



Horse Park Happenings

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Welcome to the first issue of the New York Horse Park newsletter.

Our first major public appearance, the Saratoga Environmental Expo, was a great success. Many people stopped by our booth to watch the video presentation and discuss the horse park concept. It seems like there is a great deal of interest out there as well as a need for general education. *"What's a horse park?"* is the first thing most people ask. After we tell them, the next question usually is, *"Why doesn't New York have one?"* We're working hard to make sure the public knows the answer to the first question and we're working even harder to make the answer to the second question a resounding *"We do now!"*

A horse park is much like a convention center for horse shows. Our ideal vision is that of a large, multi-use, state-of-the-art facility capable of attracting national and international competitors/competitions complete with a covered arena capable of seating thousands of spectators for year-round showing and possibly indoor polo, two or more regulation-size dressage rings, a larger regulation-size dressage ring for combined driving competitors, an outside grand-prix jumping course, a cross-country course for eventers, a marathon course for driving competitions, a steeplechase course, 3 or 4 warm up rings as well as 3 or 4 outdoor arenas, some of which would be equipped with lighting for night-time showing and a permanent vendor area. Different disciplines require different footings – one ring does NOT fit all. We also envision an area where some retired race horses/polo ponies would be housed, connection to existing trails and/or trailheads to existing trails. The possibilities are vast and we are still exploring them.

To attract the larger, multi-day shows a large amount of land is needed, in the hundreds of acres. Successful horse parks throughout the country offer RV hookups, overnight camping, trailer parking and spectator parking. Combined driving marathon courses run up to 15 kilometers in length; cross country eventing courses also require large amounts of acreage, usually 80 acres or more. A horse park must also have permanent stalls; some facilities in the country have more than 1000 permanent stalls. Currently, the three shows held in Saratoga Springs are experiencing a shortage of more than 200 stalls, causing potential competitors to be turned away from these events.

The synergy of a horse park comes from the ability to offer all these amenities in **ONE** location. The economic benefit of a horse park comes from the ability to host more than one competition per day/weekend as well as the ability to attract larger, 2 and 3 day (or longer) events to the facility. Saratoga is already the home of world class racing; we feel it is time to add a world class horse park.



Pictured above left are NY Horse Park committee members Dot Christiansen, Bob Giordano, Cheryl Keyrouze (Chair) and Celeste Caruso. Pictured above right are committee members talking with visitors to the NY Horse Park booth during the Saratoga Environmental Expo.

On other fronts, we now have our not-for-profit status thanks to the efforts of two other committee members, Pat Phillips and Don Matusik. Now fund-raising can begin in earnest.

Work is under way for a 'summer summit' for later this summer. This will be an educational event as part of our continuing effort to educate the public about a horse park, what it is and how everyone will benefit from one. We are continuing to do presentations to local leaders and we are pleased to see the interest is growing.

We are also in the process of attempting to identify suitable properties within Saratoga County where a horse park might be located. Paramount to any horse park is location, location, location. Several land owners have contacted us and we are methodically going about checking out any and all possibilities. Saratoga P.L.A.N., the conservation member of our committee, is helping us define the parameters and priorities for selecting a location as well as helping us refine our business plan.

Along the lines of learning all we can, three of our founding members, Cheryl Keyrouze, Bob Giordano and Marsha Himler traveled to Tryon, NC at their own expense to attend the 1st National Equine Economic Summit. Attendees included people from as far away as Norco, CA as well as representatives from Kentucky's equine industry, Equestrian Land Conservation Resource (ELCR), the Carriage Association of America and Indiana's Horse Council, among others. Keynote

speaker was Kimberly Brown, consultant to Kentucky State University. We found it very informative and well worth the trip. We got to see, first hand, a premier equestrian facility, the Foothills Equestrian and Nature Center (better known as FENCE) which is also home to the Blockhouse Steeplechase, an event at which we were privileged to have railside seats. Marsha even got to ride with a friend in the carriage parade preceding the steeplechase race.

The attendees were divided into four workgroups who brainstormed answers to different thought-provoking questions. We are waiting to receive the compilation of the results of those workgroups which is being put together by the Tryon Chamber of Commerce. FENCE is an example of how two states worked together to preserve and develop a lovely equestrian and nature facility. Land bordering FENCE is hard to come by because of the high demand by horse owners for adjoining property with ease of access to the center. The information we obtained and the contacts we made with other horse park people at the summit will certainly be of help as we move closer to our goal of a New York horse park in Saratoga County. One of the most astounding things we learned during the summit was just how quickly land is disappearing in the United States. According the Equestrian Land Conservation Resource, the US is losing, on average, **313 acres per minute** to development or in excess of **164 million** acres lost per year.



Another interesting fact learned is that developed land costs the taxpayer **MORE** than either farmland/open land or commercial/ industrial land. Cost of Community Services studies show that for every tax dollar collected, municipalities spend \$1.15 - \$1.50 for developed land, but only \$0.30 - \$0.65 is spent in support of farmland and \$0.35 to \$0.60 is spent on commercial land use. **Increased growth = increased spending.**

Cheryl Keyrouze, Bob Giordano and Marsha Himler, 3 of the 4 founding members of the New York Horse Park at the 1st National Equine Economic Summit held at the Foothills Equestrian & Nature Center in Tryon, NC, April, 2007.

If you would like to volunteer to help us, if you have any questions or if you would like to make a donation to the New York Horse Park, please contact either Cheryl (CLKeyrouze@aol.com) or Marsha (stonecroftmh@yahoo.com).

Please visit our website www.nyhorsepark.org to view our presentation.

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