



Illinois Trail Riders

Dedicated To Keeping Horses On Our Trails

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

November, December 2008, January 2009

State Park Closings is Huge Issue for Illinois Residents and Equestrians

By Peter L. Veit, Denise Maxwell, With Quotes From News Reporters

How it started

Recently, the citizens of Illinois were informed that as a result of our Governor's "Sweeps Program," he swept all of the unallocated or solidly nailed down funds out of almost every state department. This had a horrific \$14,000,000 impact on the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as well as many other departments. DNR proposed to start by closing 11 state parks and historic sites with an initial layoff of 39 employees with potentially hundreds more at the 320 sites managed by the DNR. Many layoffs are site assistant superintendents, rangers, and the technicians who keep the trail systems working.

Three of the areas to be closed were major equestrian sites or multi-use trail systems including the 150-mile Hennepin Canal Trail, Wolf Creek, and Moraine View.

Of concern is that this action has the potential of being a major disaster for the entire park system and the citizens of Illinois. The biggest risk is that even a temporary closing of a park allows Mother Nature to really jump in and take over, real fast. In a year or two she can wipe out what has taken decades to develop. Just look at the recent damage at Matthiessen by a few late fall/early spring storms.

Other issues include the loss of tourism dollars, the devastation of many small businesses, loss of recreational opportunities for many, loss of jobs and livelihood for employees, overpopulation of wildlife, invasive species taking over. And the list goes on.

Everyone Gets Together!

The announcement brought a universal uproar of protests. For the first time in history, diverse groups including the bikers (multi-million in number) represented by the League of Illinois Bicyclist, responsible politicians, Illinois Trail Riders, Horsemens Council, Shawnee Conservancy, The Farm Bureau, Friends of the Hennepin, hunters and fishing groups, historians, environmental activists and many, many more got together for a single cause. Petitions were drafted and put online. Alerts went out through e-mail, within discussion groups and on websites.

We even got Democratic Lt. Governor Patrick Quinn to issue a call for petitions with the following statement taken from *STOP THE CLOSING, Standing Up for Illinois - Office of Lt. Governor Pat Quinn*, <http://standingupforillinois.org/saveourparks/>:

"Dear Illinois Citizen,

Governor Rod Blagojevich recently announced the

closure of 11 state parks. This irresponsible act will have negative impacts to our State, local communities, and citizens' quality of life and health.

Illinois citizens need to band together to help protect our state parks and keep them open beyond the November 1 doomsday announced by Governor Blagojevich.

I encourage you to sign this petition and send an e-mail to Governor Blagojevich demanding that he reconsider his decision to close these state parks. Online democracy and petitions work and past efforts have saved Plum Island, kept blended sewage out of Lake Michigan, and, most recently, stopped an undeserved pay raise to elected Illinois officials.

Together we can make the will of the people the law of the land and save our state parks."

Legislators heard the outcry as petitions and calls came in!

The Illinois House approved \$214 million in new spending (unanimously 113 to 0) intended to prevent the layoff of hundreds of workers, as well as employees of state parks and historic sites that the Governor wants to close.

The spending plan to keep parks open was then approved by the House. The Senate voted 55-0 on Senate Bill 1103, which restored the cut money for parks, historic sites and the jobs. It also reinstated funding slashed from substance abuse programs and money taken from statewide officials who have announced layoffs, unpaid days off and hiring freezes. The Senate then voted 40-15 on Senate Bill 790, which takes money out of restricted state accounts to pay for the spending (the Sweep Bill).

Other News

John Carswell, a *Daily Union* Staff Writer, reports on October 7, 2008: "Despite hundreds of petitions and thousands of signatures and an approved rescue bill, Kelly Bland, owner of Wolf Creek Stables, has received an eviction notice from the DNR informing her that she will need to begin vacating Wolf Creek State Park by November 30 and be completely gone by December 7." Bland is one of the many who operate concessions within Illinois State Parks.

"Outlaw Outfitters is in a similar situation as a horse riding concessionaire at Moraine View State Park, LeRoy, IL, with estimated annual sales of \$100,000. The business is owned by LeRoy Lawyer and Dr. Tom Pliura, who recently lodged a lawsuit in McLean County Circuit Court, arguing that Governor Rod Blagojevich and the DNR cannot legally close parks established for the people of Illinois."

