



King County Executive Horse Council

"Preserving The Equestrian Way Of Life"

March 2010

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Join KCEHC on a Trail Ride for Greenway Days



King County Executive Horse Council is planning a trail ride on June 19th to participate in the 7th annual Greenway Days, a festival organized by Mountains To Sound Greenway Trust. The Mountains to Sound Greenway is a corridor of protected open space, working farms and forests, parks, trails, and wildlife habitat that stretches along either side of I-90 from Cle Elum to Seattle. In addition to year-round activities, every year Greenway Days celebrates the region by organizing a wide array of activities in various locations along the Greenway. This year, Greenway Days is on June 19-20th, and this year it will include an equestrian activity! Previous years activities have included relays, kayak and Hobie Cat rides, geocaching and orienteering expeditions, bicycle rides, and hikes. This year, join us and we'll get out and ride some of the Greenways greenest trails, in Taylor Mountain Forest.

Meeting Schedule

Meetings are on the second Monday of the month. Meetings start at 7:00pm and end at 9:00pm. All are welcome! Please note new meeting place.

- The March meeting is March 8th, at Little Bit in Woodinville. 19802 NE 148th St. Heading North on Avondale turn right onto 132nd, straight at next light, right at fork onto Mink Rd., right onto 148th. Little Bit is on the left. We are in the portable to the east of the main building.

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Taylor Mountain Forest was acquired by King County Parks in 1997 and since then has been upgraded with some new trails, restored wildlife habitat, and a new parking area for horse trailers. We'll explore some of the new trails, some of the old trails, and some of the gravel roads that criss-cross the park, picking our exact route on the day of the event to accommodate the desires of those who attend. The ride will be on June 19 at 11:00am. The RSVP contact is below.

For more information, see the Mountains to Sound Greenway Days website at <http://mtsgreenway.org/greenwaydays>, and to RSVP for the ride, contact trails@kingcountyexecutivehorsecouncil.org



KCEHC is sponsoring a survey for horse owners, riders, trainers and other professionals to determine the amount of participation in horse activities in King County. We are hoping the results will be useful for showing the county that we are numerous and spend money and will aid in giving us a bigger voice on equestrian issues. Please look for this survey in the coming months. It will be available through our website.

It's time to renew! If you haven't already renewed your membership for 2010, now is the time. If you need to renew in 2010 you will find a SASE attached to your newsletter.

However, you can also renew on our website using Paypal! Just go to <http://www.kingcountyexecutivehorsecouncil.org/membership.htm>



CHALLENGE THE WIND

By Judy Willman



I walk out to the barn with a combination of enthusiasm, apprehension and fear – an odd mixture of feelings just to go for a ride. But nowadays riding on Milady is never normal ... never like it used to be. Milady will be 36 in the spring, and for a horse, 36 is beyond ancient.

It used to be that when we would take off, we would be down the driveway before I could get three breaths taken. For her, everything was a challenge. Hills needed to be charged up. Downed trees needed to be jumped. If we were with another horse, Milady had no patience for dawdlers and no tolerance for a horse which might try to take the lead from her. It wasn't that she was hard to control, just that it was like having a small black steam engine under you that would only take a touch to explode into action.

As she headed past 30 she started slowing down. Understandable, since a horse ages about three years to our one year. But she is still the first one to come over when I come out to go riding. She wants to go. As she gets older, I can't help but wonder – is this the last time? How much do I dare ask her to do? What if something happens and she dies on the trail? I think it was only last year that as we were rounding a turn on the trail, I saw a tree lying across it. She saw it too and I could feel her begin to gather herself. I wondered, do I let her jump it? Do I stop her? Where is the line between keeping her safe and letting her enjoy life? I let her jump. She did fine. Decision OK. We moved on down the trail.

I walk into the corral, and she comes to me. Grooming her is not the same, either. There is no longer a basic roundness to her body. Her muscle mass is always shrinking and her bones are more pronounced. I feel like I have to be careful even just using the brush. She doesn't balance as well when I try to clean her feet. I feel her nose resting gently on my shoulder – a ritual we have shared since she was a gangly legged foal. I catch myself wondering how many times we have left to share, and my eyes fill up, but I have to shake it off. This ride is about a companionship that's still here. Grief has no place in it. At last she is saddled up and we leave the barn to go for a ride.

The weather is marginal. We have a week of rain showers approaching and today is a changeover day. If I am going to get her out at all, it pretty much has to be now. The forecast is for increasing winds and showers turning to heavy rain. There is no wind now, though, and my hope is that we can make the ride before the weather closes in on us. We start down the driveway.

