



# Horse

Pennsylvania Equine Council Newsletter • Spring 2017

## President's Message

Hello,

The latter part of last year the Pennsylvania Equine Council conducted a survey of our membership. Typical to most surveys, there were a series of multiple choice questions. The responses to these will give us guidance for our programs and issues we face in the future. However, the last question we asked our membership for their own insight on issues. Question 32 was: "What would you state is the most difficult issue you have in owning an equine in your area?"

I found this question very insightful as it came from our membership. Some of the answers were direct, just a few words. Some were longer or short paragraphs. I tried to simplify these answers to a key issue, with some having a few secondary issues. Please refer to the accompanying spreadsheet for the breakdown of the main issues and any secondary issues and the percentage of responders concerned with that issue. Note there is correlation between different issues and the secondary issues based on the responses.

If we were playing "Family Feud the Equine Edition", it is easy to see the top four issues were trails, urban development, no issue and economics. We probably all wish we had no

issues like some. I am sure we all are concerned with the economics of owning equine, but this comes down to our own level that we can afford to provide good care. Equine are an expensive proposition compared to many activities. I have by choice always put equine first over other activities. When you consider the trail and urban development issues, there are related sub-issues of loss of land and open areas. Unfortunately, there may not be a lot that can be done to stop or slow this issue. Many choose to move to more rural areas. This comes at a cost, as they cannot get Vet, farrier or other desired services near their location.

Regulations and zoning have a correlation with urban development. Zoning issues can be dependent on how you categorize equine either as livestock or companion animal. For Clean and Green property tax purposes, equine are not considered livestock or an agricultural product thus our taxes are higher. When considering Manure or Odor Management, we are considered livestock thus we must comply the same as a commercial farm based on the number of animals. People desiring an indoor arena may have to meet commercial building standards due to township regulations.

Traffic issues exist regardless of whether you ride in an urban or rural area. There is a lack

of knowledge or respect by motorists when they encounter equestrians. Some of us have no viable areas to ride or do not have transportation to areas we can ride, thus we are forced to ride roads to different extents. Even riding in state forest areas means there is the chance of contact.

Game land issues are limited trails, safety concerns and the proposal of Sunday hunting. For many this is their only option.

I could continue, but these are the main issues as stated by our membership. The Council will formalize a report based on this survey and make it available soon. We will discuss these issues to determine our course of action and priority. To consider some of these issues will be monumental tasks to deal with the agencies involved. These are your issues, member or non-member; it is time to get all equine owners to stand as one throughout the state. The Council cannot do this alone. It is on your shoulders to step forward.

*Charlie*



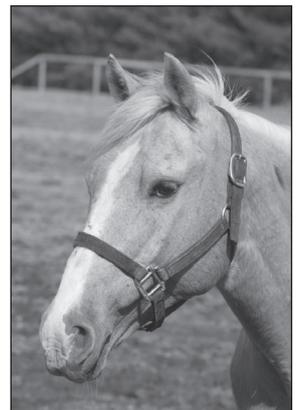
## SKIP'S TIPS

*by Skip Seifert*

Turn outs with a halter on your steed has pros and cons. The plus is that it may be easier to catch the horse especially if you have 18 inches or so of baler twine hanging on the halter. The con is the ever-present danger of the horse getting hung up on something. I once had a mare tear 50 feet of plastic pipe and the connected frost free hydrant from the ground before her halter broke. I have also seen a horse scratch his head with a hind foot and catch the heel of his shoe in

the halter. Now there is a WRECK. If you feel the need to turn out with a halter on your horse, the solution is to replace the crown pieces of the halters with a piece of leather that will break easily with little tension. Nearly all of us have some old cheap belts laying around that have "shrunk". It may not be pretty but they will work perfectly for this application.

*Skip*



## The Re-wanted Horse



Our industry is well aware of the unwanted horse issue. However, a strange twist to this problem is the unwanted horse that is now the re-wanted horse.

Simply put, you are given a horse by someone who no longer wants it. After caring for it, loving it and making it a part of your family, the previous owner wants it back. It isn't because the horse is abused or not cared for. Some reasons may be: because the previous owner either can now afford a horse; got rid of a horse-hating spouse; or the horse is now better trained and no longer has the bad traits that caused it to be given away.

Two incidents have recently come to my attention.