Pliura's *Emergency Motion for Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction* cites State Parks Designation Act 20-ILCS 840/1: "Said State Parks are statutory State Parks of the State of Illinois under the State Parks Designation Act. No statute bestows upon Defendant DNR the authority to close and remove from the public (continued on Page 6)

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

CAROLYN CUSHMAN

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

LEE ANN FOUERT

19454 Briar Drive
Bloomington, IL 71604
309 378-2146

JoANNE GERNANT

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

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

SARA RHOADES

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

PETER VEIT

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

**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 \$3.00 postage and handling)

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.

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From The President

By the time this *Newsletter* is published, we will know who the next President Elect is. We might have an idea about how fast the economy will rebound. We might have a better idea about the State of the Illinois budget, the proposed closing of parks, the federal funding for forest service trails and campgrounds or transportation related trails and so on. Right now everything seems so "up in the air," so "uncertain." 2008 has been a crazy year full of bumps and surprises. Maybe 2009 will be smoother and more predictable, with just the right amount of rain and gas prices that will encourage me to load the trailer and travel with my horse.

I have faith that things will work out for the better. Hopefully, I will never have to choose between using my horse for transportation or as food, as some did during the "wars" and the "depression." With luck, we will all continue to survive the minor struggles of everyday living, jobs and health insurance, college tuition, hay prices, mortgages and so on. Certainly we can still find time to help make the world a better place for those of us who enjoy a "horsey" lifestyle.

Time goes on...as does our work to preserve a horse-rich lifestyle with beautiful trails and the quality of life that we consider vital to the "American Dream."

Enjoy the autumn weather, the Horse Expo, and share a wonderful holiday season with family and friends.

We will see you in the spring at the annual meeting when the Horse Fair comes around.

May you always find peace traveling the trail of your life!
May your trail never end.

Denise

Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) was created through the National Recreational Trail Fund Act as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 and re-authorized by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users. This program provides funding assistance for acquisition, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of both motorized and non-motorized recreation trails.

The RTP funds up to 80% for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, enhancement and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails by public agencies, private organizations and private individuals and requires a minimum of 20% non-federal funding match. At least 30% of RTP funding is earmarked for motorized trails, at least 30% for non-motorized trails and no more than 40% for diversified trails (either motorized and non-motorized, or more than one motorized or non-motorized use). States may reserve 7% of RTP funding for administration and 5% for education.

Illinois 2009 Recreational Trails Program is based upon priorities established by the Illinois Greenways and Trails Council and Illinois State Trails Advisory Board as required under the National Recreational Trails Fund Act. The Council is composed of representatives of statewide motorized and non-motorized user organizations, statewide agency organizations, organizations with expertise in greenways and trails, and metro-area greenway and trail coalitions. State agencies including Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Environmental

Protection Agency and Illinois Department of Agriculture serve as technical advisors to the Council.

The Illinois share of the RTP funds for fiscal year 2009 is \$2,524,147. Recreational/Motorized Trails grants (five projects) and IDNR sites (two projects): \$756,752; Non-Motorized/Diversified Trails grants (nine projects): \$1,306,520 and Non-Motorized Trails IDNR sites (17 projects): \$460,875.

Fiscal Year 2009 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant Recipients/Projects Benefiting Equestrians:

Moraine View State Park, McLean County

Project: Repair four stream crossings on 13 miles of the Horseback Trail, open to hiking and equestrian use.

Cost: \$6,000 (federal share: \$4,800)

Pere Marquette State Park, Jersey County

Project: Purchase a compact tract loader to maintain trails open to hiking, equestrian use and interpretive use.

Cost: \$35,000 (federal share: \$28,000)

Project: Rehabilitate 16.5 miles of the Camden Hollow, Hickory, Hickory North, Fern Hollow and Ridge Trails, all open to hiking, equestrian use and interpretive use.

