

THE RESOURCE



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE EQUINE LAND CONSERVATION RESOURCE

Dealing With Changing Development Patterns

By Christine Hughes for Equine Land Conservation Resource

The Covid-19 pandemic brought about many changes, including a mass exodus from offices while employees worked from home. There was also a trend for people to move from cities to more rural locations. This condensed article provides information on how to work through changes in your community. The full article can be found here: <https://elcr.org/dealing-with-changing-development-patterns/>

The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

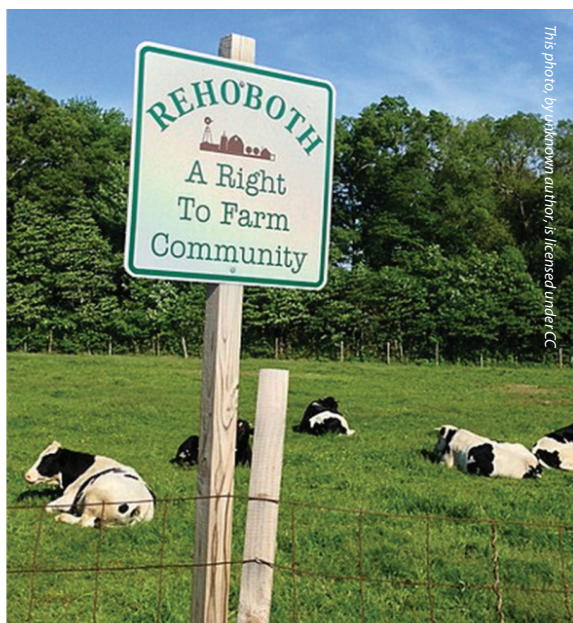
During the height of the pandemic in 2020, cities like New York and San Francisco saw a mass exodus of residents, and many left urban centers altogether for suburbs or rural areas. While the population in New York has started to rebound, data released by the US Census Bureau in 2021 shows that patterns of moving and living have shifted. Urban areas and cities have seen a loss of population, while areas with lower costs of living, warmer weather, and available housing have seen an uptick in population growth, especially the South and West.

There are challenges on both sides of the population shift and potential for conflict between farm and non-farm residents. New residents, possibly brought to the area by the idea of quiet, pastoral landscapes and a slower pace of life, may not understand the sights, sounds, and smells of a horse farm. The long-term residents may appreciate benefits, such as improved internet access and increased access to goods and services, but not having their way of life questioned.

Mitigating Conflicts

Government agencies and officials can help mitigate conflicts between neighbors. All 50 states have right-to-farm legislation, which helps protect farms from nuisance litigation. As an example, Florida's recently amended right-to-farm legislation will help protect farmers against the risk of nuisance lawsuits on farming operations. Florida's Right to Farm

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Example of Right to Farm signage.

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Act now limits complaints to only those from within a half-mile of the activity in question, increases the “evidence standard” those bringing complaints must prove, prevents a plaintiff from modifying a lawsuit to get around legal protections for farms, and limits any damages awarded to the market value of a property harmed by the nuisance. With these changes, Florida now has one of the strongest right-to-farm laws in the country.

Many local governments have agricultural or farming zoning districts, which are designed to require large lots, allow farming uses including keeping horses, and limit building restrictions. Zoning has long been a way to separate incompatible land uses; however, when people live, work, shop, and attend school from home, this separation of uses becomes a blur. These zoning best practices no longer match how many Americans are living and working. As legislation is reviewed, the goal should be to prevent conflict and litigation altogether before it starts.

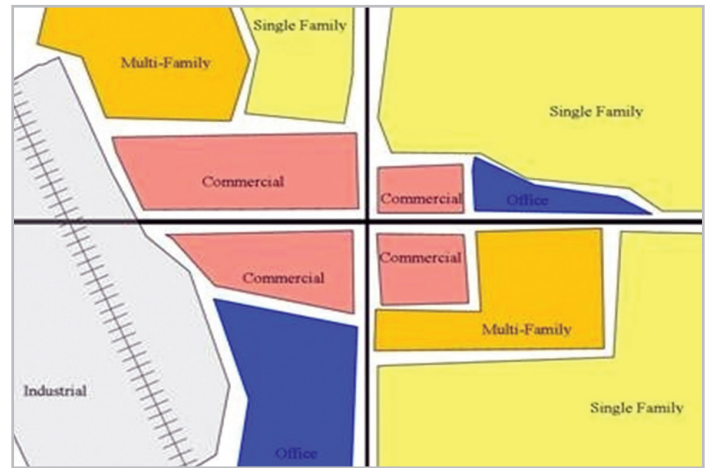
What You Can Do

Getting involved with local government is critical for building good relationships with local officials. You should understand how friendly your local government is to farming and how changes, including map amendments and by-right developments, are approved. In many jurisdictions, the development of a neighborhood full of single-family homes may not require notice. Make your concerns about any land use and zoning changes clear to your decision makers.

