



## TRAIL RIDERS OF TODAY (TROT)

Dedicated to Enjoying, Maintaining and Expanding Sustainable Trails for Equestrian Use

# ELECTION RESULTS

## PLEASE HELP US WELCOME OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Firstly, thank you to everyone who took the time to vote. We really appreciate it and you chose some fabulous new board members. Please help me welcome:

Meaghan McDermott from Howard County. She has a beautiful Morgan mare named P.K. and rides a lot at Patapsco. She has legal experience and would like to support equestrian trails and more regular group rides.

Suzannah Kolbeck from Baltimore City. She has a lovely quarter horse gelding named Hank and frequently rides at Gunpowder Falls State Park. She recently wrote an article on the non-profit Graham Equestrian Center in the January Equiery. She is a fantastic writer and interested in trail preservation.

Courtney Frye from Anne Arundel county. She has a fabulous Paso Fino gelding named Dante. She already has stepped up to help out with planning events and organizing and putting out the newsletter.

Janet Leitzel was also voted back in for a second two year term into the position of Treasurer. We couldn't do our important work without her invaluable service.

So again, a big welcome to all, and we look forward to the next two years!

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER BY CAROLANN SHARPE

When I meet someone new, they will ask "What do you do?" I normally start with what makes me a living. "I teach school and run a couple businesses." Then I will add "I horse-back ride-trail rider." The conversation will go one of a few ways- ie they used to ride, they have never ridden, they rode once, they are afraid of riding, they know someone that rides, or they ride. From there, the conversation will begin. Either by sharing my passion and my stories, or hearing theirs. Never has the conversation ended when I say I ride. Horses have such a presence in our history, our movies, and our fiber of life-it is hard to meet someone that doesn't have some sort of emotion about horses. As I love talking to people about horses, I will 'trick' people into talking to me about horses. Wear your Clydesdale t-shirt out to a movie, wear your Dublin River boots to the Food Lion, or wear your TROT sweatshirt while helping clear a trail with mountain bikers-someone will talk to you about horses. So I guess when someone asks what I do, maybe I should say, "I trail ride. When I'm not doing that, I'm thinking about trail riding. When I'm not doing that, I am planning to trail ride. When I'm not doing that, I'm shopping for things to make trail riding more fun. When I'm not doing that, I'm looking for people to trail ride with, or places to trail ride. When I'm not doing that, I'm talking about trail riding and when I'm not doing that .... I'm asleep.

Keep the horse between you and the ground, and when someone asks you "What do you do?" answer with, "I'm glad you asked. I am a trail rider, and I am putting as much life between the day I was born and the last day I get to talk about my horse."



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Martin Luther King Day is a day of service. Most parks are requesting help this day. Please consider signing up and making a New Year's Resolution to do trail maintenance work 3 times this year.
- Frederick County Parks Jan 11 at 6:30 PM Kanode Park Master Plan equestrian facility
- Chase Jack Frost Away event at Brookeville Beer Farm January 21st 3-6 PM.
- Equestrian Movie Night Jan 27th Barnesville MD, St. Mary's Church 7 PM
- Horse World Expo Harrisburg PA Jan 29-Feb 3



## TIS THE SEASON: HUNTING AND MUD

Maryland has some of the most beautiful areas to hike across the state. Fall and winter are my favorite times of year to ride and hike. The bugs are gone, the air is crisp, the horses are frisky, and there's a feeling of peacefulness. If you are like me and enjoy riding during the fall and winter months, you will need to take some precautions during hunting season to stay safe. Many counties and the state have closures and requirements for trail users during hunting season.

**Know the hunting season dates:** It seems like there is always some season open for hunting, but the most popular hunting season tends to be deer season. From archery season, firearm, to late winter season, there are many dates to keep in mind. I recommend writing these dates on your calendar to avoid any startling surprises. To see a full listing of hunting seasons and dates visit the DNR hunting calendar as well as your local area hunting schedule.