Cost: \$30,000 (federal share: \$24,000)

Giant City State Park, Jackson County

Project: Rehabilitate two miles of the Giant City Equestrian Trail and 12 miles of horse trails, and purchase a bobcat/skidsteer and a Kawasaki Mule for maintenance of trails open to hiking and equestrian use.

Cost: \$70,625 (federal share: \$56,500)

Spring Lake Equestrian Trail Head, Cook County

Project: Develop an equestrian trail head parking area immediately adjacent to the Cook County Forest Preserve (continued on page 6)

***Equestrian Lifestyle Expo & Holiday Market
A New All-Breed, Multi-Discipline Educational
and Shopping Event
November 22-23, 2008 at Arlington Park
Racecourse, Arlington Heights (Chicago), IL***

Whether you're looking for feed, tack, a barn, holiday gift items, or just a good time learning more about horses and the equestrian lifestyle, you'll find them at Expo.

Shopping and learning opportunities will abound. Presentations will be given on equestrian-themed decorating, the horse in art, animal communication, even book readings by author Marcia A. Thilbeault, DVM, today's James Herriot incarnate. There will be contests testing horse knowledge – Hippology for all ages – with prizes for adults and youngsters.

And much more!

For more information call toll free 866 384-9161 or visit www.HorsemensCouncil.org.

And be sure to visit the Illinois Trail Riders booth while you enjoy the Expo!

We want to meet you and share trail information!

Newsbits

2009 OVETS

The Ohio Valley Equestrian Trail Symposium brings together individuals and land managers who believe in working together to protect trails for the future through education and networking. As OVETS continues to expand, they are seeking state organizations and individuals that would like to be involved.

Illinois Trail Riders encourages our members to join. Be sure to identify yourself as a trail rider or trail advocate so that you will be granted permission to join. The group is tightly moderated to prevent spam. Join the OVETS google group at ovets@googlegroups.com.

The dates and location for the 2009 Ohio Valley Equestrian Trails Symposium have not yet been set. Southern Michigan in late September or early November is currently being considered. Please stay tuned to your *Illinois Trail Riders Newsletter* for late-breaking news.

Equine Trailer Handling DVD Nears Completion

Source: Illinois Farm Bureau

Filming is complete and final editing wrapping up as the Illinois Farm Bureau puts the final touches on a unique and informative DVD. The educational tool will focus on trailer and truck selection, trailer operation, safety, and how to back up a trailer. This project was a joint effort from members of the Illinois Equine Roundtable. Details for distribution will be announced after the first of the year.

Horse Slaughter Bill Passes House

Source: thehorse.com

The US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee has passed H.R. 6598, a measure known as the "Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2008."

This bill prohibits transport, sale, delivery, or export of horses for slaughter for human consumption. It also criminalizes the purchase, sale, delivery, or export of horsemeat intended for human consumption. Supporters praise the bill for banning the export of horses to processing plants in Canada and Mexico.

The bill was introduced in July by Judiciary Committee Chairman Rep. John C. Conyers (D-MI) and passed by voice vote on Sept. 23." The next step is introduction on the House floor."

Violators would face fines and/or one-year imprisonment for a first offense or one involving five or fewer horses, and fines and/or a three-year imprisonment for repeat offenses or those involving more than five horses. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and US Customs would be responsible for enforcing the measure.

Educational Project Funded through RTP

According to Gina Kenny, Project Assistant of the League of Illinois Bicyclists, a *Share the Trail* brochure funded through an RTP grant will be ready for distribution in 2009. Equestrians have had input and it will be included. The text is done for both the brochure and a poster designed to be displayed at trailheads. The poster will contain a brief summary of what is in the brochure. A graphics artist is currently working on the layout for both and expects to complete the drafts in November. Both the brochure and poster will be printed by the end of the year or

the beginning of next year.

Comments on the National Trail Classification System

Back Country Horsemen of American (BCHA) have taken advantage of a 60-day comment period which started on October 16th 2008. BCHA will circulate its comments to the Forest Service and to its members. They will also provide suggestions for member comments to the Interim Final Rule. Go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation> to read the rules and plan for the trail system. Comments must be received by December 15, 2008.

It is important that all friends of the trails send in comments during this comment period.

