



Illinois Trail Riders

Dedicated To Keeping Horses On Our Trails

E-mail: ILTrRdrs@illinoistrailriders.com

www.illinoistrailriders.com

November, December 2009, January 2010

Greenways and Trails Council Meeting

By Ron Rhoades

At the October 21, 2009 Illinois Greenways and Trails Council meeting, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) discussed progress with various grants totaling \$2,678,300 through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

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 the IDNR, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the Illinois Department of Agriculture serve as technical advisors to the Council.

Of special interest was a review of how grants are prioritized and distributed. Dick Westfall, manager of the Greenways and Trails Section of IDNR and the moderator of this meeting, explained that (in Illinois) different types of trails/trail user groups (such as equestrians) are given different priorities for RTP grants because of other dedicated funds that are available through different sources for other groups (such as bicyclists). Similarly, different groups may be eligible for higher reimbursement rates (50%/80%/90%, etc.) through RTP funds because of that same funding availability scenario. For instance, a proposed equestrian project may be eligible for 80% reimbursement and have a higher priority rating for available funds while a proposed bicyclist's project may be eligible for 50% reimbursement at a lower priority rating.

BUT, and this is a BIG but, SOMEONE HAS TO APPLY FOR THESE GRANTS. And as usual, if we (and I am speaking from the equestrian point of view) aren't the squeaky wheel, no grant applications are made benefiting equestrians and that pocket of money becomes available to OTHER groups (like bicyclists) that are normally of a lower priority for this grant pool. This doesn't mean that all available money will be given to equestrian projects, just that we are given a higher priority for this pot of money.

So – get out and get those grant applications written to get equestrian projects!

Other group projects were discussed at this meeting. One that I found of particular interest was a brochure prepared by the snowmobiler association titled "Multiple Use Trails for Winter Recreation – Facts and Myths about Snowmobiling." There are lots of interesting tidbits in it that I would encourage everyone to read. One that I found intriguing was a table that showed relative weight that is placed upon the ground by different users – including a hiker

and a horse. A snowmobile places one-half pound per square inch relative weight on the ground, a hiker five pounds per square inch, a horse eight pounds per square inch and a 4WD vehicle 30 pounds per square inch! So a horse places only slightly more stress on a trail than a human!

This brochure can be obtained from the American Council of Snowmobile Associations at (517) 351-4362, www.snowmobilers.org.

The Recreational Trails Program, which was created in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, plays an essential role in funding state trail programs all across the country. Funding for the RTP, which is administered by the Federal Highway Administration, comes from the federal taxes paid on gasoline used in non-highway recreation and is distributed to the states based on a formula that recognizes the user-pay/user-benefit character of the program. RTP funds are distributed through the state transportation departments and natural resource agencies in cooperation with citizen advisory committees and a network of organizations and communities. These partners leverage available funding with cash and in-kind support.

To see the Project Summary Funds and Project Listing for Illinois' Fiscal Year 2010 you can visit the IDNR website or send ITR an email and we will send you more information!

A New Trail in Will County Spring Creek Greenway Trail

A brand new 2.75 mile trail, known as the Spring Creek Greenway Trail, opened to equestrians this month in Will County's Hadley Valley Preserve. The trailhead is located on Gougar Road, one-half mile north of Route 6 in New Lenox, with parking for horse trailers. This multi-use, crushed limestone trail heads west to Farrell Road, in Joliet, and east to the I-355 overpass, in New Lenox.

Plans are already underway to extend this trail to the east, where a new access is planned at Bruce Road.

The Will County Forest Preserve hopes to eventually extend this trail to link with Messenger Marsh (also known as Homer Trails), in Homer Glen, where an existing 3.2-mile equestrian trail is in place at the preserve on South Bell Road.

Over the years, Will County plans a restoration of the wetland, prairie and forest lands along the Spring Creek Greenway Trail. It will be a slow and gradual process. Watch it develop as you ride the trail over the years.

For more information on Will County Equestrian Trails visit www.fpdwc.org

Thank you, Forest Preserve District of Will County!

