

THE RESOURCE



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE EQUINE LAND CONSERVATION RESOURCE

Hoofprints in the Sand: How Equestrians Gained Access to the Great Lakes Shoreline

Jenny Cook and ELCR

Where do YOU want to ride? Splashing along the shoreline with the vast horizon before you and your horse is the dream of many people. This article is about a group of horseback riders in Michigan who made that dream a reality.

After riding horses along the shorelines of Mexico, Michigan Equine Trails representative Jenny Cook was inspired to bring a similar experience for horseback riders along the gorgeous Great Lakes shorelines. Cook began researching shoreline horseback riding and discovered a 2014 *Horse Illustrated* magazine article on shoreline beach riding in the United States (<https://www.horseillustrated.com/horse-community-ride-your-horse-on-the-beach>). This article provided useful information on how to navigate your first shoreline ride and included a list of places to ride the Atlantic and Pacific shorelines. Cook contacted all the places listed to find tips and best practices.

Cook then researched Michigan public lands with multiple miles of shoreline. She was informed that a special use permit from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), approval from the County Health Department and the Environmental Protection Agency, and a \$1 million liability insurance policy would be needed to gain horse access to public lands that did not have horse-friendly management plans. All requests were completed, and Cook took these findings and success stories to a meeting with the MDNR land managers and the Equine Trails Sub-Committee (ETS). ETS members are a volunteer group,

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Horseback riding the Silver Lake State Park sand dunes.

NO LAND NO HORSE



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appointed by the Michigan governor, to advise public land managers about equestrian interests on public lands. (<http://michiganhorsetrails.com/>)

The ETS supported the shoreline horseback riding idea. The management teams decided to try private pilot rides at selected locations on public lands. They focused on areas with one or more miles of traversable shoreline and ample parking for trucks and trailers. It was decided rides should take place during the extended season, which is after Labor Day and before Memorial Day. Public land managers were invited to participate and then provided written reports to the MDNR.

Cook and her daughter Lynsey took these shoreline horseback riding examples to Indiana Dunes National Park, located along the southern coast of the Lake Michigan shoreline. They worked with park ranger Penny Callahan, who had the same dream of riding along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Ranger Callahan and Cook organized morning and afternoon shoreline horseback rides by reservation, limited to 25 riders per session for \$25 per person to cover administration efforts and beach cleanup services. The best part was when Ranger Callahan invited her 87-year-old mother, Carla Callahan, to ride and relive her childhood days when she rode her horses along the sandy shorelines. Carla never stopped smiling. These opportunities are offered on the Indiana Dunes National Park website. <https://www.nps.gov/indu/index.htm>

Back in Michigan, ETS and MDNR partnered with the Back Country Horsemen of Michigan to provide the special use permit and liability insurance for participants. Each ride participant was issued a no-charge parking permit, which provided general information, instructions, and driver identification. The rider parking permit can be viewed at <https://elcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Shoreline-article-parking-pass-doc.pdf>



Front to back: MDNR Assistant Chief Jacklin Blodgett, MDNR Executive Assistant to the Chief Barbara Graves, MDNR Event Coordinator Elissa Buck and other riders at a Silver Lake State Park public pilot shoreline horseback ride.

The public pilot rides were advertised mainly via social media with links to registration pages. Special use permits and liability insurance for the rides were secured by individuals, a local business (Grace Adventures/Paradise Ranch), and nonprofit organizations (Back Country Horsemen of Michigan and Michigan Horse Council). The fee to participate in the rides ranged from \$25 to \$40 to cover membership in one of the horse organizations or as reimbursement for the cost of liability insurance.

Looking Toward the Future

A pilot "Horse Friendly Season" at the Michigan Silver Lake State Park is planned for November 1-14, 2021, with registration through the MDNR. Sign up for notifications of Michigan opportunities at <https://bit.ly/3CpQ4GS> or text "TROT" to 80888.

