



Illinois Trail Riders

Dedicated To Keeping Horses On Our Trails

E-mail: ILTrRdrs@illinoistrailriders.com
www.illinoistrailriders.com

May, June, July 2008

The Horse Fair May Have Been Canceled But OUR WORK Has Not!

Despite the cancellation of the Illinois Horse Fair, Illinois Trail Riders held the Annual Membership Meeting and Board Meeting at a site near the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield, IL at the scheduled time. Unfortunately, attendance was very low. This *Newsletter* will help to inform you on what you missed.

At the booth you missed your opportunity to talk with us personally. You missed the opportunity to renew your membership in person. You missed your opportunity to purchase the Illinois Trail Rider *Handbook* for yourself and a friend. You missed the opportunity to see and purchase the T-shirts we had for sale. DON'T WORRY! We will be at OVETS and HorseFest. You can also CALL US, MAIL US OR CONTACT US THROUGH THE WEBSITE!

At the Membership Meeting we did the usual stuff, reading of the minutes, treasurer's report and election of the Board of Directors. Denise Maxwell, Peter Veit, Lori Kennedy, Jean Greenlee, and Gary Hampshire agreed to and were elected to serve another two-year term.

Federal and State legislation that could affect us as trail riders and horse owners was discussed (see Sandy Poletti's report on Page 5). You are urged to learn more about these issues and contact your legislators with your opinion on the specific bills. More details can be found on the Horsemen's Council of Illinois (HCI) website. Go to www.horsemenscouncil.org and click on "Legislation." Also see the information on the HCI brochure, *Laws Affecting Horses in Illinois*, on Page 6.

Denise handed out questionnaires to attendees and asked them to put them out in their local area. The questionnaire will be available on our website and is included in this *Newsletter* on Page 7. This questionnaire, to be filled out by trail riders, will be compiled and then used for an educational "Share the Trail" brochure and for the Fall 2008 Trail Summit. We are hoping to get responses from trail riders on topics such as seasonal trail closures, facilities or lack of facilities/campgrounds at certain IDNR sites, connecting trail systems etc. By collecting this information we will be sure that everyone has a chance for their voice to be heard as we talk to officials at the local, state and national level about our concerns. Be sure to send in your comments!

There were so few members and no guest speakers present (without the draw of the Horse Fair Crowd), the Board decided to hold the planned discussion on the Proposed User Fees in the Shawnee National Forest until the Board Meeting scheduled after the Membership Meeting. We sincerely hope that **every ITR member** took the time to read and respond to the two articles on this topic in the February *Newsletter* (you can find it online also). During the Board Meeting, Board members signed a petition opposing the user fees and Peter Viet agreed to draft a letter of our concerns regarding the proposed user fees by the Forest Service.

The Board also discussed strategies for furthering our goals at the upcoming trail conferences in which ITR will actively participate.

Board members will be sent to represent us at OVETS, SETC and, if funding permits, the American Trails Conference. Read about them on Pages 4 and 6.

Renew your membership, buy a *Handbook*, make a donation or become personally involved.

Attend conferences and become educated about horse and trail issues so that you too can carrying the message to township, city, county, state, and special district planners and land managers so that **Your Trail Will Never End!**

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

Over 300 pages of information on
Illinois trails and trail riding!
More than 10,000 rideable miles!



The book is divided by area with each site listing giving directions, detailed trail map and description, and information on camping facilities.

This is a must for your trail rides.

**All this For Only \$20.00
(plus \$3.00 p&h)**

Order Form On Back Page

***Illinois Trail Riders
Goals and Purposes***

Encourage the development of year-around horse trails with improved trailer parking and horse camping facilities.

Establish/maintain communications throughout all stages and levels of trail or land planning and management.

Utilize education programs to help trail developers provide safe multi-use trail facilities and all trail users to understand trail etiquette.

Work with legislators to illustrate the importance of trail-based recreation to the horse community and Illinois.

Meet with environmental and conservancy advocacy groups to encourage an unbiased approach to trail development (saddle, carriage and pack).