Find out what your land is zoned and what the land around you is zoned. Ask your local government staff to explain not only the current zoning, but also any adopted plans and policies that address the future zoning or land use around your property. Ask about any planned or proposed transportation projects.

Get to know your neighbors through a friendly chat and educate them on life with horses. Keeping lines of communication open is the best first step to maintaining a great neighborly relationship.

Learn how to work within the system to impact or influence land use changes, code enforcement, variances, and special exceptions to the rules. In addition, get to know your local elected officials. Making these connections before there are major issues can pave the way for more effective communication. If your town officials know who you are and that you are running a trusted operation, they may be able to defuse complaints that come in by explaining issues to the complaining party (and to you), which could help avoid tense or adversarial situations.



This photo, by unknown author, is licensed under CC

Example of zoning map

Get to know your neighbors through a friendly chat. If your neighbor knows how to reach you while they are working from home, they are likely to reach out if they hear something that does not sound right or notice something seems off. And they are more likely to bring problems or concerns directly to you, rather than make a formal complaint. Keeping lines of communication open is the best first step to maintaining a great neighborly relationship.

Find a way to educate your neighbors on what life with horses is like and what they might expect living near a horse farm. While there may be conflict between someone who spends hours on Zoom calls and someone who needs to run a tractor during those same hours, being proactive with neighbors can help mitigate or minimize these conflicts. Most people are willing to accommodate and be flexible when there is open communication.

Conclusion

Good communication is the key to managing ever-evolving land use patterns. Learning how to navigate the local government system, understanding local land use regulations, and maintaining good relationships with your neighbors and local government officials will be critical as populations shift and grow. For additional information and resources, please see the full article at: <https://elcr.org/dealing-with-changing-development-patterns/>

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ELCR Education Corner

Recent additions and updates to the ELCR Online Resource Library

New Article: “How Mounted Patrols Benefit Our Communities”

As access to land for equestrian activity around urban areas is endangered, the horse-human connection is also threatened. Mounted patrols in urban areas help strengthen this connection but face their own risks, such as lack of funding, and not understanding how they can enhance a community.

In “How Mounted Patrols Benefit Our Communities” Janice Holland discusses the history of mounted police units, how they function within communities, and how we can support them in their work. Included are highlights of successful patrols from around the country. See the article at: <https://elcr.org/how-mounted-patrols-benefit-our-communities/>

New Article: “Dealing with Changing Development Patterns”

During the Covid pandemic there was a trend for people to move from cities to more rural settings. Many of these people were able to work from their new homes, which put them in conflict with the routine daily activities and noise on farms. These new neighbors have learned that “country life” is not as quiet and pastoral as they may have believed.

In “Dealing with Changing Development Patterns” Christine Hughes discusses how to communicate with neighbors so you can have a good working relationship. Included is advice on how to become involved with local government which can help them understand the farmer’s view of proposed legislation and zoning changes. Read the full article here: <https://elcr.org/dealing-with-changing-development-patterns/>

Recorded Webinar: “The Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) – Stop! Speak and Stand Back”



In this webinar, hosted by our Conservation Partner American Trails, you will learn how to practice, promote, and share the TSPP with other trail users. Ideas on how this plan can be used on websites, offered to trail user groups during meetings, and delivered to land management teams for public safety announcements and use at trailheads and kiosks are included. This webinar was presented by Jenny Cook, Michigan Equine trails Representative, Michigan Trails Advisory Council and Karin Reid Offield, President of Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council. Access the recorded TSPP webinar at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBsfPn2yGQU>

Recorded Webinar: “Got Mud? Tackling Mud and Erosion on Equestrian Trails”

Mud and erosion are common issues encountered on equestrian trails. This webinar presented by ELCR, in cooperation with our conservation partner American Trails, as part of their Advancing Trails webinar series, addresses some of the challenges caused by mud and erosion by focusing on effective construction techniques, recommended products, and best management practices for trail planning, construction, and maintenance. Speakers included: Jan Hancock, Principal, Hancock Resources, LLC; Holley Groshek, Executive Director, ELCR; Clay Nelson, Owner, Sustainable Stables; and Matthew Woodson, Owner/Founder, Okanogan Trail Construction. The link to this FREE webinar, can be found here: <https://elcr.org/equestrian-trails-webinar-got-mud-tackling-mud-and-erosion-on-equestrian-trails/>

ELCR Welcomes New Board Members

“ELCR is pleased to welcome Rebecca Thompson and Ben Duke to our board of directors,” said ELCR Board President Ken Haddad. “We know that with their experience and commitment they will be great assets to the organization and to advancing our mission to conserve land for horse-related activities for the benefit of this and future generations.”

