

Trail Times

www.GoldCountryTrailsCouncil.org



Official Publication of the Gold Country Trails Council

GCTC is an organization committed to develop, maintain and advocate for safe integrated trails for equestrians and other non-motorized users.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Planning for the tack sale at Loomis Basin has been going very well. There will be a noontime presentation from a LBEMC veterinarian, and Saddles that Fit will also be giving a presentation. Laura Duncan said we have 40 reservations for booths, with several of the reservations being for double booths. Additional people have expressed an interest in getting a booth. Willie Brusin and Charles Green are helping with parking, but more people are needed to help with parking. We also need help staffing the GCTC booth.

I had a very productive meeting with Dan Goldsmith, the president of BONC. There is a meeting scheduled March 1, with the Forest Service. Board members and trail liaisons from both BONC and GCTC will attend. The agenda is designed to create action items for education and publicity. Paul Hart will be presenting changes to be made to the trail itself.

The additional scheduled workday on March 10, will be a joint workday with BONC on the Dascombe trail. We very much need members to attend the workday to show our support for the trails in the Lone Grave area.

The responses to the survey concerning the Hoot trail have been very useful. So far, I have 53 responses. I very much appreciate everyone taking the time to respond. I just shared the responses with the Forest Service. I plan on repeating the survey once changes have been made to track user experiences. A summary of the responses is as follows:

Which best describes your use of the Hoot trail:

- No one just rides the trail without issues.
- 29% ride the trail with hesitation.
- 17% ride at off hours or if they don't see bikes at the market.
- 46% don't feel safe and don't ride the trail.
- 8% answered other, which was mainly varied reasons for not riding the trail. Forty-six people entered comments about their trail experience.

Have you had conflicts with other users: Fifty-one percent of users had trail conflicts. Fifty-five percent did not report trail conflicts. Since over half the members don't ride the trail, or only ride when they don't expect bikes to be present, it shows that members that ride the trail experience trail conflicts. Twenty-nine people entered a comment about their conflict with other users, although 26 users reported conflicts.

Do you believe the safety features (signage, line of sight, trail width, speed reduction features) are adequate: Everyone thinks the safety features are inadequate. Only 4 people didn't add a suggestion for safety improvements. Three people didn't answer the question.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the March meeting. The new members directory will be available at the meeting. Cathy Chase, as membership chairman, is compiling this year's directory. I very much appreciate her willingness to create the directory. It's a significant effort, and a vital source of membership information.

Helen Harvey, President

Letter from the Editor

In 2011, Teri Personeni, then President, approached me to accept the responsibility of publishing the GCTC Newsletter. I have to admit I was apprehensive about accepting this responsibility. But over the past 7 years I have really enjoyed putting this publication together. My success has been due to the overwhelming response of this organizations membership. You have always stepped up and provided me with articles and pictures of your horsey adventures. I'm sure that your fellow members have found them as interesting/amusing as I have. This was my way of contributing to the organization.

Due to other commitments at this time, this will be the last GCTC Newsletter that I publish. I hope your future Editor enjoys this job as much as I have.

Happy Trails to All!

Lynn Mangel

**Tuesday, March 13, 2018
at 7:00 P.M.
Nevada County Horsemen Clubhouse
10600 Bubbling Wells
Grass Valley, CA**

Speaker: Duke of Duke's Trailer Works will speak on trailer safety including ball and hitch issues, as well as the new laws regarding trailering. Duke has extensive experience and is very knowledgeable. Come ready with your questions!



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Place your business card size advertisement in the GCTC Newsletter for just \$5 per issue.(members only).

The Newsletter is distributed to all GCTC members, affiliate members, and appears on GCTC Web site.

To place your ad contact GCTC Newsletter Editor.

Howdy and Welcome to our newest members!!