**Know where hunting is permitted:** Many of our state and local parks and public conservation areas offer hunting opportunities. Some areas may be closed or partially closed to hikers and equestrians when hunting takes place. Be sure to check with the site before setting out. No one wants to have a negative encounter when trying to take in a little nature. Go during mid-day when there is typically less activity. Hunters usually set out during the wee hours of the morning and around dusk.

**Wear Bright Colors and Bells:** Sporting a blaze orange hat, vest, or coat during hunting season is one of the most important things you can do to stay visible and safe. Animals can wear bells as well as bright clothing.

*“Be a good trail steward. Do not ride on the trails when they are wet. If you see hoof prints, please turn around.”*

### HUNTING CALENDARS

#### DNR:

[https://dnr.maryland.gov/huntersguide/Documents/Hunting\\_Seasons\\_Calendar.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/huntersguide/Documents/Hunting_Seasons_Calendar.pdf)

**COUNTY EXAMPLE:** Montgomery County Managed Hunt Schedule:

<https://montgomeryparks.org/deer-population-management-schedule-locations-2023-2024/>



### TRAIL CLOSURES : CHECK BEFORE RIDING

**COUNTY EXAMPLE: MONTGOMERY COUNTY** has a RAIN OUT LINE Get an email or text alerts for your favorite parks, or call and listen to the phone menu at **(240) 270-0008**, or visit the website at:

<https://montgomeryparks.org/activities/park-trails/rainoutline-trails-operating-status/>

### WINTER RIDING AND TRAIL CLOSURES

Winter and spring riding can be tricky for riding due to the natural freeze-thaw cycle. Not everyone knows that if you are leaving horse prints behind you on a public natural surface trail, you should be turn back. We need to be as diligent as other users, such as mountain bikers, in making sure we are part of a sustainable trail system and are not damaging the trails.

When temperatures go below freezing (32 F), the moisture in the ground freezes in place instead of draining away. Since water expands as it freezes, it breaks up the soil around it. When the temperatures rise, the frozen moisture melts and mixes with the soil making a mud surface on the trails. This cycle can be repeated for multiple days. This makes it difficult to tell when to stay off the trail. During other times of year, riding a few days after a rain is enough. During the winter and spring seasons, this free-thaw cycle can happen frequently and over several days.

Why is it important to keep off the public trails during this freeze-thaw cycle? Because it tears up the natural surface trails and takes hours of volunteer time and resources to fix. This includes de-berming and filling in damaged areas with hand tools. We would prefer to work on more exciting trail projects than repairing damaged trails.

If most of the trail is dry, and there are a few wet spots- remember to ride on the trail and not go around wet areas. This prevents the widening of the trail bed, which makes trail repair more difficult.

What you can do:

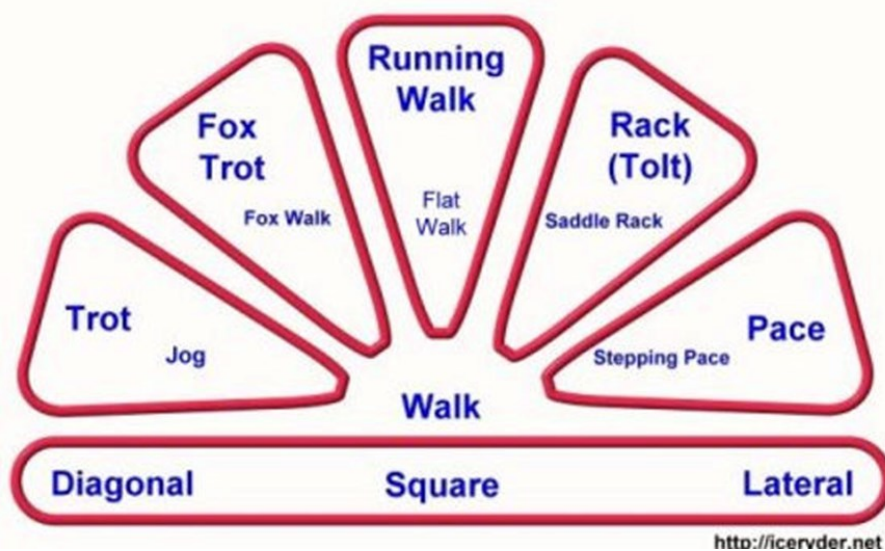
You can ride trails when they are dry or frozen (sometimes early morning or later evening rides can be safer as the temperatures drop and can freeze the riding surface).

