



Illinois Trail Riders

Dedicated To Keeping Horses On Our Trails

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

February, March, April 2007

So You Want to Start a Posse?

Shared by Lois Guyon and Ruth Fennick, members of LaSalle County Sheriff's Mounted Search and Rescue Posse

The news media reports a missing child. Quickly, volunteers begin to gather at the police station and everyone wants to help. But the police turn away these offers. Why? The Chief of Police knows that untrained searchers can do more harm than good. They miss areas to be searched, contaminate evidence, and give inappropriate information to the media.

Trained searchers, on the other hand, are welcome. Research has shown that the probability of finding evidence in a search increases from around 20% for untrained searchers to up to 80% for trained teams. Searchers on horseback, working along with ground searchers, canine units, and other trained search personnel, are particularly useful in some instances. When large tracts of land need to be searched quickly to find missing people, planes, or evidence, horses are invaluable. In rugged terrain, horses can cover areas inaccessible to vehicles. Like dogs, a horse's sense of smell can alert searchers to the presence of humans and other animals. Because horses move quietly, searchers can hear distress signals, and their height enables searchers to view terrain not visible from the ground. Horse hoof prints are easily distinguishable from human tracks, whether those of a victim or of a perpetrator. Of Illinois' 102 counties, approximately a half dozen counties currently maintain active mounted search and rescue posses.

Trail riders interested in providing this service to their own counties frequently express interest in starting mounted search and rescue posses. They have horses, ride well, and would like to contribute to the public welfare. What they may not realize is the extraordinary effort required to establish a well-trained posse and the even greater challenge of maintaining the unit once established. Many horse owners throughout the United States have started search and rescue groups only to find that they are rarely, if ever, used and disband from lack of sustained interest. On the other hand, some groups have existed for many years and are called upon regularly to aid law enforcement, fire fighters, and other first responders. Why do some groups flourish and others fail?

Several factors influence the longevity and usefulness of search and rescue posses. First and foremost is the posse's ability to address real needs in the community. Prior to establishing a unit, careful thought and research needs to be done to determine the appropriateness of mounted searchers in a particular locale. What would the posse's role be if it were established? How often would a search and rescue posse have been helpful in the past? Is a horse-dominated group the best design or would ATV's be more useful in this terrain?

Another key factor is finding the appropriate legal authority with which to affiliate. Those groups which organize first and

then try to find a supporting agency run into difficulty on various levels. Sometimes they are not used because authorities are not aware of their capabilities. More likely, the first responder agency may resist the intrusion of outsiders. On the other hand, posses organized at the request of sheriffs or fire chiefs can be confident that they will be called upon to serve when emergencies arise. A further reason for the wisdom of the posse's affiliating with a government agency is liability. The intrinsically dangerous act of horseback riding can generate even greater risk when done in unsafe environments and under adverse weather conditions.

Recruiting the best people is a critical factor in a posse's success. Applicants must be able to cover the expense of their horse, trailer, time, equipment, and uniforms. They must be reliable, trustworthy, and have a good reputation in the community. In addition to being able to ride well, they must be willing to accept call-outs at inconvenient times and in undesirable weather. They must be able to keep information (continued on page 6)

Right-to-Ride Legislation Stalls

On May 17, 2006, the House of Representatives passed Congressman George Radanovich's "Right-to-Ride" bill (H.R. 586). The bill is intended to protect the use and access of pack and saddle stock animals on public lands, wilderness areas, national monuments, and other areas that are administered by the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Forest Service where there is a historical tradition of such use.

The legislation would require that these federal agencies manage these lands to preserve and facilitate the traditional and continued use and access of horses to these areas.

The legislation did not make it out of committee in the Senate before the legislative session ended for 2006. The 109th Congress adjourned in December. The 110th Congress convened in January of 2007 with numerous changes in membership and leadership.