Clearly what started as a dream of horseback riding along the Lake Michigan shoreline is well on its way to becoming a reality for hundreds of riders and a successful model for other states. The full version of this article is available at <https://elcr.org/hoofprints-in-the-sand/>

ELCR Welcomes Intern Alycia Bardon

This summer, ELCR has welcomed new intern Alycia Skye Bardon to our team. Hailing from New Jersey, Alycia has owned and ridden horses for 15 years, with a current primary interest in dressage. She has an associate degree in equine science and management from Morrisville State College and is currently working on obtaining her bachelor's degree in digital communications. Her career goals include working in the field of equine media/equine journalism, and her prior experience includes being a news writer for her school newspaper and publishing short stories for *Horse Nation*. Alycia has been assisting virtually with writing and editing some of ELCR's recent educational articles and has been especially helpful in managing content on ELCR's social media channels. We are grateful for her assistance in our work to save horse land, and we're sure she has a bright future ahead!



ELCR intern Alycia Bardon with Bramble in Assunpink Wildlife Management Area in New Jersey.



ELCR Education Corner

Recent additions and updates to the ELCR Online Resource Library

New article: Leading the Way by Jennifer M. Keeler for ELCR

With exploding population growth in their region, the members of Back Country Horsemen First Coast (BCHFC) are working to preserve trail access for future generations of equestrians in northeast Florida. Local equine organizations like BCHFC are key to keeping land open and accessible to horses, and their story can be an inspiration to horsemen and women in other communities, encouraging them to work together to protect endangered horse lands and protect access for future generations. Read the article at <https://elcr.org/leading-the-way>

New webinar recording and article: Sustainable Equine Management Webinar and Resource Sheet

ELCR partnered with the Daily Acts organization to host a Sustainable Equine Management webinar featuring the director of Horses for Clean Water, along with representatives from several regional conservation organizations. This webinar focused on innovative, eco-friendly, and cost-effective strategies when caring for horses and the land they live on, teaching practical strategies that can save on vet bills and increase property value, all while helping to mitigate water pollution. View the recorded webinar at <https://dailyacts.org/2021/03/06/sustainableequinemanagement> and the accompanying resource sheet at <https://elcr.org/sustainable-equine-management-resource-sheet>

New article: What Equestrians Need to Know About the USDA 10-Year Trail Shared Stewardship Challenge

Equine access to public land is vitally important, and with over 100,000 miles of trails there is no shortage of outdoor space to enjoy, but unfortunately, it has become a challenge to maintain. Read how the U.S. Forest Service has planned to care for and preserve these historic, scenic, and recreational trails, and how you can help support the cause. Read the full article at <https://elcr.org/what-equestrians-need-to-know-about-the-usda-10-year-trail-shared-stewardship-challenge>

New article: Hoofprints in the Sand: How Horseback Riders Gained Access to the Great Lakes Shoreline

After riding horses along the shorelines of Mexico, Michigan Equine Trails representative Jenny Cook was inspired to bring a similar experience for horseback riders along the gorgeous Great Lakes shorelines. This article includes that story as well as information on how to navigate your first shoreline ride and tips on gaining access to public lands for equine use in your state. Read the article at <https://elcr.org/hoofprints-in-the-sand>

New webinar recording: Current and Future Trends in Equestrian Trails

This webinar, hosted by American Trails, focuses on trending equestrian trails' topics with information presented by ELCR, MIG, INC, Sustainable Stables, USDA Forest Service, and Hancock Resources LLC. You will learn more about conserving equestrian trails resources, community engagement and inclusion in trail planning, equestrian trails sustainability and new technologies, and land managers' challenges and opportunities. View the webinar at <https://elcr.org/webinar-recording-current-and-future-trends-in-equestrian-trails>

New webinar recording: Great American Outdoors Act

Now that the Great American Outdoors (GAO) Act of 2020 has been signed into law, it is helping prioritize deferred maintenance projects, including trails and land conservation projects, thereby addressing two of the horse industry's top legislative priorities. This webinar, hosted by the American Horse Council in partnership with ELCR and Back Country Horsemen of America, focuses on the GAO Act and features guest speakers from the National Park Service and National Forest Service. View the webinar at <https://bit.ly/3fm0M7Y>

Thanks to our corporate friend:



How Equestrians Can Support the USDA 10-Year Trail Shared Stewardship Challenge

Equine access to public land is very important to our equine community as recreational riding represents a significant segment of equine activities in the United States.

