



# LRRETA NEWS

## New Day Use Pens at IDB Little Blue Stem Trailhead

New addition to Little Blue Stem day use area! Shed row of 7 stalls made possible through Recreational Trail Grant Program from TPWD to LRRETA! Thank you to Neubauer Mfg. for their fine work!



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### Monthly Trail Ride

Check calendar on LRRETA website  
Locations announced on Facebook.

Call before you haul

**Monthly trail rides canceled til further notice!**

announced on Facebook.

Call Linda Moore 940-206-9355  
or Margaret Rabbitt 214-415-5527

to confirm plans.

**Your purchases can help fund our trails**



Visit <http://smile.amazon.com>  
and designate Greenbelt Alliance of Denton County as your charity.  
Every time you make a purchase, they donate .05% of the purchase price. It adds up!

# President's Message



As I write this, we are all “hunkering down” and not congregating due to Covid-19.

These are trying times, but the good news is that we can still enjoy our horses at home and as far as I know, horses not susceptible

to the virus! Good time to write newsletter articles, catch up on paperwork, groom your horses, clean your barn, clean your tack, clean the house... **make items for LRRETA online auction - see page 4.** As my daughter told me on Facetime the other day, there are enough projects around my house to keep me busy for the duration of the virus!

We have had a lot of rain and it has closed our trails at Lake Ray Roberts. Please observe this closure as damage to the trails from horse hooves takes a long time to mitigate. I know we are all anxious to get to ride, maintaining our social distance but don't ride the trails when they are too wet.

Our big news is the wonderful projects that are getting completed on our Recreational Trail Grant. As many of you have seen on Facebook, we contracted with Neubauer MFG. to construct a shed row of 7 -12' x 12' stalls on the south side of the day use area and 2 - 12' x 12' stalls on the north side of the day use area that has handicapped accessibility. See photos on front page. A big thank you goes to Allan Neubauer and his crew for their excellent work. The day use stalls are primarily for use during the day and you do not need a camp site to put your horse in them for a short time while eating lunch or after riding. However, please remember to never leave your horse unattended. The day use stalls will also be used for overflow for equestrian campers if their site does not have a covered stall. This will be by permission only from the park administration. We now have 21 covered stalls at Little Blue Stem, Isle du Bois. We will also be installing additional hitching rails at all the trail heads as well at water at each campsite and to the stalls at the day use area. We would also like to put in electrical hookups to the campsite but have not been successful in securing a grant for this expensive work. If you have ideas on a grant source please contact me or Tracy Matern. Our contact information is in this newsletter.

In January, we had a successful Annual Meeting at Rancho de la Rocha with about 40 people attending. A big thank you goes to Tim and Tish Beaty for their help and the use of their facility. We have set the Annual meeting for Feb. 6, 2021 at 5 pm for next year. Please read the article about the annual meeting in this

newsletter edition.

The leadership of LRRETA has been busy making lots of improvements in our organization. Several of us along with two TPWD Rangers, Denice Hardy and Daniel Rios, attended the Lone Star Trail Building School. We recently held our March meeting for the directors via Zoom. Since we did not want to have a group greater than ten at Ernesto's we used technology and met online. It was very successful but some did miss the margaritas! We may also have to do the April meeting online depending on how the virus plays out in the next few weeks. If you would like to be included in the meeting, please send me or Margaret Rabbit an email. Margaret Rabbit has spent countless hours getting our finances into Quick Books so we can streamline some of your processes and revamping the website. Margaret was made Finance Director at our last meeting and will work closely with Tim Beaty, our treasurer, to keep up with our income and expenditures. Tracy Matern has worked diligently to file for a large reimbursement from TPWD. Until we get this reimbursement, our bank account is rather low. Minutes from our last meeting will be posted on the website if you wish to be updated on this. Thank you to Tracy for her work on the grant! Posse has been practicing until this past week and practices have been suspended for the time being. Watch email or Facebook for new announcements.

Lastly, Carol Nichols has spearheaded a USACE meeting to discuss the log jam that is just below the trailhead at FM380. It has existed for some time and is causing the water to back up into the trailhead and the tributaries of the Trinity below the dam.

We have rescheduled our spring fund raisers for May 15-17 and an ETS Trail Challenge for June 6-7. We hope that by then restrictions will be lifted and life will be getting back to normal.

So as they say, KEEP CALM, and RIDE ON! (at least 6 ft. away from others)

## LRRETA Board Meetings

(Open to all members & Guests)

## 2nd Tuesday of the Month

Meetings are online via Zoom until further notice. If you wish to be included in the conference call, please contact Margaret Rabbitt.

6:30pm.

## LRRETA Board of Directors & Committee Members

### LRRETA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Linda Moore, President, City and TPWD Liaison	(940) 206-9355	<a href="mailto:moorelinda741@gmail.com">moorelinda741@gmail.com</a>
Michelle Ellis, Vice President	(214) 491-7941	<a href="mailto:justme.always@ymail.com">justme.always@ymail.com</a>
Tim Beaty, Treasurer	(214) 212-1999	<a href="mailto:tbeaty@tbbuilders.com">tbeaty@tbbuilders.com</a>
Margaret Rabbitt, Finance Dir.	(214) 415-5527	<a href="mailto:marabbitt@gmail.com">marabbitt@gmail.com</a>
Eileen Stecik, Secretary/Membership Chairperson	940-390-0393	<a href="mailto:eileenstecik3@gmail.com">eileenstecik3@gmail.com</a>

### MARKETING, PR AND MEMBERSHIP

Fred Rudsenske	(214) 417-3344	<a href="mailto:skiquest@sbcglobal.net">skiquest@sbcglobal.net</a>
Carol Nichols	(214) 507-9751	<a href="mailto:carolintexas@aol.com">carolintexas@aol.com</a>
Margaret Rabbitt	(214) 415-5527	<a href="mailto:marabbitt@gmail.com">marabbitt@gmail.com</a>
Monica Millan-Barbera	(817) 915-8455	<a href="mailto:monica@blackmustangranch.com">monica@blackmustangranch.com</a>
Tracy Matern	(214) 392-2288	<a href="mailto:tmatern1945@gmail.com">tmatern1945@gmail.com</a>
Susan Mendoza (Phone Tree)	(972) 475-9107	