Work to keep existing trails open and monitor changes in trail use to protect equestrians and defend our right to be on trails and roads throughout Illinois.

Advertising

Promote your event or sell your items through the *Newsletter* which reaches over 2,000 riders around the State of Illinois on at least a quarterly basis (February, May, August, November).

Ad deadline is the 10th of the month preceding publication date. Ad copy along with payment must be received by that date and are subject to approval. See rates alongside.

Ad Type	One-Time Rate	Per Issue Four-Time Rate
Business Card	\$18.00	\$13.00
Quarter Page	\$25.00	\$21.00
Half Page	\$35.00	\$28.00
Full page	\$50.00	\$40.00
CLASSIFIED: \$10.00 PER ISSUE, 40 WORDS OR LESS		

Send your camera ready copy and prepayment to Bobbi Glab, 4006 Oak Avenue, Unit 3W, McHenry, IL 60050-6311, 815 578-8960.

We Are Participating in the Country Supply Care Program

Shop at the Country Supply website:

www.countrysupply.com

and they will donate a percentage of your purchases to us! Simply enter our Care Code when you complete your order. Our Care Code: IL Trail Riders

From the President

Down here in the St. Louis – Metro East region of Illinois, it has been the wettest March on record and April seems to be working on the title as well. Needless to say, we haven't been riding much as the mud is as thick as the unpredictable rain. On the bright side, maybe the wet spring will help bring the price of hay down. I am hoping the farmers can afford the fuel to mow, bale and transport the hay. Likewise, I wish my pastures will grow and stay green this year, while I pray that I can afford the fuel to take my horse trail riding on a trail that does not cost a Six-Flags admission price to ride on.

I really missed the excitement of the Horse Fair this year. To me it signals the end of winter and I begin to get excited about the upcoming riding season. After the Fair, I try to get pumped for the summer of trail activities starting with the shedding out of my horses and reminding them of their work ethic. Despite the rain, sleet and snow, we did manage a few good spring rides at local places. My favorite is Chouteau Island in the middle of the Mississippi River. It was a blessing that the Army Corps of Engineers modified the east side parking lot this winter to accommodate horse trailers by removing a guard rail barrier. The island supports the old Route 66 bridge, Chain of Rocks Bridge, between Illinois and Missouri. It stays surprisingly dry on the levees and farm roads despite the rain and the riverside location. For us this riding area is really close, flat, and perfect for getting horses back into condition after a lethargic winter. I think we will hold off on riding the hills until the soil dries out.

On Tuesday, April 1st, I received an email with a copy of an article by Kurt Erickson titled "State Officials Defend Plan To Raise Camping, Hunting Fees." The article goes on to explain how the Illinois Department of Natural Resources would use the estimated \$33 million raised by the increases. The increased fees would go back to the DNR parks programs thus making the agency more self sufficient and less dependent on state funding to keep the state parks open. In other words, General Revenues, which currently are appropriated by the state for park programs, would be cut! State funding would be replaced by fees and no new services would be provided, in fact they might decline. This was not an April Fools Joke! We are not laughing!

Fees were increased in 2004 at all of the state parks and I haven't really seen much in the way of improvement or additions to horse trails or campgrounds (unless it was funded through internal RTP money). Many IDNR employees complain that they are plagued by overwork, lagging resources, broken Illinois government, lack of manpower, misuse of designated funds and numerous other maladies that no amount of fee increases can cure.

On the issue of User Fees on all trails in the Forest Service, I hope you each made your comments as suggested in the last *Newsletter!* There is still time!

The Shawnee National Forest has extended the comment period from April 15, 2008 to June 30, 2008 for the proposal to charge user fees at eight national forest

day-use recreation sites and for bridle tag fees on designated trails.

Comments and recommendations regarding the Shawnee National Forest's recreation fee and/or facilities proposals can be sent to Hurston A. Nicholas, Forest Supervisor, Shawnee National Forest, 50 Highway 145 South, Harrisburg, IL 62946.

You can revisit the issue or email your comments using the Shawnee National Forest website at www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/shawnee/.