With over 159,000 miles of trails, the U.S. Forest Service manages the largest system of trails in the country, including more than 10,000 miles of designated historic, scenic, and recreational trails. This presents tremendous opportunities for horsemen and women to saddle up and experience the great outdoors from the vantage point of horseback.

With so many miles of trails however, it is no wonder that maintenance of these trails is a huge undertaking that has resulted in significant backlogs. Recognizing the challenge, the USDA has initiated the **10-Year Trail Shared Stewardship Challenge**, which will focus the combined efforts of employees, volunteers, and partners to increase efficiencies and capacity, eliminate obstacles, and lead to a more sustainable National Forest trails system that is more economically viable, socially valued, and supports ecological resiliency. The shift to a more strategic focus will allow the Forest Service to better serve the public and take advantage of opportunities like the Great American Outdoors (GAO) Act. For a summary of the GAO, go to <https://elcr.org/great-american-outdoors-act-of-2020-overview-and-implementation>

The Trail Challenge consists of 10 elements or focus areas that will be implemented in three phases, with each element having corresponding outcomes and metrics for accountability and to track progress.

The 10-Year Trail Challenge Phases:

The USDA has identified the following outcomes for the Trail Shared Stewardship Challenge.

- Assessing trail workforce capacity and trail sustainability regularly to identify and close gaps.
- Engaging and sharing leadership with local communities and stakeholders in trail priorities.
- Developing online toolboxes, including best practices, success stories and reference documents.
- Improving Forest Service trail data and reporting systems.
- Incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion principles in all aspects of the collective work.

So, what can equestrians do to support the challenge?

The 10-Year Challenge guidebook lists the actions and metrics the U.S. Forest Service will be working on. While some may be specifically targeted to partners, others may be something individual equestrian clubs could work on within a forest. Alternatively, equestrians can opt to join in on other community collaboratives to make sure the equine community is represented, demonstrating what they can bring to the table to help support the challenge.



Equestrian groups like Back Country Horsemen of America play a vital role in maintaining trails on public land.

Here are just a few examples of how equestrians can support the challenge.

- One of the 10 elements described in the guidebook is user ethics. Under this element a local equestrian group could consider organizing to enhance user ethics in the equestrian community or extended trail community. Or work to become Leave No Trace masters and educators and hold sessions within the local community. Maybe even partner with nearby stables or outfitters and guides that use public equestrian trails and work to make sure they include Leave No Trace or user ethics information so that equestrians visiting the area have the best information available and know to pack it in/pack it out, etc.
- Organize saw trainings for clubs and organizations and put together a saw response team to get the trails reopened after storm damage.
- Organize a trail maintenance team within the equestrian community or larger trail community.
- Help with the trail assessments.

With any of these activities, equestrians would first need to meet with their local district office and talk through what items they could work on to assist the forest or district with moving the needle on the 10-Year Trail Shared Stewardship Challenge.

To learn more, see the USDA 10-Year Trail Stewardship Challenge guidebook at <https://bit.ly/3DvP8SC>

ELCR Remembers Mason Phelps, Jr. and Maggie Bryant

Mason Phelps, Jr. passed away on May 17, 2021. He was truly a lifelong horseman who made a recognizable impact on equestrian sports. His numerous contributions included being an Olympic athlete, groom, trainer, event manager, horse show judge, governance leader, media executive, and philanthropy organizer. Mason was also a strong advocate of land conservation and a friend and supporter of Equine Land Conservation Resource.

An innovator and natural leader, Mason launched numerous creative events throughout his career. Whether equestrian competitions or philanthropic fundraisers, his events were well attended and often the talk of the town.