### EVENTS

Gail Cotton Michaud, Chair	(214) 356-8523	<a href="mailto:gailcotton@verizon.net">gailcotton@verizon.net</a>
Chuck Manning	(940) 390-9188	<a href="mailto:chucksterman@hotmail.com">chucksterman@hotmail.com</a>
Linda Moore	(940) 206-9355	<a href="mailto:moorelinda741@gmail.com">moorelinda741@gmail.com</a>
Monica Millan-Barbera	(817) 915-8455	<a href="mailto:monica@blackmustangranch.com">monica@blackmustangranch.com</a>
Margaret Rabbitt	(214) 415-5527	<a href="mailto:marabbitt@gmail.com">marabbitt@gmail.com</a>

### GRANTS

Linda Moore	(940) 206-9355	<a href="mailto:moorelinda741@gmail.com">moorelinda741@gmail.com</a>
Lynn Jaco	(214) 995-9215	<a href="mailto:lynnjaco@yahoo.com">lynnjaco@yahoo.com</a>
Tracy Matern	(214) 392-2288	<a href="mailto:tmatern1945@gmail.com">tmatern1945@gmail.com</a>

### TRAIL STEWARDS

FM380 to FM428		
Michelle Ellis	(214) 491-7941	<a href="mailto:justme.always@ymail.com">justme.always@ymail.com</a>
Linda Moore	(940) 206-9355	<a href="mailto:moorelinda741@gmail.com">moorelinda741@gmail.com</a>
FM428 to Elm Fork		
Margaret Rabbitt	(214) 415-5527	<a href="mailto:marabbitt@gmail.com">marabbitt@gmail.com</a>
Elm Fork to Little Bluestem-Isle du Bois		
Maybeth Nunn	(214) 356-0383	<a href="mailto:maybeth.nunn@yahoo.com">maybeth.nunn@yahoo.com</a>
Little Bluestem-Isle du Bois to Jordan Park		
Sara Sydnam	(940) 600-8785	<a href="mailto:sarajsydnam@yahoo.com">sarajsydnam@yahoo.com</a>
Jordan Park to Lost Lake		
Alan Padgett	(903) 564-4781	<a href="mailto:alanpadgett@gmail.com">alanpadgett@gmail.com</a>

### EQUIPMENT MANAGER

Cliff Hemming	<a href="mailto:chemming3@pobox.com">chemming3@pobox.com</a>
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### NEWSLETTER

Leah Fry	(972) 742-9019	<a href="mailto:mljintex@yahoo.com">mljintex@yahoo.com</a>
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## Please join LRRETA, TETRA & CTETA

### LRRETA/TETRA Dual Members

Chuck Manning, TETRA Region 4 Director; Linda Moore; Carol Nichols;  
Tracy Matern, Michelle Ellis

### CTETA/TETRA Dual Members

Diana Hobbs, Linda Moore; Vicki Fraser, Robyn Pucci, Michelle Ellis,  
Carol Nichols

We encourage LRRETA members to also join TETRA & CTETA  
(see page 20)

## Greenfest on the Greenbelt including 5k Run

**POSTPONED.**

**Please mark your calendar  
for the new date:  
Saturday, September 19**

### Welcome New Members!

Bridget Brandon  
Cassandra Cummings  
Misty Farr  
Susan Hekman  
Dale Horst  
Bonnie and Forest Martin  
Duke Monson  
Avery Moore (Junior)  
John Nowell  
Karen Sawyers

### Lifetime Members


Tim Beaty  
Jamie Erbes  
Vicki Fraser  
Wendy McDowell  
Diane McLeod  
Ben Myers  
Carol Nichols  
Lori and Eddie Welsh

### New Level 3 Sponsorship

Debbie Adcock

## Trail ETIQUETTE

### Practice "PALS"

**P** - Pre-signal gait changes.  This gives riders time to prepare for gait change, put away water bottles, cameras, and/or provides opportunity for rider to "opt out of gait change" or ask that group not change gait.

**A** - Always ask, before you pass.

**L** - Leave no rider behind. One rider stays with rider who stops or gets off.

**S** - Stop. Know how to do a "one-rein, emergency stop" at all gaits.

**And - of course - ALWAYS  
clean up after your horse!**

# LRRETA Annual Meeting — January 11, 2020

by Linda Moore



The annual LRRETA meeting was held on January 11, 2020 at 6 pm at Rancho de la Rocha in Aubrey Texas. Thirty members attended the meeting.

Eileen Stecik provided the membership report and there are 174 members and 5 lifetime members. Tim Beaty, treasurer, provided an update on finances. Memberships are very important since ongoing yearly costs of approximately \$5200 for bookkeeping, event insurance, arena gratuity, and awards were discussed.

Assistant Park Manager, Denice Hardy, provided an update on the lake. Currently, the trailhead at FM 380 is still closed due to flooding once again. Change orders with the vendor providing restoration are being processed. The new playground is being completed and will open in March.

Events that LRRETA offered during 2019 included: Self Defense Clinic with Eddie Rodriguez and Eric Knight, ETS Trail Challenge Spring 2019, Pilot Point Posse- June 2019, Clinic with Greg Sokolowski, and Momma's Arena Obstacle Challenge, Christmas Party, and three newsletters were published last year.

LRRETA received approval to move forward with Recreational Trail Grant 017011 which was awarded in 2017. This provides funds to construct 9 day use stalls at Isle du Boise and water to all the camp sites.

Reports were given on Fannin County Equestrian Trails Association and Cross Timbers Equestrian Trails Association. New opportunities for engagement within LRRETA were also discussed: Volunteer Coordinator, Membership Retention Chairperson, Trail Rider Chairperson (filled), Event Chairperson (filled), and Sponsorship Chairperson. Please contact Linda Moore if you are interested in serving in one of these positions.

Plans for 2020 include developing an online membership directory, applying for a Recreational Trail Grant, pursuing electrical hookups for campsites at Little Blue Stem, ETS Trail Challenge fundraiser, two campouts at Little Blue



Stem, Clinics (2-3), Search and Rescue Training for the Posse.