Illinois Trail Riders

4873 Indian Hills Drive,
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Voice: 618 656-2591

E-mail:

ILTrRdrs@illinoistrailriders.com

Website:

www.illinoistrailriders.com

Officers & Directors

DENISE MAXWELL

President

4873 Indian Hills Drive
Edwardsville, IL 62025

618 656-1129

JEAN GREENLEE,

Vice President

2330 Rockton Road
Caledonia, IL 61011

815 292-3010

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

JoANNE GERNANT

450 Highway 6 East
Geneseo, IL 61254

309 944-4317

JERRY (BUCKWHEAT)

McKINLEY

912 N. John Street
Farmer City, IL 61842

309 928-2484

SARA RHOADES

2372 N. 1500 East Road
Seymour, IL 61875

217 687-2654

RON RHOADES

2372 N. 1500 East Road
Seymour, IL 61875

217 687-2654

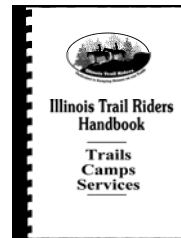
PETER VEIT

1041 N. Mill Street
Naperville, IL 60563

630 357-6465

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

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



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

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

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

Living as I do in the Metro-East region of Illinois (near St. Louis), I find that it can be a challenge to know all about this long, thin, 55,584 square mile state (24th largest in nation). I do know that 1% of Illinois land is public (48th in nation) and we spend about \$2 per capita (46th-49th least) on our state lands. Illinois residents, all 13,000,000 of them (fifth largest population), and politics are very diverse throughout the state. Being a non-native transplant I have always tried to gain insight into this state, the horse industry that serves it, and the trails open for me to ride.

The closest and best trails to my barn are in St. Louis County Parks and Missouri. They are similar in funding and use to those in northern Illinois. I hear that Indiana, Kentucky, and Wisconsin trails are great if you live near those states. I am always looking for a positive example of a "Model Trail."

The more I learn about trails in northern Illinois, the more impressed I become. Forest Preserve and Conservation Districts do a good job of providing for the northern equestrians within their counties. They appear to be well supported by the taxpayers and government officials. One district employee recently boasted that despite hard economic times, bond issues were passed and residents increased their own local taxes to support parks and open spaces.

In Cook, DuPage, Lake, McHenry, Kane and Winnebago Counties, I notice that there are many (often short, sometimes connected) trails with decent, but scattered, parking and little camping opportunity. These seem to serve the need for nearby equestrians to enjoy the parks and mingle with their neighbors who may hike, walk a dog, push a baby stroller, or ride a bicycle. Many trails have no closures so it is possible to exercise one's horse year-around as weather permits. The fall colors and early winter chills can be enjoyed by horseback in northern Illinois on bridle paths that have hardened surfaces and some amenities such as water or toilets.

Thanks to the US Forest Service, the Shawnee Trail Conservancy, and the Shawnee Back Country Horsemen, there are many beautiful places to ride in the Shawnee National Forest (over 350 miles) which are maintained by the volunteer efforts of equestrians and supported through federal projects with the assistance of federal employees. Private campgrounds offer many amenities such as cabins and campgrounds that no public agency could ever afford to build and the horse trail-riding industry supports.

A majority of equestrians in Illinois rely very heavily on the 40 or so state parks that are open to horses seasonally. Yes, we can camp with our horses for a small fee at some of the state parks and we pay a little more at the few where electricity and showers are available. The trails are often older than the park and poorly designed for the heavy use (sometimes abuse) of our growing numbers. These trails are maintained with difficulty by a state agency that does not have the luxury of dedicated funding for staff and equipment to make them all season and sustainable. Hunting and fishing have been the traditional priority on these lands supported in part by hunting licenses and fees. Shared-use trails are virtually non-existent on state lands except in parks where snowmobiles can travel in the winter. Most parks have an extensive set of hiker-only trails but they can walk on

horse trails as well if they stray from their side of the park or leave the area surrounding the interpretive center. In some parks there are private concessionaires who make a living by renting horses to the public thus providing the average Illinois Citizen the opportunity to experience the outdoors on horseback. Their businesses (like the concession bait shops and restaurants located in other parks) must seem in peril at times depending on the economic climate and the cost of hay.