BCHA concerns regarding the Trail Class Matrix and Trail Design Parameters can be found at <http://www.backcountryhorse.com/> or <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TrailAlert/message173>.

You can keep in touch with other many important "trail alerts" through these websites.

Northern Illinois Horse Fest

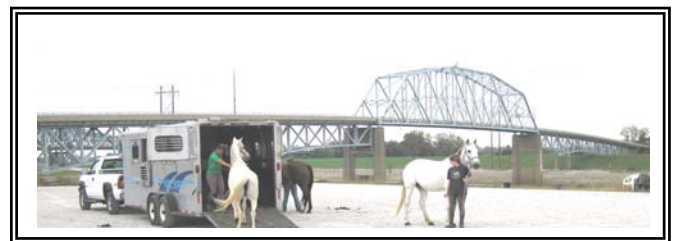
Shared by Jean Greenlee

The annual Northern Illinois Horse Fest, a two-day event, was held the last weekend of August in Belvidere, IL. The lineup of clinicians was impressive as were the special events. We had a wonderful time meeting and talking to the multitudes of trail riders who visited our booth and got the "inside scoop" at what was happening at local trails. We sold a good number of *Handbooks* and recruited several new members.

Special thanks to everyone who helped "booth sit!" Hope to see you there next year!



From the Directors and Staff of Illinois Trail Riders



Kelly Arnold of Gateway Stables in Pontoon Beach, IL unloads horses for a Columbus Day ride and picnic in the newly remodeled horse-friendly parking lot on Chouteau Island.

The trails are located just south of I-270 and Route 66 between the Mississippi River and the Chain of Rocks Canal near St. Louis, Granite City, and Madison, IL.

(Yes, they cleaned up the parking lot before they left!)

Southeastern Trails Conference 2008

By Lori Kennedy

WHAT WAS IT? It was the eleventh meeting of its kind! The conference was held the first of August in North Charleston, SC and lasted for two days. The conference brought people from the equestrian community and government agencies together to discuss trails, specifically horses on trails.

WHY? We discussed the issues that are critical to preserving the recreational use of horses on trails. We enjoyed the opportunity to network with equestrians from other areas to find out how they have been successful working with land managers to maintain and build trails. Government agency personnel gave us insight into how we can be more effective when making requests for trail improvements, maintenance, and construction.

WHO SPONSORS THIS? It was hosted by the South Carolina Horsemen's Council in partnership with the US Department of Transportation, the US Forest Service, and other departments local to South Carolina. The AQHA was the premier sponsor. Equestrian Land Conservation Resource and The Tennessee Walking Horse Association and several other state and local organizations also participated as sponsors.

WHO EXHIBITED? Exhibitors included, but were not limited to, Back Country Horsemen of America, Best of America by Horseback, Clemson University, and the National Park Service.

SPEAKERS! Wow, did we have some great speakers! Our list of speakers included, but was not limited to Brian Bourne (Shawnee National Forest), Tom Seay (Best of America by Horseback TV Series), Christopher Douwes (Federal Highway Administration), Rick Potts (National Park Service), Bonnie Davis (Two Horse Enterprises), and Ian Barlow (US Forest Service).

WHAT DID THEY SAY? Brian Bourne said: "In order to secure continued access, as well as preserve our place on tomorrow's trails, equestrians must be able to have meaningful dialogue with those who hold our public lands in trust. The idea of access for all in every instance will be non-existent. Horsemen must be willing to come to the table with realistic solutions in a spirit of compromise and cooperation. In so doing, equestrians will continue to preserve their cultural heritage in a natural heritage setting. Law will always dictate conservation over recreation."

Tom Seay spoke of the dangers to horseback riding on recreational trails. He mentioned bureaucrats with personal agendas, other user groups that sometimes dislike sharing with horses, bickering and politics among horse groups, not working toward a common goal. His list of ways to be proactive was a long one - there are many ways! Send a letter to congressmen about the horse community. Ask them if they support horses on public lands. Stay abreast of major developments in your area so that you can advocate for green space before a project is approved. Take officials and/or the media on a trail ride, including their children if possible. Invite local politicians to speak at club meetings. Name the trail, or nickname the trail. If there is news of a trail closure, request a public hearing. Volunteer to help with any stage of trail development or maintenance and join a horse group.