Mason's passion for horses and equestrian sports started early. At 16, he was invited to participate in his first training clinic with the United States Equestrian Team. In 1968, he was named "Rider of the Year" by the U.S. Combined Training Association (now USEA) and was alternate for the U.S. Three-Day Team for the Mexico City Olympic Games. His career as a trainer began in 1972, working first as an assistant at Flintridge Riding Club and later developing his own training stable for hunter/jumpers until his retirement from competition in the late 1990s.



Photo by Phelps Media Group

Mason Phelps, Jr. as we will always remember him at the National Horse Show.

In 2001, Mason founded Phelps Media Group, which has grown to represent many of the most prestigious equestrian events, organizations, companies, athletes, and businesses. Mason will be remembered by the equestrian community for his commitment to the advancement of equine support through his numerous contributions to organizations and events such as Wellington's Winter Equestrian Festival, Palm Beach Polo, National Horse Show, AHSA, USET, and Show Jumping Hall of Fame. To learn more about Mason Phelps' life and achievements, visit <https://bit.ly/2YfjBE7>.

Magalen Ohrstrom "Maggie" Bryant passed away on June 28, 2021. She was a well-known entrepreneur, philanthropist, conservationist, horsewoman, and friend and supporter of ELCR. Maggie bred many trophy-winning horses and raised cattle on her 2,400 acre property, Locust Hill Farm, in Middleburg, Virginia. She also owned stables in France, where she was a significant presence in the world of steeplechasing. She was inducted into the Virginia Steeplechase Hall of Fame in 2014.

Maggie had a vision to build a road between the Dulles Airport and Leesburg, Virginia, which would prevent development in Middleburg. She became the driving force and one of the founders of the Dulles Greenway, the first private toll road in the U.S. in over 100 years, and stayed involved with the Greenway until it was sold in 2005.

Maggie was one of the first landowners to place many of her land holdings in conservation easements. She was a founding member of the Delta Environmental Land Trust, a board member and chair of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation from 1994 to 2000, and was also a director of National Wildlife Federation. One of her single largest contributions was the donation of over 12,000 acres of land in the Mississippi Delta to the Purvis Grange Foundation, dba Tara Wildlife.

For more on Maggie Bryant's life and achievements, visit <https://legcy.co/3DPcdzU>



Photo by Rob Banner

Maggie Bryant with one of her horses in training.

ELCR Joins Coalition to Launch Nationwide Trail Etiquette Campaign

Any recreational trail user will tell you there are more people on the trails than ever before. According to a study commissioned by the Outdoor Industry Association, 8.1 million more Americans hiked in 2020 versus 2019. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, automated counters at trail systems around the country recorded four times as many users compared to the same timeframe in 2019. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy reported a 79% spike in usage nationwide between March and July of 2020.

Recognizing that the community of trail users continues to expand at an exponential rate and the growing concern among equestrian trail users, ELCR joined an unprecedented consortium of advocacy groups, brands, media outlets, and ambassadors that have come together to create the public awareness campaign **“Trails Are Common Ground,”** which elevates the importance of respectful, inclusive, safe, and enjoyable experiences on trails.

Advocacy groups and industry leaders began collaborating in February 2021 to discuss the need for this campaign. The coalition shaped the campaign to reinforce the many local, regional, and user-specific trail respect programs in existence by promoting kindness and awareness while elevating the work of these programs over 15 meetings among 20 organizations in the coalition. The coalition members represent all manner of activities that take place in the dirt, including hiking, trail running, equestrian, mountain biking, and motorized singletrack, with both ELCR and Backcountry Horsemen of America representing the equestrian trail community.

The campaign includes a website and Instagram account, and creative assets that can be shared and personalized by brands, nonprofits, content creators, and all passionate trail users who want to rise together to share the message of Trails Are Common Ground. All trail user groups are invited to participate. To learn more about the campaign, visit trailsarecommonground.org and follow Trails Are Common Ground on Instagram and Facebook @trailsarecommonground.



Madeline McDougal Awarded the 2021 Anson W. H. Taylor, Jr. Memorial Scholarship

ELCR and United States Pony Clubs (USPC) are pleased to award the Anson W.H. Taylor Jr. Memorial Scholarship to C2 event rider and Butte Valley Pony Club member Madeline McDougal of Chico, California. Madeline is studying biology at William Jessup University.

