



# FETA Newsletter

## Summer 2007

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2007 is off to a wonderful start. We have record support from our members in renewals and contributions. Thank to the many of you who 'chipped in' to help with the expensive new trail additions. This is a very special place indeed, and this marvelous trail system is an historic community effort and treasure.

The new trails connecting the different parts of the FETA trail system are finally complete. This was a far bigger project than we originally expected. At a cost of approximately \$3,500 per mile for the 4 new miles of trails, it really drove home to me the impossible cost to replace our trail system. Thanks to 16 wonderful landowners, led by the tremendous dedication, patience and perseverance of Maude Carr, Mike Stone and Hughes Creek Preserve, almost every foot of these major new connecting trails is ready to ride. And best of all, almost every landowner has agreed to protect this trail access with trail protection agreements!! A tremendous effort by our volunteers, staff, landowners and contributors. Many thanks.

We are still riding these trails to find holes and booby traps, marking previously isolated trails so you don't get too lost, and working on 'spook proofing' the neighboring dogs. The trails will be ready for you to try out on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Just remember, however, that it takes quite some time to settle the ground. Stay on the established trailbed, and be on the lookout for holes and other dangers. Also, not all the areas which now connect are marked as well as we would like as mostly the neighbors have ridden on them in the past. We will be working on that all summer. Fall would be the best time to explore if you don't enjoy being lost. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time.

Since everyone has recently read-and signed-their Rules Agreement and Release, I guess there is no need to remind you all that the landowners have conditions for the use of their trails, and if

you don't meet them, you don't ride. But PLEASE remember the long time rules that are most often forgotten: #1 Don't ride when the trails are closed. #2 Don't go around closed trails (what is up with that!!! They are closed for a REASON! Want to fall in a big hole or step on a live electric wire???? Come on, guys. You think we do this for our health???) #3 Don't ride more than 6 to a group. And (oh, my, please!) #4 make your guests sign their releases and get them in BEFORE the ride!! These are the landowner's conditions. You agreed to them. If you don't like them, ride on your own land. If you violate them, it will cost you your membership. Enough said.

We have a lot of great things on the calendar for the next few months. June 20th was our second ever Membership Party. July 25th is the Annual Safety Fair. And, of course, in October we'll have the Annual BBQ and Meeting.

Please plan to come to these events, meet fellow riders and supporters of this fabulous trail system, thank the landowners and enjoy what we are so blessed to be part of.

Finally, my special thanks to Chuck Hearon, our FABULOUS Trail Manager. Most of you will never know how much our area and quality of life depends on his hard work and stewardship of the land. Thank you, Chuck.

And - don't forget - Ride Friendly!!!

Dot 🐾

### REMINDER

#### PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE

remember that you must send in your membership renewal by July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007. There will be a penalty applied in the amount of \$50 extra for late applications.

Thanks, Randi Wetzels 🐾

## TRAILMASTER REPORT

**Trail Conditions:** As you know, Polk County is officially in drought conditions. This affects us in several ways. The trails are probably the driest they have been in years, but when the rain showers occur, the top layer of dirt becomes very slick. If there have been showers recently, even if the trails are open, PLEASE ride with care. Showers are sporadic and drying is not uniform from area to area. Our August weather pattern set up in May this year. SMOKING IS NOT ALLOWED ON THE TRAILS. Even in wet conditions. If smokers are observed, please remind them to respect the rule, and forward their name, tag number(s) or descriptions to the Board.

Trail closure policy seems to be a continuing topic. Simply put, if any of the system needs to be closed, the whole system will be closed. Exceptions are areas in which workers are working, or areas where a dangerous condition exists that has not been fixed yet. Riders are required to either call (828-894-0496), or access the website status page (<http://www.fetatrails.org/home.htm>) before EACH ride. I try to close the trails during non-riding hours, but there will be occasions where I need to close them during the day. If you are in doubt call the Trailmaster (828-275-2873). If I can't pick up, make sure you leave a message, if you do, your call will be returned. I won't answer unlisted number calls or calls that don't leave a message.

**Trails:** Please be careful on the newer trails until they have been ridden in. There are soft spots and stumps that will still have to be found and fixed. PLEASE report any trail conditions that need attention. As always, do not ride around obstructions, it isn't permitted.

Red Fox Run is complete and open for riding. It connects Carriage Row and Hooper Creek Trail. You can now ride from FENCE to Hwy. 74!

McIntyre Crossing/Peniell Parking/Thickety Ridge Way. Trails are complete and rideable. Two gates on McIntyre Crossing have latches and should remain closed. Riders are reminded to please leave gates as they found them. If you open it to go through, close it behind you. Riders should be aware that there is a dog tied near the fence as you approach Peniell on McIntyre Crossing.

**Peniell Parking lot:** The parking lot is open and the parking area defined with post and ribbon tape.

The entrance to Thickety Ridge Way is midway down the treeline from the parking area. You can't miss it, but I will sign it a bit better for those that do.

**Trail Signs:** Signing is not complete on the new trails, so please factor in some extra time if you don't know the area yet. If you are unfamiliar with an area, please call me before you ride and I'll help in any way I can.