It is already April and I am still currying mud and hair off of my four-legged eating machines waiting for the weather to break, my pastures to dry out, and trails to open following the turkey hunter retreat. I wait restlessly to enjoy the redbuds and dogwoods in bloom above the tiny woodland spring flowers. Soon I will surely be back in the saddle with the sun on my shoulders, the wind in my hair, and the green leaves rustling around me.

May our trails never end.

Denise

Newsbits

Once again the **Northern Illinois HorseFest** will be held at the Boone County Fairgrounds in Belvidere, Illinois. Illinois Trail Riders will have their booth there with *Handbooks* and T-shirts to sell. Save the weekend of August 23rd and 24th to see the all-breed exposition that supports the nation's horse industry which offers a wide variety of opportunities for horse, mule, and pony enthusiasts of all disciplines and all walks of life.

Boone County Conservation District has put **together an equestrian task force** to look at linking trails in the northern parts of Winnebago and Boone counties. For further information contact Jean Greenlee at 815 292-3010.

Don't forget **primitive camping is allowed** by the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District at the Oakridge riding trails. The trails link up to the Deer Run trails.

June 7th is National Trails Day and there is a coordinated clean up and marking of the trails scheduled for Rock Cut State Park. Equestrians and cross-country skiers are working in the equestrian area. Other areas will be divided up and handled by bicyclists, hikers, snowshoers, and canoeists.

There will be a Shawnee National Trails Day Celebration from 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM at Johnson Creek Day Use Area on Kinkaid Lake located off Route 3 on Hwy 151 near Ava, Illinois. Work on the trail from 8:30 AM to noon then enjoy a Free Cook Out for lunch. Family activities and educational events begin at 1:00 PM. Horse Packing with Bob Wagner, a Birds of Prey show, Tool Rehandling clinic and various competitions are among the many activities listed before the live music starts at 3 PM. Contact the Murphysboro Work Center for more information or to volunteer at 618-687-1731.

**Don't forget to enroll your saddle club or trail riding group as Illinois Trail Rider members.
We need your numbers to better promote our goals!**

Two Trail Projects Benefit From Illinois Promotion Board Grants

Illinois Promotion Board Grants are funded by the Illinois Equine Checkoff Program which provides for the voluntary assessment of a nickel per 50-pound bag of horse feed sold at retail. More than \$70,600 in grants by the Illinois Equine Industry Research and Promotion Board have been awarded for March 2008, according to Karen Freese, Chair. The awards went to projects in seven communities from north to south and across the state including Carbondale, Cisne, Eddyville, Hillsboro, Kampsville, Manhattan and Moline.

McCully Heritage Project (MHP) Equine Trail Improvement Project, Kampsville, was funded with a \$3,000 grant to help create maps of the trails, signage along the trails to correspond with the maps, and improve trail routing and surfacing. MHP covers 940 acres and provides 15 miles of trails free and open to the public. In 2007, MHP expanded its parking area and created a second entrance to accommodate horse trailers.

A joint proposal from the **Shawnee Trails Conservancy (STC) and the Shawnee National Forest** received \$20,000 in matching funds for construction and improvement of segments of the Designated Trail System in Pope and Gallatin counties. The funds are to leverage a larger grant request from the Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The total cumulative project cost is estimated at \$400,000, according to Tim Pohlman, Shawnee National Forest Recreation Program Manager, Harrisburg, IL. RTP funds will be sought for 80% of the cost (\$340,000) and the Shawnee National Forest will fund 15% of the total cost.

On March 1st, STC Grant Committee Chair Patty Laubscher of Hayes Canyon Campground submitted for 80% of the total project cost from the RTP grant, which in Illinois is administered by the Greenways & Trails Division of the Department of Natural Resources.

This money will be used to improve existing trails that are multi-use (the primary users are equestrians, but also used by hikers and bikers). The proposed trail work will be beneficial to the environment by improving trails in such a manner that they will be sustainable and ecologically sound.

The Shawnee National Forest trail system is used by thousands of equestrians a year making it an economic magnet for the area, according to Cindy Cain, executive director of the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau. A study in 2003 counted more than 38,000 visitors to horse campgrounds alone in the area.