The following people were recognized with a plaque:

- Gail Cotton Michaud - Event Management
- Paula Peay – Posse
- Tracy Matern - Grant Management
- Michelle Ellis Rupe - Facebook Manager
- Eileen Stecik - Membership
- Leah Fry - Newsletter Editor
- Val Nava - Posse Arena Management
- Monica Millan-Barbera - Website Development
- Cliff Hemming - Equipment Manager
- Sara Sydnam - Trail Steward
- Alan Padgett - Trail Steward
- Michelle Ellis - Trail Steward
- Margaret Rabbitt - Trail Steward
- Maybeth Nunn - Trail Steward

## Coming Soon: Online auction to benefit LRRETA!



Bring out your talent and donate a handmade or purchased item or service for an online auction to be held in May.

More information coming- watch Facebook and your email.

## Volunteer of the Quarter



**Margaret Rabbitt**

Margaret, a member since 2016, has put in many hours for LRRETA. In 2017, she became a board member at large. In August, when the newly formed Posse changed leaders, Margaret stepped up to assist. Her technology skills have provided updates to the website and several new options such as Pay Pal, an updated calendar, meeting minutes, and email distribution to keep members informed. Margaret also put all finances into Quickbooks, which allows us to easily look at current balances. Margaret was instrumental in setting up the Clinic with Greg Sokolowski last fall. It was through Margaret's efforts that LRRETA members can now enjoy a 15% discount with Riding Warehouse. In March, the board voted unanimously to make her Finance Chairperson. Margaret and husband, John, own Sunset Stables LLC in Valley View, TX. She breeds, boards, and trains horses. Currently, she has 12 horses.

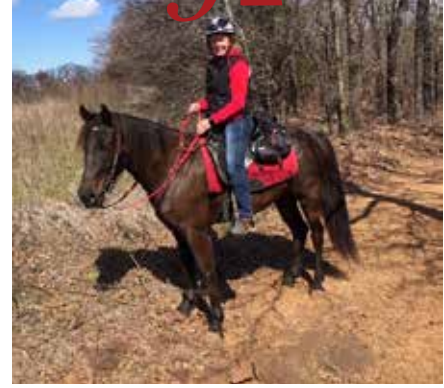
**ETS Trail Challenge  
Tentatively June 6-7 — Elm Fork**



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
RENEW YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP**

You KNOW you have time!

## Member Highlight



**Gail Cotton Michaud**

Gail has been in the Dallas area for almost 40 years and always begged for a horse as a child. She finally got her first horse about 12 years ago. She joined CTETA and LRRETA and now has a great group of trail riding friends. Gail's wonderful horse, Thunder, passed away suddenly a couple years ago but thanks to Linda Moore, Gail has a rescued 5-year-old TN Walking horse named Gazelle. The two of them like to camp and have ridden many trails together!

Gail lives in Plano with her husband, Georges. She is very active with LRRETA, helping to maintain trails, attending monthly meetings, planning, and volunteering, and she also serves as Event Chairperson.

## New Member Highlight



**Jennifer Conditto**

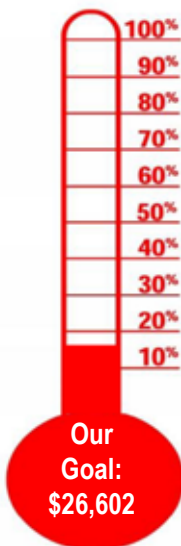
Jennifer is an unemployed elementary school teacher, currently working at Jim-a-Dee Ranch, doing a little bit of everything from ranch ahnd to event coordinator to personal assistant. She and her husband Keith have 3 Morgan geldings, Kinner, Drummer, and Winchester. Kinner has been her "perfect partner" for 20 years, and together they have done gaited Morgan demos, breed demos, historical reenactments, parades and Butler County Sheriff's Posse up in Pennsylvania. They have ridden the trails in AZ, MO, VA, WV, PA, NY, SD and AR. She is a member of the Pilot Point Mounted Posse.

# Grant Update as of March 20, 2020

by Tracy Matern

## 2017 TP&W Recreational Trails Grant

- While we were awaiting approval from Texas Parks & Wildlife to start construction of our day-use stalls, volunteers cleared the site. Sand was delivered and leveled. Margaret Rabbitt, Cathy Milligan and Linda Moore sealed, osphoed, and painted the storage container. A DR Trimmer was purchased for LRRETA which will be extremely helpful especially against privet invasion on the trail.
- We received approval from the Recreational Trails Program to accept the bid from Neubauer Manufacturing to construct our 7-Stall Row in our day-use area and a 2-Stall Row in our handicapped-accessible area on October 30, 2019. Linda met with the contractor at the site to discuss specifics, materials were purchased, the area was staked out and additional sand was delivered and leveled.
- Construction began on January 7, 2020 and was completed by January 15, 2020. At the final inspection meeting, it was noticed that rain runoff from the roofs was eroding the sand stall base. It was determined that gutters, downspouts and perhaps some form of retaining wall would be needed to mitigate this erosion. Permission was sought and received on the same day and Neubauer responded quickly to order and install the gutters and downspouts. At the March 18, 2020 Board Meeting conducted on Zoom, it was determined that a retaining wall was still needed to stabilize the sand and purchase of the necessary pavers was approved.
- The items remaining on this grant include running water to the corrals, construction of the rinse rack, construction and installation of the hitching rails at several trailheads, and renovation of the trail from FM 428 to US 380. Running water lines to the corrals and rinse rack is awaiting multi-level, multi-agency approval. Once we have that, we will be able to start construction. The rinse rack is being re-designed to capture any soap from contaminating the soil should someone use something other than just water. Once a design to agreed upon, we can begin construction. 20 hitching rails have been welded and primed by Neubauer and installation is awaiting approval of the placement sites and dry conditions.
- A request for reimbursement for \$25,515 of our expenses has been approved by TP&W and should be on its way soon. They retained 20% (\$6379) until we meet our 20% match. We have met \$3,907 of our \$26,602 required match or 14.6%. Please join us for our fun workdays when they are scheduled to help us make our match.



