

Why Should I Join the Pennsylvania Equine Council?

What does the PEC do for me?

By Skip Seifert and Joan Pauley

These are questions that often are presented to PEC directors and/or volunteers at the Equine Learning Center and other venues. Most of the time the question will be from potential members, but I have also heard members ask the second question! So let us address this second question first.

In my opinion, the answer to the question is simple: if you own a horse, your membership expresses your support of the growing equine community in Pennsylvania. The PEC is the one organization in the state that advocates for all disciplines and all breeds of equid – for the total community itself. If you are a part of that industry, not only should you support this advocacy, but if possible, you should try to be involved in the direction and decisions the PEC makes on your behalf.

PEC, through its excellent relationships with Penn State University, the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center, the PA Department of Agriculture, the PA Farm Bureau and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is a great source for sound, science-based information. As we know, put two horsemen together in a room and you're likely to have two opinions on just about every aspect of horse care, feeding, training, etc. But, we also know that what works for one horse may or may not work for another. Going back to the science-based, proven methodologies gives the horse owner a reasonable place from which to begin developing appropriate care for his/her equid.

Advocacy and education: the fundamentals underlying the existence of the PEC.

Advocacy:

The PEC works with legislators to help ensure that policies and laws are horse and equestrian friendly. The Equine Activity Immunity Act of 2005 is a shining example of this political advocacy. Do you know it took 16 years to get that put into law? 16 years of volunteers getting signatures, calling legislators, getting new volunteers involved. 16 years of perseverance on your behalf.

But how does that help you?

This law is leading more and more equine insurance carriers to be willing to sell insurance products in the Commonwealth. An increased number of providers equals an increase in competition among these providers and that helps keep premiums in check. It will take years for this to unfold, but already some insurance companies are requiring their clients to have the two signs necessary should they need to seek protection under the Equine Activity Immunity Act.

Membership is not a gold star – or a knick-knack you can display. But it is a profound benefit to the equine community. And you contributed!

The PEC's political advocacy did not stop after that accomplishment, but continues every year at one level or another. Each year, the PEC sponsors an evening at the PA Horse World Expo in Harrisburg for legislators or their agricultural assistants. That evening, we walk them through the Expo hall and show them the far-reaching implications of the \$10 - \$15 BILLION annual equine industry in the state. We provide a modest reception during which we present various PEC programs as a progress report for the PEC. Finally, our guests adjourn to watch the *Theatre Equus* and witness the incredible strength, beauty and versatility of the magnificent equine.

So how does the PEC help you if you are an equine enthusiast? An educated legislature can more easily recognize the impact of our community when they are making decisions that may impact us. They also know that we, as a group, can provide them with sound, non-partisan, science-based information.

Education:

The PEC has programs that respond to various needs of our equine community.

For example, the Equine Learning Center strives to reach new, existing and potential horse owners. We provide them with sound, experienced information relating to the costs associated with owning and caring for a horse, some basic facts about equine care and how to own equids *responsibly*. So how does this benefit you? If you are among those just getting into horses, it is a good place to learn some of what you will need to know to care for that horse. If you are not new to the equine experience, but you care about the equine community, then you can be proud of your membership support in seeing this community grow in a responsible and educated fashion. Your membership dollars, through the Equine Learning Center, work to help increase awareness of the responsibility of owning a horse and to prepare for any unexpected horse situation.

Scholarship Program

The Pennsylvania Equine Scholarship (PEC) program was created to assist individuals in the opportunity to further their education. An applicant can be furthering their education in any area of interest and in any type of educational menu, but a strong emphasis is given to those who have vigorous involvement in the horse industry. Applicants must be PEC members and demonstrate a strong involvement in various activities, especially within the horse industry.

The Trail Stewardship Program instructs trail riders and other non-motorized user groups in the importance of working with the public land managers to maintain non-motorized, shared-use trails to include equine. Our program has grown tremendously and is attended not only by equine enthusiasts, but also by DCNR personnel which utilize the program as continuing education for its employees. How does this program benefit you? The PEC Trail Stewardship Program recognizes that *working with the state land managers and private landowners is vital to being included in future plans for recreational use of public and private lands*, and strives to develop and nurture relationships that will ensure that you and future generations will have access to land on which to ride.

So why should you join the PEC? What does the PEC do for you?

We all have things we are passionate about and hopefully have some time we can devote to these things; but who has time to devote to preserving all the things that they are interested in? Sometimes, the best we can do is to monetarily support a group with programs that sustain our equestrian lifestyle. The PEC is an all volunteer organization with no paid staff. When you join the PEC, 100% of your membership dollars go into the programs described above and into developing more strategies to help the PA equine community grow responsibly.

If your passion is horses, mules, mini horses or donkeys or other equine, the PEC is the group that will advocate and educate on behalf of you and your passion.

Please take a look at our website for much helpful information:

www.pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org or call 1-888-304-0281. Below are some links that will take you to our website quickly:

PERSONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

<http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/insurance.php>

http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/pdf/insurance_faqs.pdf

GENERAL LIABILITY AND D & O INSURANCE FOR ASSOCIATIONS

http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/pdf/13_0310_amp_faq.pdf

BUSINESS MEMBERS - receive a hot link and 4 business card ads each year in our

<http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/membership.php>

HORSEPOWER newsletter

**PURCHASE or BECOME A RESELLER OF PA EQUINE LIMITED LIABILITY SIGNS
(you do not have to be a member to purchase or resell these signs)**

<http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/signs.php>

DISCOUNTS FROM PA EQUINE COUNCIL AND AMERICAN HORSE COUNCIL

<http://www.pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/pdf/2015/perks.pdf>

KEEP ABREAST OF LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

<http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/legislation.php>

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AVAILABLE AND VOLUNTEERISM

<http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/trails.php>

<http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/elc.php>

CURRENT EQUINE NEWS – as a member you will receive 4 standalone paper newsletters and several electronic newsletter each year

<http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/news.php>

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AVAILABLE SCHOLARSHIP

http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/scholarship/pec_scholarship_flyer.pdf

PURCHASE A PENNSYLVANIA EQUINE COUNCIL LICENSE PLATE

http://pennsylvaniaequinecouncil.org/license_faqs.php