While it's not likely the Right-to-Ride legislation will be considered early in the session, it's not a bad idea to let your new Senator and Representative know that this is important to you. Citizens benefit when there is robust and frequent communication between constituents and elected officials, because ultimately that communication affects legislators' perceptions of the importance of key issues (including those important to the horse industry). Senator Richard Durbin and Senator Barack Obama represent you, as do the 19 individuals that we have elected to Congress from our districts. You can easily find and reach your elected officials in Washington or Springfield through "capwiz" in the Legislative Issues section of the Horsemen's Council of Illinois web site, www.horsemenscouncil.org.

Illinois Trail Riders

4873 Indian Hills Drive,
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Voice: 618 656-2591

E-mail:

ILTrRdrs@illinoistrailriders.com

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

LORI KENNEDY, Treasurer

18051 South Gougar Road
Joliet, IL 60432
815 726-5346

SANDY POLETTI, Secretary

8727 Rosewood Hills
Edwardsville, IL 62025
618 656-4712

KELLY BLAND

P. O. Box 449
Bethany, IL 61914
217 665-3550

CAROLYN CUSHMAN

RR1 Box 179A
Mode, IL 62444
217 774-2639

JoANNE GERNANT

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

JUDY GRIFFITH

30902 Henery Road
Girard, IL 62640
217 627-3522

GARY HAMPSMIRE

3418 Sheridan St.
Springfield, IL 62703
217 529-7961

GLORIA HEGGY

23447 Digilvanna Ave.
Athens, IL 62613
217 636-7421

JERRY (BUCKWHEAT) McKINLEY

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

PETER VEIT

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

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Illinois Horse Fair March 2-4, 2007

Illinois Horse Fair offers many opportunities to enhance your equestrian education in a full program of demonstrations, riding clinics and seminars.

Curt Pate headlines the 2007 Illinois Horse Fair this year. He will be joined by renowned reining, Western, Barrel racing and saddle seat equitation clinicians at the 19th annual Horse Fair for an outstanding educational program presented by Purina Mills, Midway Trailer Sales, John Deere and Morton Buildings.

On the agenda are trainers of national prominence hosting riding clinics and/or seminars in their disciplines: Julie Goodnight, Poncho Springs, CO (known for her ability to bridge natural horsemanship techniques with the principles of classical riding, will concentrate on helping to improve the rider); NRHA Hall of Famer Clint Haverty, Krum, TX (reining); American Barrel Horse Assn. Five-time Senior World Champion Chuck Tolbert (barrel racing); AQHA World, Congress and honor Roll titlist Lisa Farrell, Durham, CT (Western Horsemanship Trail); and UPHA Instructor of the Year/AMHA Woman of the Year Anne Speck, Rancho Del Mar, CA (saddle seat equitation).

In addition to expert trainers and clinicians, the three-day all-breed expo and industry tradeshow presents 25 breed and sport demonstrations, Stallion Row and Parade, more than 100 horses in the HorsesForSale aisles, 140 equestrian vendors, more than 100 horse trailers on display for sale and a full schedule of educational seminars and workshops.

Horse Fair opens on Friday when early bird shoppers get access to vendors' full stock of merchandise plus save money on special Friday-only promotions and reduced admission charge - and see training demo sessions by Curt Pate.

For more information visit the website at www.horsemencouncil.org. Illinois Horse Fair is produced by Horsemen's Council of Illinois, an affiliate chapter of the American Horse Council.

Newsbit

Midway St. Jude Fundraiser and Trail Ride

A group of equestrians, under the guidance of Chick Bishop, is organizing a St. Jude fundraiser and trail ride for April 27-29 at Midway Trailer Sales off of the Carlinville exit, north of Litchfield on Interstate 55. This will provide the first public access to trails around a five-mile lake which is owned by the City of Litchfield. Midway Trailers, a great supporter of trail riding activities and trail riders, will host the event. The group has been working with local trail-riding landowners who are familiar with the trails that were created many years ago. Jim Cadwell, Park Superintendent at Lou Yeager Lake, along with other Litchfield city leaders, are hoping that equestrians can help to clean up and restore the trail system to increase tourism and economic development of the area. The ride itself is proposed for Saturday, the 28th. The plan is to access the trails at North Lou Yeager from Midway. In the meantime, planners will have to enter the trails and do a massive cleanup and plot the trail. They are planning various entertainment and equine related activities. Fun for all !!

