trailer Handling DVD has been an ongoing project and is finally complete! First editions were handed out to

roundtable participants. This video for equine owners called "Know before You Tow" is available (for free) at everyone's local farm bureau office. Lois Guyon, an ITR member, is one of the "stars" in the video. These will be given to Illinois residents only as they contain some state specific information.

New items were discussed and a priority list was mutually agreed upon for this coming year's activities. The main theme for this year's activities was **The Horse Industry in Illinois is in Survival Mode.**

This theme was selected because of the erosion of horse industry participants and facilities that has transpired (such as the closing of parks and trails, etc.). IFB is passing the priority list among several industry members and the basic concerns can be broadly described as:

1. The horse industry is in survival mode and is to be elevated to a measure of priority with our state's leaders. Its demise will severely impact the Illinois economy.
2. The general public deserves and needs education to keep the horse industry and the importance it has played and will continue to play in Illinois history in its collective mind's eye. This involves not only educating the new horse owner about proper equine financial responsibility, but educating potential equine enthusiasts to participate in horse activities.
3. Equine groups and the IFB need to work together to keep Illinois livestock friendly. The concern is that the general mindset of the state is toward urbanization and away from agriculture and livestock.
4. Education is needed for the insurance industry (yes, even Country Financial Insurance underwriters) to make it more equine friendly (mention something like "bombproof" or "extreme" to the typical insurance agent and get their reaction!). As a consequence insurance providers generally veer away from equine insurance or charge high premiums.
5. Trail issues encompass a need for adequate funding for acquisition, construction and maintenance as well as volunteer efforts to reinforce the importance of horse trails to our parks and recreation leaders.

IFB is an organization that works hard to support the agricultural industry in Illinois. We as EQUINE enthusiasts need to raise our voice and get their attention! Contact IFB!

**The FB roundtable would welcome more participants.**

If you know of an organization that would like another forum to have their voice heard and vote counted, email Jim Fraley (IFB Livestock Program Director) at [JFrale@ilfb.org](mailto:JFrale@ilfb.org).

## *Learning at a Greenways and Trailways Meeting*

Yes, we did it again! We (Ron and Sara Rhoades) attended ANOTHER committee meeting - July 15<sup>th</sup> in Springfield - an Illinois Greenways & Trails (G&T) Council meeting.

While we don't have an attendance list to spout, we CAN tell you that ALL sorts of groups were represented – hikers, bicyclists, canoeists, snowmobilers, Champaign County Design and Conservation Foundation (CCDCF), off-highway vehicle (OHV) users, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and of course Illinois Trail Riders (ITR)!

We learned a lot – about how projects paid for by grants such as Recreational Trail Program (RTP) funds must be completed and paid for by an interested trail user group, then submitted to IDOT for reimbursement who must submit to FHWA for reimbursement. Of course, IDNR has to communicate with IDOT and FHWA before doing the work to make sure the money is locked away for the project before the work is even started. That way, once all the bill submittals happen, FHWA can pay IDOT, who can then pay DNR who can reimburse the applicant! Talk about head spinning!

You may have (hopefully) seen in the news that the Federal Highway Transportation Bill has been debated in our governmental halls and attempts are being made to renew the recreational trails funding for another term. We know there is a new grant program included in the new 2010 Federal Transportation Bill, but not enough information is available on that yet.

In Illinois the latest news is that they are extending the program for a shorter time and working on determining what form to use to set up the program funds. There was a list of 13 projects and 19 grants that were submitted by the deadline. Of the \$2.6 million from federal funds, 30% must be for non-motorized projects. While DNR didn't yet have a list ready to present, they hoped to circulate one prior to the October meeting. There are 59 IDNR projects that have been awarded but not announced (except for OSLAD) for \$21.2 million.

IDNR does not yet have a budget because the State of Illinois does not yet have a budget. There was \$18 million in the bill for IDNR but there were restrictions on use of the funds. The Capitol bill is 100 pages in length so IDNR personnel will have a tedious time of understanding all the ins and outs of fund usage and some projects, programs and staff may take another hit.

The CCDCF and the CSX railroad have agreed to jointly hire an appraiser to establish a fair price for the old railway bed (mostly between Danville and Champaign-Urbana). CCDCF's goal is to (finally) have the land purchase accomplished yet this year.

The Office of Livability has been trying to create a transcontinental bicycle routes system administered by USDOT. Designated corridors already exist. A Bike Planners course has been offered at UIC and has now received a grant to take the program on the road statewide.

Information was presented by the Canoeist representative of a regional G&T that was doing a periodic reworking of their master plan. The proposed work was not yet published for public review, but the time period for that public review was not being extended to accommodate the delay in plan publication. This was cause for concern by committee members, but no further action was taken at this time.

Some T&G Council members will be attending The Mid-America Trails & Greenways (MATAG) Conference in Kalamazoo Michigan October 25-28, 2009.

The meeting provided a good industry-wide gathering of possible user groups to meet to co-plan actions as well as insight into how government operations and funding operates.

Of course we have a disclaimer to add! We (Ron and Sara) are pretty new to this game so if we made mistakes in what we reported or left someone out we should have included, please forgive us!