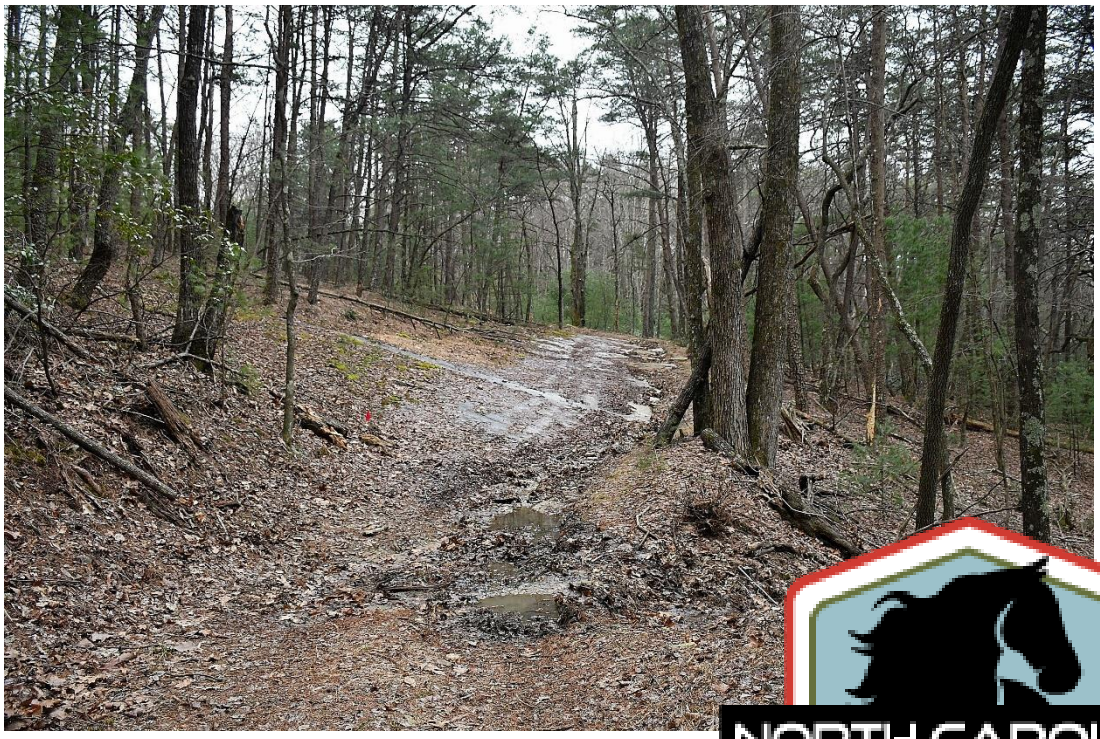

Annual Report

2019

"Working together…Stronger than Ever"

North Carolina Horse Council

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"We appreciate all horsemen and women across the state who help us grow a strong equine community."

Tom Thomas,
President

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

Sammy Jenkins
Past President

To Our Members

Strategic Highlights

- Establishment of a new partnership with the NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine and the NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- New marketing plan and materials developed
- Ambassador's Program
- New grant category established, and Grant awards increased across all categories
- New trails opened, developed and improved
- Pasture Management, Emergency Management and new equine passport materials developed

Financial Highlights

- Grant dollars up to $10,000 was set to fund scholarships for therapeutic riding programs
- $5,000 set aside for Hurricane Relief
- Once again, we have exceeded the budget projection on the sale of the NC Equine License Plate
- A new Ambassador's Program was approved for implementation in 2020

Legislative Highlights

The Legislature session of 2019 was one of the longest in our state's history. The Horse Council submitted a change in the 2019 NC Farm Act to better clarify equine activities as agritourism. The Farm Act has not passed the General Assembly and will be taken back up in 2020. Ground word was laid to introduce changes to include increased equine access to public lands.

Looking Ahead

We remain committed to improving equine business and working towards becoming the most legislatively friendly state in the nation. "Come Join the Herd".

Sue M. Gray
Executive Director
2019

North Carolina remains in the top 10 states in the nation for number of Equine

1.2 million households contain horse enthusiasts

Horse Ownership, Equine Institutions & Profit-Making Organizations, and Tourism spending by participants and spectators combine for $3.44 Billion economic impact

Equine Economic Impact Study

The NC Horse Industry remains a stable and vital force in our State's economy. The Horse Industry directly contributes over $1.1 billion to the state's economy, along with 25,072 jobs.

From those direct effects, the horse industry's contribution ripples out into other sectors of the economy. Adding these ripple effects results in an estimate of the total contribution of the horse industry to the North Carolina economy of $2 billion.