Christopher Douwes spoke about the funds that help to develop transportation and recreation, the RTP (Recreational Trails Program) funds. These funds work to increase transportation choices for pedestrians and bicyclists. "The RTP provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities, Mr. Douwes said.

Rick Potts of the National Park Service spoke of the decline in rural upbringing. Only 11-15% of those born today will grow up rural. He said that there has been a 26% decline in backcountry use, where folks stay out overnight in the woods. How can we get folks outside for unstructured play? How can we put a value on the "draw" of the horse when bean counters only look at the cost of keeping the livestock? We must get the public to take ownership! We have infinite demand in the face of limited resources.

Bonnie Davis (www.TwoHorseEnterprises.com) offered numerous tips for camping with a horse, lists of what to pack for the human and for the horse as well as environmental considerations for horse camping. Her lively presentation brought much laughter.

Ian Barlow, Wilderness Ranger for the US Forest Service, Nez Perce National Forest, was a dynamic speaker. He has built bridges at various locations in the United States using information and technology he has gathered literally from all over the world. He really thinks outside the box and has the ability to engage the less than willing to great accomplishments. He shared ideas and pictures from his life experiences.

This conference is highly recommended to anyone that would like to become more efficient at networking and building effective partnerships that will promote recreational trails for horses. Florida will host SETC in 2009. It will take place July 7 and 8 in Gainesville, FL. You can get more information at www.southeasternequestriantrails.com.

Do You Know The Horse And Rider On The Right?



They are Illinois Trail Rider member Ron Rhoades and his horse, Blue. This photo was taken during the filming of a Lincoln documentary in October 2007.

The documentary, produced by WILL-TV's Allison Davis Wood, tells the story of Lincoln's life as a traveling lawyer in the middle of the country.

Abraham Lincoln's experiences on muddy roads, in homes of friends and in courtrooms on the circuit in central Illinois shaped the views and honed the skills that guided him when he became president. Re-enactments of Lincoln riding the dusty circuit, telling stories with friends and trying cases in court help viewers envision his formative experiences on the circuit. The documentary will air in February 2009, the bicentennial month of Lincoln's birth. Check with your local PBS station for date and time.

State Park Closings is Huge Issue for Illinois Residents and Equestrians *(continued from page 1)*

the benefit and enjoyment of any of the statutorily designated State Parks."

A Springfield writer reports: "Two bills drawn up to save State Parks and historical sites set to close later this year have been sent to the Governor. Governor Rod Blagojevich has 60 days to sign or veto the measures that would save the sites as well as more than 300 state jobs that are set to be lost as part of state budget cuts." He quotes Senator Bivins; "Governor Blagojevich has until December 6 to make his decision on the bills. There are still several opportunities for mischief by the Governor. He could drag this out until after the parks and historic sites close. He could sign the legislation then refuse to release the funds. Or he could change the legislation which would require lawmakers to return to Springfield again to act on his changes,"

Gary Wagle, President of the Friends of the Hennepin Canal, writes: "Closing the Canal Parkway will end the life of the Canal. At 100 years of age (we celebrated the Canal's centennial one year ago), the Hennepin Canal is a delicate, living structure, and without diligent maintenance it will die. Maintenance is critical, for without continual monitoring of the levies and water levels, a breach is certain to occur. Only shutting off the supply source at Rock Falls could prevent an eventual broken levy or plugged aqueduct. But shutting off the water, even temporarily, would result in a fish kill and deterioration hard to imagine. If this happens, we will lose one of the finest green spaces left in north-central Illinois. Illinois ranks 49th in public lands per population. For more information go to www.fhcanal.home.mchsi.com.

Update

As of October 31, the Illinois Legislators have passed bills, which would restore funding to keep our parks open. The Governor must sign Senate Bill 1103 authorizing the expenditure. Without his signature, state parks will close at the end of November and workers will be laid off.

