

# THE RESOURCE

## ELCR Strategic Plan Focuses on Supporting Local Horse Communities

**M**ore than 15 years ago, horse owners and conservationists saw the risk to the future of the horse community from land becoming inaccessible to horses. With great foresight, they founded the Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) with the express purpose of “sounding the alarm.” Since then, with our battle cry “No Land, No Horse!” ELCR has worked with equine and conservation organizations to make horse enthusiasts aware of the threat of losing land for horse activities and to provide educational materials and resources.

Over the years ELCR has become the “go to” organization for issues relating to equine land conservation. During this period ELCR has witnessed an increase in local efforts by equine organizations working to protect horse lands and support land trusts, impact local planning and zoning, conserve publicly owned and accessible equestrian facilities and support trails and trail networks. Too often these local efforts are hampered by a lack of coordination among local equine stakeholders and insufficient tools and resources to impact change at the local level.

Having had success in reaching horse people, ELCR is now focused on working directly with local equine organizations to assist them in keeping their communities accessible to horses. Since most land is saved locally, ELCR is now focused on working directly with local equine organizations. Our vision is a future that includes




Photo courtesy United States Pony Clubs

*Keeping land open and accessible for horses is key to future generations being able to enjoy the benefits horses bring to our communities.*

**Where will you  
ride  
drive  
race  
compete  
raise foals  
grow hay?**



**EQUINE  
LAND  
CONSERVATION  
RESOURCE**

4037 Iron Works Parkway  
Suite 120  
Lexington, KY 40511  
859-455-8383  
Fax 859-455-8381  
info@elcr.org  
[www.elcr.org](http://www.elcr.org) 

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horses in our communities nationwide with public and private lands accessible for horse related activities, and individuals enriched through deeper connection to the horse. The realization of our vision can be attained through the strategic development of a nationwide network of local organizations, learning from one another and benefitting from a shared commitment and approach.

**Our vision is a future that includes horses in our communities nationwide, including metropolitan areas, with access to open space with public and private lands accessible for horses and horse related activities, and communities enriched through deeper connection to the horse.**

With the support of a national network, horse enthusiasts can become more effectively engaged in protecting horse lands in their local communities and thus help to ensure the future of our equine lifestyle, heritage and industry. Furthermore, local groups need to have the appropriate tools, resources and support in order to maximize the impact of their activities.

Our strategy is based on forging alliances and promoting a united voice on behalf of the horse. A network of local equine conservation organizations across the country will be at the forefront to ensure that future generations benefit from horses and all they provide to us. By establishing the network and developing and distributing the needed tools and resources, ELCR will ensure that horses are protected and appreciated in local communities across the country.

### The key phases of our strategic plan are:

1. Identify local equine organizations involved in land conservation, develop a national network of these organizations and determine the issues most critical to their success
2. Provide the tools needed by these groups – educational materials, networking opportunities, organizational and technical assistance and financial support
3. Support local equine land conservation efforts through a marketing program communicating the benefits of horses in local communities

The completed strategic plan will be available by the end of 2015.

Local organizations interested in learning more about the strategic plan or becoming part of the network can contact ELCR at 859-455-8383 or [information@elcr.org](mailto:information@elcr.org). ■

## ELCR Elects New President

ELCR is proud to announce the election of Ken Haddad of Lloyd, Fla. as president of the board of directors. Ken has served on the ELCR Board of Directors since 2011. An avid foxhunter and trail rider, Ken has years of experience in land conservation. He retired as executive director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission where he was responsible for the management of over 5 million acres of Florida public and private lands. Ken has worked with many other organizations, serving as a member of the state lands Acquisition and Restoration Council, chairman of the Science Coordinating Group of the Everglades Restoration Task Force, and president of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. He is a current board member of the Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy and the Wildlife Foundation of Florida. ■



*Abby and her Quarter Horse Appendix, UA Strait Up Details (Jack)*

## ELCR Welcomes Abby Gates

ELCR welcomed new staff member Abigail (Abby) Gates in May. She received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from Georgetown College this spring. Abby became interested in equine land conservation after spending a semester as an intern for ELCR. She has also interned with Equestrian Events Inc., the organizers of Rolex Kentucky Three Day Event, and Kentucky Equine Research, an international equine nutrition, research and consultation company. Abby is a lifelong equestrian, growing up with horses on her family's farm in Arkansas. She resides in Georgetown, KY and enjoys riding and bringing along her young buckskin Quarter Horse Appendix gelding Jack. ■