The Racing Sector:

- Adds $120 million in value to the state economy
- Supports 1,916 jobs
- Total economic impact of $190 million

The Competition Sector:

- Adds $423 million in value to the state economy
- Supports 7,976 jobs
- Total economic impact of $734 million

The Recreation Sector:

- Adds $478 million in value to the state economy
- Supports 9,076 jobs
- Total economic impact of $812 million

The Equine Therapy:

- Adds $14.9 million in value to the state economy
- Supports 346 jobs

The Equine Rescues & Sanctuaries:

- Adds $2.3 million in value to the state economy
- Supports 48 jobs

There are 559,000 acres of land in North Carolina used for horse-related purposes.

Special Partnerships

College of Veterinary Medicine and The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

The North Carolina Horse Council, the NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine and the NCSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences entered into a new partnership. The goal of the partnership is to improve the educational opportunities and facilities for students interested in pursuing careers in the equine industry. A matching Grant of $22,000 was awarded for improvements at the NCSU Equine Educational Unit. Both NCSU University Departments matched the $22,000 for a total of $66,000.

NC Department of Agriculture

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and the NCHC moved to develop new educational materials regarding the equine health passport. New procedures were put in place for emergency response. The NCHC participated in the NC State Fair but in a very limited capacity. The NCHC remains committed to assisting the NCDA&CS in identifying ways to highlight the horse industry during this largest agricultural event in the State.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources

The Memorandum of Agreement with the Wildlife Resource Commission continued throughout 2019. The new trail at Mason Point is moving closer to opening. This trail will mark the beginning of improved access and future trail development.

Other Special Events

The NCHC co-hosted the National Backcountry Horsemen of America Annual Conference. We were also privileged to sponsor the National Equine Science Symposium. Both events were held in the Western part of our State.

"Thanks to local horse owners for helping build new trails at Mason Pointe."

Barb Oslund, Trails Consultant, NCHC

"We must preserve and protect our historic right to ride. Working together with other trail groups improves our success!"

Sue Gray, Executive Director, NCHC

Trail Report

The year in review:

This annual report is a sampling of the activities that have occurred but is not comprehensive and there are many others who have had important accomplishments related to trail access and stewardship. We are proud of all the important work NC trail riders do, and please feel free to share your accomplishments and access the NC Horse Council's resources in 2020.

Local and State Trail Programs:

Wake County is in the final design process for equestrian trails at Proctor Farm in the eastern part of Wake County near Lizard Lick. Permit issues have delayed parts of the planned system, so the decision was made to phase the project which will result in about 5 to 6 miles of trails being opened first.

NCHC continues to work with the non-profit Jordan Lake Trails Conservation Association (JLTCA) on the Mason Point horse trail on a portion of gameland near Jordan Lake at the Chatham/Durham County line. JLTCA has held several volunteer days and is working to have the upper loop of 5.5 miles open by the end of the year. Signage and maps are being completed, and volunteers are needed for regular mowing. They conducted a meeting with local first responders and veterinarians to share a safety plan so there will be some familiarity with the horse trail system in the event of a human or equine emergency.

We have strong working relationships with the State Parks staff and the state-administered Recreational Trails Program. It was a busy year for equestrian trails in State Parks. We were very happy to be invited to the grand opening of the Carvers Creek State Park, which includes 11 miles of multi-use (including equestrian) trails near Fayetteville.

North Carolina recently purchased the Pisgah View Ranch in Buncombe County southwest of Asheville. This large property will eventually be opened as a State Park and will have equestrian trail opportunities. It will be important for equestrians to stay involved in the planning process. https://www.smokymountainnews.com/archives/item/27387-pisgah-view-state-park-will-be-years-long-process

Morrow Mountain State Park equestrian trails were re-opened in mid-September, almost a year after the hurricane damage. The NCHC worked with the concerned riders and the State parks personnel to hold a June 16 public meeting to bring people up to speed on efforts and needs and volunteer opportunities. After a lot of work from contractors and volunteers, all three loops of the horse trails are now open. This happened because of the leadership of local riders that worked with Park staff and volunteered to clear out some of the corridor. More volunteers will be needed to help with remaining clearing and future minor trail maintenance. The Park has an organized volunteer program in place. Ranger Alden Early is leading the

volunteer program at the park. His email for anyone else interested is alden.early@ncparks.gov.

NCHC supported riders at **Medoc Mountain State Park** in an August meeting regarding the status of the equestrian trail system. Park staff and volunteers were re-acquainted, and learned about planned managed forestry activities, possible additions to the trail system, and ideas to improve the equestrian camping area.

NCHC provided grant funding to the **Elkin Valley Trails Association** to fill a shortfall on constructing an important horse trail connection at Stone Mountain State Park. This section of trail required blasting rock to make it safe and level and will eventually connect the Park horse trail system to the local section of the Mountains to Sea Trail that will include equestrian use. NC is designating other State Trails across the state. Most existing State Trails have very limited equestrian use and NCHC is trying to broaden the planning process so equestrians have a voice in gaining access.