From the President

It is the start of the year and all of the clubs and trail organizations are busy planning their ride schedules for the season. I am already seeing schedules for the 2007 NATRC, CMO, AERC and UMERCA sanctioned rides in Illinois and elsewhere. Of course, I have to begin planning for the one that I will manage at Johnson Creek. State Park reservations are already being booked for fundraising trail rides and club events. Individuals are thinking about the vacation and sick days they will need to take from work to accommodate their personal riding schedule. Campsites and campgrounds will be full if the gas prices go lower and the weather stays nice. It would be nice to know where the crowd will be on any given weekend this upcoming season so that I can avoid or join them when I plan my special time with my horse. I only can hope that each of us takes a little volunteer time to groom a favorite trail before the crowd rushes in.

The most exciting, a one of a kind, ride promises to be the Great Santa Fe Trail Horse Race, an 800-mile adventure, that starts in Santa Fe New Mexico and ends in Independence Missouri. September will be the perfect time of year for the journey meant to highlight the historic value of the entire trail. There will be 10 one-day rides of about 50 miles each during the major event for individuals and teams of riders who want to go shorter distances or share the experience with multiple horses. Iditarod sled dog race, move over, here come the horses!

Meanwhile the American Horse Council is gearing up "The Congressional Cavalry Program," a new direct grassroots effort, to better represent and serve the horse industry. Individuals and organizations that sign up can be called upon and mobilized when there is a need for grassroots lobbying. This might be an excellent way for trail riders to support a Right-to-Ride bill or other legislation that affects our horses or the use of public lands, trails, and funds. Expressing our concern to our State and Federal legislators is an effective way to participate in democracy and make use of our freedoms and representative government. In fact, Peter Veit's "Fast Response Alert System for Equestrian Trail Issues" (see February 2006 *Newsletter*) plays right into the "Congressional Cavalry" scheme of rapid communication and mutual support within the equestrian community.

The Greenways and Trails Council is currently considering the creation of some sort of "Share the Trails" educational piece. Ed Barsotti, the Executive Director of the League of Illinois Bicyclists, proposed the idea. It could take the form of a DVD, a video, a coloring book, or a written piece that could promote greenways and trails for every person and user group. There is a small amount of Recreational Trails Pro-gram money earmarked for statewide trail education. First, a grant must be written that defines a given proposal. Trails Council Chairwoman, Kandee Haertel, is taking the proposal seriously. She wrote, "The Trails and Greenways conferences have been excellent, but reach a limited audience that may largely already be members of the choir. This could potentially be a tool that is used to benefit/educate the "general public" while also increasing the general feeling of support for Greenways and Trails. We can all relate both good and bad experiences with other users. We have to get past this issue if we are going to increase the general public's support of Greenways and Trails. Passing bond issues, working with developers, and convincing land managers takes more than a single user group to happen (sorry to those of

you who already understand the value of greenways and trails). It would be a while before such material could be produced and everyone involved in the Trails and Greenways movement would need to get involved."

We are looking forward to another year of busy Trail Advocacy work. We hope you are involved! If you would like get more information or details on ITR advocacy, check out back issues of our *Newsletter* on our website at www.IllinoisTrailRiders.com.

I hope to see all of you in March at the Annual Meeting. Contact us before the Horse Fair or stop by the Illinois Trail Riders booth before the meeting to let us know if you have an important announcement, issue, solution, or agenda item relating to horse trails advocacy that should be shared with the membership.

