

## NEWS RELEASE

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*Editors Note: Photos of new members available upon request*

### **ELCR Adds Diversity to Growing Advisory Council and Recognizes Departing Board Members**

*Lexington, KY* – The Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) is proud to welcome four new members to the Advisory Council which serves as a support structure for the organizations growth and future development. Each member brings unique and necessary knowledge to the table and can advise ELCR staff and Board members on a variety of topics ranging from fundraising to volunteerism, to trail development and stewardship to equine economic development.

**Jeff Hooper**, of Texas, has served as the National Cutting Horse Association's Executive Director since August of 2000. The NCHA is the nation's premier Western performance horse organization with over 21,000 members.

Jeff has dedicated his life to working in various sectors of the equine industry and he understands and promotes the conservation of land for equine related activities. "Preserving land for equine purposes and preserving the western lifestyle is extremely important to the National Cutting Horse Association. It is an honor to serve with the ELCR on these worthy efforts that will benefit generations to come", said Hooper.

Jeff is the proud father of two children; a son studying at Texas A&M University and a daughter whose a junior in high school.

**Kerri Kent** of Hood River, Oregon, is a rancher, rider, outdoor enthusiast, mother and inventive businesswoman that started KERRITS; a company that specializes in sustainable equestrian apparel that is made exclusively from organic and recycled materials. In the beginning, Kent examined every aspect of her business from manufacturing and shipping practices to product packaging and advertising strategies to develop an earth-friendly business model and the results proved to be extremely rewarding.

Kerri has been actively involved with horses since childhood. She has participated in various disciplines including jumpers, eventing and dressage. These days she can be found riding outdoors on a 40,000 acre cattle ranch in Washington. She works diligently to allocate land for equestrian use. "Maintaining land is vital to the sustainability of the equestrian industry. As a horse person and business owner, I am proud to be involved in land conservation for future generations", states Kerri.

Her dedication to land conservation is made clear through Kerrit's involvement with 1% for the Planet; a global movement comprised of hundreds of companies that donate 1% of their annual sales to a network of more than 1,500 environmental organizations. Kerrit's has earmarked their contribution to the ELCR to help advance the conservation of land for horse-related activities.

The third addition to the ELCR Advisory Council is **Anthony Fleischmann** of New Jersey. Tony is the President of Reeves International, Inc. In 1985 Tony deferred his acceptance to Tufts University Veterinary School to help his father acquire and develop Breyer Animal Creations®, a high quality brand of model horses. Breyer grew considerably over the next decade to become the premiere brand of model horses and accessories. In 1998 Tony purchased Reeve's International, Inc. outright from his father and continues to develop the business both domestically and internationally.

In 2008 Breyer® and the ELCR partnered to create a new program that would fund grassroots organizations trying to preserve land for equine use at the local level. Each year the grant is awarded at the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event. As of the spring 2011, Breyer will have provided a total of \$30,000 for equine land conservation projects across the country.

Tony adores animals and the great outdoors. He is committed to animal welfare, animal-assisted therapeutic charities and children's education and welfare. He spends his spare time enjoying the great outdoors running, kayaking, wilderness trekking and packing, horseback riding or by finding thrill in aerobic aviation.

**Colby Balazs**, of Newton, MA, is the Vice President of Marketing at SmartPak; a rapidly growing company that offers a broad line of horse health, show apparel, tack, dog supplies and pharmacy products. The environmentally savvy company works hard to minimize their impact on the earth by abiding to the "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" viewpoint of conservation.

As an outdoor enthusiast, Colby is familiar with land use issues. Growing up in a small Pennsylvania community bordering 2,000 acres of accessible state game lands, she became a supporter for responsible trail maintenance and advocacy. Although she feels lucky to have had access to the open land, she admits not all users were responsible trail stewards which in turn threatened access for all users.

Colby is a dedicated equestrian and actively competes in three-day eventing with her Irish Sport Horse gelding, Hard Alee. Their recent successes include ranking in the top 10 on the United States Eventing Associations National Leaderboard for the past two years.

As an eventer, Colby is especially sensitive to land conservation. "Many of the fields I used to gallop across have become developments in the short span of 10 years. I find myself asking, what will happen in 20 years if we don't act now? She continues by saying, "Horses by their very nature need land. They are physically engineered to roaming, grazing machines. While I know the way we keep the modern horse is not exactly as intended, we need to do all we can to preserve open spaces for their keeping, food and our equestrian pursuits."

ELCR CEO, Deb Balliet, is confident that each new member will help guide the organization in the correct strategic direction. "Each new member has valuable knowledge to share with the ELCR staff and Board of Director's. Their guidance will enable the organization to take the necessary strides needed to increase awareness across the country," said Balliet.

As the ELCR welcomes new Advisory Council members, the organization also recognized three departing board members that served dutifully for many years. Georgiana Hubbard McCabe, an ELCR co-founder and past President; Nancy Hamill Winter, past President; and Sophie Pirie-Clifton, all played a central role in the organizations growth.

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**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. For more information about the ELCR visit our website at [www.elcr.org](http://www.elcr.org) or call (859) 455-8383.