The Wilderness Gateway trail was recently designated and will pass through Catawba, Burke, Rutherford, and McDowell Counties, and will pass through South Mountain State Park. Negotiations with private landowners and public land managers is on-going; however, this trail corridor will have great potential for equestrian use. Stay alert for information regarding the planning process for the trail sections so you can participate.

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. Very few horse trail projects are usually represented in the grant applications, so please encourage your local, state and Federal land managers to apply for funding to maintain or build new equestrian trails. The Federal RTP has been in place since 1993 and has typically provided over $1 million annually in grant funds to North Carolina for motorized and non-motorized recreational trails.

Federal Trail Programs:

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.

Back Country Horsemen of Uwharrie chapter hold regular workdays and recently completed a workday in which several trails had updated markings and signs to guide riders. They have gained several new members that also volunteer at nearby Morrow Mountain State Park.

NCHC provided feedback during the 30-day public comment period on the rationale for the permanent closure of the Hang Glider Trail in Uwharrie National Forest. This once-popular trail has been “temporarily” closed since 2010.

Federal Trails continued:

The Back Country Horsemen of the Croatan chapter helps to maintain over 13 miles of equestrian trails in the Croatan National Forest. They have been addressing (2018) hurricane damage for both trails and the access road to the trail head parking lot.

The Back Country Horsemen of NC provided public comments asking that horses be added to the designated users on the Forest Service proposed Mortimer project in the Wilson Creek area, Caldwell County. The proposal would create new loop opportunities and include 11 miles of new trail construction, all currently only bike/hike designations.
.
BCH is also working with National Forest land managers to find a fair and equitable way to prioritize horse camping in horse camps. When there is a need for additional camping for hikers, bikers they often use an open spot in the horse camps. This can limit horse camping, and also can be dangerous with a public unfamiliar with horses interacting with horses.

The Back Country Horsemen of the Blue Ridge are talking to the Forest Service about including 25 miles of user-created trails to the designated trail system in the Boone Fork area. The NCHC has also advised equestrian trail advocates on Roanoke Island and in Warren County on efforts to have initial discussions with land managers about allowing horse trails on State and Federal lands in those areas.

Come join the Herd!

Legislative Actions

The North Carolina Horse Council was once again represented by John Copper of Connect C and Jackson Stancil of Jones Street Consultants as our lobbyists.

The North Carolina Horse Council wishes to thank our lobbyist for another successful year.

The North Carolina Farm Bureau has always been a strong partner with the Equine Industry. This year at the North Carolina Farm Bureau annual convention, Shawn Harding was elected as the 12th president. Harding was formerly Beaufort County Farm Bureau President and Chairman of the North Carolina Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee. He also previously served on the North Carolina Farm Bureau Board of Directors and as a member of various state advisory committees. For the last year, he has been employed as a Public Policy Director for the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation. Harding replaces one of the most respected men in North Carolina agriculture, Larry Wooten, who is retiring after holding the position since his first election in 1999. Several new policies were approved by the North Carolina Farm Bureau. These included a policy that supports recognizing equestrian activities as a school sport and students who participate in that sport would be eligible for an excused absence. The other policy addresses the status of our wild mustangs. It specifically addresses the labeling of our mustangs as an invasive species and will work to change this status.

A highlight of legislative activities this year was the inclusion of language in the NC Farm Act that clarified equine activities as agritourism. While there was no opposition to this portion of the Farm Act, the Bill was not voted on and will be carried over into 2020.

Legislative discussions and preparing for the upcoming Long Session occupied the middle part of the year. Our Lobbyists continue to position the Equine Industry issues to the forefront as we have worked with multiple legislators on potential legislation including protecting and including equine access to public land.

Meetings including our lobbyist and representatives from North Carolina State University were held. Several topics were discussed including the enhancement of the Equine Educational Unit and the new research hospital and programs at the College of Veterinary Medicine. Ideas on how to increase legislative funding for equine programs were highlighted during this year.

Hurricanes and Emergency Preparedness were front and center during the late Summer and early part of Fall. Our lobbyist and staff worked with many other livestock commodity groups to help and support equine owners impacted by the Storms. Recovery procedures were reviewed, and each commodity shared what they thought was good and what areas may need some work. Overall, the group was pleased with the hurricane response.

Grants and Scholarships

Grants are a major function of the NCHC and this year we awarded dollars in all grant categories.

Special grant recognition for our youth groups included the FFA Horse Judging Competition.

Health and Research Grants Awarded to NCSU/CVM

The North Carolina Horse Council was able to substantially increase grants, sponsorships and scholarships during 2019 thanks to an increase in our referendum dollars. A new Grant Category: Nonprofit Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAAT) Program was added. These grants provide support for organizations that use horses as a tool to help individuals with physical, mental and emotional conditions gain confidence and work through the healing process. The bond that is formed between the horse and the client is often a strong one that helps the client process feelings, gain skills and ameliorate fears.