- Skip Bertuzzi
- Leslie Bisharat
- Karrie & Verb Dunham
- Andrea & Frank Fenn
- Carolyn Gilmore
- Pam Maxwell & Kerrie Gravelle
- Diane & Greg Mann
- Shellie Prichard
- Joanna Proctor
- Debra & Gary Richard
- Jory Stewart

<http://www.goldcountrytrailsCouncil.org>

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Minutes of the GCTC Board Meetings and the current 2018 GCTC Events Calendar can be accessed on the GCTC Website
www.GoldCountryTrailsCouncil.org

What's Happening in the Forest?

GCTC created and maintains trails and campgrounds primarily on Tahoe National Forest land, so we communicate directly with TNF personnel in regard to what is happening in the forest in relationship to trails. In an effort to keep the GCTC membership informed, a forest report is presented at general and board meetings. This article is designed to give general information of ongoing projects.

1. In order to do trail work in the Grouse Ridge area, Paul Hart, TNF has initiated a plan to create a NEPA report for a large section of the area so that when trail work is needed there will not have to be separate NEPA's created. That is not on the schedule for 2018 as there are other trail projects in the district that will be done first. However, the improvement for the rocky area on the Bowman Mountain Trail is still scheduled for 2018. The date has yet to be set. Paul Hart also reports that there will be two backcountry patrollers in the Grouse Ridge area for next season.
2. The trees that were reported down on the Spaulding Lake trail in August, as well as downed trees off Excelsior and on the Burlington ridge trails were removed by TNF crew.
3. There is no new information on the status of Lone Grave Area maps that are being prepared by Jet Lowe, TNF. The Burlington Ridge trail map has been completed and is available at the Chalk Bluff trailhead or at the Coyote Street TNF office. Those maps were paid for through Green Sticker (motorized vehicle funds). The maps highlight the motorized trails, but also show the non motorized trails.
4. A trail work day was conducted by BONC on the Hoot Trail on December 10, 2017. The objective was to clear sight lines by trimming brush, and minimize features of the trail that were not user friendly to other non motorized users.

Submitted by Mary Johnson



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The Gold Country Trail Council would like to recognize the following individuals for their generous donations:

Judy Askins
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 Laura Lester
 Jan Montana
 Ann-Rubenstein-Zerin & Jonathan Zerin.
 Kristine Kallie & William Van Roo
 Barbara Wright

GCTC members are not always able to participate in workdays or other activities but want to contribute to the support of the important work that the Gold Country Trail Council does throughout the year. We appreciate their donations and support.



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FREE CHOICE FEEDING

After years of feeding 5 times/day, trying to make up for only having enough property for 1/10 acre of irrigated pasture for my horses to graze, it was suggested that I try free choice feeding. I had considered it before but never got serious since one of my two Morgan mares was already an easy keeper and prone to gaining weight. This mare, Midnight also colicked last summer and the summer before... I knew I had to try something different so I decided to do some research about free choice feeding and found a lot of helpful information that was very encouraging. According to all the articles, just about any horse, mule, donkey or mini can handle and actually benefit from free choice feeding. There are just a very few rules to make it work but there are tons of benefits for both horses and their handlers. I've been free choice feeding for over 5 months now and here, along with what I've read, is what I've learned.



The basic rules are first, check with your vet if your horse has any metabolic issues, e.g., Insulin Resistance or Cushings... these horses have little or no control over their leptin levels (a hormone released by fat cells which tells them when they are full) so they will never stop eating. Second, feed only low sugar hay – less than 10% is best. (Sugar content is a combination of Water Soluble Carbohydrates + Starch.) You can have your hay tested for sugar content and you can also test for all kinds of other nutrients if you want to get really serious about their nutrition. Equi-Analytical, in New York, does a great job of testing and they can also provide a wealth of information for you. (www.equi-analytical.com) Pasture is okay but if it's in lots of full sun, it will likely contain too much sugar for unlimited grazing so you'll need to manage that along with the hay... graze early morning or at

night. Third, use slow feeders for best results... slow feed hay nets or box/tub style feeders with slow feed grates on top work really well. Fourth, make sure water is always available and know that your horses will likely drink more than they used to. And fifth, NEVER let your horses go without food, not even for 10 minutes, especially when they are first starting out. Horses that are fed and then run out of food before their next meal arrives are always in "starvation mode" and will eat whatever is available. It takes anywhere from a few weeks to a few months for a horse to regulate to having food available 24/7 and if they run out of food during the process, or really anytime, they revert right back to starvation mode and will overeat.