Throughout Illinois, horse owners without horse trailers or with busy work schedules ride circles in an arena or experience trail riding on local roadways and along edges of private farm fields. A horse is not something that should be parked in a stall or small dry lot without exercise and training until the next ideal weekend for an outing. Every horse owner needs a trail within 10-20 minutes from his barn or pasture.

No matter the region we live in or the place we ride our horse, we each should feel a deep sense of ownership of our local public lands and state parks. I hear of equestrians who mobilize with loud indignation when "our trails" are closed due to weather or overcrowded with no hope of a reserved campsite. Feedback comes from trail riders who are critical or even angry when "their trails" are in disrepair or short staffed. Reports of horse owners who cut trail, litter them with beer cans, are rude to other trail users, and argue with land managers also reach my ears and I am ashamed.

We need to turn things around! We need to volunteer a little more, educate our friends, dig deeper into our pockets, join with like-minded neighbors, and reestablish our positive connections with the managers of public land, trails and open spaces. We need to work to increase the mileage of trails where the camping is good and the distance from town great. We need to connect our trails in the suburbs, near our homes, to decrease our dependency on horse trailers. We need to become and educate others as experts in sustainable, multi-use trail design so that we can disperse our use and our impact on trails. We need to take responsibility for the preservation and creation of our trails. We need to anti-up our taxes and fees if we expect others to do our work for us. We need to let our legislative representatives and government officials know that we do care, we do ride, and we do vote!

May your trail never end.

Denise



Letter From The Forest Preserve District of Cook County President's Trail User Committee

"Dear Trail User:

As trail users we all share the trails with other groups. Since these trails are everyone's resource we all need to take care of them. In Cook County we enjoy two types of multiple use trails. The wide gravel covered "multitrack" trails can be used in any weather condition wet or dry. But the narrow dirt surface "single-track" trails can only be used when dry or frozen.

Single-track trails have a natural dirt surface and are easily damaged in wet weather, so for that reason it is important that you stay off of them when they are wet. As you enter a single-track you will see a new black and yellow sign that says "Open when dry, closed when wet." In an effort to protect these trails, it is important that you follow this warning or you may be ticketed and will have to appear in court.

When using single-track trails a good rule of thumb is you should leave no trace. If your horse hoof, foot, or bike tire leaves an imprint, turn around. That trail should not be used at that time. If you are on an otherwise dry trail and happen upon a wet area, do not ride around it. Instead you should either turn around or go through the middle of it. Going around it makes the trail wider until it is no longer a single-track. Mountain bikers prize single-track trails above all other trails. Just as equestrians travel the country looking for the next great trail experience, mountain bikers do the same as they look for that next great single-track trail experience. We have precious few miles of single-track in Cook County and it is very important that we all follow the rules and protect what we have.

As the seasons change and we get into "mud season," it is the hope of the Equestrian Community, Chicago Area Mountain Bikers and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County that all trail users will follow the rules and protect our trail resources. A lot is at stake here. We can either improve the trail system or lose parts of it from misuse.

Mountain Bikers Should Yield the Trail to Equestrians and Hikers

We all share the trails with other users. Hikers and horses can be intimidated by silent, fast-moving bikes. It is important therefore, that we treat other trail users with respect. As the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) recommends, bikes should yield to hikers and horses.

As mountain bikers approach horses head on, stop and get all bikes on one side of the trail. Talk with the riders. Your voice will put the horses at ease. Then ask if you can ride past.

As you approach a horse from behind, whistle or let the rider know you are there. Talk with the riders. The sound will let the horse know someone is behind them. Spooking a horse can put both you and the rider at risk.

As mountain bikers approach hikers, slow down to their speed. Announce your presence and slow down as you approach them from behind. Yelling out "on your left or on your right" does not always work. They will hear left or right and go there, so slowing down to gauge their reaction is the key."