## Texas New Mexico Power Grant

- We were not awarded our request for a grant by TNMP. Application can be made in the Summer of 2020 but before we can accept this grant, we must have permission from the Park to run the electric lines. This is also tied into our request to run water to the corrals. Any disturbance of soil in a State Park must go through multi-agency approvals. The approval process was started by the Park on August 25, 2019 and it can take a long time to complete.

## 2020 TP&W Recreational Trail Grant Application

- On February 1st, we applied for another Recreational Trail Grant. In normal times, we would know whether it was funded around June. If funded this grant would fund installing mile markers every half-mile along the 11-mile gravel surfaced linear Greenbelt Bike Trail for safety and informational purposes, just like the ones that were installed on the equestrian trail. It would also fund installing covered picnic tables and horse tie rails at 6 locations including Lost Lake, Jordan Park and halfway between each of the other trailheads which would serve hikers and equestrians. We would add a new automatic horse waterer at the FM 428 park to replace one that is no longer operational.
- In addition, we would like to build an ADA-compliant pavilion with water, fans, lights and a group BBQ grill at Elm Fork Park which would serve all Park users especially during the many special events that are held here including the GreenFest Bike Rally, Educational talks and equestrian competitions. Due to flooding damage, GBA and its sub-committee Lake Ray Roberts Equestrian Trail Assn. (LRRETA) will use volunteers to help repair and renovate the 11-mile natural surface linear equestrian trail. A small trailer that can be pulled behind our rented UTVs would be very helpful in getting supplies down the trail. Renting some heavy equipment may be needed for this effort. Consideration will be given to rerouting the trail to make it more sustainable.
- Lastly, we would like to install at least two electronic signs which can be operated from the Park's headquarters to notify the public of trail closures saving Park personnel time.

# Bomb Proofing and Obstacle Course Clinic — November 2-4, 2019

by Margaret Rabbitt



Last November, LRRETA hosted a Bomb Proof and Obstacle Course Clinic led by Greg Sokoloski, former head of the Houston Mounted Police held at Jim-A-Dee Ranch in Sanger, TX. Approximately 25 participants attended over the three days and learned techniques that helped their horses to be calmer and more confident.

It takes a team to manage all of the particulars, and a big thanks go out to all who helped make this clinic a success! Thanks to Jim-A-Dee Ranch for hosting the event and preparing great lunches; Paula Peay Duff for designing and helping to build the obstacle course; Valerie Nava and Chuck Davis for helping to build some of the obstacles and loaning us more obstacles; Gail Cotton for managing reservations; Debbie Adcock for assisting with the saddle fitting demonstration; and Margaret Rabbitt for coordinating and marketing the event. Also, a big thank you to all those who helped set up and tear down the obstacles! And last, but certainly not least... a big thanks to Greg Sokoloski for coming up from Houston to lead the clinic.

There were many challenging obstacles to practice on both in the arena and outside.

Various areas covered in the clinic were:

- Calming the horse by learning how to calm yourself and the cues you give off
- Backing the horse with the lead rope and teaching them to lunge in a circle at the end of the line without moving
- Standing calmly while picking hooves
- Flexing the neck and teaching a safety stop
- Teaching your horse to first face, sniff, and touch the obstacle before attempting to complete
- Backing up on a long lead to touch barrels
- Standing calmly at the mounting block
- Riding with the seat and to calmly stop on their own in the center of the arena

This clinic was a fundraiser bringing in \$3,175 to support the Pilot Point Mounted Posse. Funds help pay for the use of the practice arena, supplement the cost of purchasing and building obstacles; and other related activities.

LRRETA is thankful for all who participate in our events to help themselves, their equines; and LRRETA!

Greg is coming back in May (see next page). He and Debbie Adcock are leading another clinic at Jim-A-Dee Ranch - <https://www.lrreta.com/obstacle-bomb-proof-clinic> and a Trail Obstacle Course Clinic at Elm Fork Trailhead - <https://www.lrreta.com/elm-fork-trail-obstacle-clinic>. Be sure to check out the calendar of events on the LRRETA website at <https://www.lrreta.com/copy-of-calendar-of-events> and on [Facebook](#).



# 2020 Elm Fork Trailhead Obstacle Course Clinic Postponed to TBD date in May



Take what you learned at the Obstacle & Bomb Proof Clinic held at Jim-A-Dee Ranch May 15-16 and apply it at the outside trail obstacle course!

### Featuring:

Greg Sokoloski - retired head of the Houston Mounted Police

Debbie Adcock - certified Parelli Instructor!

### Where:

Elm Fork Trailhead (just south of the LRR dam on FM 455, Aubrey, TX a mile west of Isle Du Bois)

### When:

May 17 8:30 am Check-in | 9:00 Demonstration | Clinic to 12:00 Noon  
12:00 Noon - 1:30 pm potluck lunch

Negative Coggins required! | Bring a DISH or DESSERT to share

### Cost:

\$75 (Members) | \$100 (Non-Members) | Youth - \$25

ETS Trail Challenge | Tentatively June 6-7 — Elm Fork



# Lone Star Trail Building School

by Vicki Fraser



LRRETA and OETRA partnered in February at the Sid Richardson Boy Scout Ranch in Bridgeport, Texas, for the 17th annual Lone Star Trail Building School. The school is put on by Groundworks Dallas and S & S Trail. This annual event brings together all types of participants – everyone from inner city youth to professionals from the City of Dallas. For the last several years, thanks to Carol Nichols, equestrians have been well represented. Tina Hummel (Trail Ambassador for Sportsman's Lake in Seminole) and I drove in from Oklahoma in time to meet everyone for dinner at Pronto's Italian restaurant for the annual dinner before classes start on Saturday.

There are two levels of classes – the basic course spends half a day in class, then moves out onto the trail to put their newfound knowledge to use. The advanced class also had half a day of instruction and then worked on extending an existing project. This consisted of an elevated bike trail, armored at the beginning with stone from the site, anchored into boulders and canted at the turns.