May your trail never end.

Denise

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.

Notice Of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Illinois Trail Riders will be held on Saturday, March 3, 2007, at 11:30 a.m. in the lower level meeting room of the Livestock Exhibition Center at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield, IL, the site of the Illinois Horse Fair. According to the By-Laws, the purpose of the meeting is for the "election of directors and for the transaction of such other business as may come before the meeting."

If you are a member, please plan on attending so you can be updated on ITR plans and activities. If you are not a member, we invite you to attend anyway so you can become acquainted with ITR and our trail advocacy work.

Please plan on attending - don't be left out.

Illinois Farm Bureau + Trail Riders = Equine Committees

Shared by Sara Rhoades

According to the March 9, 2005 issue of the Illinois Farm Bureau's *FarmWeek*, "the state's horse industry has ag-related issues and needs that county Farm Bureaus may serve via equine committees." In "2006 Policy Resolutions of the Illinois Farm Bureau," on page 46, there exists the statement that : "We support:

1. Relationships with entities that would allow access for equine trail activities on publicly-owned recreational trails.
2. The establishment and maintenance of equine trails on publicly-owned property."

Trail riders and the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) are compatible given the right mix of IFB employees and members at local and state offices and their decisions about the priorities of the membership. Currently 11 county Farm Bureaus have developed equine committees and another 16 are interested in starting committees. The committees' interests and functions vary from county to county. For instance, access to trails in the Shawnee National Forest is a major interest for Williamson County Farm Bureau's committee, according to Garry Jenkins, Williamson County Farm Bureau manager. Champaign County Farm Bureau surfaced 400 names of people with ties to the county's horse industry and offered them information and a service directory. The county Farm Bureaus have offered workshops on topics ranging from mare care to regulations for trucks and horse trailers.

The Illinois Farm Bureau holds a yearly Equine Roundtable with valuable participation and discussion of issues that affect the equine industry. These issues could involve legislation, regulation, education, or any other agenda that arises to drive a discussion within the equine agricultural industry.

If you are not currently a member of your county Farm Bureau, join today. Farms, stables, and even backyard horse pasturers can join for a minimal fee (about \$20). If you are a member of your county Farm Bureau, and it doesn't have an equine committee, start one. If there is already an equine committee in place, join it and steer it toward more horse trails. Trail riders need to be heard as often as possible in as many places as possible. Maybe the trail riding bug will bite a few more people after they hear and see your trail riding enjoyment.

If I can help or offer more information, contact me:
Champaign County Farm Bureau Equine Committee
2372 N 1500 East Road
Seymour, IL 61875
Phone: 217.493.9654; Email: sara@rhoadesgroup.com

Shawnee Back Country Horsemen

The Shawnee Back Country Horsemen (BCHA) is but one Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of America with over 16,000 members in 19 states nationwide. The philosophy is strait forward; it is a service organization working in the back country and educating the users of the back country. These two elements, along with a determination to protect the heritage of back country stock use, are primary factors of its existence. The name was chosen because it signifies an interest in much more than just wilderness. Members are interested in perpetuating recreational stock use on virtually all public lands.

The Shawnee Back Country Horsemen operate within the boundaries of the Shawnee National Forest. According to those "experts" out west who ride "real wilderness" on much larger expanses of land, Illinois land is barely wilderness and is really considered part of the "front country." Almost all of the Shawnee was farmland prior to the civil war. Homesteads were common and non-native species were cultivated throughout the lower part of the Illinois. When one sees large stands white pines in the Shawnee, they are looking at old farmland that was bought after the New Deal area in pieces and cropped out into timber. Now the Shawnee is a tourist destination that many user groups claim ownership to while the Federal Government administers the land it has managed to purchase and piece together over time.

The Shawnee Chapter seeks to work with Forest Service management and other land owners while adhering to the following purposes:

TO PERPETUATE the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness areas.