Conservation Congress

Between 1993 and 2003 there were five Conservation Congress programs, once every three years. Delegates to the Conservation Congress would assemble in the Illinois State House to represent the views of the constituents and to make recommendations to the Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and to the policy makers of Illinois. During the three-day Congress, delegates approved recommendations and made resolutions which would guide natural resource policy in Illinois. This came after a series of caucuses held in each of the five IDNR administrative regions of Illinois to identify issues, draft recommendations and elect delegates. The caucuses provided constituent organizations with an extraordinary opportunity to influence how we manage and utilize our natural resources.

Membership in the Conservation Congress was composed of representatives from recognized organizations in Illinois, including not-for-profit corporations and businesses or other entities whose goals and actions demonstrate a commitment to the protection, conservation, sustainable use and/or recreational enjoyment of Illinois' natural resources. After 2003, the idea of Conservation Congress fell by the wayside.

In February of 2009, Marc Miller became Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and established a new positive direction for the IDNR. Knowing that the next few years will be critical to parks and natural resources throughout the state, Director Miller moved immediately to reengage and involve IDNR constituents with the rebuilding of the agency and formulate new directions for providing outdoor recreation opportunities and natural resource conservation. The IDNR developed a slimmed down approach where costs and demands on limited staff were reduced. The Illinois Natural Resource Advisory Board pre-selected three topics which provided the forum for constituents and the direction of the discussions to come. The three issue areas were Public Access, Youth Recruitment and Retention, and Conservation Funding. Stakeholders were engaged in new ways, including the internet.

The 2009 Conservation Congress is still comprised of a wide range of citizen groups and organizations working together. The new mission:

- To engage, inform, and activate constituents giving them a meaningful avenue for their guidance and commitment;
- To propose and advocate actions that can be taken (continued on page 7)

•

WEBMASTER WANTED – Help maintain the website for Illinois' only state-wide trail advocacy organization, Illinois Trail Riders, and earn your annual membership!

Be a part of preserving horse trails in Illinois!

Email IITrRdrs@illinoistrailriders.com today!

Wauponsee Glacial Trail

Shared by Lori Kennedy

Looking for that long trail with varying landscape? Try the Wauponsee Glacial Trail.

Located in Will County near Joliet, the trail is named for an ancient lake formed at the end of the last ice age. The twelve-foot wide multi-use trail is composed of 2.5 miles of asphalt in Joliet, not open to equestrian use, and 20 miles of crushed limestone from Laraway Road southward to the Kankakee River, which is open to horse riders. It is a rails-to-trail conversion and is a totally linear trail.

Sugar Creek Preserve provides main access to the Wauponsee Glacial Trail and trailer parking.

In 2004, the equestrian trail was completed from Laraway Road to the City of Manhattan, approximately 4.4 miles in length.

In 2005, voters approved a \$95 million bond issuance requested by the Forest Preserve District of Will County. The initiative passed by a 52 to 48 vote. A portion of this money has funded the Wauponsee Trail.

In 2006, 8.1 additional miles of trail were completed from Manhattan to Symerton, and in 2008 the trail was completed with 6.8 miles of trail from Symerton to the Kankakee River.

This was a huge project

As you start out on the trail, you may feel very small as vast farm fields stretch out farther than the eye can see. The farmland gives way for a short time as you enter the town of Manhattan where trees along the trail provide some shade.

Leaving Manhattan, the trail parallels another very short section of railroad tracks that dead-end at a maintenance facility. South of Manhattan, you'll see some of the largest cornfields around. To the west, you'll see the 19,000 acre Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, which was federally designated as a tallgrass prairie in 1996 – the only such area to receive that status. Equestrian access to the Midewin from the Wauponsee Glacial Trail is planned.

The trail then goes to Symerton, a quaint town at about mile 15. From Symerton to the Kankakee River you have open sky trails. The trail ends at a bridge over the Kankakee River. Horses are not allowed on the bridge, but I am told the view up and down the river is spectacular for people from up there.