We also built a crib wall, which was a dry-stack stone wall, backfilled with stone and soil to provide a landing spot as the elevated trail ended. It is a bold, artistic trail, and while this trail is for bikes only, we discussed what we would do if it were to be an equestrian trail. Most of those changes of course would deal with



load-bearing and surface changes. S and S Trails – [info@sstrails.com](mailto:info@sstrails.com) facilitates the classes and the hands-on work during the weekend. They have become a valuable resource for us as we come across issues that need to be resolved on our equestrian and hiking trails. One problem that LRRETA consulted with them on was boggy footing crossing a creek. The response was to move the crossing from the bend in the creek to a straight portion of the stream – the issue had to do with the speed of the water as it moves through the waterway. We so appreciate having their expertise available to us.

A big thank you to OETRA for investing in Tina and I as Trail Ambassadors, and to LRRETA for doing the same for Lake Ray Robert's park personnel. Assistant Superintendent Denise Hardy and ranger Daniel Rios both attended the school this year. It was a great opportunity to get to know them both better, and for them to be able to network with the other participants.

It was fun to see everyone! Linda Moore, Mary Apple, Carol Nichols, Gail Cotton, Brigitte Caperton, Ellen Farnum from Austin, Tina Hummel and myself from Oklahoma. The trail school sold out fairly early and we appreciate that Groundworks Dallas squeezed the Oklahoma contingent in at the last moment.



so appreciate that Carol has the vision that brings together bike trail builders and equestrians to partner with each other as we move forward.

You might want to clear a spot on your February 2021 calendar for next year's trail school!

## Log Jam at US 380 Continues to Flood Lake Ray Roberts Trails

by Carol Nichols



As you know, record rainfall has caused increased flooding and trail closures in the Park. But did you know that there is a massive log jam that is amplifying the flooding?

The water running through the Park used to flush out under the US 380 bridge and empty into the Elm Fork of the Trinity and on to Lake Lewisville. However, beginning in 2015 with the first torrential rains, ending the 50 year drought in Texas, the rapid release of water undercut the banks, combined with dead trees from the drought, causing the collapse of hundreds of trees into the river. In addition, as Lake Lewisville filled up, the flow slowed and the log pile built up — with nowhere to go! A southerly wind blows to keep the logs in the channel. Further "piling on" comes from developers upstream cutting down trees and dumping in the river (chain saw marks on trunks have been reported by Rangers at USACE). The result ... one big JAM!

The impediment to drainage has caused increased flooding, closure of trails, reduction of sand bass fishing below the dam, and damage to various recreational areas including the Lake Ray Roberts Park, the Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center, the Greenbelt and private property. The Greenbelt Trail between FM 428 and US 380 has been closed for 5 years due to high water. There is also a concern the jam could impact US 380 infrastructure. Due to the relatively flat elevation between the two dams at Lake Lewisville and Lake Ray Roberts, it is not expected the log jam will clear naturally.

Carol Nichols has recently organized a coalition to address this problem. The first conference call with interested parties was held on March 24, 2020. Representatives at the conference call meeting included Greenbelt Alliance (GBA) Board members Richard Rogers, Tim Beaty, Carol Nichols; Linda Moore - President of LRRETA; Katherine Barnett - City of Denton, Rob Jordan - USACE and his



team, Chris True and Mark Stewart - TPWD Lake Ray Roberts State Park, Steve Smith - Trinity Coalition; and Web Mangham - Trinity River Authority.

This will not be an easy or quick fix — sticks of dynamite are no longer fashionable to use as in the old days before "environmental awareness." The Corps does not have any dredging equipment on site and log jam removal has not been a priority in previous USACE budget packages.

Identifying funding will be the key. At this first meeting, all agreed they wanted to help solve the problem. The group agreed to reach out to other experts for ideas and resources.

The next task force meeting will be the end of April.

# Lake Ray Roberts State Park — Spring Update

by Mark Stewart, TPWD Lake Ray Roberts State Park

Howdy All! Here we are again; it now seems to be a more regular thing than I remember. The lake is currently about 5 feet over and more rain is in the forecast. We are experiencing a variety of closures in all three units of Ray Roberts Lake State Park.

We were very excited just a few weeks ago when the lake was at normal levels, our construction projects were complete at the Isle Du Bois. It was Spring Break and the new playground was open and visitors were out enjoying all sections of the park. After several rain events we started closing facilities due to flooding and then we had the impact for the COVID-19 pandemic begin to be felt at the park. The project to repair the Hwy 380 Access is currently on hold due to the almost continual flood which is occurring at that location. We are having to now wait for the flooding to subside and the COVID outbreak to settle down to whatever our new normal will be once that occurs. But when that does happen, we will be here so that y'all will be able to come out to the park and enjoy the trails and other amenities we have to offer.

The park is currently open at a limited capacity. The equestrian trails are closed due to flooding as are numerous other facilities. For the most up to date information about what is available, please check our Facebook page, our website, or contact the park.

We great appreciate the support we receive from LRRETA and look forward to seeing y'all on the trail!



Above: fishing pier. Below: the trail



# Fannin County Equestrian Trails Association

by Carol Nichols



A meeting of the Fannin County Equestrian Trails Association (FETA) was held on February 15 at the Caddo Trail Riders Pavilion in Telephone, TX. Duke Monson presented a detailed Master Trail Plan that will serve Texas trail riders and Fannin County residents now and for future generations. Please read the Plan and see maps - we welcome your feedback: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pbjKpuk9h\\_g9ncQeh7vOWFCgiUmY2iu/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pbjKpuk9h_g9ncQeh7vOWFCgiUmY2iu/view)

Thanks to Tahni Nichols Ross - FETA President, Duke Monson - Trail Riding Chair, Phil and Cyndee Haley, and the Caddo Trail Riders Association for their vision, local connections and support!

A plan for public trails within and across Fannin County. The Trails Plan supports many different user groups: Hiking, Cycling (Road, Gravel, and Mountain Bike), Water (Kayak and Canoe), Nature Observation, and Equestrian (Trail and Carriage). Existing and proposed trails are identified within the County and possible funding sources are identified.