2008 National Trails Symposium

**Little Rock, Arkansas
November 15-18**

Innovative Trails: Transforming the American Way of Life

www.AmericanTrails.Org/2008

Go online for information and registration

Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference July 31-August 2, 2008 in Charleston, SC

www.southeasternequestriantrails.com

Thursday, July 31, 2008 - optional tour - limited size - The Low Country Tour and the Wetland Trails. The bus tour will leave the Sheraton Hotel at 8:30 AM and will return at approximately 4:30 PM. GIS for Professionals 1 PM - 5 PM at the Sheraton Hotel.

Friday and Saturday, August 1st and 2nd. The General Session begins after breakfast at 8:00 AM. Speakers will include top trail representatives from agencies such as the National Park Service, Forest Service, Federal Highway Administration. Experts on topics such as GIS and GPS for the horseman, Horse Camping, Equi-tourism, Historic Trails, Wilderness Areas, Trail Legislation, Government and Political involvement, and other topics will make presentations and answer questions.

Lunch is served at noon both days and a dinner at Folly Beach is included in the registration price.

The Sheraton in North Charleston, SC 29406, 888-747-1900, is sure to be classy and comfortable. Attendees must arrange and pay for their own hotel accommodations. Mention the Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference for the discounted room rates. Group rates available until June 30, 2008. Subject to availability. Reserve your room online at www.SoutheasternEquestrianTrails.com.

\$140 Early Conference Registration - until June 1

\$165 Conference Registration June 2 – July 29

\$175 On-site registration – cash or check only

Register online or make checks payable to SETC and mail to:

Donna Patterson, 902 Berkley Drive, Clemson, SC 29631

OHIO Valley Equestrian Trails Symposium June 19-22, 2008 - Shawnee National Forest, Eddyville, IL

Thursday from 9 AM – 3 PM there will be a Pre-Conference Organized Ride to spotlight trail projects in the Shawnee. This will cost \$10.00. Conference registration begins at 4:00 PM with a mixer at 7:30 PM. Full registration is \$75.00, but one-day-only tickets may be purchased for \$40 on Friday and Saturday.

Every morning there will be “riding at your leisure” on the beautiful Forest Service trails surrounding Lusk Creek. From 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM there will be afternoon symposium presentations on trail maintenance, cross-country riding, designated trails, private and urban equestrian trail issues, universal accessibility, volunteer and multi-use trail information.

For more information contact Trails for the Future, Inc., PO Box 595, Vienna, IL 62995, call 618-833-3436 or email Cbourne51@msn.com for more information on registration.

Call Peggy at 618-672-4303 for full hook ups, primitive camping, stalls and accommodations. Little Lusk Lodge, RR #1 Box 245, Stonefort, IL 62987.

2008 Legislation Affecting Trail Riders

Shared by Sandy Poletti

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS ABOUT THE FOLLOWING 2008 BILLS:

HB5776 amends the Department of Agriculture (Department) Law. It provides that

- the Department shall not require a premises identification number or electronic identification under the **National Animal Identification System** to exhibit or enter livestock, poultry, rabbits, horses, or any other animal at any fair or exhibition in Illinois, unless required by federal law or regulation.
- the Department will develop a process for persons to withdraw from the National Animal Identification System registration and that process shall provide for the removal of the person's information from the Department's database.
- the Department will cooperate with the United States Department of Agriculture to provide for people to withdraw from the federal database.
- there is no rulemaking authority under the amendatory Act, but the Governor may suggest rules by filing them with the General Assembly and requesting that the General Assembly authorize such rulemaking by law, enact the suggested rules into law, or take other appropriate action in the General Assembly's discretion.

This premise identification is the first step in the **National Animal Identification System (NAIS)**. The second stage will be animal identification and the final stage will be the reporting of animal movement within 24 hours of leaving the registered premise property. When stage three becomes effective, one would have to report every time an animal goes off one's property. Please let your state legislator know that it is impractical to report the monitoring of equines as they are frequently taken off one's property for trail riding, showing, training, or exhibiting.

