



STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2018

ELCR advances the conservation of land for horse-related activity.



Our Vision

A future in which horse lands have been conserved so that America's equine heritage lives on, and the emotional, physical and economic benefits of mankind's bond with the horse remain accessible to all.

Our Mission

The Equine Land Conservation Resource leads in the protection and conservation of lands for the horse and horse-related activities.

Our Six Core Issues

- Planning for horses in your community;
- Conservation tools for horse lands;
- Equine access to public lands;
- Equine access to private lands;
- Best management practices; and
- Benefits of horses to our communities.



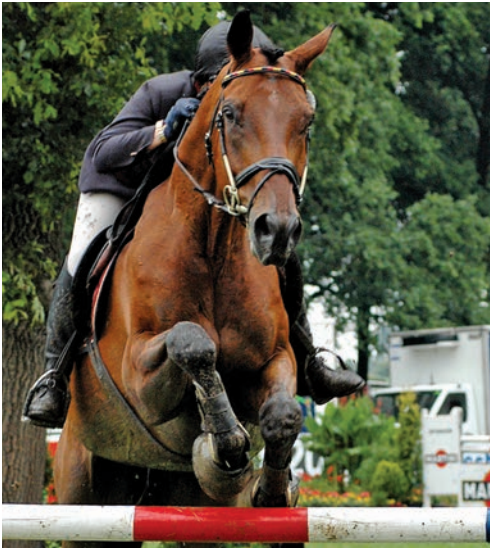
Photo courtesy of Keith Mountain

Horses benefit our communities by

- Branding a community with a sense of uniqueness and local identity;
- Providing spectacular viewsheds that increase property values;
- Promoting tourism and creating job opportunities;
- Providing recreational opportunities and healthy lifestyle choices;
- Providing ecological benefits from open pasture lands;
- Bringing us out into nature; and
- Enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.

Horses cannot provide these benefits without the land needed to support them.





Why Horses Matter

Remember riding across an open field as a child and the sense of freedom it gave you? Or the excitement and pride when you competed in your first horse show? Or the warm feeling when assisting at a therapeutic riding program?

If we want our children and grandchildren to experience all the benefits horses provide us, we must save the land that horses need. And we must save it in metropolitan areas where most people will live and where the threat is most immediate.

The equine industry can be a powerful economic driver. The economic impact of the equine industry in New York reached \$4.2 billion in 2011, with 33,000 full-time equivalent jobs. (2012 New York State Equine Industry Economic Impact Study)

Horses are an iconic part of America's heritage, but if we don't act NOW they will not have an important place in America's future. We know that horses help children develop character, leadership skills, teamwork, confidence and a sense of community. For those adults, children and wounded warriors with disabilities, horses provide a sense of independence, a nonjudgmental companion, improved physical and mental capabilities, and the strength to improve their lives. Horses also bring economic benefits to communities by providing employment, saving open space, offering recreational opportunities and providing beautiful viewsheds.



Photo courtesy of PATH Intl.

Land for Horses

To enjoy all the benefits that horses bring, people need easy access to the land required for horse-related activities: stables, turn-out fields and exercise rings, riding trails, competitive venues and hay fields. While our population is increasing and more people are moving into metropolitan areas, the number of horses and horse-owning households declined dramatically between 2007 and 2012, from 7.3 million horses to 4.9 million and from 2.1 million households to 1.8 million (American Veterinary Medical Association). Fewer horses means fewer people having the opportunity to appreciate the value horses provide.

In metropolitan areas, the land needed for horse activities is increasingly endangered by developers willing to pay high prices, by planning and zoning boards eager to “grow” their communities, and because fewer residents having a connection to horses. Even outside metropolitan areas, horse activities are threatened by increasing land cost, division of large holdings into smaller parcels not suitable for horses, and public and private lands restricting horse access.

For horses to continue to be a part of our lives, we need to educate members of our communities, including the planners, developers and government officials who make land decisions, about the benefits of horses.

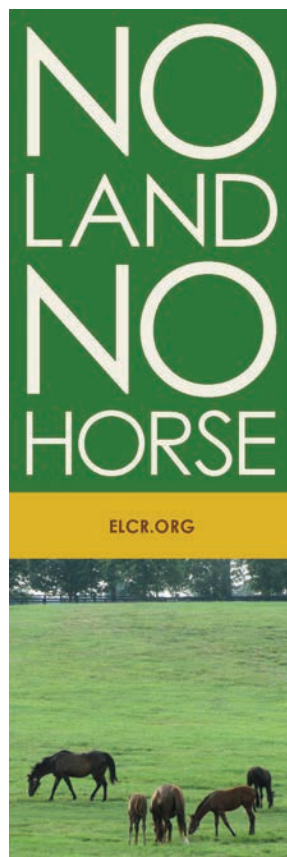
The cost of horsekeeping, loss of trails and riding areas, and competition for open space from other agricultural commodity producers or developers are among the top six issues facing the equine industry. (2015 American Horse Publications Equine Industry Survey sponsored by Zoetis)



ELCR and Our Role

More than 15 years ago, horse owners and conservationists saw the risk to the future of the horse community from land becoming inaccessible to horses, particularly around urban areas. With great foresight, they founded the Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) with the express purpose of “sounding the alarm.” Since then, ELCR has worked with equine and conservation organizations to make horse enthusiasts aware of the threat of losing land and to provide tools to assist in conserving it.