## From the Saddle

### A Letter from the ELCR President

Welcome to the fall issue of *The Resource*. My name is Ken Haddad and I am the new president of the ELCR Board of Directors. Your first thought is probably, never heard of you and where did you come from? Well, to make a long story short, I am relatively new to the horse world...at least new relative to every other horse person I know! While always having an interest in horses my career never provided the opportunity for my wife Sharon and I to actually pursue our interest or even learn how to ride. We did have horses on our minds however. In 2001 we built a 4 stall horse barn and then in 2004 bought a horse trailer. We got our first horse in 2005 after I rode with a Master of Fox Hounds in a vehicle to watch a mounted fox hunt. It was quite a thrill just to watch. I learned to ride and jump in short order and have been an avid fox hunter and trail rider ever since.

Why is this relevant to ELCR? It so happens that from 2002-2009 I was the executive director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the state agency in Florida that presided over all fish and wildlife in Florida and managed over 5 million acres of conservation land. It was not until I became involved with horses did it become clear to me that representatives of every user group had been to our meetings

advocating for their interests on our public lands except for those representing horse activities.

Literally, in almost 8 years, I did not hear from one horse person. I found myself being the sole advocate for making sure agency public lands were available to horse activities. Of course this also translates to all the issues faced on private lands with land use changing with the blink of an eye and planning and zoning leaving out the horse. So, my experiences have driven me to be an advocate for the horse and to jump with both feet into the mission of ELCR. Without a collective and networked voice in our local, state and national arenas I see the future of the horse in our communities dimming.

The good news is that ELCR has a plan. We have sounded the alarm of No Land No Horse and now we recognize the need to help organize and provide the tools for advocating for horse and land conservation at the local level. ELCR has spent months extensively devising a new strategic plan in order to chart our efforts over the next several years to develop and nurture a national network of local action groups working to conserve horse lands in their communities. We are excited about this next step for ELCR and the impact it will have on ensuring we have access to the land needed to support the equine industry. Read about our new strategic plan in this issue of *The Resource*. The complete strategic plan will be available by the end of the year. We look forward to working with you on the implementation of our strategic plan! ■



ELCR President Ken Haddad with his horses Flying Cloud, Jamison and Forrest



## Cobia Chosen as Conservation Scholarship Recipient

**K**atelyn Cobia of Layton, Utah has been selected as recipient of the 2015 Anson W. H. Taylor Jr. Memorial Scholarship. Katie was chosen for her academic accomplishments as well as her achievements in Pony Club, but it is her appreciation of the importance of land conservation that made her an outstanding candidate for this scholarship. She is a member of the Wasatch Pony Club in Ogden, Utah. Katie will begin attending Utah State University this fall, majoring in Bioveterinarian Science.



*Scholarship recipient Katie Cobia of Layton, Utah aboard her gelding Helluvahottie (Elvis)*

ELCR partnered with the United States Pony Clubs to establish the Anson W. H. Taylor Jr. Memorial Scholarship in 2006 to honor Anson Taylor for his work and dedication to youth and land conservation. Mr. Taylor was a founding member of ELCR, as well as a devoted supporter and past President of USPC. ■

*Thanks to our corporate friend:*

### Active Interest Media



#### Equine Network and its fine family of equestrian print and online publications:

American Cowboy, Arabian Horse World, Discover Horses, Dressage Today, EquiManagement, Equine.com, EquiSearch.com, EquiShopper, EQUUS, HorseBooksEtc.com, Horse Journal, HorseLinkMagazine.com, Horse & Rider, MyHorse.com, Practical Horseman, Spin to Win Rodeo, and The Trail Rider



Riding on trails that are wet can damage trails. Rain softened surfaces are vulnerable to use immediately after rainfall events. Please allow trails time to dry before adventuring out. Ride on dirt roads or more durable surfaces and allow the trails to recover. Do your part by modeling appropriate behavior and best practices.

