



**CT Horse Council
TRAIL NEWS
Volunteer Horse Patrol
SPRING 2009**



Volunteer Horse Patrol Statistics for 2008

We had over **1,400** patrols statewide - **3,459** Patrol Hours with **824** hours of Trail Maintenance saving the state (that's you and me!) **\$67,450** for **2008** alone!
There were 33 areas of DEP land and 5 others, making a total of 38 areas patrolled statewide.

The total savings of our 6 years in volunteer service hours is **\$236,500!** The 6 years include **4,504*** Patrols, **12,124** Patrol Hours with **2,249** Trail Maintenance hours.
*(individual patrols were not counted in 2003 & 2004)

For additional statistics on the Patrols, locations, trail maintenance hours, sightings and assistance given, please contact Diane Ciano

Patrol Hours - Over 100	
Meg Sautter	321
Diane Ciano	184.5
Phyllis Alexander	149
Cathie Mestermaker-Harris	133.5
Lynda Perry	119
James Griffin	162
Vevette Greenberg	157

Most Maintenance Hours	
Meg Sautter	80
Diane Ciano	53.5
Vevette Greenberg	41
Phyllis Alexander	39
Gina McManus	32.5
Diane Morton	27.5
Barbara White	21.5

Patrol Hours - Over 50	
Diane Morton	96
Alesia DiFederico	87
Deborah McConnell	82
Jane Samuels	79
Gina McManus	76.5
Debbie Sommers	67.5
Rose Mary Biegger	66.5
Debbie O'Donnell	61
Judy Beliveau	61
Melanie Langan	60.5
Barbara White	60
Bob LaRosa	59
Lucy Prybylski	59
Anne Albee	57
Marcia Sigman	52.5



Most Areas Patrolled	
Meg Sautter	26
Diane Ciano	22
Vevette Greenberg	21
Judy Beliveau	16

13 new members join in on the CHC Volunteer Horse Patrol for 2009

We have 11 new VHP members from the Pomfret Horse & Trail Association, a newly formed group that will patrol the private land trails of Pomfret and surrounding areas to help protect and keep the trails open to equestrian use. They will also patrol some of the lands of the Wyndham Land Trust along with the state DEP land of the Mashamoquet Area.

Lisette Rimer, President and Penny Foisey are the VHP Coordinators. Other members include, Antoinette McNeill, Bruce McNeill, Gina Labbe, Kristen Jezerski, Meg Dinger Susan Boone, Susan Jackson, Susan Parrow, and Vikki Fortier.

Other new members are Deborah Finco-Kent and Ariel Kent from Mystic who will be patrolling Bluff Point, Haley Farm and other surrounding areas.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, April 11th 10:00 am **Volunteer Horse Patrol "Blessing of the Mounts"**

Machimoodus State Park, East Haddam

Contact Diane Ciano at Spirit76@snet.net

Saturday, May 30th 6:00pm - **Volunteer Horse Patrol Parade Participation**
New Britain Memorial Day Parade

To register: Contact Meg Sautter at mmsautter@att.net

Saturday, May 30th **DEP- The Great Park Pursuit - No Child Left Inside**

This year DEP is focusing on various recreational activities that are available in our state parks. The event will be on the **Air Line Trail** (between Colchester and East Hampton) and the theme of the day is biking and horseback riding. **Members of the CHC-VHP are asked to participate.** Contact Diane Ciano at trails@cthorsecouncil.org

NATIONAL TRAIL DAY EVENTS

Saturday, June 6th & Sunday June 7th:

Contact Diane Ciano at trails@cthorsecouncil.org

Saturday, June 6 - **Airline Greenway** - Event sponsored by the Town of Colchester

Saturday, June 6 - **Larkin State Bridle Trail - Walk-Bike-Ride**

Sponsored by the CT Horse Council Volunteer Horse Patrol

Sunday, June 7 - Pachaug State Forest - 10 Mile - Forging Partnerships Ride

Sponsored by The Tennessee Walking Horse Breeding and Exhibition Association (TWHBEA) & The Connecticut Horse Council.