## Fannin County Regional Trails Master Plan

### 3.4.3 Gravel Surface Bike/Horse Routes

There are 170+ miles of gravel surfaced County roads used to create the gravel routes that are suitable for both cyclists and equestrians. Most of those roads are County roads, occasionally an FM road is used for a short distance to get from a County road on one side of the highway to a County road on the other side. As much as possible, the County roads that have been chosen are not main corridors.

Over time, it is expected that the County road routes will be improved with:

- 1) Route signage (route name, distance(s), and directions)
- 2) Bike and Horse safety signage (e.g. "Share the Road")
- 3) Multi-use trailbed within the County road right of way

We need your help:

- 1) Please tell your friends in Fannin County to call their Commissioners and County Judge Randy Moore to ask that they support the Master Trail Plan.
- 2) We need more "locals" in Fannin County to help design trails, to influence Town Councils and Commissioners, and serve on the Trail Advisory Committee. Please send Duke Monson ([duke.fhollow@earthlink.net](mailto:duke.fhollow@earthlink.net)) or Carol Nichols ([carolintexas@outlook.com](mailto:carolintexas@outlook.com)) names of Fannin County residents who might be good representatives for the "Trail Advisory Committee."
- 3) We need introductions to equestrians who currently ride the equestrian trails at Lake Fannin, outside of the historic district, so we can document the routes they are using.
- 4) We need to identify additional people for a "Grant Writing Committee."

Thanks for your support. A special thanks to Duke for all his volunteer work to create a visionary and detailed Master Plan that will serve Texas trail riders now and for future generations to enjoy the great outdoors! Let's Ride!



Figure 6 - Gravel Surface Bike/Horse routes - marked in orange.



# Where have you ridden lately?

## Big Bend National Park by Tracy Matern

On February 1st, 14 LRRETA, TTPA, and Saddlebag friends set out for a trip to 800,000 acre Big Bend National Park. Eight of us caravanned in 5 trailers and one car led by TTPA President Duke Monson and his wife Jill. Duke and Jill, Kathy Erickson, Toni and Mike Tuttle and I started the caravan in Allen and picked up Carol Nichols and Gail Cotton at the Love's Truck Stop outside of Weatherford.



*Tracy Matern, Toni and Mike Tuttle getting ready to roll to the Big Bend*

We very much missed President Linda Moore who was scheduled to go with us but took an unscheduled dismount from her horse, breaking two ribs, the week before we left.

We traveled to the Lugo Ranch in Big Spring, TX and were greeted warmly by Cindy Lugo and her family and their ranch helper Steve who helped us all get our rigs backed into place and hooked up and our horses unloaded and safely in their cozy, comfortable, shavings-lined covered stalls. After getting settled, the Lugos invited us all to share hamburgers with their family and friends. We all highly recommend

the Lugo Ranch for an overnight stop for Big Bend or New Mexico or Arizona. Toni and Mike Tuttle were not hauling horses, so they spent the night in a local hotel and rejoined us for the trip. In addition to wanting to see Big Bend, their purpose was to see how horse camping with a group really works.

We left about 9:30, filled up at the Big Spring Walmart and got back on US 20. This gas station is not recommended as there are Love's and Pilot/Flying J stations nearby. We turned on FM 1053 towards Fort Stockton and then, after filling up our tanks, took US 385 to Marathon, where we filled up again, and then rejoined US 385 to take the longer but scenic route through Big Bend National Park. The faster route is to turn on I10 West at Fort Stockton and take it to US 67 S through Alpine to TX 118 south to Terlingua. We arrived at the Lajitas Equestrian Center and Stables just before 5 PM where we were warmly welcomed by the stable manager. I mention the specific name of the stables because there is a Lajitas Stables and a Big Bend Stables in the nearby area. If you want to book the Lajitas Equestrian Center and Stables you do it through the Lajitas Golf Resort. The stable is an open-sided stable with a roof. The stalls are sturdy pipe with mats over concrete floors, so it is a good idea to bring shavings with you. They do not sell shavings or hay. Also, bring your

own buckets for water and feed, your feed and your hay. Bring blankets as well as sometimes the nights get cool. I would also suggest you bring a portable saddle rack as you must haul your tack back and forth each day. You can leave your hay, feed, muck rake and shavings there.

Debi and Richard Zinser traveled separately to the Davis Observatory on February 1st so they could participate in a Star Party. They and their horses spent the night in an overnight horse facility near the Observatory. They came to greet us as we arrived; they were already settled.

Bonnie Martin and John Rutan drove separately also and stayed at the Resort. They did not bring their own horses but rented some.

Maybeth Nunn and her husband also traveled separately and without horses in their brand-new RV and shared experiences with us in the Maverick RV Park.

After settling our horses, we proceeded to the Maverick RV Park, also part of the Resort. This is a beautiful, clean park with all the amenities — full hookups, laundry room, recreation room, pool, a very nice dog park — and it was packed full. It is more expensive than most horse camping facilities especially at this time of year, but it is well run.

*continued on page 12*



*Richard and Debi Zinser by the cliffs on the Camino Viejo Trail*

It is also a “Dark Sky” park as is Lajitas and the Big Bend State and National Parks and all lights must be off by 9 PM. I especially liked the dog park as I could let Cowboy run and it was a great social center to meet other people and their pets.

The first day we joined a ride to show us where the trailheads were located. Their “trailheads” are not what we think of as trailheads, just places where marked trails crossed. The markers in the Lajitas trail system are minimal, only at intersections. We were given good trail maps.

We split off from the manager on the way back to find our way to the Rio Grande which turned out to be more difficult than we thought. There was a lot more water in the Rio Grande than the last time I was there, there was more vegetation along the edges and the river was flowing rapidly. On the way back we discovered, much to our delight, that the statue of Robert E. Lee which was removed from Lee Park in Dallas now resides on the Black Jack's Crossing Golf Course at the Lajitas Golf Resort. We all had to have our pictures taken with it in the background. We rode about 14 miles. Just after we got back, a powerful storm blew through and took out Debi and Rick's new awning. Neighbors ran to help but it was too late. We felt so bad for them.