This PSA was made possible by the American Quarter Horse Association's STEP program.



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# Rain? Rein go away. Come again another day!

## ELCR Welcomes New Members to Board of Directors

**E**LCR is pleased to welcome two new members to the board of directors. John Blackburn of Washington, D.C. brings a special knowledge to the board. John has over 35 years of experience as an architect, and his skill in equestrian architecture has positioned him as a leader in this exclusive niche. John has a portfolio of more than 160 equestrian projects, allowing him a unique perspective of horses and land use and a particular appreciation for the hardships encountered in equine land conservation.



*John Blackburn of Washington, D.C.*

Dot Moyer of Columbus, N.C. brings to the board years of interest and activism in land conservation. Dot has witnessed the difficulty of conserving horse lands and dedicates much



of her time to protecting land and equestrian access. She is an active member of Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, Pacolet Area Conservancy, and the Polk County Soil and Water District Advisory Committee. She has also served on the Foothills Equestrian Trails Association Board of Directors, focusing on its easement program to protect the trails. ■

*Dot Moyer of Columbus, N.C. and her Lusitano homebred, Recado*

## Don't forget to follow Equine Land Conservation Resource on Social Media



**FACEBOOK**

<https://www.facebook.com/EquineLandConservationResource>



**TWITTER**

<https://twitter.com/savehorseland>



**INSTAGRAM** (new to ELCR!)

<https://instagram.com/savehorseland>



**YOUTUBE**

<https://www.youtube.com/Elcrvideos>

## Equine Places and Spaces

**NEW:**

### Blake Lowry Horse Camp | Illinois

City officials of Litchfield, Ill. joined local riders in June to unveil the new Blake Lowry Horse Camp near Lake Lou Yaeger. The camp started as a few user-created trails, but has been developed into a new horse campground through dedicated volunteer dedication, and is quickly gaining popularity. The camp is outfitted with RV sites, hitching areas, shower houses and bathrooms.

To find out more, visit: [www.goo.gl/EBQbO9](http://www.goo.gl/EBQbO9)

**IN DANGER:**

### Mount Rogers National Recreation Area | Virginia

The United States Forest Service proposed plans in April that would close hundreds of miles of user created trails in southwest Virginia, leaving only 20 percent of the area's trails open for riders. While not out of the woods yet, the Forest Service met strong opposition from local equestrians, and announced in July that it would be backing off from these trail realignment efforts in order to listen to individuals, groups, and county and tourism officials.

To find out more, visit: [www.goo.gl/9JfodH](http://www.goo.gl/9JfodH) or [www.goo.gl/MA4U6Q](http://www.goo.gl/MA4U6Q)

**LOST:**

### Equine Partners Therapeutic Riding Center | Massachusetts

Equine Partners, a therapeutic riding center in Hopkinton, Mass. closed its doors at the end of 2014 and the property was listed for sale in March 2015. The growth of a mixed-use development surrounding the property has changed the atmosphere of the property, making it unsuitable for riding in general, much less a therapy program.

To find out more, visit: [www.goo.gl/rGEjUa](http://www.goo.gl/rGEjUa)

**If you are aware of an equine-related place that has been lost, saved or is in danger, please let us know about it. You can contact us at 859.455.8383 or [info@elcr.org](mailto:info@elcr.org), or visit the Report An Issue page on our website. ■**



# Horse Trail Access: Protect It or Lose It

by Denise O'Meara

Setting out on the trail with your horse is a magic moment. The promise of quiet solitude, the beauty of nature, relaxing with friends, the companionship of a beloved horse and enjoying a bit of adventure are all part of the attraction of trail riding.

How did this inviting trail become available to you? Did you develop a relationship with the landowner or manager, or is there any relationship at all? Good relations with both public land trail managers and private landowners are imperative. Do you have a written agreement or an informal understanding? And do you show your respect for the owner/manager by using trails responsibly?

Just as trail riding contributes to your happiness quotient, treating the land with respect contributes to the durability and availability of your trail. You should know the condition of your trails before you ride, especially during inclement weather. Thoughtlessly slogging through wet areas can cause extensive damage and create unsafe conditions. And it can lead to loss of trail access.