Rebecca Thompson’s dedication to the cause of preserving and expanding equestrian space comes from her own belief that people of all ages who learn to ride reap multiple benefits of being with and caring for horses.



Rebecca enjoyed a 28-year career in the Foreign Service with the Department of State which included overseas assignments. Rebecca also brings with her nearly three decades of experience in public relations that includes writing, press event planning, grant work, and networking with other interested individuals and organizations.

In the years following her Foreign Service career, Rebecca has participated in trail riding and competed in dressage events in such diverse locations as Argentina, El Salvador, the Philippines, Mexico, Venezuela, Northern Virginia, and Northwest Arkansas. She is a co-founder and Board Member of Fairfax4Horses (<https://fairfax4horses.org>) an equestrian nonprofit organization in Fairfax County, Virginia.

In 2002, following the closure of one of the largest riding stables in the area, Rebecca and a coalition of equestrians and individuals interested in maintaining open space in the county began organizing to create opportunities for horseback riding by establishing public riding facilities on county parkland. As a result, Fairfax4Horses was incorporated in 2004. Recognizing that many individuals in the area are not able to enjoy the benefits of horseback riding due to the closure of many local stables because of expanded development, Fairfax4Horses remains dedicated to the establishment of public riding facilities on Fairfax County parkland. Rebecca is also an active member of Hunters Valley Riding Club in Northern Virginia and the Northwest Arkansas Dressage Club in Northwest Arkansas.

Benjamin Duke III, a native of Colorado, received his B.A. in Geology from Williams College in Massachusetts in 1975. Upon graduation, he embarked on a career in education and academic administration. Ben later moved into not-for-profit management at the Colorado Historical Society, where he served as Vice President for Development and as curator/director of the Georgetown Loop Historic Mining and Railroad Park. He later served as Development and Alumni Director of Graland Country Day School in Denver, where he also served as Assistant Head of School.



In 2005, Ben became the Vice President for Development and Membership Services at Denver Zoo. In the spring of 2011, he was recruited by the Mesa Verde Foundation to be its executive director. He retired from that position in 2016.

Ben served as president of the United States Pony Clubs, Inc., and Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust. Ben currently serves as a trustee of the National Western Stock Show, where he heads the Catch-a-Calf Program, and also serves on the boards of the Colorado State Fair Foundation, where he is the current chair, and of the Colorado Cattlemen’s Association Foundation. Ben is a member of the Roundup Riders of the Rockies and serves as president of its Heritage and Trails Foundation. He is active in Elbert County 4-H as a 32-year leader, has served on the County Fair Board for 25 years, and is a board member and past president of the Elbert-Douglas County Livestock Association.

Ben formerly served on the board of the Colorado Historical Foundation, and he is the past chair of both the Denver Public Library Friends Foundation and Four Mile Historic Park. Ben was president of the Denver Agricultural and Livestock Club in 2000. He also served as a trustee for Denver Academy for nine years.

Ben is married with two adult children and one granddaughter. He is also a rancher, raising Red Angus commercial cattle on his Fire Rock Ranch outside of Elizabeth, Colorado.

Thanks to our corporate friend:



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EQUINE PLACES AND SPACES

SAVED: Beebe Ranch, Chincoteague Island, Virginia

Who would have known that the book “Misty of Chincoteague” published in 1947 by Marguerite Henry would have such a lasting impact on millions of people? The true story of 2 children who want to buy a pony at the annual pony penning, has made the Beebe family, Misty, her descendants, and Chincoteague Island a beloved part of so many lives. Unfortunately, the last 10 acres of the ranch, including the acreage where Misty spent most of her life, was put up for sale by the family. Fearing the property would be purchased by developers, the Museum of Chincoteague worked out an arrangement to try and raise the funds necessary to purchase the property (over \$600,000).

The museum put out the call for help, and thousands responded. Donations poured in from children, adults, and organizations to preserve this historic property which means so much to horse lovers from around the world. Auctions of rare models of Misty and her descendants, fund-raising events, and even children selling seashells at a roadside stand helped to raise the necessary funds by the end of June 2023. Visit the museum’s website or Facebook page <https://chincoteaguemuseum.com/save-the-beebe-ranch/> to see the latest updates.

