

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
APRIL, 2016

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Attended the NC Farm Bureau Women's Conference
- Participated in the NCDA&CS "Barnyard" Chat
- Held two regional Caucuses
- Assisted the Border Belt Horsemen's Association with planning for the 2016 Cowboy Up Event
- Attended the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Legislative Committee Meeting
- Sworn in as a member of the Outdoor Cultural Heritage Board
- Attended multiple legislative and political events in preparation for the 2016 Session
- Refined the by-law revisions
- Participated in the NC College of Veterinary Medicine Open House
- Met with select staff from the NCDA&CS to work on improving our joint efforts
- Conducted the April Trail Challenge

DISCUSSION:

The NC Farm Bureau Women's Convention was attended by over 200 women from across the state. Select agricultural issues were addressed but of specific significance was a presentation on understanding the role of cities and counties in policy and lawmaking. Several of the issues that the NCHC worked on were mentioned at the conference.

The NC Department of Agriculture holds a meeting each year prior to the opening of the legislative session with all of the Agriculture Commodity Groups. The NCHC has participated in these meetings. This year, being a short session, the discussion centered on budget requests. The Commissioner also remarked to the group that they would be conducting another Legislative Ag Awareness Day prior to the 2017 session.

Two Regional Caucuses were held during April. A Caucus in Yadkinville was extremely well attended. State Park representatives were also at the meeting. The major issues that were brought forward included equine parking and camping at our state parks. In addition, concerns regarding partnering with State Parks on trail maintenance and providing increased carriage trails were discussed. Understanding the role of the NCHC was explained and the need to "join the herd". A second Caucus was held in Burgaw. This meeting highlighted the legislative changes we made in 2015. Concern regarding the interpretation of the new language regarding Agricultural Present Use Value tax was also brought up. It appears that some county tax assessors are not aware of the inclusion of boarding and training as sources of income. The NCHC is working on appropriate actions to correct this.

The Border Belt Horsemen will be the new managers of the Cowboy Up Event. A meeting was held to discuss the addition of a horse pull. The group has decided to make this a one day event and include the NCHC Trail Challenge as part of the event activities.

The NCHC was appointed a seat on the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Committee at the end of the 2015 session. This committee has met three times and continues discussions on several issues including WLR management plans which may be impacting local farmers. The new Outdoor Cultural Heritage

Board was sworn in during this month. The NCHC occupies a three year appointment. This committee will begin addressing increasing access to public land, specifically for our youth.

This has been an active political month as many events have been held prior to the opening of the short session. With an unusual budget surplus available, requests for additional dollars will be highly competitive. We have two legislative requests including the addition of equestrians in the Fonta and Flora Bill and additional funding to complete the Lumberton Stalls Project.

Other events and activities this month included continued work on our by-law revisions and attendance at the NC College of Veterinary Medicine Open House. The NCHC continues to promote the visibility of our equine industry and support of our industry through these types of events. The attendance was predicted to be around 10,000 participants.

The April Trail Challenge was hosted by 4-B Farms and was another great success. Judging was provided by Jim Thomas and Sally Manier; Mary Constantino and Cathy assisted the judges by scribing. A big thank you to Larry Blackburn for hosting this event at his facility and to everyone who came out and participated.

Finally, a meeting was held between the NCHC, our NCHC Lobbyist and Zane Hedgecock and David Smith of the NC Department of Agriculture. Several issues were discussed including improving our presence in marketing materials, discussion of activities at the NC State Fair, agri-business insurance, and the completion of the Lumberton Stall Project. Discussions will be on-going.