Person A gave a horse to Person B. They were friends and no paperwork was exchanged. Three years later A wanted the horse back to use for lessons. B's children loved the horse and took care of it for 3 years. B refused to give the horse back. A showed up at B's place with a trailer and attempted to take the horse out of the pasture. B called the State Police. Since A had no proof of ownership the troopers escorted A off B's property. Person A said she free-leased the horse to B, but had no written agreement, and did not pursue the matter.

Person C gave an 11 year old horse to the 10 year old daughter of Person D. C also gave all documentation, health charts, registration paper, etc. to D. There was no further contact between C and D for 10 years. C now wants the horse back. The 21 year old horse is part of D's family and they have records of 10 year's care. They have sought legal advice and are willing to go to court to retain ownership.

I have known cases where an owner did not pay board and the courts gave legal ownership to the person providing the board and care of

the horse. Just a thought - What would the bill be for 10 years of board?

There is a lesson to be learned. Both of these families have had an ordeal of trauma that could have been avoided. A simple procedure is to "buy" the horse for \$1.00 and have a signed bill of sale including the description of the horse and/or the registration number. If it is a registered horse, insist that the paper is signed and can be transferred. An unsigned registration paper is not uncommon in changing ownership of a horse, but following registry instructions can save you problems down the trail.

Remember, there was a time when banks loaned money on a hand shake, (Yes there really was.) and a person's word was all that was needed to seal an agreement. That no longer is true, even among friends. So, whether you are an expert or a novice in the horse world, make sure your interests are covered in writing.

*Linda Golden  
PEC Legislation Chairman*

# Power



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## SUNDAY HUNTING! "IT'S BACK!!"

The Pennsylvania Game Commission owns and manages nearly 1.5 million acres of state game lands throughout the Commonwealth. Although the majority of PA residents don't know, the primary purpose of the commission is the management of habitat for wildlife and to provide opportunities for lawful hunting and trapping.

Secondary recreational uses are permitted in accordance with the Game Commission's narrow band of regulations that came about following the 2002 shutdown of the state game lands to all use of mountain bikes and horseback riding. Through the efforts of the Pennsylvania Equine Council and negotiations with the Commissioners and Executive Director of the PGC, we were instrumental in getting designated routes (trails) that could be used to ride on or through the game lands during times that hunting season was not in progress and on Sundays. These multi-use roads or trails are open to bicycling and horseback riding at certain times of the year and under certain restrictions. Riding activities are not permitted (except on Sundays or on roads open to public travel) from the last Saturday in September thru the third Saturday in January, and before 1 p.m. from the second Saturday in April thru the last Saturday in May. This does not apply to anyone lawfully engaged in hunting, trapping or fishing on state game lands. Designated routes are posted by the Game Commission as being open to travel by a non-motorized vehicle, conveyance or animal. These designated trails could be used to connect to other pieces of public lands like DCNR and Allegheny National Forest or parcels that connect to other lands that were open to public use like county or conservancy lands. Also the trails could connect to roadways that were accessible to private land with easement agreements that allowed other non-motorized users to utilize the trail that passes through the private land.

Individuals or groups who have attended "FREE 3-Day or 1-Day Trail Stewardship Workshops" conducted by the Pennsylvania Equine Council could ask for a designated trail through the application process. The workshops give them the knowledge needed to choose routes that were sustainable, be able to maintain the trails to be environmentally friendly, as well as fill out and comply with the application process.

A few years ago the commission was considering shutting down recreational use again or at minimum charge a user fee in an attempt to educate the recreationist that they were to be only on designated trails when on game lands. There was a good bit of undesirable impact happening to streams and sensitive habitat due to the equestrians and mountain bikers riding off "designated trails". Also people who were not hunting were riding during hunting seasons that was not lawful under the current regulations. We were able to hold off the shutdown and user fee in lieu of trying to educate those offenders. We also pressed the Game Commission to enforce the regulations that were agreed to in the early 2000s allowing us to access the game lands in the first place. Many people just didn't know about the rules but others just blatantly didn't care and caused issues that we are still not sure we can overcome. There have been many citations issued and we expect more this year as riding season starts up in earnest.