If you see hoof prints behind you- please turn around.

During these times seek out better riding options such as various covered and uncovered arenas, or trails that are made of gravel surfaces that are more resistant to rutting such as the C and O canal, or even your own property.

You can otherwise organize with other riders in your area to alert other equestrians on social media such as on the Facebook riding groups such as Trail Riders of Today Community page.

Also, remember that some parks ie Montgomery County Parks in Maryland have a handy rain out and trail status informational resources you can follow.



## GAITED HORSEMANSHIP... THE GAIT LINE ... THE FIRST IN A SERIES FROM JACQUIE COWAN

The softly gaited breeds are bred to perform smooth, 4-beat intermediate/pleasure gaits rather than trot or pace. Most individual gaited horses of all the breeds can trot and/or pace, which can be a challenge for owners to find and maintain their healthiest and smoothest gait, which should fall between the Fox Trot and the Rack.

What the feet do is a product of the horse's posture emanating from both the top and underline. And that is directly influenced by the rider. If you ride your gaited horse with a hollowed back, it is most likely to pace – a lateral 2-beat gait with the feet on the same side lifting and landing at the exact same time. If you ride your horse with a too rounded back, it could trot – a lateral 2-beat gait with the diagonal feet lifting and landing at the same time. The pace causes a side to side with an additional upward motion that can feel like riding a washing machine. The trot, which most of us are familiar with, is the up and down motion of suspension, hence the need to post.

The softly gaited breeds' gait is actually an extension of the walk...you can think of it as a "power walk." The actual gait as shown in the illustration is dictated by confirmation, conditioning, posture, and horsemanship. When you study the origin of the various gaited breeds (the last I read there are 32), you see how the terrain and job dictated their development. But they all have that one thing in common – a 4-beat smooth way of going that is comfortable for all-day trail riding.

The Tennessee Walking Horse is famous for its long-striding, smoothness with a predominant head nod up and down that falls in the center of the gait line. The appearance can be walking behind and trotting in the front because of its breaking knee action. The hind foot should overstep the front by an average of 8-18 inches. The Fox Trot is the opposite with the front appearing to walk while the rear has a little more hock action. The Rack is both a gait and a breed (Racking Horse), also known as the Single Foot because one foot is on the ground while all three others are in different positions of the stride. The pleasure gait of the Mountain horses, Icelandic, and Pasos are mechanically a Rack and do not have as long an over-stride or head nod. These specific breeds have distinguishing gait calls in the show ring. The Stepping Pace is a fault gait that can be smooth and easy to ride. Both feet on one side leave the ground at the same time like the fully lateral Pace, but they land slightly at different times, breaking up the 2 beat into an uneven 4 beat.

Gaited Horses are horses, so the basic horsemanship still applies. But it is important for owners to understand the mechanics of gait, become familiar with the way their own horse moves, and the influence you the rider have on its posture. It can be hard for you to know just what your horse is doing under you, so it is most helpful to have a set of knowledgeable eyes on the ground to watch and tell you while you develop your feel in the saddle.

In future articles I will try to dispel some of the common myths, explain the various gait mechanics, dos and don'ts of buying a gaited horse, answer your individual questions, and more. Please send your questions to [jacquiecowan@comcast.net](mailto:jacquiecowan@comcast.net).