The following is a synopsis of those awards:

Grant	Grant	Grant	Grant
Industry Program Sponsor	NCSU-SCAAEP	Equine Health Symposium	1,000.00
	NCDA&CS -v	Pledge NC Ag Awareness Day	500.00
	BCH of NC	2019 BCHA Annual Meeting	3,500.00
	BCH of America	2019 BCHA Annual Meeting	1,750.00
	NCDA&CS -v	"Got to be NC Products Dinner"	100.00
	Equine Science Society	ESS Symposium	5,000.00
	NCSU	Livestock Science Camp Scholarship	800.00
	NCSU	Extension Agent Training Conference	250.00
	NC Agricultural Foundation	FFA State Convention	3,500.00
	NCSU	4-H Jackets	1,309.00
		Total Industry Program Sponsor	17,709.00
Gelding Voucher			
	Gelding Voucher		250.00
		Total Gelding Voucher	250.00
Equine Safety Net			
	Greystone Veterinary Svc	Medication	150.00
		Total Equine Safety Net	150.00
Trail Grants			
	Elkin Valley Trails	Stone Mountain State Park	15,000.00
	Jordan Lake Trails	Safety Planning & Trail Maintenance	1,933.74
	BCH of Pisgah	Horse Cove Gap Trail	20,000.00
		Total Trail Grants	36,933.74
Education/Community Grants			
	Patty Nunnery	SE Ag Facility Arena Maintenance	1,400.00
	Halifax Co Cooperative Ext	Equine Educational Programs	2,000.00
	NCSU	Equine Educational Unit	8,000.00
	NCSU	Equine Educational Unit	14,000
		Total Education/Community Grants	25,400.00
Health and Research Grants			
	East Carolina University	Theraputic Riding Study	4,500.00
	North Carolina State University	Equine Nutrition Research	14,383.00
		Total Health and Research	18,883.00
Nonprofit Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAAT) Program	Trail of Faith Farms Co.	Wheelchair Ramp/Coral Panels	3,633.00
		Total EAAT Program	3,633.00
0.00	0.00	0.00	102,958.74

2019 Elected Board Members

Allan Harper
Allison Gay
Casey Armstrong
David Brooks
Dottie Burch
Erin Hensley
Gayle Nifong
Jerry King
Laurie Wood
Lucinda Human
Mary Constantino
Mary Myers
Michael Benner
Michael Boucher
Nancy Ferguson
Pat Benton
Patty Nunnery
Rene Trehy
Rick Peniston
Sammy Jenkins
Todd Erickson
Tom Bennett
Tom Fischer
Tracey Scheltinga
Tracy Tinsley
Virginia Godwin

Administrative Staff

Cheryl Bennett

NCHC Officers

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Vice President
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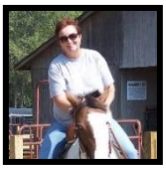
rwsan@outlook.com



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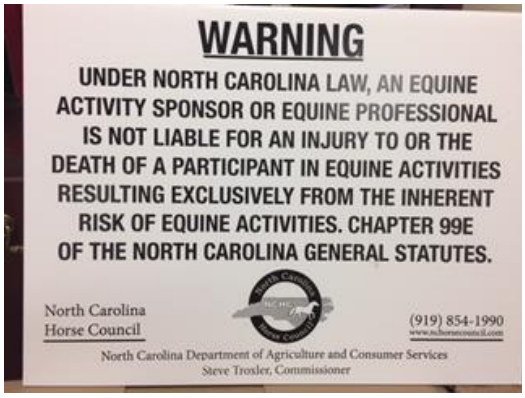
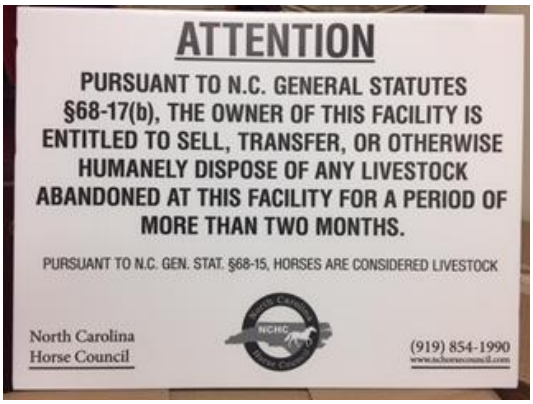
suegray@nchorsecouncil.com

Important Information for all Horse Owners

If you own horses and they are located on your property, you should post the following sign in multiple locations:



If you board horses on your property you may wish to post the following sign on your property and include this information in your boarding agreements.



These signs are available to NCHC members at a discount and can be purchased on-line at www.nchorsecouncil.com