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Editor's note: Photo available upon request

## **Russell Martin of Show-Me Missouri Backcountry Horsemen to Receive Anson W. Taylor, Jr. Award for Leadership in Equine Land Conservation**

Lexington, KY – Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) is proud to name Russell Martin of Bolivar, Missouri as the recipient of the 2013 Anson W. Taylor, Jr. Award for Leadership in Equine Land Conservation. The award will be presented to Russell Martin, of the Show-Me Missouri Backcountry Horsemen (SMMBCH), by ELCR President Susan Harding at the Back Country Horsemen's National Board Meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup> in Rapid City, S.D.

Named for ELCR's founder and first president, the Anson W. Taylor, Jr. Award recognizes individuals or organizations that demonstrate outstanding leadership in conserving and preserving access to land for horse-related uses.

Russell Martin, through his work with the Show-Me Missouri Backcountry Horsemen (SMMBCH), has made great strides in helping to improve relationships with government agencies and private groups hoping to find common ground as well as helping to resolve equestrian related issues on Missouri trails. "He has done more to improve the relationship between equestrians, other trail users and trail managers in the state of Missouri than any other individual or group of individuals," said Nancy Feakes, Mark Twain National Forest Recreation Manager.

Russell and his wife Tammie Martin, serve as state-wide equestrian representatives in various capacities; most significantly with Missouri State Parks planning, development and maintenance projects. Martin has been instrumental in the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the SMMBCH and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks (DNR) and recently with Mark Twain National Forest to specifically assist with management and maintenance of trails and other equestrian recreation opportunities in the Forest, help provide equestrian input to public land management, and provide Leave No Trace (LNT) training.

Currently, Martin is spearheading a project with SMMBCH working closely with primary a property owner, United States Forest Service and Missouri State Parks to create an equestrian use trail that runs parallel to the Ozark Trail as well as improve the condition of other equestrian trails in the area. He has worked with land managers and other interested parties to select an agreed-upon route, applied for a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant to fund some of the construction work, and led a small group of dedicated volunteers to upgrade the existing section of trail on the Mark Twain National Forest to accommodate equestrian use and meet the higher trail standards and parameters. When completed, this new trail segment will help form one of the longest through-trails managed for equestrian use in the nation.

Russell serves as Chairman of the Board and Public Land Committee Chair for SMMBCH and is also a board member of the Ozark Trail Association. He has helped to start new chapters of the Show-Me Missouri Backcountry Horsemen, and has attended meetings and work outings for several chapters. Russell was awarded the US Forest Service's Eastern Region (R9) Trail Volunteer of the Year in 2012. The Eastern Region includes 20 states, 15 national forest units and thousands of volunteers.

"We are proud to honor Russell Martin with the Anson W. Taylor, Jr. award because of his notable work ethic and accomplishments in the area of trail advocacy, access and stewardship on public lands," noted ELCR CEO Anna Gibson. "Mr. Martin's outstanding example of dedication, volunteerism and leadership will serve as an inspiration to many other individuals."

Former award recipients include Robert Clay (2010) a Kentucky Thoroughbred breeder and land conservationist and founder of Bluegrass Tomorrow and the Bluegrass Conservancy; Majorie V. Kittredge (2011) founder of Windrush Therapeutic Equitation in Massachusetts and owner of Windrush Farm, a property that was conserved with help from a number of towns and organizations, awarded posthumously and Caledonia Conservancy of Racine Wisconsin (2012) for the Land Trust's conservation efforts and trail preservation and access on private lands. For a complete list of prior award winners, please visit [www.elcr.org](http://www.elcr.org).

***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 and networking resource for land and horse owner, organizations, agencies and all equine enthusiasts on issues related to farm and ranch land conservation, land use planning, farm and ranch land stewardship/best management practices, trail access and sustainability, liability and equine economic impacts. For more information about the ELCR visit our website at [www.elcr.org](http://www.elcr.org) or call (859) 455-8383.*