HB4861 and **SB2596** amend the **Illinois Vehicle Code** by

- creating the offense of infliction of serious physical injury or death to a vulnerable user of a public way.
- providing that a person commits the offense of infliction of serious physical injury or death to a vulnerable user of a public way if the person (i) operates a vehicle upon a highway in this State in a careless or reckless manner and (ii) causes serious physical injury or death to a vulnerable user of a public way.
- providing that infliction of serious physical injury or death to a vulnerable user of a public way is a Class A misdemeanor and carries a minimum fine of \$12,500.
- provides that any driver who is convicted of infliction of serious physical injury or death to a vulnerable user of a public way is subject to suspension of his or her driving privileges.

Persons riding an animal are listed as one of the "vulnerable users." This bill is important for those riders who ride on the road, as many of us are forced to road ride, as we have no other place to ride our equines.

SB1941 amends the **Recreational Use of Land and Water Areas Act**. Adds entry onto the land of another to conduct

horseback riding with the rider's own horse or carriage driving to the definition of "recreational or conservation purpose." This is one of several amendments introduced this year to the Recreational Use of Land and Waters Act.

HB4296 lists horseback riding as an activity to be covered under the Act. For the last three years, bills have been unsuccessfully introduced amending the Recreational Use of Land and Waters Act in order to close legal loopholes in the original Act. The amendments always are strongly opposed by lobbyist representing personal injury attorneys. For those who ride on private land, these amendments are very important as they free landowners of any liability for graciously allowing equines access to their land.

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN THE US CONGRESS AND SENATE CONCERNING:

Preserving our Equine Heritage on Public Lands Act (S. 2238)

This bill recognizes the importance of saddle and pack stock in the settling, exploration and recreation of our country by ensuring that the horse's historic and traditional use is recognized as our public lands are managed by the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Forest Service. The bill directs the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to manage the federal lands under their jurisdiction "in a manner that preserves and facilitates the continued use and access of pack and saddle stock animals" on lands on which "there is a historical tradition" of use. The bill applies to the management of the National Park System, BLM lands, National Wildlife Refuge System land, and National Forest System land. This is a version of the "Right to Ride" bill that has been unsuccessfully introduced over the last few years.

Support increased funding for trails and recreation

The Administration's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2009 includes a significant increase in the National Park Service budget (Centennial project), but a drastic cut in the RTCA Program (17%). Funding to recreation and trail related programs in the USDA Forest Service (33%) and Bureau of Land Management (18%) is slashed. These cuts will reduce the recreational capacity of the forests through trail and access closures, as well as reduce recreation-oriented agency positions. These cuts will prohibit the agency from addressing the tremendous maintenance backlog on trails throughout the forests. Please let Congress members know how you feel about these proposed cuts for trails and recreation in the Administration's budget. Learn more and take action at www.americantrails.org/NewsAction or view www.nrpa.org.

LWCF - Administration proposes to terminate the stateside program

The Administration has, once again, proposed to terminate the successful stateside Land and Water Conservation Assistance (LWCF) partnership program administered by the National Park Service which provides 50/50 matching grants to help communities acquire local and state parks and develop outdoor recreation resources. There is no other program that provides the permanent conservation and outdoor recreation benefits that LWCF does. The Federal side of the LWCF is proposed to be cut by 68% (compared to FY '08 budget). Learn more and take action: www.americantrails.org/NewsAction.

Important Questionnaire on Page 7 Fill it out! Send it in!

The Illinois Greenways and Trails Council has invited a representative from Illinois Trail Riders and other trail advocacy and trail user groups to spend 15-20 minutes presenting themselves. Each group must identify three critical issues (challenges or opportunities) facing their constituencies in Illinois and offer suggestions to address those issues. Your answers to the questionnaire will guide us in our presentation.