The last thing we are hearing is about the "Pack the Park" sponsored by the Illinois Department of Park Districts (<http://ilparks.org>) designed to show the Governor our need for the parks. So as far as we can tell, all the parks that were on the initial hit list are still on it. A reliable source says: "Insiders say Blagojevich won't do anything until after the election, when he will see what to do (or not do) with the Senate seat of Obama." Although funding is supposedly allocated to these parks, no official action has been taken to date.

Call the Governor's office and let him know that you want to keep our parks open.

Chicago Office: 312-814-2121

Springfield Office: 217-782-6830

Send a loud message to the Governor that it is not acceptable to close our parks.

Keep abreast of this issue. The battle is not over.

National Trails System Turns 40

October 2, 2008 marked the 40th anniversary of passage of the National Trails System Act. This Act opened the door to Federal involvement in trails of all types, from city centers to remote back country. It also formally established both the Appalachian and Pacific Crest as America's first two National Scenic Trails. Eight more National Scenic Trails and 17 National Historic Trails totaling over 50,000 have also been designated. In addition, the Act authorized the designation of National Recreation Trails and the ground-breaking rail-banking of abandoned railway corridors.

This event will be celebrated in Little Rock Arkansas at the 19th National Trails Symposium November 15-18, 2008 <http://www.americantrails.org/>. One highlight of the Symposium is the National Trails Awards which recognizes the people, agencies, and organizations that are creating trails for all Americans.

American Trails National Trail Advocacy Award

Kandee Haertel has been awarded the prestigious American Trails National Trail Advocacy Award. The American Trails Board received over 200 nominations for the 2008 National Trails Awards Program and Kandee's work stood out to the board as an exceptional example of the inspiring work being done within the trails community. The award will be presented on November 17, 2008 at the National Trails Symposium.

Kandee's extensive lifelong experience with horses, trails and land conservation made her an ideal candidate for the award. She is nationally known as a trails advocate, especially among the equestrian groups. Much of her adult life has been dedicated to preserving trails for equestrians by coordinating and educating the many partners and advocates of trails.

Before becoming affiliated with Back Country Horsemen as the Director of Development, she served as Executive Director, Equestrian Land Conservation Resource (ELCR), Galena, IL.

Recreational Trails Program *(continued from page 3)*

District's Spring Lake Preserve. The project includes the renovation of an entry road, the construction of a parking area, fencing and an informational kiosk.

Sponsor: Barrington Countryside Park District
Cost: \$135,000 (federal share: \$108,000)

Shawnee National Forest Equestrian/Hiking Trails, Gallatin/Hardin/Pope Counties

Project: Reconstruct almost nine miles of equestrian/hiking trails in the Shawnee National Forest. These reconstructed trails are part of the American Discovery Trail.

Sponsor: US Forest Service
Cost: \$159,900 (federal share: \$127,920)

Elburn Preserve Horse and Hike Trail, Kane County

Project: Develop four miles of equestrian/hiking trail, with interpretive and wayfinding signs, a 20-car parking lot, a picnic shelter and a restroom in the Elburn Forest Preserve.

Sponsor: Kane County Forest Preserve District

Cost: \$250,000 (federal share: \$200,000)

Shawnee News

Recreation Fee Proposal

Harrisburg, IL, August 26, 2008 - Shawnee National Forest Supervisor Allen Nicholas has announced, based on several months of public comment, that a final recreation fee proposal will be submitted for consideration. The proposal will be to only increase existing recreation fees in five developed Shawnee National Forest campgrounds. The current fee for Pine Ridge, Pharoah, Camp Cadiz and Pine Hills campgrounds is \$5.00 per night and has not been increased in many years. The fifth campground, Johnson Creek, per night's fee has been \$5.00 for a single site, \$9.00 for a double site and \$12.00 for a triple site since approximately 1996. The proposed fee is \$10.00 per night for a site at Pine Ridge, Pharoah, Camp Cadiz and Pine Hills Campgrounds; and \$10.00 for a single, \$12.00 for a double and \$15.00 for a triple site per night at Johnson Creek. Increasing the price for overnight sites in these campgrounds would bring the fees more in alignment with the local market.

This final recreation fee proposal will be forwarded to the Regional Fee Board in Milwaukee, WI and, if approved, the proposal will be forwarded to the Recreation Resource Advisory Council (RRAC) for consideration. The RRAC's decision will be forwarded to the Regional Forester who will either accept or deny the recommendation.

