



Annual Report 2016

“Working together....Stronger than Ever”

North Carolina Horse Council

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**SUPPORT
NORTH CAROLINA
HORSES**

Your purchase of the North Carolina Horse Council plate promotes:

- A Thriving Horse Industry
- A United Voice for all Horsemen
- Protection of Horses at Risk

NORTH CAROLINA HORSE COUNCIL

www.nchorsecouncil.com

The advertisement features a close-up of a brown horse's head on the left. In the center, a North Carolina license plate is shown with the number '0123Hc' and the text 'NCHC Council' and 'NORTH CAROLINA'. On the right, there is a circular logo for the North Carolina Horse Council (NCHC) with a horse silhouette. The background is a dark blue and green gradient.

“Once again we have had a strong year working together to strengthen our Equine Industry.”

*Sammy Jenkins
President*



“Nothing would get done if we didn’t work together. The Horse Council truly represents all aspects of the industry.”

*Rose Cushing,
Secretary*



To Our Members

Strategic Highlights

The Horse Council continued our presence across the state

- The trail horse challenge continued with several new venues.
- The Lumberton Stall Project began construction with an additional \$165,000 allocated by the legislature to complete the project.
- Nothing Could be Finer than a Horse in Carolina events grew by 13%.
- Grants awarded included dollars for a Gelding Clinic and new educational programs conducted by our NC Agricultural Agents. In addition, several trail projects were completed in 2106.

Financial Highlights

- The feed assessment income remains within budget.
- The budget projection on the sale of the new NC Equine License Plate was met.
- Our Special Events were all profitable.
- The State Fair Contract was completed without incident.

Legislative Highlights

- Multiple Caucuses were held across the state to prepare for the 2017 Legislative Session.
- Actively included equine interest on the Outdoor Cultural Heritage Board.
- Prepared the legislative Agenda for 2017 to include access to liability insurance, improve our workers compensation rate and expand impoundment to include horses abandoned at Boarding Facilities. Other ongoing issues include improving equestrian access to public land.

Looking Ahead

“Working together...Stronger than Ever!” this motto has encouraged growth among all equestrians and will allow us to move forward on improved land conservation, equestrian access to public land and a better regulatory environment for the equine industry.

Sue M. Gray
Executive Director
2016

"I wanted to thank and show my appreciation to you and your horse Sunshine for allowing my 3 young children such a great ride today at the fair! I was not expecting to take my children on a horseback ride when I came to the fair, but my already high expectations were surpassed when I was handed a small personal invitation to attend as I entered the fair. My anticipations were then exceeded as my children and I had such a truly wonderful time today in no small part to you. Thank you again, and to Sunshine for making this such a memorable day for us!"

Anonymous Participant talking about the Five Minute Lessons



NC State Fair: Nothing Could be Finer than a Horse in Carolina

The NCHC conducted eleven days of educational and entertaining activities to increase awareness of and interest in horse-related activities in North Carolina. The event targeted families who are challenged to not only find family-friendly activities but who are also interested in our agricultural heritage. We hoped that by providing hands-on and entertaining activities more families would discover the benefits of horse-related activities.

A five minute lesson: Eleven riding instructors provided 2,479 individual five minute lessons. This was a 13% increase from 2015. We have estimated a potential 17% increase based on the average number of rides that we would have completed on Friday, October 21st when we closed the lessons early due to a storm. The NC State Fair representative made the decision to close the lessons and remove the horses from the Alley of Breeds. The age range of riders was approximately 2 years old to 78 years old. This popular activity drew participants to the Hunt Horse Complex for an average stay of over 30 minutes. Providing individuals the opportunity to decorate a horse shoe as a souvenir and Hunt for the Red Horse Shoe extended their stay. Our youngest rider from 2015 returned for a repeat ride. He stated that he would be back when he was four! To many, the Five Minute riding lesson was the highlight of their fair experience. Perhaps it was best summed up by the parent of a rider:

Upon exiting the lessons, each participant was given an "I rode a Horse Today" sticker and asked about their experience. All declared that they wanted to come back next year! All instructors rated the event as exceptional.

Alley of Breeds: Ten unique breeds were displayed during the State Fair. Each breed was presented with a basic description and history of the breed along with an individual activity sheet and special facts about the North Carolina Equine Industry.

Special Event: A daily scavenger hunt was held in search of a red horseshoe. The winner each day received a plush stuffed horse!

Extreme Trail Horse Challenge

This was the fourth year of the Trail Horse Challenge. We had several returning sponsors including Double LL Tack and Feed, DC Western, Carolina Hoofbeats TV and Claudia McCauley's Thunder Hooves 4-H group. We awarded saddles to the overall highpoint winners in the Novice and Youth divisions. The winner of the Pro Division received a cash award of \$1000 and this year the winner of the Experienced Division received a cash award of \$500.