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Richard W. Kanode Farm Park Meeting

Jan 11 6:30 PM, Bourne Building, 355 Montevue Lane, Frederick, Maryland to discuss the Kanode Park Master Plan. The master plan includes proposed equestrian facilities, including a. a 100' x 200' arena (dressage, jumping) with potential for being enclosed, b. a 300' x 300' western arena (barrel racing, jumping), c. a 100' x 100' practice ring, d. an obstacle course and e. 3 miles of trails. We encourage as many horse people as possible to attend to show enthusiasm and support for public equestrian facilities.

#### Equestrian Winter Mixer: Brookeville Beer Farm, Brookville, MD: Jan 21st 3-6 PM @ Brookeville Beer Farm

Jan 21 @ 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Come join us for an equestrian mixer at Brookeville Beer Farm, Brookville Jan 21st 3-6 PM.

We're thrilled to extend an invitation to a "Chase Jack Frost Away" Mixer designed specifically for passionate horse riders like you. Whether you're a seasoned equestrian or just beginning your journey in the saddle, come join us for an evening filled with camaraderie, stories from the trails, and the chance to mingle with fellow riders who share your love for these majestic creatures.

\* Volunteer to lead a ride in your favorite spot

\* Networking opportunities with like-minded individuals passionate about equestrianism.

\* Refreshments and snacks to fuel our discussions and socializing.

#### Horse Enthusiast Movie Night-

Jan 27th 7PM

Movie: Unbranded

St. Mary's Church event pavilion, 18230 Barnesville Road, Barnesville MD

#### SADDLIN' UP for BREAST CANCER

Trail Event, September 21 to benefit The Red Devils. It features a trail ride through Tuckahoe State Park, home cooked lunch, silent auction, raffles, and an All Pinked Out Parade with great prizes...camping is available at the Tuckahoe Equestrian Center ... [jacquiecowan@comcast.net](mailto:jacquiecowan@comcast.net) / 410-215-4979

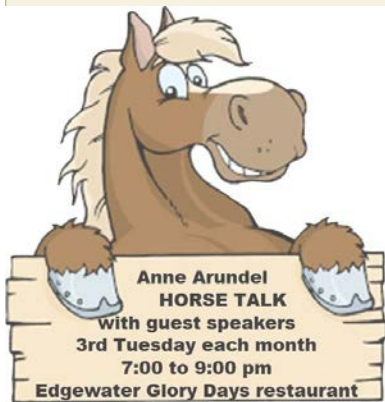
Horse World Expo  
Harrisburg PA  
Jan 29- Feb 3



## CLASSIFIEDS

**GAITED HORSE LESSONS** ... do you know what gait your horse does? is it consistent and comfortable? want to learn more about the mechanics of gait? Jacquie Cowan 410-215-4979 / [jacquiecowan@comcast.net](mailto:jacquiecowan@comcast.net) single lesson - group - clinics ... I can come to you.

**Anne Arundel HORSE TALK** .... a monthly get together for horse lovers and equestrians of all disciplines and interests with guest speakers at the Edgewater Glory Days Restaurant the 3rd Tuesday each month, 7 - 9pm... [jacquiecowan@comcast.net](mailto:jacquiecowan@comcast.net) / 410-215-4979



## CARROLL COUNTY UPDATE BY IVY SMINK

Carroll County Trails will be closed from September 1<sup>st</sup> through February 15<sup>th</sup> on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays for cooperative hunting. Please dress your mount and yourself in safety colors of bright orange or neon green for visibility and safety when riding on the trails.

Morgan Run Environmental Area has a calendar of closures different from the Union Mills, Speigle Hill, Piney Run, and Gillis Falls areas. It is part of the Patapsco State Park System and it follows the hunting schedule designated by the State.

The Gillis Falls area and the Union Mills area of Carroll County trails will be CLOSED to all use - including equestrians - for firearms season starting on Thanksgiving 11/23 thru December 12<sup>th</sup>. After those dates, the trails will resume the same schedule of closure until February 15<sup>th</sup> when trails are open 7 days a week.



## ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY UPDATE BY JACQUIE COWAN

### Gaining access to Bacon Ridge Trails in Crownsville:

Our small Anne Arundel equestrian work group is making slow, steady progress with the County Recreation and Parks (R&P) to regain access to the trails formerly known as the Windy Knoll Horsemen trails. On their request, we walked and submitted mapping of the trails we thought to be appropriate for horses. Recs and Parks were mostly in agreement of our proposal and on our behalf forwarded it on to the environmental stakeholder group for review. In the meantime, the County has authorized an expansion of the adjacent Forney area parking lot that includes horse trailer parking. Our equestrian group attended a public meeting to share our pros and cons of the plans, which included amenities we felt were not necessary. We traded those for a better design of the trailer spaces for safety and maneuverability. Hopefully, the balance of the trade-off could actually save the County some construction money. The County Development Team appreciated our input and the insight to equestrian trail riders they gained. Since then, our work group has hiked the trails with managing R&P Rangers, reconfirming appropriate trails to move forward on, and we have begun an early conversation about access from the Crownsville State Hospital that the County now owns. Our next big step is to meet with the Stakeholder Advisory Group, that we now have a seat at the table with, to address some of their environmental concerns. Our work group is keeping a bit of a low profile, particularly on social media, in order to establish and maintain a positive working relationship with everyone involved. Please contact me directly with any questions or suggestions..... [jacquiecowan@comcast.net](mailto:jacquiecowan@comcast.net) / 410-215-4979 Jacquie Cowan, Anne Arundel Coordinator

## TRAIL SPOTLIGHT: WHITE'S FERRY BY CHIRSTINA MICEK

It was a beautiful crisp fall day when we arrived at White's Ferry parking lot to gather for our ride and hike. There was already a horse trailer in the lot, and riders should know that the parking area usually can fit horse trailers easily on most days. While there are passing bikes, dogs, and walkers, the footing is level and smooth for horses. This ride and hike was open to all including PBHTA and TROT members, and the general public.

We gathered everyone's lunch order and gave it to the White's Ferry grill, and we set off on the C & O canal towards Edward Ferry. We passed by the Turtle Run campsite and views of the Potomac peeked out at us from the trees. We saw about a dozen bikers, some on longer treks, and only a few walkers with and without dogs. There were two horseback riders on the trail- one from a barn in Poolesville and her friend from Frederick.

The C & O canal trail is more enclosed and intimate in this area than the wider, more open C & O trail going from Riley's Lock to Pennyfield. The birds, turtles, fish and fauna made the walk even more fun, and one of our intrepid naturalists spied the paw paws ready to be eaten and brought us many to share.

The lunch from the White's Ferry Grill was deemed "something for everyone" with their long menu, cold food, snacks, ice cream and drink selections. The Reuben was a favorite, as were the onion rings, burgers, and chicken salad sandwich. Many had to bring half of their meal home since the sandwiches were so large. While White's Ferry Grill is a separate business from the ferry operation, they also rent canoes and kayaks, and picnic tables and grills for special events.

## FACING FEARS— BIG AND SMALL BY JANET LEITZEL

In 1996, I was able to achieve my dream of doing a horseback riding trip out west. It was a 6-day camping trip in the Weminuche Wilderness area in southwestern Colorado. The area spans nearly 500,000 acres across the San Juan and Rio Grande National Forests and protects the head waters of both rivers. I learned not long after the trip was scheduled that I had to have major surgery. My health issues became my first challenge on the ride.

A friend and I flew into Durango and spent the night. We were picked up early the following morning and taken to the outfitters' ranch. We met the rest of our group and were assigned our horse or mule for the week. There was no time to waste as it was about a four-hour ride from the trailhead to the campsite. The ride began at an altitude of 6,000 feet. The campsite was at 10,000 feet. The mules left first, carrying our luggage and provisions for the week.

The ride started just fine. It was sunny and mild. It then became cloudy and cooler and finally rained. The thunder was very loud, and lightning lit up the sky. We were told to put on our rain gear and just keep riding. It took close to five hours to reach the campsite.