It is a mild autumn day. Many of the leaves have started to turn, but not yet fall from the trees. Things will probably be a lot different after this approaching storm. I wait for Milady to get her balance. It takes her a while now to feel as if she is able to walk a straight line. We move carefully down the drive, along the gravel road toward the trail system, and gradually her path straightens up. My attention is focused on her, and it is only as we enter the trail that I realize that the wind has begun to pick up a little. An occasional leaf drifts past and I think about autumn as I watch them. Things change. You can't stop them. That's where Milady and I are now, changing. The wind dies down.

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One of the things that has always fascinated me about riding in the fall is the time when there seems to be no wind, the trail in front of you is like a painting or a photograph – still and unchanging – and then, somehow, a shower of leaves lets go and drifts down. It's as though all of a sudden a dance of leaves has appeared where none can logically happen. There is no wind and still the leaves dance downward. I see that happen ahead of us and cannot help but smile.

And then there is wind again. This time it is stronger. Leaves connected to small branches are drifting past. Maple “helicopter” seeds whirl and dance through the wind like a swarm of dragonflies. Milady has leaves in her mane. She picks up her pace. Her head is higher. The wind is getting stronger. I can hear the trees whipping with the stronger gusts. Sometimes there is a sharp “crack” in the distance as a larger branch cannot withstand its force. I have begun to wonder if I have made a mistake to ride today.

We have reached the point where the trail crosses a road and somewhere upwind there is a tree whose small leaves are dried and blowing off. They come at us down the road like a small river – like an invasion of giant cockroaches audibly skittering down the concrete. I marvel as Milady walks through them, for it is a sensation which makes my stomach turn.

We are back on the trail now, and the gusts of wind are stronger. There is a multi-branched tree top across the trail, but we are able to walk around it. Milady crosses the wooden bridge at a trot, beginning to be anxious to get away from these unseen assaults. She picks up to a canter, and for a few brief moments I remember the grace of her and the thrill of speed – and then ahead of us there is a series of sharp cracking sounds and I see tree tops moving wildly as a resounding crash occurs. I rein her in to a walk and find myself wondering what I would do if I saw a tree starting toward us. She no longer has the speed to accelerate or the agility for sharp turns. But the tree ahead of us has broken off as it fell and only sticks out about half-way across the trail. We go on.

The crashes are coming more often now. I am wishing we were home, but I cannot ask her to go any faster than her balance and stamina allow. I briefly wonder how much wind it would take to push her over. A tree is across the trail ahead of us. A pretty large one, but this time there is no gathering underneath me. She will walk across it and I sincerely hope she can lift her feet high enough and keep her balance for this kind of obstacle. We make it across, and I realize I have been holding my breath.

Not much further to go now. We are back on the gravel road heading for home. The wind is still howling and the rain is starting. Milady begins to call for her companions, but there is enough noise from the wind that they cannot hear her. Her calling gets more frantic until we reach the driveway and she hears an answer. Not far to go now. Somewhere behind us, on our neighbor's property I hear something else crack and crash. We are wet. We are windblown and shaken. But once again, we have made it home.

I suppose some people would question the wisdom of that ride, and I would be the first to admit that it was fraught with hazards. But there was also a sense of triumph at the end of it. A sense of being able to shake your fist in the face of growing old, and say, “You see! Life isn't over until it's gone!” A sense of gathering enough courage to help a beloved companion retain some sense of normalcy in a life which is changing beyond her control. It's what we do when we love. We grit our teeth and step out of our comfort zone. We challenge the wind.



Kathryn Taylor Equestrian Park Work Party

When: Saturday, March 20, 2010

9:00am-1:00pm

Where: The Kathryn Taylor Park

Located east of Woodinville, north of Trilogy, just north of the Tolt Pipeline Trail with 232nd Ave NE and Fallbrook to the east, and 142nd Pl. to the north, and Lake of the Woods to the west.

Detailed directions and more information about the KTEP can be found in a link at the Northwest Parks Foundation website: www.nwparks.org

Why: To cut down or pull up new small invasive Red Alder and Cottonwood saplings and Scotch Broom; trim back and dig out blackberry vines near the two main gates and other locations; rake round pen; rake zigzag trail up the mound; plant grass seed along dirt shoulder of the zigzag trail; and apply wood preservative on the kiosk.

With all the huge governmental budget cuts and deficits, park maintenance is being reduced or eliminated in many parks. Continued volunteer support is critical to help maintain the park, just to keep it open.

Who: Everyone is welcome to come out and help, especially equestrians who use the facility. This is a great opportunity for students, Scouts, 4-Hers, etc., needing to complete volunteer hours. Even 1 or 2 hours of time will help. It's not necessary to stay the entire time.