The organization presentations will constitute the morning's part of the Summit. In the afternoon, attendees will participate in facilitated break-out sessions to review issues and solutions and set overall priorities. The Summit will conclude with a summary of the day's work listing top priorities by each breakout group. After the Summit, a report will be generated for distribution to attendees, local agencies, Legislators and more. The issues and solutions from each organization will be included, along with information on how each organization and its members can be a resource to agencies and others in Illinois.

The "Share the Trail" part of the questionnaire is for input to an upcoming brochure. In the February *Newsletter* (Page 7) we explained how the League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB) would be spearheading a brochure for distribution and a mini-poster for display at trail kiosks around the state. LIB, in conjunction with other trail user groups, is drafting a brochure. The brochure will have tips on sharing the trail to enhance the trail experience for all users and minimize conflicts.

We are asking for your assistance in giving your input on what should be included in the brochure. Specifically, what information would you like to convey to your constituency about sharing trails? And, what should other trail users know about sharing the trail with your constituency to improve the experience for everyone involved?

Your opinion counts!

Horsemen's Council of Illinois publishes a brochure titled "Laws Affecting Horses in Illinois." The brochure does not give legal advice. Instead, it describes laws affecting horses in Illinois and cites *Illinois Compiled Statutes and Public Acts* where full language of the laws is available, making it easier for interested parties to learn the laws governing horses and horse activities. The Council recommends that legal questions should be discussed with a qualified attorney. Horse owners may access the brochure on the Council's web site, www.HorsemensCouncil.org, where it can be downloaded or a request made for multiple copies.

HCI also maintains a "Legislation" page on its web site where viewers can use its CapWiz service to locate pending bills in the General Assembly and Congress, review Council positions on such proposals as they affect horse owners, and find and contact their state and federal representatives in government.

Some Questions, Key Words And Concepts That Might Help

- How are trail amenities such as parking, toilets, miles of trail, trail surfaces, camping, signage, showers, maps, etc. on your local, state or federal trails?
- Do you use multi-use, shared-use, or single-use trails?
- Seasonal, year around, or special-event access?
- Is there any interagency cooperation on trails in your area? (i.e., River to River or Grand Illinois)
- Is there consistency in planning, design, rules of use, user fees?
- How is funding for your trail (dedicated or general revenue) (high/low) (taxed/granted)?
- Trail users tracked and counted? Are trail users registered/tagged? Who understands patterns of use?
- Are trails evenly distributed, dispersed, isolated or concentrated in your area of the state, region, or park?
- Are trails, access areas, and camping appropriately clustered?
- Are you involved in your community or state trail Master Planning efforts? Is their work transparent? Can you make suggestions? Are equestrians represented?
- How are paid staff or volunteers organized to improve, build or maintain trails?
- Do your trails connect, circle, or take you somewhere?
- Have your trails been created for perpetuity?
- Are your trails local and close to your home and barn?
- Are your trails a vacation destination or a road trip?
- What programs enhance communication between and education of various trail user groups, including equestrians.
- Are there any very safe or dangerous places, practices or people on your trails?
- Do you share/cross roadways and highways with other trail users as well as motorized vehicles? How is that handled?

We Need Some Good Pictures

- ♦ Examples of equestrians sharing trails with other users.
- ♦ Examples of problems, concerns or solutions.



We need captions, names and permission to use the pictures.

You can email them to us at President@illinoistrailriders.com.

Think PowerPoint presentation, brochure, newsletter, etc.

Comments on Trail Issues for Illinois Trail Riders

Please identify the top three trail or greenway issues, concerns or problems that face equestrians today in Illinois. Provide a suggested solution for each.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you think ITR members can do to minimize these problems/concerns/issues and maximize the success of the solutions?

Sharing the Trail (An upcoming brochure for trail users)

Where and with whom do you share trails?

What do you think equestrians should do to share trails more safely and courteously?

What do you think other trail users should know to make them better trail partners (bicyclists, hikers, dog walkers, ATV and snowmobile riders, back packers, children, etc.)?

Use another sheet of paper to comment if necessary (don't forget to renew your membership now to save a stamp)

Mail to ITR 4873 Indian Hills Drive, Edwardsville IL 62025 or email President@Illinoistrailriders.com