



WISCONSIN STATE HORSE COUNCIL, INC.

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A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF HORSES AND HORSEMEN IN WISCONSIN

PRESS RELEASE

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EQUESTRIAN TRAIL BUILDING SCHOOL SET FOR EARLY MAY

Columbus, WI - The deadline for applications for this year's Equestrian Trail Building School is April 6, 2007 but organizers doubt there will be any openings remaining by that late date.

"We had a waiting list last year, for the first trail design school, and indications are that we'll have a waiting list again," said Dan Catherman, chair of the Wisconsin State Horse Council Trails Committee.

"My advice is – if you're interested, let us know as soon as possible to get your name on the list."

The May 9-12 class will be held at Governor Dodge State Park near Dodgeville, and is offered by the WSHC Trails Committee and the Glacial Drumlin Horse Trail Association, with financial support from the Department of Natural Resources' Trails Program in the Bureau of Parks and Recreation. The class is limited to 15 participants. The \$50 fee includes all instruction and materials, morning and noon meals, beverages and snacks. Lodging is available.

Returning as the class leader will be Mike Riter, who owns and operates Trail Design Specialists, a Georgia-based company that creates and improves recreational trails and offers courses on trail design and maintenance.

Riter is recognized nationwide for his work and educational programs, said Ken Carpenter, president of the Glacial Drumlin Horse Trail Association.

"Members of the Wisconsin State Horse Council and Glacial Drumlin Horse Trail Association have traveled to trail conferences across the country in the past couple of years, and Mike Riter's name keeps coming up," Carpenter said. "The feedback we got from the 2006 conference convinced us we should ask Mike back again."

Participants begin each day in the classroom, then take to the trails in the afternoon to apply the theories and practices Riter introduces and explains. The course is broken into four components and each one is covered for a full day. The focus of the first day is trail design, followed by trail building, trail maintenance, and on the final day, trail crew leadership.

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Those who successfully complete the course will graduate as Trail Master Certified Trail Building Crew Leaders. Organizers hope the graduates will share their new knowledge with others. As with last year's class, participants will include a mix of land managers and volunteers.

Last year was the first time that this type of horse trail design course has been offered in Wisconsin, and it was the first class that Riter ever taught that included both volunteers and land managers.

"The dynamics of the group were amazing," Carpenter said.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources State Trails Coordinator Brigit Brown attended the 2006 school and has recommended it to others.

"Mike is a great teacher," she said. "What he's presenting is consistent with the standards the Department of Natural Resources will be adopting. We're very happy to see this class offered a second time."

Riter promotes multi-use trails, Brown said. He employs principles of good trail design, and the result is a better outdoors experience for everyone.

"Good trails are good trails, no matter who the end users will be," Brown said.

Through proper design, trails can be developed that minimize or even eliminate conflict among users, Carpenter said.

"If the land can hold 15 miles of trails and everybody demands a separate trail, each user group gets fewer miles," he said. "Instead of having each user group stay in its own area, on 3 miles of trails or 5 miles or trails or whatever, why not have everybody enjoy the full 15 miles?"

Information about the 2007 Equestrian Trail Building School is available from the Wisconsin State Horse Council office, 132A S. Ludington St., Columbus, WI 53925, telephone 920-623-0393, and online at www.WisconsinStateHorseCouncil.org. Information is also available at the Glacial Drumlin Horse Trail Association Web site, www.madison.com/communities/gdhta.

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