LOST: Bowie Race Track, Bowie, Maryland

Home to live racing from 1914 to 1985, Bowie Race Track became a Thoroughbred training track until 2015. In December 2023 the property will be conveyed to the City of Bowie based on the Racing and Community Development Act of 2020.

Several organizations, including the Maryland Horse Council, Bowie State University, and the Bowie Race Track Task Force worked together to determine the future of the property, and the city hired a strategic planner to facilitate discussions, which included input from the community and stakeholders. Groups with an equestrian interest were encouraged to attend all planning sessions.

Final recommendations were submitted to the City Council in July 2023, and do not include an area for equestrian activities. However, the Task Force recommended that the city investigate some inclusion of equestrian history.

THREATENED: Fairfield Lake State Park, Fairfield, Texas

Privately owned Fairfield Lake State Park, located in Freestone County, was sold to a developer who does not intend to renew a lease with Texas Parks and Wildlife. The 1800-acre park was leased by the state from Vistra Corp since the 1970’s, and includes 10 miles of trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding, as well as almost 14 miles of shoreline around the lake. Dallas-based Todd Interests let the park remain open temporarily while the state explored options.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is hoping to have funding in place to purchase the entire 5000-acre property and is currently in discussions with Todd Interests. If TPWD purchases the property, they intend to expand park offerings on the additional acreage. If the purchase falls through Todd Interests is planning to build a private golf course and gated community.

REBORN: Quentin Riding Club, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania

The Quentin Riding Club was started in 1934 when local businessmen wanted to acquire land and stables for equestrian activities and was officially chartered in 1935 when the William Coleman Freeman hackney farm was purchased. It became one of the premier outdoor horse show venues, hosting A-rated hunter/jumper, Saddlebred, Morgan, and other breed shows. The last show was held in 2018 and the Club officially disbanded in August 2022.

The 44-acre property was purchased by a local developer, Louis Hurst, in 2019. Although many of the buildings needed to be demolished, some of the historic buildings, including a stone blacksmith shop, will be preserved. Other historic buildings were dismantled and moved. A mixed-use development is planned, with approximately 18 acres proposed for a therapeutic equestrian facility for veterans, a project which Mr. Hurst and his wife believe will meet a growing need in the region.

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](#).

Meghan Hill Awarded the 2023 Anson W. H. Taylor, Jr. Memorial Scholarship

ELCR and United States Pony Clubs (USPC) are pleased to award the 2023 Anson W.H. Taylor Jr. Memorial Scholarship to C2 HM, C1 DR dressage rider and Sonoma Coastal Equestraining Center (SCEC) Pony Club member Meghan Hill of Petaluma, California. The scholarship, sponsored by USPC and ELCR in memory of former USPC president and ELCR founder Anson Taylor, Jr., is awarded annually to a current USPC member demonstrating commitment to horse land conservation.

Meghan developed a plan to make the 320-acre SCEC an example of good management, with an eye on sustainability and conservation of the natural environment. As part of this whole farm plan, they limit the total number of horses on the property and utilize a rotational pasture system to allow fields to regrow. They also incorporate native grasses into the pastures and hay fields and utilize no-till planting methods to limit soil disturbance. Other farm improvements include developing a filtration system between natural reservoirs on the farm and using water from these reservoirs for the horses. They planted trees along creeks which help eliminate erosion issues, and provide new habitat for various animal species.



Meghan Hill, 2023 Anson Taylor Scholarship Recipient.

Meghan will be continuing her education at University of San Francisco by completing a master's degree in sustainability and management. She says the work she helped with at SCEC inspired her to pursue this degree, stating "sustainability is one of my number one passions".

Congratulations, Meghan, on your scholarship award. We're excited to see what the future will bring for you!

Trail Funding Opportunities

Funding for trail maintenance and improvements is always a concern among equestrian trail user groups. Below are three trail funding programs equestrians should be aware of. The first two programs are administered by our conservation partner, American Trails.