TO ASSIST the various, government, state, and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource.

TO WORK to insure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use.

TO EDUCATE, encourage and solicit active participation in the use of the back country resource by stock users and the general public commensurate with our heritage.

TO FOSTER and encourage the formation of new state organizations and BCHA chapters.

The members of the group are continuously learning new skills and they share many of them through educational clinics and presentations. They volunteer on trails, organize and participate in work days and try to set a good example for other equestrians they meet. A new slate of officers and board of directors were elected in December 2006 providing a fresh outlook on how to address and the goals and visions of the original and oldest chapter in state.

You can join them on their journey to the other side of the mountain where the packer and his stock are living symbols that connect America's past to it's future, carrying forward the traditional skills of the pioneers. You can also consider starting a chapter in your part of the state.

Interested? Like More info? Contact: Shawnee Back Country Horseman % Vicky Hennager, Rt. 2 Box 214, Golconda, Illinois 62938; mulemaid@shawneelink.net.

Or visit the Back Country Horsemen website www.backcountryhorse.com.



Report on Kane County Meetings

Shared by Peter Veit

Kane County is currently in the process of reviewing the utilization of their entire forest preserves system with the intent of generating a multi-year developmental plan. As part of this review, a series of meetings for various forest preserve users was held throughout the county. That included one dedicated entirely to equestrian concerns on October 24th. Prior to that meeting, I received telephone calls from several concerned trail riders expressing fear that horses might be excluded from existing trails and that many good trails might be eliminated.

Since I was not able to attend the October 24 meeting, on October 25 I was in contact with Jerry Culp, Planning and Development Manager, and offered to meet with him and his staff in an effort to provide any useful input on behalf of trail riders. The meeting concept was based on our experience with DuPage County Forest Preserve where we have regular, informal, bi-monthly meetings with operations management. For several years we have jointly explored the interaction of horseback riders with other trail users, be they joggers, bikers, baby-cart-pushers, bird watchers, cross country skiers, etc. We have also been active with the DNR and their Greenway Seminars, and supported Will County Trail Riders in their close work with Midewin (where we now have 6 miles of trails and 30 more on the drawing board).

A meeting was held with Jerry and Michele Springer, Land Preservation Planner. Many specific concerns were discussed including trail surfaces, parking areas, signage, different approaches to multi-use trail design, use, and maintenance. Also covered was data obtained at the recent DNR Greenways Conference, the National Trail Symposium in Davenport, and the Southeastern Equestrian Trail Conferences in North Carolina and Virginia, and trail rider interaction with various site managers at DNR properties and with the US Forest Service.

After some ninety minutes of informal, but thorough, discussions, I came away with several very positive impressions. Some of these will require some give and take, and mutual understanding by all interested parties. These are my personal impressions:

1. First and foremost, I am convinced that Jerry, Michele, and Kane County do not in any way intend to eliminate horses from their forest preserves.
2. It is also recognized that, while most horse owners are responsible individuals, we nevertheless only represent a portion of the total residents of the county. A Kane County survey (both written and by telephone) indicated horse ownership, or horse usage, to represent between 2-3% of the Kane County population.
3. The Kane County Forest Preserves maintain a significant total acreage. Much of this is fragmented into smaller parcels. That means that there will be trails in the preserves and certain other trails connecting those preserves. Many of those connectors must be alongside of roads, some with special lanes which can be sufficiently protected from traffic for use by responsible bicyclists. Many such trails may not be suitable for horses. (We have seen people fall from bicycles, but never because those bicycles were spooked by traffic.)
4. The majority of the plans are still under study and/or in the planning stage. Some immediate improvements and/or

modifications are already in the process of being made including a new horse trailer parking area at Camden Hills. This will make parking easier for us and at the same time eliminate road edge damage.

