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President's Message

One thing is for sure; nothing stays the same in the equestrian and recreation game. There is always some new issue to be monitored, some new event to plan, some new volunteers ready to help, some new regulation to worry about, some new court decision, or some old issue that has reappeared and been reconfigured as a new one. My horses hardly recognize me any more.

Fortunately, there is good news to read in this newsletter, and there is more good news in the works for our next publication. I hope you have been able to get outdoors and enjoy the wonderful (though hot) summer we have been having in Southern California. Things seem almost normal. The terrorist threat is diminished. Brush fires are popping up here and there, but nothing catastrophic so far. The energy crisis has waned. The politicians can't agree on anything; and many of you have taken the time to vacation and smell the roses.

On November 1st plan to join us for our 4th annual REC ride. Last year 150 horseback riders and supporters took the time to help us celebrate the outdoor life we cherish so deeply. It was a memorable event, so don't miss it this year.

Ruth

Boarding Ordinance Amendment Nearing Completion

County progress has been very slow in preparing the draft amendments to the Boarding Ordinance requested by the Board of Supervisors over one year ago; however, it appears to be nearing the end. At the last update, the County Planning Department staff indicated that they expected to complete their internal review and have a draft available for public comment sometime in September. Backyard boarders, many of whom have been cited for zoning violations, anxiously await the long-delayed changes. As soon as the draft is available, we will notify all interested REC members to let you know where and when the hearing and meetings will be. We hope that Regional Planning will propose a realistic draft to reflect the ignored needs of the equestrian community.

Courts Support Our Public Access

In the waning days of the Clinton Administration, under pressure from the lame duck administration and environmentalists, the U.S. Forest Service designated 58.5 million acres of federal land as “roadless areas”. In a recent 100-page ruling a federal judge has struck down the designation calling it **“a thinly veiled attempt to designate “wilderness areas” in violation of the clear and unambiguous process established by the Wilderness Act.”** Judge Brimmer also ruled that the Forest Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by circumventing proper procedures and acting in “political haste.”

Such designations are usually intended to deny public access to longstanding recreation areas. It would appear that those who use the environmental review process to frustrate private property owners have just tripped over their weapon. Public access wins one small skirmish.

4th Annual REC Ride Set for November 1st

REC's 4th Annual Trail Ride to “Celebrate Recreation” will serve a double purpose this year.

The ride will be an inaugural event for celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the creation of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), which begins in November and runs for a whole year. We are honoring Woody Smeck, Superintendent of the SMMNRA, and a loyal supporter of our way of life. He grew up in the Sierra with a love for the mountains that included riding horses and fishing. He still enjoys fishing when he can get away, and will be riding a good trail horse for our ride. It is an honor for REC to have Woody with us for the first event marking the yearlong celebration of this unique urban recreation area. As always, it will include that scrumptious, fantastic, delicious Bar-B-Q and unlimited camaraderie. Mark your calendar and plan to join us. A flyer with all information will be sent in September. This celebration will be an extra special event.

REC to Seek Congressional Support for SMMNRA

Representatives of REC are arranging a meeting with Congressman George Radanovich, Chairman of the National Park Services Committee, which oversees the National Park Service, to discuss the need for expanded recreation services in the 150,000 acre recreation area. REC has long advocated for a more cooperative relationship between the National Park Service and the private landowners that provide most of the recreation services available in the Santa Monica Mountains. Congressman Radanovich, who represents the Fresno area, has expressed a willingness to visit the area and discuss the role Congress might play in improving public access and utilization of this popular recreation area.

REC Hires Administrative Assistant

Welcome Leslie Schwarz to the REC team. Leslie has joined the staff to update our membership services and to improve our newsletter and e-mail distribution. She will also process and mail membership renewals. We expect to be able to distribute our newsletter electronically to all that are interested. Our website is going through some serious updating presently. The office phone is 310-457-0524. Thanks for joining our team, Leslie.



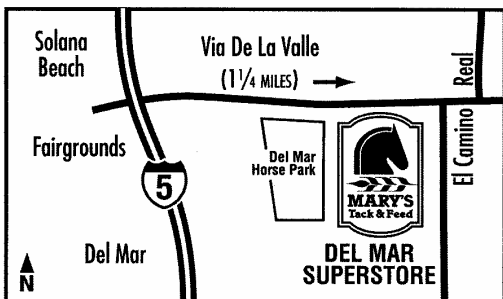
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4th Annual REC Ride
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