What to bring: Gloves, metal rakes, shovels, clippers, loppers or pruners. King County Parks will provide a truck load of additional tools and gloves in case they are needed. Bottled water and light snacks will be provided.

For more information or questions contact Judy Westall at:

425-788-9372 or jswestall@earthlink.net

Trail Etiquette for Horsemen

By Robert Eversole



You've found a trail to ride and a good riding partner but there are a few more items to consider for a great day on the trail. There are plenty of trails to enjoy, and on some days it seems that everyone else is also using the same trail that you are. So here are nine simple guidelines to help make sure that you, and your trail partners, have a great time.

Multi-use means that we need to share the trail. Believe it or not horse riders are seen as rude, inconvenient, inconsiderate and even dangerous by mountain bikers and hikers. If we want to keep from losing access to even more trails we, as horsemen, need to break these stereotypes and help educate fellow users of the trails. For example: We know that horses have the right of way over bikers, and hikers. But are you sure that the hikers and bikers you run across know this? Often times they don't know and just need to be informed. When I come across bikers I try to find a safe spot to pull off the trail and let them go by. I may have the right of way but it's easier on me and the horse to let them go their way, not to mention the good will it buys from the biker community. Similarly, I'll stop and chat with hikers I meet. The conversation helps the horse learn that hikers are human and again it's amazing the goodwill that a cold soda can buy.

The slowest horse in a group sets the pace. When a slower rider is left behind by a group the slower horse will often turn into a jiggling, snorting, monster as it tries to catch up with its "herd". The easiest and safest way to avoid this type of confrontation is for groups to simply ride together. Groups that start together need to stay together for the duration of the ride. If you find that you don't like your riding partners don't go with them on the NEXT ride, but do the safe thing and finish this one as a group.

Leave the outdoors cleaner than you found it. Consider this; it's a hot day and you've just finished a long ride. Just as you're ready to load and leave, your horse passes manure and throws its hay on the ground. What do you do? Leave it? I hope not. Manure and loose hay isn't what you want to see pulling into the trailhead. Neither is it the impression that we want to leave with non horse people.

Stay on established trails. Horse's hoofs churn a lot of dirt. Trails are there to help keep the damage in one place. Help keep our access, stay on the approved trails. Your horse won't melt in puddles and mud won't hurt him either.

Don't be a parasite. Don't steal time by making your riding partners wait while you fit new tack for first time as your trail buddy is waiting. Also, bring your own lunch and water and all the tack you need.

Trail rules are there for a reason, follow them. Trail regulations such "Hiker's Only", heartbeat restrictions, etc. may be an annoyance but they're there for a purpose, whether we understand it or not. You may be able to get away with skirting the rules, but your hoof prints will give your entire family of horsemen bad name. (cont. page 7)

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Pack strings and riders traveling uphill have the right of way. Handling a single horse is hard enough, give packers a break as well as a clear trail. Likewise, riders struggling uphill have a hard enough task ahead of them without you swooping down on them.

The “Golden Rule” is alive and well. Be considerate to the riders in front and behind you. Keep your horse off the rump in front of him and let your group know about his kicking habits BEFORE the ride. Don’t canter up a hill without telling your friends first.

Let your trail riding partners know about any issues that may arise. Everyone wants to have a good ride so speak up if you have a fear of heights, or your horse has a fear of water. A quick chat before the ride can give everyone a chance to decide on the most appropriate trails to take. No one wants a rodeo during a trail ride.

Trail riding can be either a wonderful or a miserable experience. Just a few common sense guidelines can make our trails a Heaven on Earth for everyone that’s on them.

Robert Eversole is the owner of www.TrailMeister.com a company that provides free trail information to people who enjoy the outdoors on horseback. Robert has served as a U.S. Marine, and member of mounted search and rescue organizations in addition to being a NARHA instructor where he teaches equitation skills to children with disabilities.



The poster features the LWSC logo on the left, which includes three stylized horse heads in purple, green, and blue. The text 'L.W.S.C.' is written in a cursive font above the logo. To the right of the logo is the title '2010 LWSC show dates'. On the far right is a crest with a green shield, a white cross, and a yellow banner below it. The main text lists various show events and their dates. A purple box on the right side of the poster contains information about new offerings for the 'C' shows.

L.W.S.C.
LAKE WASHINGTON SADDLE CLUB

2010 LWSC show dates

C shows – May 15th and 16th, July 17th and 18th
Jumper Fun Show – May 1st, June 12th, July 31st
Hunter Fun Show – May 2nd, June 13th, Aug. 1st
Dressage Schooling Shows – June 6th, July 11th, Aug. 22nd, Sept. 12th
Play Days – May 8th, Sept. 11th
Party in the Park – June 26th

LakeWashingtonSaddleClub.org

The “C” shows are excited to offer new this year:

- Pessoa/USEF National Hunter Seat Medal
- ASPCA Horsemanship Class
- WSHA Good Seat & Hands Medal (3’6”)



Real people – real places – real stories!