Trails Capacity Program (formerly the Trail Fund)

The **Trails Capacity Program** (formerly the Trail Fund) is an initiative of Trails Move People, a coalition led by American Trails with a goal of increasing trail capacity nationwide through research, education, and stewardship. These grants are for work on motorized or nonmotorized trails/projects that are open to the public anywhere in the United States. Priority is given to projects on state and local lands, and federal lands projects will be accepted. (<https://www.americantrails.org/the-trails-capacity-program>)

Legacy Trails Grant Program

American Trails, in partnership with the USDA Forest Service, has established the **Legacy Trails Grant Program (LTGP)**. The goal of the LTGP is to support projects that restore, protect, and maintain watersheds on our national forests and grasslands. American Trails is administering this grant program and solicits applications for funding, with awards up to \$100K per project. (<https://www.americantrails.org/legacy-trails-program>)

National Forest System Trail Stewardship Partner Funding

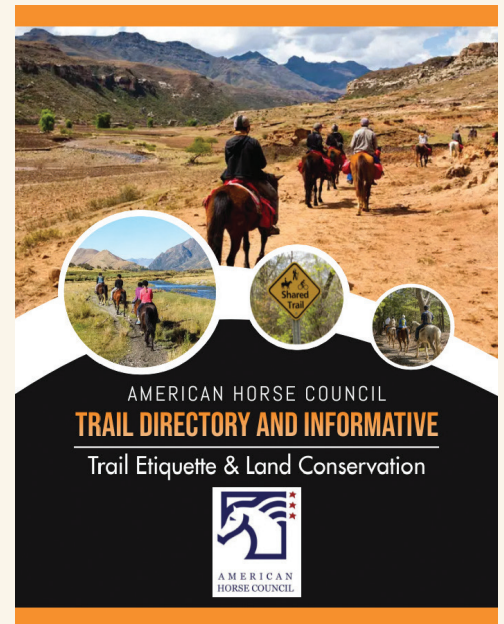
This program is a partnership between the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance (NWSA) and the USDA Forest Service. A variety of trail organizations, including Back Country Horsemen of America, assist in selecting grant recipients. Funds are provided to trail and stewardship organizations to improve trail maintenance of National Forest System Trails. The ideal proposal encourages volunteer and stewardship group engagement over a broad area of district or forest, and over an extended length of time. (https://www.wildernessalliance.org/trail_funding)

National Trails Directory and Guide Now Available

During the pandemic, equestrians turned to trails to commune with nature and enjoy their horses. But equestrians were not alone in hitting the trails: recreational trail use numbers in general soared across the country.

Recognizing a need for equestrians to be able to identify additional places to ride, the American Horse Council's (AHC) Recreation, Trails, and Land Use Committee (RT&LU) developed a national trails directory as a resource to assist anyone looking for horse-friendly trails. AHC President Julie Broadway stated, "We hope this comprehensive guide with links to all things trail-related will be a valuable asset to our recreational trail riding community."

This new AHC publication, "Trail Directory and Informative," also includes information on issues that affect the horse industry such as land preservation and trail etiquette and offers tips on traveling with horses to make it a safe and enjoyable journey. With lots of information scattered over numerous websites, the RT&LU Committee wanted to make the search process easier. Equestrians can also use the directory to access a list of trails by state. The Trails Directory and Informative can be accessed at <https://horsecouncil.org/national-trails-directory/>



The AHC thanks Back Country Horsemen of America, Equine Land Conservation Resource, the State Horse Councils, US Forest Service, National Park Service, and American Trails for their support on this project.

How YOU Can Support ELCR

ELCR could not continue the good work it does without your support. Below are some of the many ways you can help support ELCR's vital mission of saving horse lands!

1. Join ELCR as a Conservation Partner.
2. Make a gift in honor of friends and family who also love our equine friends and way of life.
3. Donate stock to ELCR.
4. Become a monthly donor and leverage a smaller monthly gift into a larger annual impact.
5. For federal and state employees, contribute to ELCR through the CFC or SECC.
6. Remember a cherished loved one or equine companion with a Memorial Tribute Gift.
7. Like and share ELCR on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram—the more people we reach, the more cherished lands and equine heritage we can save!



Visit ELCR.org for more information or contact us at elcradmin@elcr.org.

Spotlight on Honor Contributions

Are you struggling for the perfect gift for that person who "has everything"? Do you know someone you'd like to recognize as a supporter of preserving horse lands? Or do you have a friend who loves horses and horse-related activities? Honor contributions to a charity are a creative and unique way to recognize a friend or loved one, noteworthy accomplishments, and special occasions. Contributions to ELCR allow you to have an impact, while giving acknowledgement to others who support our mission. You can customize the contribution for a specific project, such as our education initiatives, to make the gift more personalized.



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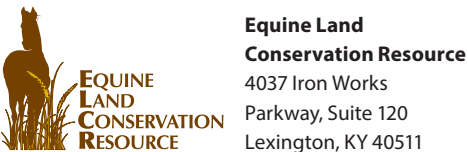
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FALL 2023

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