It's not uncommon for a private landowner to deny access to existing trails on their land, posting the dreaded No Horses Here sign. Public land managers, citing damage to sensitive lands, post Access Denied notices. Disappointing, yes; and often irreversible.

Education and proper stewardship are critical to maintaining trail access for horsemen. With support from the AQHA STEP program, ELCR has partnered with Tread Lightly!, a national organization concerned with land

## What You Can Do

### INDIVIDUALS

When riding alone or with friends, avoid wet or damaged trail areas. Let the landowner know about damaged or wet trail areas so others can be informed. Help with trail maintenance.

### TRAIL CLUBS

Organize your fellow trail riders and form a riding club. Clubs can focus on both enjoyment and trail stewardship by informing members about trail conditions, who can use private land trails and communicating with the land owner to resolve developing issues. Post current information on your website, social media or your email list!

### PUBLIC LAND

Local/regional and state parks divisions often post trail conditions and emergency weather situations with advice about trail closings on websites and Facebook. If your club uses these public trails, you can check these alerts and re-post them to your club's media.

### PRIVATE LAND

Private trails may require more effort, as landowners seldom post information about trail conditions on their own land. What can you do? When the owner can't provide information, designate certain club members to observe and report unfavorable trail conditions to the club manager. Post information on your club's media or email.

### BETTER TRAIL PLANNING & DESIGN

Stay abreast of new trail planning in your community and help to ensure that new trails and repairs to damaged trails are designed to shed water and hold up under the stresses of equine use.

**For post-able public service announcements to help spread the word, contact ELCR.**



stewardship, to launch the “Respected Access is Open Access” campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to educate trail riders and promote responsible stewardship of trails in order to protect access.

How does careless use of trails affect the owner and the land? And how can you prevent closure of your trails?



## The Cycle of Erosion

All user types will have some impact when trails are used after heavy rains, but a horse's heavy body weight combined with compact, sharp hooves churn up wet ground, plants and soil. Eroded soil washes into the nearest stream or pond as sediment. This can happen quickly if there is nothing to protect or prevent the soil from moving. It affects the waterway by reducing oxygen and obscuring the riparian wildlife habitat. Other pollutants such as herbicides and fertilizers further reduce water quality. Downstream, it all ends up in our drinking water.

Riders and other users tend to avoid the wettest or most eroded part of the trail and traverse the edges, a habitat damage - an endless cycle of degradation continuing until the trail is no longer usable – or until the land owner recognizes the damage and puts a stop to trail use altogether. ■

*This article is reprinted with permission from the May 2015 issue of The Trail Rider. To subscribe, please visit [TheTrailRider.com](http://TheTrailRider.com). To view the full article, visit [www.elcr.org/?p=2301](http://www.elcr.org/?p=2301)*



**tread lightly!**®

ON LAND AND WATER



## Respected Access is Open Access: Help us spread the word!

ELCR announced in July a new partnership with Tread Lightly! and AQHA to launch the Respected Access is Open Access campaign. Tread Lightly! is a nonprofit organization with the mission “to empower generations to enjoy the outdoors responsibly through stewardship to further the goals of responsible and ethical recreation.” The organization started the Respected Access is Open Access program to educate recreational users of public land about responsible use and proper stewardship. The overarching goal of the program is to maintain and enhance access to public or private lands by improving recreationists’ behavior.

The message is simple – responsible and respectful behavior leads to continued access. This powerful message resonates in the hearts and minds of the entire outdoor recreation community. Equine Land Conservation Resource has teamed up with Tread Lightly! to bring this educational campaign to the equine community with support from the AQHA STEP (Stewards for Trails, Education and Partnerships) program. The campaign will focus on raising awareness of the consequences of riding wet trails ranging from resource damage to increased conflict with other trail users through educational articles and placement of printed public service announcements.

Help us spread the word! Organizations or publications interested in supporting the educational campaign by placing public service announcements can contact Abby Gates at [agates@elcr.org](mailto:agates@elcr.org) or 859-455-8383. ■

*Thanks to our corporate friend:*



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*If you prefer to donate online, visit [www.ELCR.org](http://www.ELCR.org).*