My experience so far has been well beyond my expectations. When I made the decision to try this new way of feeding, I had a large, recent delivery of orchard grass in my barn and had no idea what its sugar level was, so I sent a sample to Equi-Analytical and was happily surprised to find it tested out to 8.5% sugar... that meant I could start! I had already sent for hay nets... really big ones that were made of a more fabric-like feel instead of plastic (check out www.Hayburnersequine.com.) I filled the nets and hung them in the stalls and from a few selected trees in the paddock. We started our new feeding plan in mid-September and I cannot tell you how much fun it has been to watch my horses and mini donks donkeys moving and "grazing" from stalls to tree to tree. My herd had been feeding from slow feed nets for several years so the nets were no surprise to them. The constant food was a surprise that they adapted to quite quickly and happily. It took about 3 to 4 weeks for their bodies to regulate and then I would see them eating, then resting, then eating then resting... just the way they were meant to live and eat. They never look bored - it's so wonderful to watch.



As for me, life is SO much easier. I no longer wonder if it's time to feed. I no longer plan my day around their feeding schedule. I no longer have to rise out of bed early to rush out to feed because all I have to do is make sure there is enough hay at night and I know there will be hay for them in the morning too. I can leave for an entire day or even overnight so long as I've put out enough hay. I have enough nets that I can set them up and they will last 3 to 4 days, which is very helpful during storms, etc. Liberation is a good thing. And now, when I go out to clean or check on the horses or grab empty nets to fill, the interaction with my herd is much more fun and relaxed... they aren't just looking for food from me... they take time out to greet me and then they go about what they were doing.

Continued on next page



My donkeys are fat! No question about it, they are heavier now than before we started this but they are definitely regulated and aren't any fatter today than they were last month or the month before... and I find that when I'm feeding very low sugar (less than 8%) they almost look a little leaner! Stara gained weight and is now a perfect 5 - 5.5 on the body weight scale... she was always a little too thin because Midnight is alpha and would finish her own food first then finish Stara's as well. Midnight is a 6.5 on the scale and that's ok with me... she has a big barrel like her Mom and has never been thin. Keeping her exercised helps to keep her weight down but if 6.5 is where she stays, that will be good enough... it's not obese and she still moves down the trail like a Ferrari. I feed a little more now depending upon the size of the bales and there is more waste than before but they do clean up pretty well and it's really not all that much. We who free feed have a saying... "better to pay the feed store than the vet!" With hay

constantly moving through her system, I truly believe Midnight won't be colicky anymore. She makes lots of appropriate gut sounds so I know this free feeding regimen is making her hind-gut much happier.

Finding low sugar hay takes a little more effort and filling hay nets is harder than just throwing flakes but my happy, healthy horses and my easier overall lifestyle is so worth it. Thank you, Pamela Swartz, for encouraging me and giving me the confidence to go this direction and if anyone reading this has questions or would like some assistance getting started, please contact me and I will be more than happy to help.

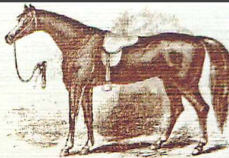
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GOLD COUNTRY TRAILS COUNCIL

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(Pines to Mines Trail FUNDRAISER)

Sunday • March 18, 2018

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

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Saddles That Fit

QUESTIONS? Laura m2ptacksale@gmail.com

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