The rain was with us much of the week. Many of the trails were muddy and slippery. We rode on canyon trails that were narrow and steep. The scenery was lovely, especially riding through huge meadows bordered by tall pines. One time we saw an elk taking a nap on a ledge above us. It took me a couple of days to adjust to the altitude. I was lightheaded and had a headache. I found that the up and down of the canyon trails really affected me. My friend on the other hand did not seem bothered by any of it. She couldn't understand particularly my problem with cliff edges.

My biggest challenge came on the fourth day of our ride. It had rained all night. We took a shorter ride that day due to the weather conditions. Coming around a turn in the trail, we had to go down a long, steep very muddy hill. We were told that to get down the hill, the horses had to slide down on their haunches, while we were on them. It was very scary. I was about the last of the group to go down the hill. However, my horse wasn't bothered at all, and we slid down just fine. I was so upset afterwards though; I couldn't eat my lunch.

Something changed for me that day. I stopped worrying. My friend commented later that nothing seemed to faze me the last couple days of the ride. I even asked to ride one of the mules down to the trailhead on our last day. I had survived!

*We love to hear from our members— please report equestrian needs and news in your county, let us know about events you would like advertised, issues on trails, or interest to volunteer.*

## CLASS 1 E-BIKES IN CARROLL COUNTY BY IVY

The Carroll County Board of Commissioners approved an Amendment to the Carroll County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 94, section 94.033 to allow the use of Class 1 E-Bikes on designated trails in county-owned parks. The motion also included the addition of expanding efforts to educate trail users about trail etiquette.

Before the Commissioners conducted a public hearing on June 29, 2023, the Department of Recreation and Parks received public comment regarding the issue of E-Bike usage on trails and reviewed the Code with the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. Equestrians, cyclists, and the public at large provided nearly 2 hours of comments before the commissioners during the June 29<sup>th</sup> public hearing. After the public hearing the Commissioners kept the record open for an additional ten calendar days for continued comment.

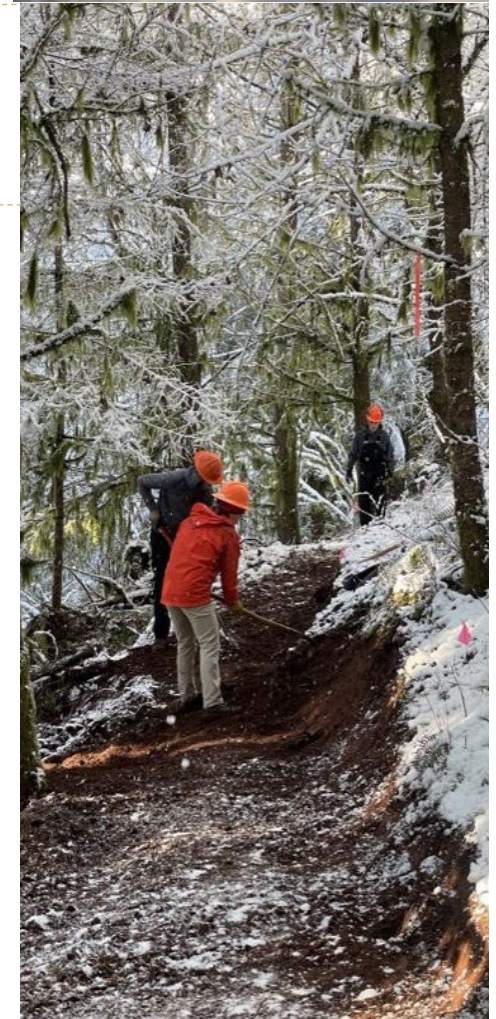
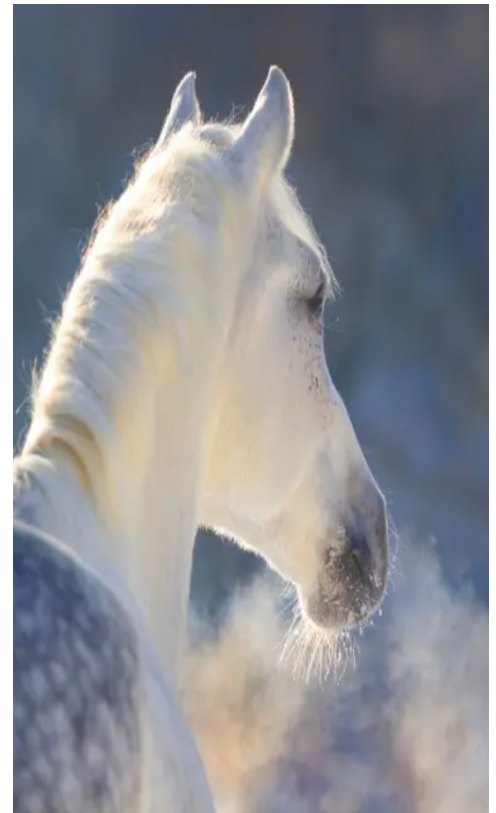
On July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Commissioners made a motion and passed (3 for and 2 against) the changed to the Carroll County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 94, Park and Recreation Sec-