With our battle cry “No Land, No Horse,” ELCR has brought significant awareness to this issue. According to recent American Horse Publications surveys of horse owners and enthusiasts, the issues related to land (competition for open space from development, loss of trails and riding areas, and cost of horsekeeping) are among the most important issues facing the equine industry. 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, to be most effective ELCR must work directly with these local organizations.



The future of the horse tradition in America depends on the strategic building of a nationwide network of local organizations learning from one another and united by a shared commitment and approach—a strategy of forging alliances among local horse organizations and acting as a united voice on behalf of the horse— both in response to crisis and proactively shaping public support and local policies that strengthen the horse community.

The Strategy

ELCR is committed to working with equine and conservation organizations at the local and national level to protect the future of horses. Our strategy is to support local groups to ensure that planning and zoning regulations are friendly to horse activities; to demonstrate to developers and local government officials the economic value of protecting horse lands and preserving the equestrian lifestyle; and to coordinate with conservation organizations to provide for horses and public and private lands.

The keys to our strategic plan are:

- Identify local organizations involved in equine land conservation, develop a database of these groups and form a national network. Utilizing the network, determine the support most critical to their success in their local communities.
- Build ELCR's capability to provide the tools needed by these groups, including educational materials, network connections, organizational and technical assistance, and financial support. Local demonstration projects, funded and managed with ELCR support, will provide models for communities working to save their connection to the horse.
- Design and implement a marketing plan to provide local organizations with the communication tools they need to garner support from their residents, community leaders and local government officials. The program also will promote ELCR and our role in preserving horse lands across the country.



Our Vision

With these actions accomplished, we look forward to:

- A strong national network of local equine organizations committed to saving land for horses and preserving the place of the horse in their communities.
- Local horse communities having access to the resources they need from a strengthened ELCR providing effective programs and services.
- Collaboration among local horse organizations both to create effective coalitions and to share experiences.
- Widespread support for horses in communities from parents, local planning and zoning officials, developers, conservationists and residents who will have gained an understanding of the value horses bring to communities and their residents.



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 a deeper connection to the horse.

With your help, we can work to ensure that horse enthusiasts and their communities are aware of the threat of land loss, are educated on what it takes to prevent it and supported with the resources necessary to conserve and protect their horse lands.

Working together we can protect and conserve our treasured equine places and spaces, preserving our equine heritage, culture and industry for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations of Americans.

What the industry is saying about land loss

“As the U.S. population has grown, communities have expanded and urban sprawl is putting a strain on horse lands originally allocated for riding horses, competitions, camps and recreational horse sports. The United States Pony Clubs is an organization focused on providing education in all aspects of horse sports, from equine management to riding in the open, and has seen first-hand our equine landscape change. As open land for riding diminishes, Pony Club finds that aligning with ELCR to provide member awareness and initiatives for preserving equine land increasingly important.”

–Teresa Woods, Executive Director, United States Pony Clubs

“Our sport and tradition of mounted fox hunting, like many horse activities, is uniquely dependent on access to open land, the importance of respect for all landowners, public and private, and the need to secure it for future generations. As our landscape changes, the horse community needs to be alert and organized to ensure a future for the horse and our sport. In order to be successful we need to respect and coordinate with other horse organizations and field sports sharing our ideals and goals.”

–Col. Dennis Foster, Executive Director, Masters of Fox Hounds Association

“The loss of land for horse-related activities is the greatest threat to horse sport, industry and recreation in the United States.”

–David O'Connor, Eventing Chef d'Equipe, Past President of the United States Equestrian Federation, and Olympic Gold Medalist

“For the last several years, the AAEP has been involved in an industry initiative to stimulate growth in the horse industry called ‘Time to Ride.’ Obviously, having a ‘place to ride’ is critical to any growth in the industry, which makes the work of the ELCR and the preservation of horse lands integral to the future of the entire industry.”

–David Foley, Executive Director, American Association of Equine Practitioners

“The newly adopted mission statement of the USEF puts renewed emphasis on the growth of equestrian sport in the United States, and the ELCR Strategic Plan is perfectly complementary to the efforts we will be making.”

–Chris Welton, CEO, United States Equestrian Federation

“The hunter/jumper sport is enjoyed by competitors across the country, and the ever-increasing development of rural land poses a risk to metropolitan and rural competition venues. We must all be cognizant of this issue and work together to ensure the preservation of this open space for the future of our sport.”

–Bill Moroney, President, United States Hunter Jumper Association

“The United States Eventing Association has partnered with the Equine Land Conservation Resource since it was founded. We recognize that the future of our sport is intrinsically tied to the availability of open space, and ELCR is focused on protecting and conserving that land.”

–Rob Burk, COO, United States Eventing Association

“Adequate access to land to raise, feed, train, compete and recreate with our horses is a critically important and growing concern to every discipline and the future of the equine industry at large.”

–Stephan Hienzsich, Executive Director, United States Dressage Federation

“The more than 263,000 members of our association depend on access to the land required for their horse-related activities. While members may vary in the scope of personally owned acreage, or even their usage of public access land, our members wish to protect and conserve the land for future generations. With the financial support of Tractor Supply Co. and the backing of groups like ELCR, Back Country Horsemen, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Parks Service, Leave No Trace and thousands of volunteers, the American Quarter Horse Association has awarded more than \$260,000 in grant funding to land conservation projects. ELCR is implementing a new strategic plan, and AQHA looks forward to working alongside other equine organizations in our support of their vision.”

–Craig Huffhines, Executive Vice President, American Quarter Horse Association

NO
LAND
NO
HORSE



EQUINE
LAND
CONSERVATION
RESOURCE

SAVING
OUR
HORSE
LANDS



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