5. The management thinking of all the forest preserves, be they Cook, DuPage, Kane, Will, or others is all tending towards development of **multi-use trails**. Like it or not, as population densities increase, and forest preserve usage increases, **we all must learn to share the trails**. It is my understanding that as part of Kane County's planning, they are considering retaining certain grass or dirt trails, adding multi-use limestone screened trails, and in certain areas hard topping one side of the trail using a very unique approach of adding a limestone shoulder **specifically for equestrian use** next to the blacktop surface. Our input on this and other issues will be given serious consideration in the planning process.
6. In addition to creating trails for recreational purposes, it is also the prime responsibility of any forest preserve (possibly as differentiated from park districts) to preserve the natural aspects of the forest including its flora, fauna, wetlands, topography, etc. Thus, the impact on the land must be considered in formatting any future plans. By their very presence, all trail users will always **impact** an area. However, **impact** does not mean **impair!**
7. We are collecting certain data for Jerry and Michele since they expressed interest in learning more about trail conferences or seminars already attended or forthcoming. The door for future meetings has been left open.

Lake Lou Yaeger Work Weekend

Shared by Judy Griffith

Macoupin and Sangamon County trail riders came together the weekend of November 4th and 5th to work on the horse trails at Lake Lou Yaeger in Litchfield, IL.

Several months ago, Denise Maxwell, president of Illinois Trail Riders, approached me to assess the possibility of organizing a group of riders to work on the trails that have sustained erosion after 35 years or so since they were first developed by Blake Lowery of Litchfield. Gary Hampsmire and I, both new on the board of ITR, and Lyle Behl, newly off the board, along with Theresa Duncan of Gillespie, Danny Griffith and Jim Ibberson gathered with Jim Cadwell, Lake Superintendent, and his assistant, Randy Wilson, on August 8 to study the situation. Mr. Cadwell was most accommodating and plans to proceed began.

On August 22, Lyle, Gary, Denise Maxwell, Carolyn Karnes, and I rode the trails and identified five sites that were in need of some repair and decided to start with the west entrance to the trails from the horse camp as Site #1. The basic problem identified was deeply compacted, concave trail tread where water travels down the center of the trail from camp, causing a u-shaped tread in the center with high berms on both sides. There was also trail braiding and a muddy crossing at the bottom, 28-foot wide, where water runs across from the ravine on the left and down from both hillsides eventually into a creek on the right. The goal would be to divert water from the center of the trail and allow it to flow off to the side of the trail over a hill by establishing outslope to tilt the edge of the trail down and away from the high side. We favored a culvert at the bottom and water bars at intervals down the hill. (continued on page 6)

Lake Lou Yaeger Work Weekend

(continued from page 5)

The work weekend was set for November 4 and 5, a supply list was made up and a major effort was put forth to publicize the event. Patty Rykhus, president of Prairie Trail Riders, volunteered to cook, and things were in motion.

Riders from Prairie Trail Riders in Sangamon Co., EZ Riders in Macoupin Co., and one fellow from Otter Creek Saddle Club in Macoupin Co. gathered Saturday morning. Twenty were in attendance.

A culvert was placed at the bottom of the hill under the direction of Bob Wilson, a local farmer and member of the Lake Advisory Board who is experienced with culverts and soil filtration.

Mr. Cadwell was on hand to oversee what was done. Three water bars were placed on the hillside, and aggregate and chipped asphalt were used to stabilize everything. Jim Ibberson, of Viriden and member of Otter Creek Saddle Club, had brought his track skidster and did the excavation work which saved many hours of labor.

Rod Hall of Litchfield, who is building a bicycle trail at the Lake, directed Sandy Wilson, Susanna Voigts, Theresa Duncan, and me in widening an unsafe trail alongside a deep ravine by executing a "bench cut" correction. We then placed two railroad ties on the outer side of this trail and secured them to slow water run-off. We also did some more minor work on three other areas.