tion 94.033 to include a statement allowing for usage of Class 1 E-Bikes only, on designated trails in county parks.

The multipurpose trails affected by this change include Gillis Falls (near the Carroll County Equestrian Center), the undeveloped side of Piney Run Park (Martz Road), Union Mills (Kowomu Trail Road), Hashawha (John Owings Road) and Speigel Hill (Kowomu Trail Road).

All trailheads are to have trail etiquette yielding signage. Over time, trails will be widened to help eliminate blind spots through the efforts of volunteers, MORE, and the Department of Recreation and Parks.

People can report safety issues, violation of Park rules, the condition of these trails or the interest to volunteer to Lisa Carroll, acting Director of Department of Recreation and Parks, 300 South Center Street, Westminster, MD 21157. Telephone 410-386-2103. Email: [ccrec@carrollcountymd.gov](mailto:ccrec@carrollcountymd.gov)





## TROT

Originally founded in 1980, by a group of 22 Maryland riders seeking to save a single trail, Trail Riders Of Today (TROT) expanded in 1997 to a 501(c)3 Corporation for charitable and educational purposes and specifically to educate the public concerning the preservation of existing equestrian trails and the establishment of new equestrian trails. TROT encourages partnerships with local organizations, state government agencies, land developers, and the public at large to maintain, preserve, and promote open space and equestrian trails with ecological and aesthetic benefits for public recreational use across the region. TROT and its members work with the public to educate and disseminate information concerning trail stewardship, safe riding practices, proper equine care and horsemanship, clinics, work groups and public forums. Join TROT – If you enjoy riding horses on trails in Maryland, want to learn about great places to ride, and would like to see these trails remain open to all riders, see our membership page to join/renew/contribute. And be sure to check out our list of scheduled rides on our calendar page.

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE– PLEASE VOLUNTEER

Many of the trails open to equestrians are multi-use trails that also are open to hikers and bikers. The success of TROT's mission depends on the active participation of equestrian and non-equestrian trail enthusiasts, and we actively support collaborations with all users to ensure that trails are available for everyone to enjoy. Please join TROT or renew your membership and volunteer your help by contacting TROT at [activity@trot-md.org](mailto:activity@trot-md.org). We are always looking help for letter writing campaigns, photos of events, event ideas and help putting them on, marketing, trail stewardship and work days, web site expertise, county coordinators, legal advice, leading trail rides, etc.



TROT  
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Finksburg, MD 21048

TROT has two Facebook pages:  
Facebook Community Page- very active: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/127953560568829>  
Official Facebook page for members:  
[www.facebook.com/Trail.Riders.of.Today](http://www.facebook.com/Trail.Riders.of.Today)

Web: <https://trot-md.org>  
E-mail: [activity@trot-md.org](mailto:activity@trot-md.org)

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

Mail To:

