

*Images available on request*

*L-to-R: Breyer has designated the ELCR as its Breyer Benefit Model beneficiary for 2009. Two new models have been created from which a minimum donation of \$10,000 will be awarded to a group to help them preserve land for equestrian use.*

## **Highland Equestrian Conservancy Wins \$10,000 Breyer-ELCR Grant**

### *Breyer Names ELCR Beneficiary of 2009 Breyer Benefit Model Program*

(Pequannock, NJ - Jan. 30, 2009) -- "Every time we turn our backs, we lose land to development," says Sharon Greene of the Highland Equestrian Conservancy. Her group, based in southeastern Michigan, is the 2008 winner of Breyer Animal Creation's Equestrian Land Preservation grant, awarded through the Equestrian Land Conservation Resource (ELCR), Lexington, Ky. Highland Equestrian Conservancy will use the \$10,000 grant to purchase land that connects a road in neighboring Rose Township to Highland Oaks Park, a popular park for local trail riders. This purchase will help preserve land and an equestrian way of life in an area, like so many, that is struggling with encroaching development.

The ELCR is the only national organization dedicated to saving land for horse-related activities. The organization's goals are to get horsemen to understand the magnitude of the land loss issue and to guide them in taking grassroots action to preserve open space. Breyer created a special model horse from which a portion of the proceeds will create a fund to help local groups preserve land for equine use through the ELCR. Breyer has pledged a minimum of \$20,000 to the ELCR over two years.

"Loss of land use for equestrian activities cuts across all breeds and disciplines and affects everyone who loves horses," said Stephanie Macejko, Breyer's Vice President of Marketing & Product Development, and a frequent trail rider. "That's why we named the Equestrian Land Conservation Resource as the beneficiary of our 2008 Breyer Benefit Model program and why we will continue this program with the ELCR in 2009. If we don't act, the land we ride on, drive through, pasture and raise our horses on will be gone."

"It's not enough to be aware," agrees Deb Balliet, ELCR CEO. "You have to take action and be advocates in understanding and conveying appreciation of the value of horses."

The Highland Equestrian Conservancy, the first of its kind in Michigan, started as a small group of area residents with a mission to conserve and protect natural resources and the equestrian heritage of Highland Township. Merle Richmond, Coordinator of the Oakland Equestrian Coalition, Paula Weaver from Highland Trail Riders, Sharon Greene, a 4H, US Pony Club and Equestrian Team mom, (all Michigan Horse Council members), and Dr. Fay Hansen of Oakland University and the Oakland Land Conservancy, spearheaded an effort to work with horse facilities, trail clubs, equestrian groups (4H, Pony Club, Equestrian Teams), Highland Business Association and the township Downtown Development Authority. The "Highland Model" was established to promote open space, interconnecting greenways, trails and wildlife corridors.

Plans are underway for hitching posts and stabling for equestrians to ride into the horse-friendly downtown. The Conservancy has already established two greenways with riding trails around local housing developments. The HEC is working on two more to create a network. The "Highland Model" is now recognized as a strategy for preserving the rural character of developing townships. Information on the Highland Equestrian Conservancy can be found at [www.highlandequestrians.org](http://www.highlandequestrians.org).

### *Applying For Funds*

To support the program, Breyer has created two new model horses for 2009 in ELCR/Breyer branded custom-designed boxes that also contain an application to apply for funding. The ELCR Benefit models will be available from January-December 2009 at specialty toy stores, tack shops, and agricultural retailers nationwide in specially marked displays. Details about applying for funding will also be available online at [www.breyerhorses.com](http://www.breyerhorses.com) or [www.elcr.com](http://www.elcr.com).

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### **About Breyer Animal Creations®**

Breyer Animal Creations®, a division of Reeves International, Inc., is the world's best-selling brand of equine-themed toys and collectibles. Breyer designs, manufactures and markets authentic model horses and animals of enduring quality for play and collecting. From Hollywood heroes like Roy Roger's Trigger to racing legends Seabiscuit and Barbaro, Breyer brings the world of horses to life! Each Breyer model is individually hand-decorated by Breyer artisans. Visit [www.BreyerHorses.com](http://www.BreyerHorses.com) for the latest news and information on BreyerFest, *Just About Horses* magazine, licensing programs with Scholastic®, Macmillan® and The Saddle Club®, as well as the real horses that inspire our models.

### **About Equestrian Land Conservation Resource (ELCR)**

Equestrian Land Conservation Resource, based at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Ky. is the only national organization that advances the conservation of land for horse related activities. Equestrian Land Conservation Resource is a resource for horse people, towns, land trusts, and elected officials nationwide - a clearinghouse of information on such topics as getting organized, securing land trusts, and rights of way. It is a network that puts people in touch with those of similar need or experience, partnering with environmental and other interest groups, and other information to secure land for horse activities. In addition, ELCR promotes the vital connection between horse landowners and land conservation in general. For more information, visit [www.elcr.org](http://www.elcr.org) or call 859-455-8383.