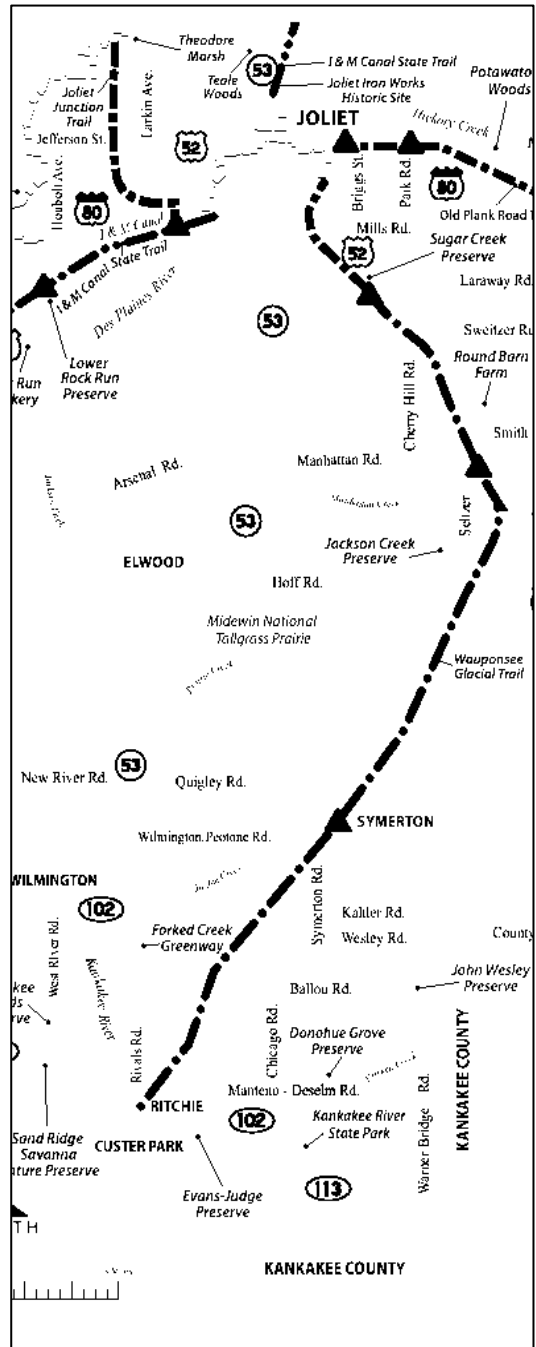
But this is not the end of the journey. Plans are on the drawing board to provide access from the southern part of the trail together with trailer parking and possibly with overnight equestrian camping.

Located in Sugar Creek Preserve is the Forest Preserve's visitor's center and office location, the Sugar Creek Administration Center (Center). The Center is a model of "green architecture" with features such as photovoltaic panels to provide electricity to power the building's computers and phones; abundant glass to provide natural lighting and solar heating in the winter; an air-convection system that utilizes chimneys to draw air through the building; and an abundant use of recycled materials in the building's construction. The Center features extensive landscaping with plants native to the Midwest. The landscaping includes a pond that mimics a natural wetland, which provides habitat for wildlife and filters pollutants from water before it flows into Sugar Creek. At the Center visitors can pick up information on Forest Preserve trails, obtain permits and attend workshops and tours on natural gardening and building "green."

The Sugar Creek Administrative Center (parking and trailhead) is located at 17540 West Laraway Road, approximately .75 miles west of Route 52 in Joliet. From Interstate 80, take South Briggs Street south for 2.7 miles and turn right onto Laraway Road. After .7 mile, look for the Center on the right, before the Chicagoland Speedway.

For further information contact the Forest Preserve District of Will County at 815 727-8700 8:00 am - 4:00 pm weekdays or visit their website at www.fpdwc.org.

The Wauponsee Glacial Trail (equestrian portion) runs from Sugar Creek Preserve and ends at the Kankakee River (near Ritchie on the map).