The proposal to increase fees at these developed campgrounds was announced, along with other proposals, in the *Federal Register*, in October 2007. The Forest Service received 60 letters that were fully or conditionally supportive of the entire proposal. There were 93 letters and one petition containing several thousand signatures not supportive of fees. The overwhelming majority of these letters were concerned with the proposal for charging new fees either for day-use facilities or for equestrian use of the designated trail system. Increasing existing fees at campgrounds did not emerge as a significant issue among the comments received.

Forest Supervisor Allen Nicholas offered that the response to the initial proposal to increase fees was not entirely surprising. "I fully understand the concerns expressed and will strive to provide recreational and trail experiences within the funding levels we are provided."

Forest Service Chief's Award Presented To Wilderness Trail Crew

Harrisburg, IL, October 30, 2008 - The Shawnee National Forest, Hidden Springs Ranger District Wilderness Trail Crew (25 members), was chosen as recipients of the Traditional Skills and Minimum Tool Leadership Forest Service Chief's Award for work done in the Lusk Creek Wilderness. These recipients competed with forests across the country for this prestigious award.

Those traveling to Washington, DC to represent the Wilderness Trail Crew in receiving the Award during the ceremony held October 15 were current District Ranger Tim Pohlman, Brian Bourne, Tony Longbucco, Ray Broadway, Justin Dodson and Eric Stead.

In the spring of 2006, the Forest implemented the Trails Designation Project. The project's primary purpose is the management of a trail system within a four-watershed area, which includes Lusk Creek, Garden of the Gods and Bay Creek Wildernesses. The trail crew continued this ambitious project in 2007 by constructing five miles of new re-routes and trail features in the wilderness.

One of the most visited spots in the Forest, the 6,700 acres of Lusk Creek Wilderness, is frequented by equestrian groups and hikers. At the beginning of this project there were ten miles of system trails and fifty miles of non-system trails. Many trails displayed the effects of moderate to heavy use and were both poorly designed and poorly located. Since the implementation of the Trails Designation Project, major improvements to the trail system have been finished.

Trail Team Leader Brian Bourne instructed trail crew members in the use of primitive tools, such as the crosscut saw and about working with pack stock. During 2007, the crew constructed three miles of trail, reconstructed two miles of trail and installed turnpikes, retaining walls, causeways and erosion control features. This work was achieved without the use of modern tools and techniques.

Each day crew members hiked to the work site in the wilderness over rough and steep terrain. Using shovels, buckets, handmade chain baskets and pack stock, they moved tons of soil, 300 tons of sandstone rock, 350 tons of gravel and 1,400 feet of timber were removed. In March and part of May, a pack stock team from the Hoosier National Forest in Indiana joined the crew. During May, an eight-mule team and three Forest Service staff from the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming were on hand to help. In all, the mule team hauled over 300 tons of gravel into the wilderness.

The trail crew's detailed rock work can be compared to the quality work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. The techniques and primitive tools used were the traditional methods practiced for hundreds of years by foresters and American frontiersmen. Native materials such as sandstone were used to construct trail features. Using native materials not only reduces construction costs, but blends aesthetically with natural surroundings.

Johnson Creek Road Reopened

Harrisburg, IL, October 28, 2008 - Mississippi Bluffs District Ranger Dan Lentz announced the re-opening of Forest Road #724 into Johnson Creek Recreation Area on Kinkaid Lake in Jackson County, Illinois. The road has been temporarily repaired with one lane that goes around the existing slump in the road. Drivers should use caution when entering and exiting the area and avoid the orange fence and barricades that marks the hazardous slump area. The road will remain open unless further slumping occurs into the temporary road area. The Forest Service is working closely with the Federal Highways Administration to complete permanent repairs of Forest Road #724. The Forest recently received approximately \$600,000 in funding for this project. The permanent repair is not yet scheduled and there is no completion date set. For updates on the status of Forest Road #724, you can contact the Mississippi Bluffs Ranger Station at (618) 833-8576 or the Murphysboro Work Center at (618) 687-1731.