TWHBEA launched a trails initiative program that includes forging partnerships with the National Park Service, the Back Country Horsemen of America, Leave No Trace, Equestrian Land Conservation Resource and Best of America by Horseback. As part of their initiative to expand the trails program, local representatives Ariel Kent and Deborah Finco the Connecticut/ Rhode Island representatives for the (TWHBEA) Trials Initiative and the Connecticut Horse Council are sponsoring a 10 mile ride to promote the use of local, state and federal land for equestrian trail riding The ride is open to all breeds. Lunch will be provided following the ride (\$5.00) NEHT **sanctioned**. Contact Deborah Finco: dfkent@snet.net 860-705-8456

Volunteer Horse Patrol Events

February 7 - The Great Park Pursuit - No Child Left Inside - Winter Festival



Cool Hand Luke

Balladeer

Over 700 people came out to enjoy Black Rock State Park in Watertown on a spectacular winter day full of educational and fun activities, that included ice fishing, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, compass and animal track walks, ice rescue demonstrations, search and rescue dogs and meet & Greet the CHC-Volunteer Horse Patrol members & their mounts. Meg Sautter / Dancer, Diane Ciano / Aladdin, Alesia DiFederico / Balladeer & Judy Beliveau & Cool Hand Luke participated in the event.

St. Patrick's Day Parade



7 VHP Members participated in Hartford's parade: Meg Sautter, Diane Ciano, Vevette Greenberg, Judy Beliveau, Ken Forcier, Bev Torell, and Diane Morton. They were joined by members of the CT Ranch Horse Association.

Trail Warrior Award - Diane Ciano



TRAIL WARRIOR

Award

Devoting countless hours and hard work to trail preservation in Connecticut, Diane Ciano is very worthy of the title – Trail Warrior. Serving on the Connecticut Horse Council as trails chair, she has been vital to the ability of horse owners to continue to ride on the Connecticut state trails system. In 2003, she created the Volunteer Horse Patrol, a subcommittee of the CHC. The patrol acts in partnership with the Department of Environmental Protection and serves as their eyes and ears in Connecticut state forests and parks. VHP members report issues, log number of users on specific trails, helps with trail maintenance and provide park goers with directions and information. VHP members have logged thousands of hours since its creation.

During 2007, trail riders faced a state regulation change which would have severely restricted access of horses to public trails on state lands. Diane voiced strong opposition to this proposed regulation, joined by the CHC, and ultimately it was withdrawn by the state.

She is also currently mapping existing horse trails on state land, an important step in ensur-

ing protection of these trails for the future. In her "spare" time, Diane is leading the way to update and restore a former national forest equestrian camp. She has applied for matching grants from the state and leads work parties and fund raisers in order to get the Lost Silvermine Horse Camp upgraded.

A tireless champion of the trails, Diane is most definitely a Trail Warrior! Nominated by Amy Stegall.

Send your
Trail Warrior
nominations to
editor@trailblazermagazine.us



Diane
Ciano

Another prestigious award bestowed upon one of our very own! Diane Ciano, Trails Committee Chair and CHC Volunteer Horse Patrol Supervisor, with her trusty mount Aladdin, has received this award, nominated by CHC President Amy Stegall.

Of course, those of us who ride with her have added 'Princess' to the title: *Trail Princess Warrior*. Diane will soon have a headdress to go with her title...or at least a feather to put on her helmet.

Diane is a tireless advocate, of over 20 years, for trail preservation and we're all VERY proud of her! **You go girl!**



Hoof beats in Heaven

Farewell to the Patrol Horses that have gone to the great pastures. Our condolences go out to the members who lost their beloved friends. May the memories and blessings bestowed upon them to ride upon their backs and know the spirit of the horse that has enriched their lives, comfort them. If we listen closely, we can hear their thunder as they run across the heavens.

Ginger Tullai's **Gazett and Express**

Elise Wood's **On a Whim**

Cathy Clouse's **Shadow**

Bunny Joseph's **Flashie Rebel -"Bill"**

Bill was the horse that was pictured on the CT Greenways Brochure



*As my candle, burning bright
Sends shadows off on this dark night
It offers peace, and hope and love
To the horses dancing up above.*

*My prayers and thoughts will help them find
Beloved friends they left behind.
So they may comfort us in turn,
And thus it is my candle burns.*

*With quiet tears, lovingly shed
I hear the horses, overhead.
Their pounding hooves are thunder stirred,*

For another other friend has joined the herd.

Paige Cerullo

Candle Lighting Tributes to these horses can be viewed on the Hoofbeats-in Heaven website: <http://www.hoofbeats-in-heaven.com/candlelighting/>

MERRITT PROPERTY - Groton

Groton - The CT Horse Council was notified of a recent decision by the Groton Open Space Association (GOSA). GOSA has severely limited the land use of the Merritt Property which they purchased with public funds through DEP's Land Acquisition Program. The property was purchased as public open space for the Town of Groton. Horseback riding, bicycling and dog walking has been banned.

GOSA's reluctance to allow public input by equestrians has contributed to the unfortunate situation. Local equestrians have attempted to offer their knowledge and be supportive of the land use decisions and have received little or no response.