Sunday, there were 10 in attendance. There was some exposed gully left after everyone had worked on the culvert and water bars and we worked on that. We placed some check dams and filled the gully with small aggregate. Jim Cadwell needs to get us some clay dirt and more road pack to cover it. We can place it and grade it with Danny's Kabota. As many times as the skidster, the ATV's and the tractor ran over those water bars, they never moved!!! They should be compacted in nicely!!

On Friday, November 24, Jim Ibberson and Danny and me returned to the trails to finish the footing on the trail before the anticipated trail use on the weekend. I understand there were about 15 trailers there on Thanksgiving and Saturday and Sunday. We rode Sunday and all looked well.

Thanks to everyone for their hard work and a job well done.

We anticipate working on cutting trees and picking up limbs this spring after the ice storm dropped limbs everywhere, probably about the last weekend of March or first weekend of April. That will need to be coordinated with work for the St. Jude Ride at Midway Trailer Sales (see Newsbit, page 2).

So You Want to Start a Posse?

(continued from page 1)

confidential. They must be willing to expend the time and effort necessary for training themselves and their horses to perform at a high level.

Classroom instruction for all posse members includes training on search types, search patterns, lost-subject behavior, tracking, vision theory, critical separation theory, communications, and evidence preservation. Members must also demonstrate individual skills, such as those in tracking, technical rescue, training techniques, equine care, communications, navigation, use of GPS and maps, first aid, emergency medical treatment, intergovernmental relations, report writing, research, and funding acquisition. Volunteers with multiple skill sets are especially desirable, for example, someone who is cross-trained as an EMT and certified as a radio operator.

Training for horses is as important as rider skills. Horses must be able to ground tie, side pass, stand in trailers for half a day, traverse various terrains, stand near fires, pony other horses, accept loud and strange noises, walk into confined spaces, work with other horses or alone, tolerate emergency vehicles and aircraft, pull heavy objects with ropes, cross bridges and bodies of water one at a time, and respond immediately to the rider's cues. This training must be completed under conditions that allow the horse and rider to be certified against published standards. Although each state currently establishes its own specific certification criteria for search and rescue work, a set of national standards for certifying horses and riders as a team is under development.

Finally, the posse must demonstrate its usefulness and its competence by integrating itself into the total search effort and the county's unique needs. The posse's role is to complement, not replace, existing law enforcement services. The posse must work with foot searchers, ATV searchers, dog patrols, air and water units, and other mounted posses, all under supervision of a central command. While the posse's primary role may be search and rescue, most posses are called upon to perform other functions as well. Security, crowd control, public relations, and parades all may be required at one time or another. In addition to giving the posse a visible presence, these functions expand the posse's usefulness to the community, thus assuring its longevity and providing the public service its planners initially envisioned.

For more information about mounted and search and rescue work, see the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) Mounted page at www.nasar.org/nasar/specialty_fields.mounted.phs. For links to MSAR units and other state-by-state resources, see the MSAR unit's web page directory www.ibiblio.org/msar/units. For informal discussion of MSAR related issues subscribe to MSAR-IL and MSAR-Riders at <http://lists.ibiblio.org>. For search theory: Pete Roberts and Dave Perkins of Northumberland National Park Search and Rescue Team in the UK are world acknowledged authorities on the complex theories which form the basis for modern search management.

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Park and Trail Updates

Pere Marquette

Shared by Sandy Poletti

The vaulted two-person privy flushable toilets are finally being installed at Pere Marquette State Park. If weather holds, they should be done soon. IDNR site super Dick Niemeyer said a sizable amount of grant money for trail maintenance has been awarded to the park. He is going to use some of the money for the parking lot. He wants to put down more grit in the areas that are eroding. A Sierra Club member has complained about the grit claiming it attracts the wrong kind of birds.

Our equestrian campground is not a forgotten child and is still being proposed at the old trailer site (brick house property on the trail across from new parking). I don't see it happening in my lifetime, but I am still amazed that we ended up with a very nice trail system at Pere Marquette.

