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Leaving No Trace on Horseback

Deb Balliet, Equine Land Conservation Resource Chief Executive Officer, recently completed the Leave No Trace Master Educator Stock Course. This 5 day, "opportunity of a lifetime," course led Balliet to the Montana wilderness. There, she and 11 other horsemen and three educators learned the Leave No Trace principles as they applied to stock and packing purposes, as well as techniques for training others.

"Leave No Trace is more than a program," stated Balliet. "It's a way of living; a personal commitment to good stewardship of the land. Those who practice LNT have a way of using and interacting with the land with as little impact as possible."

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics is "an educational nonprofit organization dedicated to the responsible enjoyment and active stewardship of the outdoors by all people worldwide."

Practicing Leave No Trace principles can have a great positive impact on horsemen. Being good stewards of the land and ensuring good water quality is a good practice, but it also may open doors by strengthening relationships with public land managers, land owners and other recreationists. Most importantly, it is these positive relationships and good will that can retain existing access and obtain new access to trails and riding land for equestrians.

There are three levels of Leave No Trace education, Awareness classes, Train the Trainer classes and the Master Educator courses. For more information on training at any level, visit the LNT website at <http://www.lnt.org/training/index.php>.

"I would particularly encourage those interested to participate in the Master Educator Stock course," Balliet said. "Not only is the information invaluable, but the time spent with like-minded horsemen and women cannot be replaced."

The next Master Educator Stock course is scheduled for September 27-October 1, 2010 in the Hoosier National Forest in Bloomington, Indiana. Participants in this course will also be contributing to the new frontcountry course model. Graduates will be well prepared to "leave no trace" on their own rides, but will also be ready to teach both Awareness and Train the Trainer courses. If you are interested in participating in this course, please call Linda Carlson at the Ninemile Wildlands Training Center at (406) 626-5410.

For more information, or to get involved in equine land and trail conservation in your community, visit www.elcr.org or contact ELCR at (859) 455-8383.

About the Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR)

The Equine Land Conservation Resource is the only national not-for-profit organization advancing the conservation of land for horse-related activity. ELCR serves as an information resource and

clearinghouse for land and horse owners on issues related to equine land conservation, land use planning, land stewardship/best management practices, trails, liability and equine economic development. If you want to know more about ELCR, visit our website at www.elcr.org or call (859) 455-8383.