The second day we headed out from the stables, down the trail along the side of the road for .9 miles to the Big Bend State Park headquarters where we bought permits to ride the State Park and got maps. We rode the Contrabando trail which is the main trail in this part of the State Park. It does down the middle of this section of the park with several side trails that go off and return to it. We turned off to the right on the Crystal Trail and were rewarded by a hill covered in quartz-like gypsum crystals...very beautiful. This brought us back to the main trail and we followed it to the Camino Viejo Trail where we caught

Waterfall trails were my favorites of the entire trip. We ascended out of this valley to the main trail and rode on home for a total of about 25 miles. That evening we all met in the Recreation Building to listen to the State of the Union. Gail brought some Amarula Cream Liquor from South Africa for us to try and it was delicious.

We decided to take Wednesday off and were greeted in the morning by a brief snow shower. It was awesome to open your door and see big fat fluffy snowflakes coming down. This did not last long. This day turned out to



*Carol Nichols, Kathy Erickson, Gail Cotton and Tracy Matern*

up with Debi and Rick and ate lunch under towering cliffs. Returning to the main trail, we rode to an abandoned Mercury Mine, camp and school. There were many mercury mines in the Big Bend up until after World War I when the demand dried up. Turning for home, we turned right on the Dome Trail, this was a very pretty trail which twisted and turned along the tops of the ridges. It took us to the Waterfall trail where there was access to an overlook for which you could see the valley, the abandoned stone buildings and the waterfall channel through which we were about to ride. This was a very beautiful and technical trail. The Dome and

be pretty good except for the passage of a brief heavy downpour. Overall, the weather on the trip was fantastic as it usually is this time of year with highs being in the 60s and 70s and lows in the 30s and 40s. The trick is whether the weather is going to be bad traveling to and from the Big Bend.

After sleeping in and feeding the horses, we decided to venture into Terlingua and eat at the Chili Pepper Cafe. It was not as good as Ernestos for sure. We then visited the magnificent Quilt Shop owned by an artist named Margarite who is now in her 80s. *continued on page 13...*

## Big Bend ... continued from page 12



*John Rutan on the Lajitas Trails at Big Bend*

Be sure to stop here as she is truly an amazing artist and they have many other items by local artists. We came back to Lajitas, checked out the country store, the Mayor's cage (the Mayor is a goat), the Badlands Hotel, the shops and restaurants at the resort. Christina's World is an extraordinary gift shop filled with unique items by local and regional artists. We ate dinner at the Candalilla Café at the resort and it was very good; beautiful view of the mountains and Golf Course.

On Thursday, Duke, Jill, Carol, Gail, Kathy and I bundled up and set out to ride the Lajitas Trails. We broke into two groups and rode out towards the airport on Loop 1 to Loop 2 to Loop 3, then took it to Loop 4 going around the farthest out part of the Lajitas trails mainly through the desert. We followed

Loop 4 in the shadow of majestic cliffs several hundred feet high through a beautiful little canyon called Fun Valley then headed home on IB and back to 1. It was a great 22.5-mile ride.

On Friday, Jill and Duke left for home and Kathy decided to give Smokey a day of rest so Carol, Gail and I headed out to explore more of the Lajitas trails. Soon, Gail and I realized our horses were tired and not very enthusiastic. Kathy had the right idea, but it was too late. We decided to ride out on Trail 5 along the top of a ridge sometimes with sides sloping sharply off on both sides and some steep ups and downs. It was challenging and beautiful. This trail rejoined Loop 1 going the opposite direction from the day before and we decided to follow it and come back on IB to the other side of Loop 1. After some time, we realized we had gone too far and had missed the turn. We thought everything was good because we saw trail markers that others had made from stones but when checking our GPSs realized we were off the map. We turned around and vigilantly looked for that turn to the north and never did find it. We just traced our way back home. We asked others that we met after returned where that turn was, and they said that sometimes the trails get hidden after heavy rains. It still bugs me that we didn't find it. We will have to look for it going the opposite direction next time.

On Saturday, Gail and I decided we and our horses were tired and

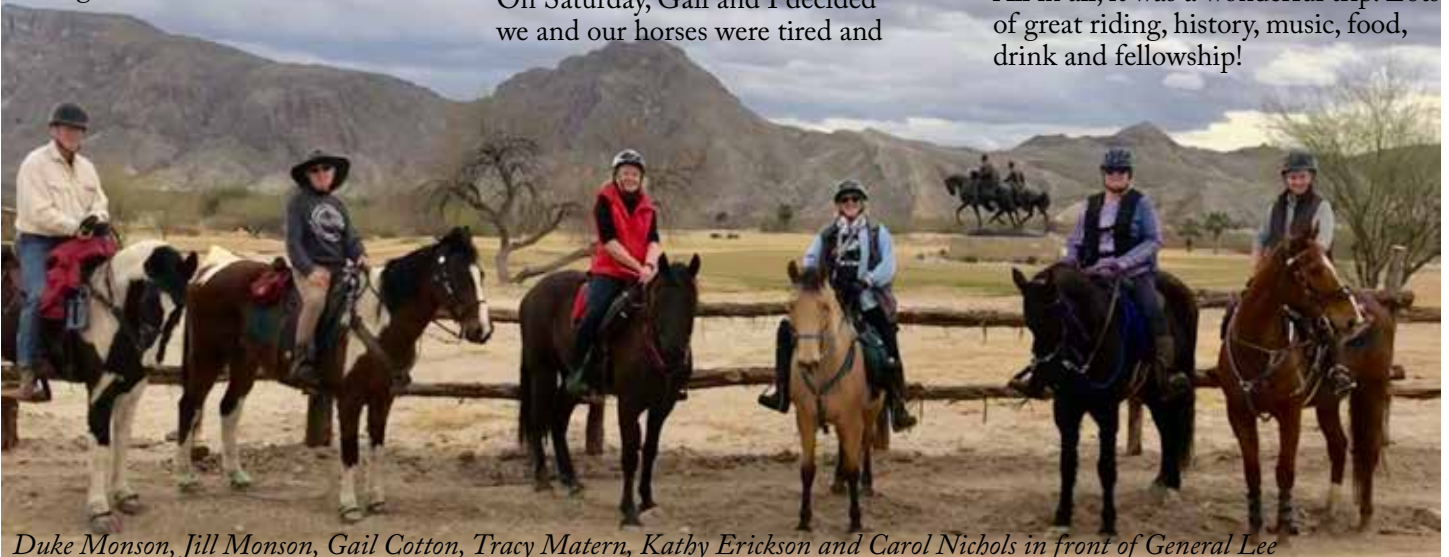
bowed out of riding. We drove to the National Park down to spectacular Santa Elena Canyon. We hiked the 1.6-mile trail there that climbs up the cliffs over the Canyon. It is absolutely beautiful. One hazard was getting across incoming Terlingua Creek where it enters the Rio Grande which was extremely muddy. We both made it across with the only casualty being our clean shoes.

