



FETA Newsletter

Winter 2008

"Preserving the legacy trails of the Carolina Foothills Hunting Country"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A new year always brings promises and, of course, resolutions. This year, I have promised and resolved to enjoy and appreciate more of the wonderful things in my life. One very special thing that I truly appreciate is the fabulous legacy left by the people who created and nurtured this wonderful trail system for almost 100 years. This amazing stewardship continues. From "Paw's Rest Stop" to vistas created at Cotton Patch to the renovation of long-lost trails, our landowners' enthusiasm to create wonderful experiences for other people – people they don't even know – continually inspires me.

FENCE is the epitome of this community legacy. From the original land grant of the Mahler family, a truly unique equestrian and nature complex was born. Since that time, almost 400 acres has been accumulated through the generous and foresighted gifts of landowners and donors. FENCE today is a hub for not only our equestrian community, but our entire community. A legacy to each of us from those visionary people who have created it.

FENCE has embarked on a vital project to permanently protect its land. It has arranged for a conservation easement on the entire FENCE property to ensure that the land is never developed or subdivided or used for incompatible purposes. To complete this project, FENCE must provide a \$25,000 Stewardship Fund to monitor the easement. FETA supports this effort and has so far raised almost \$4,000 toward this goal.

The future of this "in our court", and the FETA Board encourages you to help ensure the future of FENCE by stepping up to support this legacy. For more information, please read the article "FENCE in the Future" on page 3.

Another thing we can all do to preserve the area is to become educated about, and practice, appropriate land use. If you want to cut down all your trees, you need to think about your responsibility not only to your neighbors, but also to the legacy

which you enjoy. High density horse farms and overgrazed pastures may be the norm where you came from, but they will destroy what has been built here. Steep slope clearing is another problem we all need to be responsible for. If the people before us cleared all the forests for pastures and allowed denuded steep slopes to erode into the rivers, streams and ponds, what would our area look like now? So, before you clear that beautiful wooded property on the trails with a 7 degree slope and expect to put horses on it, do your homework and find out whether the land can support your plans. Chances are you will have nothing useful for years, and will end up with a muddy, expensive, eyesore eventually anyway! Lots of help is available and the article on page 2 has guidance from people "in the know" on what you can expect your land to be able to support.

Each of us is responsible for how we contribute to, or destroy, the land. It is not fair to expect the large landowners to protect their land for your enjoyment if you are going to destroy yours. So, please make your land use decisions wisely.

Ride Friendly! Ride Safely!

Dot Moyer, President 🐾

MANY THANKS to our wonderful Trails Manager, Chuck Hearon, for his incredible contributions to FETA over the years. Chuck brought FETA's trails to a new standard. His thoughtful stewardship and attention to conservation needs has made an enormous difference to the quality and environmental sensitivity of our system. We wish Chuck well in his retirement. 🐾

FENCE IN THE FUTURE: A VALENTINE FOR ALL OF US

Forever is a long time. Too long in the history of institutions to guarantee. But the land is here forever. Question is, then, what does the future hold for the land?

Up until now, the future of FENCE's land has not been secure. It could be developed or otherwise lost to the community. Thanks to years of work and donations, FENCE has finally been able to permanently protect this land by donating a conservation easement to the Pacolet Area Conservancy which will ensure that its beautiful fields, streams and trails cannot be developed or destroyed. That is very good news for this community.

To complete this Conservation Easement on FENCE's land, our community must raise an additional \$15,000 to pay expenses to monitor the easement. You can make your tax deductible contribution to FENCE to help with this project. Be sure to indicate that your gift is for the "FENCE Conserva-

tion Easement".

Another way you can help is by purchasing a FETA Territory Map. This beautiful, artistic, map of the FETA trails area was created by FETA members and prominent local artists Phyllis Eiffert and Sarah Holmberg to raise money for this cause. You can see the print at The Green River Gallery and in the window of Foothills Wellness Center, both on Trade Street in Tryon. A signed, numbered, limited edition print is available for \$125 unframed, \$200 framed. It makes a lovely gift and will be a great addition to your den or office. \$50 of each print sold will go to FENCE to permanently protect the land. An order form is enclosed or you can call Sarah Holmberg at 828-894-3780 or Dot Moyer at 828-894-8060 to purchase one.

Please give yourself, and our community, a gift. Support FENCE's Conservation Easement and be a part of the legacy of FENCE in the future. 🐾

TRAILS CLEAN UP DAY: SATURDAY, MARCH 8th (Raindate 3/15)

Meet at the FETA parking area at FENCE at 9 am.

Bring gloves, clippers, rakes and other hand tools.

We always have fun, so please plan to come. 🐾



'HORSE SENSE'

-- SAFETY CORNER --

"Horses are not machines, and riding trails is a dangerous activity. If you are not able to control your horse around wildlife, motorized vehicles or other horses, stay home and get some help before venturing out.