**New Member Party:** I think it was a great success, having a map and a point-of-contact seemed to be just what was needed. I met so many people in such a short time, I'm afraid I will let someone slip through the cracks. Touch base with me, either by email ([smittyc7@alltel.net](mailto:smittyc7@alltel.net)) or phone (828-275-2873) if you have questions about the trails.

*Dave Smith*

FETA Trailmaster 🐾

## HELLO FROM MEMBERSHIP:

You guys have been so amazing this year. Most of you have already renewed and correctly. I only had a couple forget their check or their Coggins so it's just been an outstanding year.

And you have been soooooo generous with the donations. FETA cannot thank you enough for the extra support this year.

For those of you, who have not renewed yet, please be reminded that you have until July 1<sup>st</sup> to renew without penalty.

Also, yes, the guest passes are the same as last year. This was done on purpose to save on printing costs and to allow those who still had some left from last year to be able to use them. In fact, there are many of us that never use them, so we might opt to not include them with each renewal next year. I might just ask you to let me know if you need more when you renew? Let us know what you think of this idea. I truly believe in our members and don't feel you will abuse the system.

Thanks again for your rapid renewals and complete cooperation. You guys are the best!

*Randi Wetzel*

Membership Chair 🐾

## RULES' REMINDER : GUESTS

'Guests' have always been a bit of a problem, and FETA policy has changed over the years based on our experiences. It is one of those areas where we have worked for 15 years to try to get it right. The policy adopted in 2002 seems to be working, but there is still some confusion from old rules. So, in the interests of perfect clarity, here it is:

Members may have unlimited guest passes. You don't have to pay for passes anymore. Dues increases made up for that revenue loss with much less work for our poor overworked volunteers. If you need more, just call Randi Wetzel.

BUT, you are expected not to abuse the privilege, and FETA has established these requirements:

- You MUST ride with your guests.
- They MUST sign a guest pass, and you MUST return it to FETA BEFORE the ride.
- YOU are legally liable for any damage they cause, and if you forget to get them to sign a Liability Release, YOU - yes YOU - are responsible if any landowner has any liability because they rode. That is in your contract. YOU, not the poor unsuspecting landowner that you did not protect by getting the release signed and into FETA before you rode, are LEGALLY liable to FETA and the landowner if your guest is hurt or hurts others.
- People eligible to join FETA are expected to do so. It costs a lot of money to keep up these trails, provide insurance, and otherwise keep this system going. 'Piggybacking' on other peoples' memberships is bad sportsmanship. FETA is the best horse deal around. Don't take people out who won't join themselves. Fair is fair, and our landowners, volunteers and other members expect them to pay their fair share.
- If you have out of town guests, they can ride up to a week on a single guest pass. Otherwise, each guest must sign, and you must return, the pass each time they ride.
- No more than two guests per ride. Do not bring the same guest more than once a month. 🐾



## REMINDER

Do not go through the FENCE Showgrounds or Cross Country Course when there are competitions or shows. Skirt the Showgrounds on the road around the steeplechase course. Mahler's Lane and Tommy's Trail are often closed during large shows. Avoid the Cross Country Course completely when it is closed on the FETA calendar. 🐾

## HATS OFF ....

..... To Rhonda King and Faith Jorgenson and the new Member Relations Committee for putting on such an excellent 'meet and greet' for our new members. It was an outstanding event with the most amazing potluck dinner. Thank you to everyone who contributed. Thanks also to Dave Smith for the wonderful job he has done GPS'ing the trails in the entire system and for producing great new maps.

If you are interested in helping on this committee, which has been formed to coordinate the talents and volunteer efforts of members, arrange social functions and act as a liaison between the Board and members in instances of alleged rules violations, please contact Rhonda at 828-859-9887. Rhonda King with her husband Ben, own the Pony Track, and she is the chair of this Committee. 🐾

## -- SAFETY CORNER -- TRAILERING SENSE

On a recent sunny afternoon, a horse trailer was observed being towed along Peniel Road. In the trailer was a large horse with it's head and neck sticking right out of an open window.

Please use common sense when trailering your horses. Polk County roads are too narrow and dangerous for taking risks such as this. If the driver had encountered a delivery truck or large vehicle at an inconvenient place with no pulloff space there would have been a serious injury, or worse, to this horse.

PLEASE use "horse sense"! 🐾

## UPCOMING EVENTS

July 25th Annual Safety Fair  
October 27th Annual BBQ and Meeting

## PARKING LOT CLOSINGS

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

July 22	Cross Country Schooling
Aug 24-26	TR&HC Horse Trials
Sept. 22	FRC XC Schooling
Oct. 5-7	TR&HC Horse Trials
Oct. 27-28	FRC Horse Trials & Kids @ FENCE Fall Festival
Nov 11	Hunter Pace

ALWAYS call the FETA trails number to check the status of the trails BEFORE you set out! 🐾

**\*\* PLEASE \*\***

**\*\* PLEASE \*\***

**\*\* PLEASE \*\***

phone for trail status  
BEFORE you ride

**828-894-0496**

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