The NCHC wishes to thank all of our wonderful volunteer judges, trail hosts and sponsors!

“Thanks to the NCHC for making events like the five minute riding lessons available to all people.”



*Kimberly Allen Wood,
Five Minute Lesson
Instructor*

“Providing quality legal services to horse owners is important to the growth of the equine industry ...and Dottie is one of the best.”



*Dottie Burch,
Executive Committee,
NCHC*

Trail Report

This year was like many preceding years, with a mix of trail opportunities, trail losses, and chances for the equestrian community to be heard. The following are just highlights of our Trail activities reviewing Local Trails, State Trails and Federal Trail Lands.

Local Trails

A special local trail opportunity on a portion of gameland near Jordan Lake was begun this year. The importance of this project cannot be over-emphasized, as the horse community has been asking the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) for riding access in gamelands for many years (horseback riding in Jordan Lake gamelands is currently prohibited, except along the American Tobacco Trail). This is the first collaborative effort between the NCHC and the WRC, and it is in a part of NC where private and public trail riding opportunities are scarce. The success (or failure) of this project will set a precedent for future gameland access.

We continue to track Wake County’s progress on the development of the planned “Proctor Farm Equestrian Park” in eastern Wake County. Wake County staff and consultants are continuing to work through permit issues, and hope that the park can be open to the public in late 2017.

We continued to assist several local equine developers on how to plan for equestrian trails.

State Trails

We have strong working relationships with the State Parks staff and the state-administered Recreational Trails Program. Despite those relationships, 2016 produced a net loss of trails in the State Parks system. Important sources of trail funding have also been diminished this year. We are working to establish connections with state agencies not traditionally known for providing recreational opportunities for trail riders, including the NC Department of Agriculture and the Wildlife Resources Commission.

We continue to represent the equine recreational trail community on the North Carolina State Trails Committee. The Federal Recreational Trail Program (RTP) funds continue to be authorized by congress.

The NCHC received a state trail grant to assist in funding the 2016 National Equestrian Trails Conference. As the host for the conference, the NCHC prepared a dynamic agenda and had attendees from as far away as the State of Washington.

The National Equestrian Trails Conference (NETC) is the largest, most recognized equestrian trails conference in the country. NETC’s participants, sponsors and speakers included federal, state and private recreational land managers and other experts in the areas of recreational land us, conservation, maintenance and volunteer development.

Trail Report continued:

“Trail issues remain the most important land issue that we face”

*Barb Oslund, NCHC
Trail Consultant*



“We must preserve and protect our historic right to ride. One way to increase our work is to join with other trail user groups.”

*Sue Gray,
Executive Director*



Trails on Federal Lands

The National Forests in NC, and to a lesser extent the National Parks, provide the greatest equine trail mileage, camping, and variety of experience. Every National Forest and National Park in NC is supported by a chapter of the Back Country Horseman (BCH) of North Carolina. The NC Horse Council has a cooperative agreement with the Back Country Horsemen of North Carolina, whose chapter members exemplify the spirit of volunteerism, knowledge and stewardship that is needed to maintain our access to trails.

Barb Oslund, NCHC Trails Consultant, continued to represent the Equine Community in ongoing discussions of the trail designation process in Uwharrie National Forest. These meetings were also attended by other user groups (hikers, mountain bikers, off-highway vehicle enthusiasts), as well as several BCH Uwharrie chapter members, independent trail riders and adjacent property owners.

The Back Country Horsemen of NC remain very involved in the plan revision process in the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests process. The NCHC and BCH of NC are represented on the Leadership Team of the Nantahala Pisgah Forest Partnership, as this collaborative group continues to work to find common ground among interested parties to help support the Forest Service in their new Forest Planning effort. The Nantahala Pisgah Planning process seems to be ahead of other National Forest efforts, and the collaborative partnership is becoming a template for other forest planning efforts.