Equestrian Lifestyle Expo and Holiday Market

By Peter Veit

November 21st & 22nd are the dates for the second relocated Equine Expo. This year it will be held at the new Lake County Fair Grounds Expo Center (north of Chicago, west of I-94 at Peterson & Midlothian Roads – 1/2 mile west of US 45 and 1/2 mile east of IL 83). Free parking. Last year it was held at Arlington Race Track.

This year there will be an even greater emphasis on the educational aspects with more sessions of pertinent topics ranging from equine health through equine maintenance and equine law. There will also be an even greater number of vendors and educational booths.

What we think is very exciting is that five trail advocacy organizations will have a joint information booth featuring their activities and capabilities which include interfacing with the forest preserve districts, working with other local clubs, site superintendents, etc. A representative of the Equine Rescue Training Program for accident first responders will also be there.

Illinois Trail Riders, as a statewide organization, will take on the umbrella responsibility for the booth with Horse Promoters, Palos Hills Horsemen's Association, Will County Trail Riders, and Trail Riders of DuPage all present. What may be even more exciting is that the US Forestry Service (via its Midewin Tall Grass Prairie Restoration project of 23,000 acres) will be an active participant in this joint booth.

Midewin is a fantastic example of how land managers and equestrians can work together. There was the time of the very first meeting some six or eight years ago with the same clubs sending representatives when Dr. Gene Woods of Clemson University hosted a one-day seminar for all the Midewin staff and the five equestrian clubs. At that time there were only three miles of as yet untried equestrian trails and a new site manager. She knew that there were some 40,000-50,000 horses in the greater Chicago area – and was absolutely certain that at least 30,000 of these would be out each weekend trampling her newly restored prairie!

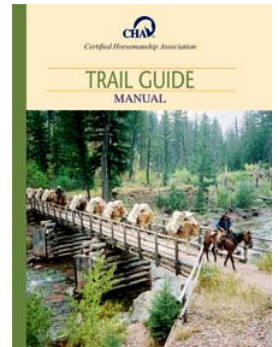
Today there are some 8± miles of trails, with 30 more on the drawing board and in the process of being built. Relations between all trail users, the restoration volunteers, and the professional staff, are exemplary.

While we all helped – Will County Trail Riders did most of the work -- and deserves all of the credit.

We hope to see you at the Expo! Visit www.horsemenscouncil.org for more Expo information or call (866) 384-9161.

Book Review

The *Trail Guide Manual* by the Certified Horsemanship Association is an extensive, (252 page), comprehensive collection of the skills and knowledge necessary for any trail rider or trail guide in any setting. It is based on the requirements of the nationally recognized, four-level certification program that has promoted excellence in safety and education for the benefit of the horse industry since the 60's. This *Trail Guide Manual* was developed specifically to reduce or eliminate the risks to trail riders and horses and presents a solid framework for a safe and professional equestrian experience.



On the trail we each have a responsibility to ourselves, our livestock, the environment and the others who use the resource as we, and our saddle clubs, meet the challenges and expectations of our riding experiences. Wide ranges of topics are covered in the book, associated with everything from horse care and handling. The basics of behavior, feeding, first aid, hoof care and health for horse and rider are introduced. Horsemanship and riding skills are explained along with the correct use, adjustment, care and repair of tack and equipment that are used for trail riding and packing. Camping skills, navigation, menu planning and emergency procedures complement each section, from the one-hour trail ride to overnight trips to wilderness adventures on horseback.

These skills are connected with a thread of professional standards expected from the mature, educated equestrian who utilizes many interpersonal relationship skills and exhibits respect and empathy for participants, livestock, the environment, and the land manager associated with the recreational activity of trail riding.

The material is sound, accurate and so complete that the manual could easily be used as a textbook for any college course in trail riding. Bulleted outlines and succinct narratives waste no words as they convey important information. The many pictures and photos enhance the reader's understanding and knowledge essential for increasing the personal skills of a participant or a leader in any trail riding activity.