As a requirement of the grant from DEP, GOSA had agreed to allow the continued usage of the existing trails on the Merritt parcel. The multiple-use trail system falls within the purview of the DEP easement with GOSA allowing passive recreation.

The Merritt Property is of great importance to the equestrian community as well as other trail users because of its connectivity to public lands that allow multiple-use. The property has the potential to continue the safe long distance travel corridor between adjacent/nearby Town of Groton lands. This open space parcel provided connection to the following Town of Groton owned lands: Beebe Pond to Merritt, which connects to Groton owned Mortimer Wright, which connects to trails on DEP's Haley Farm and Bluff Point. All of which allow horses, dogs and bikes.

CHC Trails is investigating this matter further. As we gather information, we will keep the equestrian community informed.

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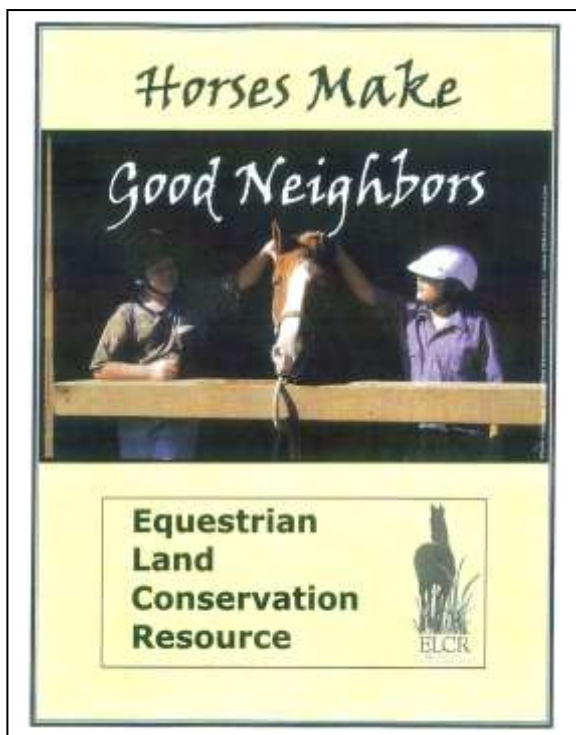
**NEWS from the Equestrian Land Conservation Resource -
Where will you ride tomorrow?**

National Parks Service Awards Grant to Equestrian Land Conservation Resource To Develop a National Equestrian Trails Organization

The National Parks Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS RTCA) has awarded the Equestrian Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) a technical assistance grant to develop a national equestrian trails organization. The terms of the grant include assigning an NPS RTCA staff person to facilitate of process, identify issues and needs of trail riders nationwide, determine an effective organizational structure to represent horse trail users; and provide a contact point for land managers to communicate with trail riders. The determination of the needs and appropriate organizational structure will be developed by conducting a series of meetings with stakeholders in 2009.

An organizing meeting was held in 2008 at the National Trails Conference. In 2009, a series of in-person and conference call meetings are planned. The plans also call for an on-line bulletin board to post the meeting agendas and notes. The on-line forum will also provide an opportunity for trail users and trail organization representatives to share their comments. In addition to ELCR and NPS RTCA representatives, representatives from the following organizations participated in the process: American Horse Council, Back Country Horsemen of America, Southeast Equestrian Trails Conference, Ohio Valley Equestrian Trails Symposium, Pennsylvania Equine Council, US Forest Service, and the US Department of Transportation Recreational Trails Program.

The project goals are to increase to the number of trails open to horses, promote good stewardship of the trails, enhance communication with land managers, develop positive relationships with other trail users groups, and serve in an advocacy role on the above issues and other issues identified during the grant process.



ELCR booklet "Horses Make Good Neighbors"

This full-color 11 page booklet is designed to help horse lovers educate people who are not familiar with horses about the important ways in which horses contribute to their local communities. It will be a particularly valuable tool for advocates of equine-friendly zoning to share with elected and appointed government officials, neighborhood associations, and community zoning and planning professionals and volunteers.

The publication is available for purchase on their website: www.elcr.org

About Equestrian Land Conservation Resource (ELCR):

ELCR, the only national not-for-profit organization assisting in the conservation of land for horses and horse-related activity, serves as a clearinghouse and educational resource for land and horse owners on issues related to conserving land, preserving horse access on public and private lands, equine economic development, community land use planning and zoning and good land stewardship.

If your organization would like to join our national efforts to save land and trails for horses, visit www.elcr.org, or call (859) 455-8383 for more information.