The scholarship, sponsored by USPC and ELCR in memory of former Pony Club president and ELCR founder Anson Taylor, is awarded annually to a current Pony Club member demonstrating commitment to horse land conservation.

Madeline volunteers regularly at Camelot Equestrian Park, a nonprofit, sustainable equestrian facility on 1,600 acres that serves all disciplines and is a community recreation center, and even serves as a Large Animal Disaster Evacuation Center. Camelot's biggest concerns are land preservation and fundraising to support park maintenance and improvements. Camelot is run on a strictly volunteer basis, so through her volunteer hours Madeline has helped to staff events, keep the facility usable with new improvements, and assist in disaster relief efforts during the extensive 2018 Camp Fire in northern California. She also donates all the funds she earns from being a D-level examiner to the park foundation. Madeline cares deeply about Camelot and she hopes that her efforts, combined with others', will ensure that future generations are able to continue to enjoy this equestrian facility that greatly enriches the community.

Madeline McDougal and her mount Duvall (Dewey).

EQUINE PLACES AND SPACES

LOST/REBORN:

Sedgefield Showgrounds Greensboro, North Carolina

The Sedgefield Showgrounds horse-show property in Greensboro and an adjacent property have been sold for a combined \$2.2 million to a Greensboro housing group, which has stated plans to build 220 affordable apartment units on the over 17-acre site. Sedgefield Showgrounds was an equestrian center with a long history of riding events since the 1920s, and many local residents had hoped it would be preserved for its historic and local significance. However, the prior owners of Sedgefield were eager to sell the property in a neighborhood undergoing a rapidly changing landscape. Thankfully, some of the showground operations and events have been moved to the Carolina Horse Park facility in Raeford, North Carolina, where the organization is now known as Sedgefield at the Park.

GAINING GROUND:

Nebraska Equine Sports Complex Lincoln, Nebraska

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) recently announced a \$1 million gift from the Kimmel Foundation to support an initiative to build a state-of-the-art Nebraska Equine Sports Complex on its East Campus. The proposed \$4.5 million equine facility is scheduled to include a barn, large and small arenas, exercise round pen, classrooms, offices, a wash bay, lockers and outdoor runs, along with plans to deliver high-quality teaching and learning for all ages, backgrounds and cultures. In addition to academic programs like colt training and equine reproduction, the facility will also become the practice space for the University of Nebraska Rodeo Association and UNL's Husker Equestrian Team. "This is about having a facility dedicated to the heritage of equine training and sports here in Nebraska," said Ernie Weyeneth, president and treasurer of the Kimmel Foundation. "It's really all about our young people—the next generation of equine professionals and enthusiasts."

THREATENED:

Acton Community Trails Acton, California

Members of the Acton Town Council have issued a call to action to community members concerned about preserving and enhancing trails in the Acton equestrian community. Revisions are being proposed to the Acton Community Standards, which remove mandatory trail language in the current Community Standards District for subdivisions and defers all future trail decisions and development in the community to the discretion of the Department of Parks and Recreation. According to the town council, these revisions would ensure the community's trail objectives, which direct the county to secure both mapped regional trails as well as unmapped connector and feeder trails, will never be met because the department's trail strategy in Acton does not include a commitment to securing unmapped feeder and connector trails and it constrains equestrian and pedestrian uses to dangerous highways. To help preserve equestrian access to these trails, the council recommends that all concerned community members write to the appropriate Los Angeles County departments to let them know the proposed revision to the Acton Community Standards District does not meet the community's desire to maintain and ensure future access to the trails.

If you are aware of an equine-related place that has been lost, saved, or is in danger, please let ELCR know about it. You can contact us at 859-455-8383 or info@elcr.org, or visit the [Report an Issue](#) page on our website.

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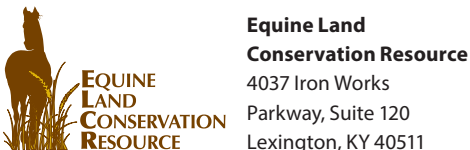
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