The book is available online at www.CHA-ahse.org or at (800) 399-0138.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

ILLINOIS TRAIL RIDERS is currently looking for individuals to serve as Directors of our organization. Be part of the effort to develop and maintain equestrian trails in Illinois!

We are also looking for Volunteers to help out in various capacities for a multitude of projects.

HELP us be more effective!

Volunteer today!

For more information please email IIRdrs@illinoistrailriders.com.

Conservation Congress

(Continued from Page 4)

by elected and appointed officials to protect and conserve our natural resources;

- To ensure through professional management that sustainable use, recreational opportunities and enjoyment of these resources is available for this and future generations.

The delegates still worked to resolve the issues of their constituents on a variety of topics including trails and greenways, outdoor recreation, education, land and water management, funding and public and political involvement. Everyone who attended the state-wide meetings between July and October of 2009 did so knowing that this is a critical moment for conservation and with the understanding that change will not happen without broad constituent and public support.

To begin the process, the Natural Resources Advisory Board formed three committees on three critical issues, Youth Recruitment and Retention, Public Access, and Funding. In a series of 13 meetings held throughout the state (open to anyone who signed up!), participants took on the task of reviewing the issue, developing reports, proposing and voting on recommendations.

Many ideas were generated throughout the process. Recommendations designed to protect and conserve natural resources for this and future generations were brought to the top of the list. A final summarized version of the recommendations was reviewed on October 24th by the more than 100 constituents in attendance at Congress.

Saturday, in the IDNR building in Springfield, the Congress background and process was reviewed. The final committee reports were presented and discussed in the three focus areas. After lunch, breakout groups of eight to ten people were formed on each topic to review findings, discuss issues, and generate new ideas. At the end of the day, each group summarized its findings, before group leaders retired to compile all of the information.

Sunday the compiled ideas were presented and each of over 75 participants received seven stickers to use as votes. Each person could place their votes next to the items that were most important to their cause. In this manner participants forged a consensus. After placing votes, the most important recommendations were as follows:

- Youth Recruitment and Retention – Update environmental legacy program to include outdoor components that result in youth recruitment and retention and work more closely with partners and teachers to help children appreciate the outdoors.
- Public Access – Restore liability protection for all recreation use on public lands.
- Funding – Implement a long-term dedicated funding source according to the master plan, including an increase of fees.

At this critical point, with so many challenges to overcome, the need is great to provide that forum and give IDNR advocates their voice back. To be effective, this information needs to reach elected and appointed Illinois officials through the voice of the advocates.

A complete report, including detailed information on the discussions and recommendations, is available on IDNR's website, <http://dnr.state.il.us>.

Northern Illinois Horse Fest

Shared by Jean Greenlee

The Northern Illinois Horsefest was held once again in Belvidere, IL the last weekend of August. This is an annual fair held in the late summer with clinicians, demonstrations, horses for sale, drill team competition, and, of course, lots of items for sale.

This year we shared our booth with Horsemen's Council of Illinois and Equine Rescue Training group, a program administered through Trail Riders of DuPage which helps train emergency personnel and first responders on handling equines that may be involved in emergencies.

Newsbits

A bill worthy of support by equestrians is the **Complete America's Great Trails Act** (H.R.1912) that was introduced by Representative Gerry E. Connolly (D-VA) and Representative Cynthia Lummis (R-WY). This bill would create a new tax credit for private landowners who grant a conservation easement to a National Scenic Trail (NST), which crosses their property. If enacted, this tax credit will provide an incentive for landowners to establish easements and complete NSTs. Trail easements such as these would open many more miles of NSTs to the public and users of NSTs will be assured access to those portions of NSTs.

Governor Pat Quinn has named **John D. Rogner** as the assistant director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Rogner joins the IDNR from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), where he has served since 1998 as supervisor of the Chicago Field Office.

As IDNR assistant director, Rogner will serve as a liaison to the Department's federal partners and work to rebuild its fish and wildlife programs, as well as help manage new initiatives on youth retention and recruitment. He is joining IDNR as part of an agreement with the USFWS intended to strengthen fish and wildlife programs and projects managed cooperatively by both agencies.

