



## America's Great Outdoors Suggested Talking Points

- The conservation and management of America's public and private lands is extremely important to the millions of equestrians throughout the country. Riding provides Americans with a link to the past and a chance to see and experience America's great public lands from horseback just as early explorers and settlers did. Additionally, without private farm land to breed, raise, and provide feed for its horses the equestrian community could not exist. a minimum of 36 million acres (4 acres per horse, conservatively) is needed to support the 9 million horses in the US.
- The recreational riding community is dependent on access to public lands. Recreational riders also need well maintained trails, trail heads for horses, access routes, picnic and camping facilities, restrooms and stables to make use of our nations public lands.
- The equestrian community recognizes its responsibility to treat our nation's public lands with respect. This community has a deep commitment to outdoor recreation and believes that recreation is a fundamental and legitimate use of our country's public lands. Whether they are trail riders, competitive riders, packers, outfitters or saddle-stock users, they recognize the overriding need for the responsible use and wise management of our natural resources. Furthermore, thousands of recreational riders are involved in volunteer projects each year building and maintaining trails for all users of public lands.
- Besides being a healthy activity that allows Americans of all ages to enjoy the outdoors, recreational riding also has a direct and significant impact on the national economy. The recreational horse industry contributes nearly \$32 billion a year to the economy and supports the employment of over 435,000 Americans nationwide.
- Equestrian activities can play a roll in increasing physical activity among children and get them away from the television, computer video games etc. It is important that children have a broad array of options so they can find a physical activity that engages their attention. Equestrian activities should be one of those options.
- Many Americans with these various physical impairments regularly visit trails and the backcountry on horseback. Indeed, more and more such trail users with these conditions are using horses as a means of access. The horse is a common and environmentally friendly means to access wilderness, and many outdoor areas for physically challenged individuals.

- We hope as the Administration and Congress determines future policy the contribution America's millions of equestrians make to support and conserve America's outdoors and the role equestrian activities can play by connecting Americans of all ages with the outdoors will be considered. The equestrian community is part of the historic legacy of America's great outdoors and riding on America's public lands continues to play an important roll in the lives of many Americans and their families today.