Please let Dick and his staff know how much we appreciate their efforts over the last 6 1/2 years!!!!

Springfield Area

Shared by Gary Hampsmire

The ice storm we had the first part of December all but closed the horse trails at Sanchris State Park. Several of us from Prairie Trail Riders spent time clearing the trails so we could hold our annual Crazy Cold Man Ride the 1st day of January, which we were able to do. We probably have 60% of the trails cleared and will clear the rest as time permits.

Some of our riders from the Springfield area have ridden in San Ridge (by Havana) and the trails there are in good shape.

Deer Run Trail

Volunteers are needed to help with new construction on Deer Run Trail between Johnson Creek Campground and the Day Use parking area. Learn more details on the Shawnee National Forest website or call Kelly Pearson at the Murphysboro Ranger Station 618 687-1731 for details. Free camping for workers. March 17, 31, May 5 and June 4.

Streator

Shared by Lois A. Guyon, PhD

When the Streator, IL, City Council voted to sell the 37-acre, city-owned Spring Lake Park for a housing development, equestrians joined hikers, picnickers, and naturalists to save the natural recreation area for use by area residents. City Council member, Siobhan Elias, who voted to save the park, researched the park's transmittal to the City and found that the City was constrained from selling the park land. Now that Spring Lake remains open to the public, volunteers are developing a plan to aid the City in improving equestrian and hiking trails and assisting with general park maintenance.



Conferences

OVETS Ohio Valley Equestrian Trails Symposium

Date: June 21-24, 2007

Location: Midwest Trail Ride, 1264 Hunter's Creek Road, Norman, Indiana, www.midwesttrailride.com.

Thousands of miles of trails have been closed to horses across America due to urban development, legitimate problems associated with horse use, lack of knowledge of the actual impact of horses on trails, and not networking with other agencies. You can help preserve our cultural heritage of "riding horses in America's open spaces," by attending this educational experience about various trail issues tailored for the riding enthusiast.

Attend OVETS to learn how to work with land managers, learn the facts about protecting trails, and learn where to get help when trails are threatened with closure. Remember: You are the solution!

Sessions in the morning, ride in the afternoon, enjoy the campfire in the evenings!

Produced by the Indiana Horse Council with support from the Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin Horse Councils.

To receive information on OVETS 2007, mail a request to: Indiana Horse Council, c/o Yvette Rollins, 225 S. East Street Indianapolis, IN 46202, call 812 797-4540 or Email: hoosierhorsemen@yahoo.com

AERC Trail Master Class

Date: June 7-10, 2007

Location: Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish & Wildlife Area Chandlerville, Illinois

Overview

The course will cover the latest advances in trail design, trail construction, trail maintenance, and crew leadership. Techniques for long term sustainability and ease of maintenance on the trail are the main focus. The course consists of three interactive classroom sessions: Thursday, Trail Design and Layout; Friday, Trail Construction; Saturday, Trail Maintenance; Sunday, Crew Leader. The last day will be field application of the concepts we covered on the previous days interspersed with leadership techniques for working with volunteers. Class size limited to only 10 people, sign up early!

Cost is \$111 per person plus travel and lodging. Deposit required by March 1, 2007.

Contact: Lucy Bagot; home 217 626-1627, cell 217 971-5673, Email Lucy@acesethepace.com.

SETC 2007

Date: July 19-21, 2007

Location: Knoxville, TN

While the Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference focuses on the issues surrounding the use of horses on trails in the southeastern United States, the Conference is open to anyone interested in natural resource conservation. People from outside the Southeast are encouraged to attend to share their perspectives with and to learn from those who value the opportunity for recreational use of horses on trails.

Participants and guest speakers include forestry and trail experts, and representatives from natural resource agencies, riding clubs and volunteer groups.

For more information on SETC 2007, contact Joanne Mitchell, Conference Planner, Email jfgmhorse@bellsouth.net or call 865 693-4308.