Join the King Conservation District and Horses for Clean Water for these guided educational presentations at private horse facilities and small agro-businesses. Learn from peers and resource specialists about eco-friendly ways to manage horses, livestock, crops and land while reducing our impacts on the land. Find out about sustainability, agro-tourism, low-sugar pastures, cost-saving solutions, chore-efficiency, mud – manure – pasture management, free resources available, and many more exciting opportunities!

Register and receive directions with the King Conservation District at 425-282-1949 or signup@kingcd.org.

CARNATION, WA

Saturday, March 27th, 10 am to noon

Cadbury Farm and Low-Sugar Pastures Tour a 15-acre horse property on Tolt Hill in Carnation. This high-end dressage facility has worked hard to maintain the health of its natural features as well as the health of its horses. See beautiful maple, cedar and fir trees as well as pastures, large mud-free sacrifice areas, and a beautiful covered dressage arena. Chore efficiency is central to the management of this facility. An ecology block compost bin collects stall waste in a highly efficient manner off one end of the barn, to be spread later on pastures in place of commercial fertilizers. This owner/trainer has a lot of experience dealing with EPSM and Insulin Resistant horses so pasture turn-out and the carbohydrate dilemma has always been an issue for them. One way of solving pasture turnout problem is to plant a grass blend that is genetically engineered to support the health of metabolically compromised horses. Join us for a healthy discussion of pasture management, horse health and management. **BONUS:** Meet a representative from Grassland Oregon, the seed company that developed this farm's low-sugar pasture seed mixture.

FALL CITY, WA

Saturday, April 24th, 10 am to noon

The Baxter Barn: Budding Eco-Tourism Business When these farm owners purchased the overgrown, bramble-covered historic Baxter property in 2007 they had no idea where their journey would take them. Hear the landowners' journey to collect history, restore the farm site, recycle plants, wood and found objects, and to protect water quality and natural resources. Partnering with neighbors, the KCD and King County, along with a labor of love, has transformed the 2.5 acres into a clean, quaint, working farm and educational facility that preserves history while helping salmon, streamside animals, birds, and other wildlife. Farm animals you can see and pet include horses, miniature donkeys, cows, chickens, quail and pheasants. Join us at the Baxter Barn to learn about eco-tourism and the many ways to "clean up" your farm.

AUBURN, WA **Wednesday, June 9th, 7 to 9 pm**

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! Paddock Paradise Join us on a farm tour adventure to look at a new, creative approach to managing sacrifice areas. Modeled after author Jaime Jackson's approach to managing paddocks in his book, *Paddock Paradise: A Guide to Natural Horse Boarding*, this farm has designed uniquely shaped, large, grassy tracks that are used as "natural" sacrifice area which encourages the horse to move. See this innovative design firsthand and join in on a discussion on the pros and cons of this technique. **BONUS:** Horse farming really begins from the soils up -- learn from a soil scientist about soils and how they affect your horse keeping decisions.



**Mark your calendars
& join the King County Posse for.....**

A Benefit Prize Ride

Saturday, May 22, 2010

Lots of Great Prizes

Ride a marked trail in Kirkland's scenic
Bridle Trails State Park

**50% of the proceeds will be donated to the
Bridle Trails Park Foundation**

No overnight camping. Horse water available.

Registration opens at 9:00am; Last rider out at 11:00am; Prizes at 3:00pm.

\$6 per hand or 2 / \$10

For more information: Chris (425) 868-1583 candbfarm@msn.com

Or for DIRECTIONS visit www.kingcountyposse.com

*Sponsored by the King County Posse in cooperation with
Bridle Trails State Park and The Bridle Trails Park Foundation*

Membership Dues

Individual Family \$15 Club/Organization \$25

Membership is based on a calendar year of January 1 through December 31. After October 1, new membership will be applied to the following year.
Please make check payable to KCEHC and mail to: King County Executive Horse Council, P.O. Box 2904, Woodinville, WA 98072-2904

Name/Organization _____ Telephone _____ FAX _____

Mailing Address _____ E-mail address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Date _____

- 1. Do you want your name excluded from the membership directory? Yes No
- 2. Do you want to receive your newsletter by e-mail? Yes No

* Please make sure that you have provided us with your correct/current

e-mail address *

3. I can help with the following:

- Education Kathryn Taylor Horse Park Maintenance
- Publicity
- Membership
- Newsletter
- Trails
- Equestrian Issues

At this time I can only support the KCEHC with my membership

Comments: _____

Mailing Label

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