Work continued with the ongoing forest plan revision process for the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forests, the NCHC was included in a coalition of user groups that entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that supports establishment of National Recreation Areas (NRAs) in the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. The MOU recommends more trails and better public access as well as back country and wild areas for the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Alpine Club, American Whitewater, Back Country Horsemen of America, Back Country Horsemen of Blue Ridge, Back Country Horsemen of North Carolina, Back Country Horsemen of Pisgah, Back Country Horsemen of Western North Carolina, Black Dome Mountain Sports, Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine, Carolina Adventure Guides, Carolina Climbers Coalition, Franklin Bird Club, Friends of Big Ivy, Ground Up Publishing, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, Highlands Plateau Audubon Society, Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition, International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA), MountainTrue, Nantahala Area Southern Off-Road Biking Association (SORBA), Nantahala Hiking Club, North Carolina Horse Council, Northwest North Carolina Mountain Bike Alliance, Outdoor 76, Outdoor Alliance, Pisgah Area SORBA, Pisgah Mountain Bike Adventures, Southern Appalachian Plant Society, Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS), Stay and Play in the Smokies, The Wilderness Society, Trout Unlimited - Unaka Chapter, and Wild South. The idea driving the coalition is that Western North Carolina's National Forests are the regions greatest public asset. The Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest is in the top three most visited national forests in the United States.



Legislative Actions

Request for additional funding for the Lumberton Stall Project

It became apparent during 2016 that funding was lacking to complete the 100 stall project at the Southeastern Agricultural Event Center. The NCHC held several meetings with representatives from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and were told that in-order to complete the project, they needed an additional \$165,000. The NCHC immediately went to the NC General Assembly to lobby for the additional funding and was successful. The Stall Project will be completed in 2017.

Outdoor Cultural Resource Board

A new law was passed which established the North Carolina Heritage Trust Fund to expand opportunities for youth to engage in outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, biking and equestrian sports. The Governor appointed Sue Gray from the North Carolina Horse Council to a three year term on the new Commission.

Currently the Board has established a strategic plan to fund projects which will increase youth access to public lands. Funding has been identified with an initial allocation from the General Assembly of \$100,000. Additional monies have been collected via the Wildlife Resource Commission.

The acquisition of a new outdoor training center is under consideration. This would include equestrian activities.

Access to New or Additional Trails

The NCHC continues to work with our legislators to understand the needs of the equestrian community. NC State Parks presented a review of recreational activities on all properties, identifying 16 properties with equestrian trails. Newly acquired state land may also offer some increased equestrian access.

The NCHC wishes to thank our lobbyists, John Cooper, Stephen Kouba and Jackson Stancil for a successful 2016.

Grants and Sponsorships

“A special thanks to the NCHC for helping to fund trail projects.”

*Deirdre Lightsey,
NCHC Western Trail
Consultant*



“It is always great to acknowledge our Board Members working to support our goals. Thanks Tom for all that you do!”

*Sammy Jenkins,
President*

*Tom Thomas, NCHC
Board Member and
President of the NC
Backcountry Horsemen*



Grants remain one of the most critical functions of the North Carolina Horse Council. During 2016 we supported youth development programs such as Horsemen’s Youth Day at the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine. The NCHC provided dollars to support an Equine Health Symposium which was open to not only equine professionals but also equine owners and participated in the Veterinary School Open House. The NCHC also funded the Eastern Regional 4-H Conference during 2016.

On-going trail Grants were extended into 2016. Work began on building parking areas, high lines and generally improve our trail from the Mountains to the Sea. We continued to enjoy our partnership with the Back Country Horsemen of NC.

A Health and Research Grant was funded to study the effect of dietary restriction or low-intensity exercise on weight loss in over conditioned horses. Obesity and related conditions such as laminitis and Equine Metabolic Syndrome are significant problems in the horse industry, with high rates of mortality and morbidity. The grant will not only assist in providing horse owners better care for their livestock, but will also assist in training equine nutritionists.

Other Grants awarded included funding a new Equine Educational Series in Halifax County conducted by the Halifax Livestock Extension Agent and a Safety Net Grant was awarded to an equine farm owner who was dealing with an abandoned horse on the property. In addition, a gelding grant was awarded to the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine to conduct a clinic. This clinic provided much needed services to the clients as well as provided experience for future equine veterinarians.

The Equine Community dodged several bullets during 2016 including Hurricane Matthew and the wildfires in the Western Part of our State. No mass fatalities were reported and no requests for assistance were received. The Horse Community banded together during these difficult times and assisted each other in caring for our animals. A great big THANK YOU to all who assisted during these disasters.

NCHC Officers

2016 Elected Board Members

Allan Harper
Allison Gay
Casey Armstrong
Cindi Fritz
Clara Cahoon
Dottie Burch
Doug Tate
Gayle Nifong
Jerry King
Jim Thomas
Laurie Wood
Mary Constantino
Mary Miller-Jordan
Mary Myers
Michael Boucher
Myra Daniel
Nancy Ferguson
Nathan Tabor
Pat Benton
Patty Nunnery
Randy Ratliff
Rick Peniston
Todd Ericson
Tom Thomas
Tracey Scheltinga
Virginia Godwin

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Cheryl Bennett



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