You will be glad you did!" 🐾

Many thanks to Frankie Shehan and Cheryl Every for getting the NCDOT to finally post warning signs on the roads. Great job, ladies! 🐾

WANT A HORSE FARM?? SOME REALLY GOOD ADVICE

Many people move to our area to have trails access and buy wooded and/or hilly property or small acreage for the price or the location thinking they will make it into a "horse farm". Here is some advice from area experts:

1. Location: "Buyer Beware". Lots of realtors will tell you a property is "on the trails" when it may be a several mile hack or a 20 minute trailer ride to the closest trail-head. Even if it is on or near trails, different areas are better than others for trail condition, protection, distance and interest. Check carefully before you buy.

2. Horses are big animals with big needs. To give your equines room to run and keep them healthy and your pasture sustainable, a *minimum of 2 acres of fenced pasture per equine* is recommended in this area and required in some zoned areas and developments. In addition, a dry lot is highly recommended.

3. Don't forget you have to live somewhere too! Be sure to buy enough land for all your needs—house, barn, ring, garage, pasture, dry lot, etc. And don't forget shade, privacy screening and making a positive contribution to your neighborhood. The FETA trails need to be preserved or re-routed if you expect to be able to join and ride on the FETA system.

4. Pastures take a long time and a lot of money to establish. Land needs to be properly prepared and expensive grading, drainage and soil augmentation is required. With normal rainfall, it takes a minimum of two years for grass to be strong enough to support horses. It will be "fragile" and need pampering for much longer. In a drought, it is almost impossible to establish pasture. Land previously growing pines will take a very, very, long time to establish as pasture.

5. Water runs downhill and clay does not absorb well. You are legally responsible for the damage to your neighbor's property from erosion off your land. Streams require at least a 200 to 300 foot buffer to prevent erosion damage, depending on slope. (Please note, this is not Florida!) Erosion control measures are needed with any clearing.

6. Steep hillsides make poor pasture. The steeper the land slope, the greater the erosion and the harder to establish grass. Horses slipping and sliding on the slopes tears up the grass, causing yet more erosion. Costly injuries ensue. Avoid slopes greater than 7%.

7. You get what you pay for. Established pastureland may look more expensive until you start adding up the costs. It is actually cheaper in

the long run and it is immediately useable.

8. Do your homework! Lots of resources are available to help you. Talk to people with well managed horse property. Talk to the county extension agents, and hire a responsible land planner and/or grading contractor who understands pastures. Use a reputable realtor specializing in local horse properties. *And listen to them.*

Many sloping, wooded or small properties cannot accommodate all the requirements of a horse farm. Choosing a property which is unsuitable or too small for your needs will cost you more in the long run, and usually leave you with a high maintenance, unsightly dry lot, unhappy horses and neighbors, and devalued property.

Keep our area beautiful, rural, and open and protect our rivers and streams from erosion. Buy suitable, sustainable property for a horse farm, maintain "your share" of open space, and help preserve the legacy of this special place.

For more information on establishing sustainable pastures, contact Kendra Bisette, Agricultural Extension Agent at 828-894-5693 or Gerald Harbinson, NRC District Conservationist, at 828-894-8823. 🐾

HI FROM MEMBERSHIP

A New Year is upon us and a quick reminder that our new membership year is just around the corner. I just ordered our new tags and parking stickers for '08 so please start lining up your coggins now and be ready to renew promptly in April. Boarding barn management, please be sure and remind your riders too. **2008 membership renewals will be sent to you in late March.**

I cannot thank you guys enough for your generous donations towards last year's trail expansion. \$13,000 was spent on new trails last year, made possible by your generosity. Exciting news—we have quite a few more projects in the works for '08, both for new trails and some rebuilding projects, so I will be keeping the line open on the membership form to add an optional donation towards trail work/continued maintenance to your membership renewal if you can. Some of you may not realize it but the FETA system has grown by about 50% over the last five years. So, again, thanks in advance for all your support in helping to keep this incredible playground maintained!

Randi Wetzel
Membership Chair 🐾

FETA PARKING LOT CLOSINGS

Please note that FENCE and the parking lot will be closed on the following days:

- February 17 - Hunter Pace
- March 9 - Go Fly A Kite Day
- March 21- 23 – FENCE Horse Trials
- April 12-13 - XC Schooling & Clinic
- April 19 – Steeplechase 🐎

TRAIL CLOSINGS

- Mahler Trails from Pete’s Pond to Hunting Country Road
- River’s Edge (Hunting Country Road to Pacolet)
 - FENCE showgrounds
- North Peniel - February 20th - Tryon Hounds Hunt until 12 noon 🐎

**To report trail problems
contact David Smith
at 828-275-2873 or
smittyc7@alltel.net**

**** PLEASE ****

**** PLEASE ****

phone for trail status
BEFORE you ride

828-894-0496