### **Back to the main issue of this article!! Should Sunday hunting be expanded to all Sundays in main hunting seasons?**

Because Sundays during the hunting seasons, described earlier in this article, are the only days equestrians and bikers can access game lands during hunting season, the recreationists have been adamantly opposed to expanding Sunday hunting because that would eliminate access to other lands and severely affect opportunities to get out during the most pleasant times of the year. We would be remiss if we didn't share that over the last several decades many states have gone to Sunday hunting, and that has fueled the push for Sunday hunting in PA.

The idea of Sunday hunting is coming back up again as strong as or stronger than ever. With some of the legislature (representatives and senators) now pushing for Sunday hunting to prop up their electability with the hunters and gun owning public, there has been another resurgence to get Sunday hunting pushed through. That being said, if Sunday hunting would go through, basically there would be **NO** access on or through game lands during the fall and winter as well as part of April and all of May unless some willingness by the commission is made to allow for access to the designated trails during the hunting seasons. There have been Senate hearings and the Game Commission has held some meetings asking the recreational public, including hikers, bikers, and equestrians, if there would be anything that could change to make Sunday hunting more palatable. From previous surveys about six years ago, 93% of horse folks were definitely opposed to Sunday hunting. We need to hear from the people again to see if there are concessions that would be acceptable that would ease the pain of Sunday hunting if it would become a reality. We have said we would bring the topic to our membership as well as trail riders in general that we could reach by

creating some possibilities that we have heard from people. Here is one idea that has come up:

- **If designated trails were only closed during the rifle deer, bear and elk seasons, would people consider an expansion of Sunday hunting?**

This could mean that designated trails could remain open year-round and be closed through the rifle deer, bear and elk season. Please go to the PGC's website to look at the seasons and time frames.

With there being 12,702,379 residents in Pennsylvania, there were 935,146 hunting licenses sold in 2015 (nearly 50,000 of these are non-residents and many hunters only hunt one or two species or seasons). It would seem reasonable that some user-friendly decisions could be reached for those who are non-hunters to access game lands. We all enjoy wildlife and also we all take the brunt of wildlife damage to our property those of us who have crops and timberland as well as vehicles in higher feed bills for our animals and auto insurance cost.

Again we want to hear from you!!!! If you filled out a survey at the Pennsylvania Equine Council booth during Horse World Expo, you need not comment again unless you have a different perspective than what you left with us.

*Bud Wills, State Trail Chair  
Gwwills52@gmail.com*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **2017 2-Day Packing Clinic**

May 20th & 21st -- Clarion County

For more info and registration contact Gwen Wills at: 814-379-3759 or [gwwills52@gmail.com](mailto:gwwills52@gmail.com)

### **2017 Two 3-Day Trail Stewardship Workshops**

July 17-19 and July 20-22 -- State College, PA

For more info and registration contact Gwen Wills at: 814-379-3759 or [gwwills52@gmail.com](mailto:gwwills52@gmail.com)

### **Board of Directors Meeting at Ag Progress Days**

State College, PA

August 15, 2017 Meeting at 5:30

### **2017 Annual Meeting and Issues Forum**

November 3rd and November 4th

Super 8 Hotel, State College, PA

## Results From A Recent Survey

Q32 What would you state is the most difficult issue in owning equine in your area?		
Trails	Proximity to/Open land/Availability	18.86%
Urban Development	Loss of land/Neighbor issues/Zoning	10.23%
No issue		7.05%
Economics	Cost/Money	5.91%
Vet	Lack of/Good/Advanced	5.45%
Regulations/Zoning		4.55%
Traffic		4.32%
Hunting	Game Land Use/Safety/Sunday hunting	3.86%
Manure management		3.18%
Hay	Available/Quality/Afordable	2.95%
Farriers	Lack/Qualified/Special	2.73%
Public Lack of knowledge		2.73%
Trails	Safe/Maintenance	2.50%
Pasture/Land Management		2.05%
Not sure		2.05%
Boarding	Cost/Lack of/Good	2.05%
No Response or Blank		1.59%
Tack/Supply		1.36%
Welfare	Unwanted/Care	1.36%
Liabilty	Law/Issue	0.91%
Bikers/Mountain bikers		0.91%
Property Taxes		0.91%
Insurance		0.91%
Water	Clean/Sustainable	0.68%
PEC	Presence in the Western PA	0.45%
Taining/Lessons/Schooling		0.45%
Transportation issue		0.23%
Trailer Registration/Weight		0.23%
PEC	Like	0.23%
PEC	Dislike	0.23%
Conservation district		0.23%
Hunting	General	0.23%