We stopped briefly at the Catalan Visitor Center then hurried back to fix dinner and head to the Thirsty Goat Saloon (named after the Mayor) to hear music and dance.

Saturday it was off for home again. We were down to four trailers and one car as Duke and Jill had already left, so I took the lead. This time we took SH 118 to Alpine and then US 67 North to I10 to Fort Stockton. Again, we stayed at the Lugo Ranch.

We pulled out early on Sunday and headed home in the light rain. Kathy noticed her engine was running hot. We stopped and checked the transmission fluid and it was not registering so we added a quart and started off again. The engine trouble continued so Carol and Gail kept going while we found a big diesel shop. He said we could get safely home by adding coolant frequently when the engine got hot, so off we headed again. We stopped several times but we all made it home. Kathy is having the engine rebuilt.

All in all, it was a wonderful trip. Lots of great riding, history, music, food, drink and fellowship!

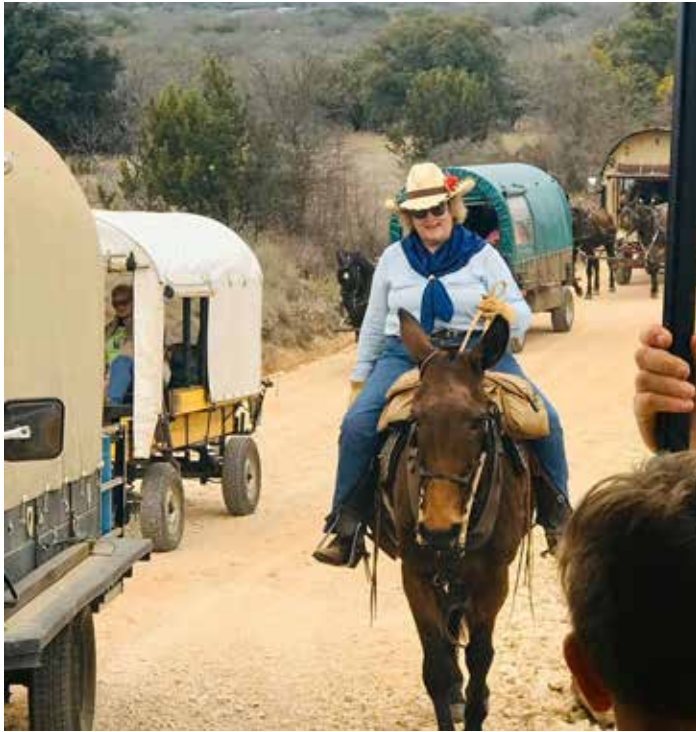


*Duke Monson, Jill Monson, Gail Cotton, Tracy Matern, Kathy Erickson and Carol Nichols in front of General Lee*



# Where have you ridden lately?

## Riding With Wagons by Peggy "Redhorse" Kimberlin



The invitation came five days before the 3rd Annual Oplin Area Wagon Ride from my friend Jeanne Kennon of Abilene. She has been driving a covered wagon for years and came a few years to my Big Bend-Stillwell Ranch wagon train and ride. I jumped into gear and headed to Oplin, Texas!

This was a round robin ride; out and back to the same camp. The community center/1938 Oplin High School Gym served as our camp and provided a kitchen and restroom facilities. Lots of good food came out of that kitchen and fun parlor games, too!

There were seven wagons, each pulled by a team of horses/mules and several riders. The ride averaged 18 miles a day, primarily on county dirt roads. Thanks to area ranchers, we were able to enter private property for rest breaks and lunches.

There was a lot of wildlife and interesting livestock! A frisky trio of bison drew some attention! The alpacas, in three locations, were contained and didn't draw too much attention. Deer and feral hogs darted across the road ahead of the wagon train.

Ironically, the only riding animal I've owned that hadn't been on a wagon train was my mule Mary! She has been my ride for five years now, and I didn't hesitate taking her. Riding alongside each wagon, she actually connected with every team and bayed at them if one of the wagons got out of order! It was a great ride, and I encourage all equestrians to try it!



If you've participated in a parade, you and your mount have probably been exposed to a wagon and wagoners. They are great folks! The chains rattling, the rubber/iron wheels rolling on pavement and flags waving can also be simulated at obstacles courses.

Saddle up!





# Cross Timbers Equestrian Trails Association 2019 Obstacle Clinic

by Lisa Broughton, Treasurer CTETA



## People love obstacles on horseback!

They are fun and an excellent way to desensitize your horse! December of 2019 marked our 8th year of doing the equine obstacle clinic.

We have moved our clinic to Gainesville, Texas, to Elliot and Catie Holtzman's place. They do a fantastic job of getting the obstacles ready, so when we show up, we can get straight to work!

## How it all started

We found a need to host this event in December because it is typically cold, rainy, and muddy. We needed

something else to do when the trail system was unrideable.

What we found was a winter resource for riders by taking the trail riders off the trail and hosting an arena event.

We have a grand time and experience camaraderie with like-minded people who are trail stakeholders. Necessity is the mother of all inventions!

Our intentions with the clinic are to expand the trail riders' skill-set and do it in a safe arena where there is support from other equestrians.

Horses learn to trust their human partner and to maneuver, cross over, and or go under the unfamiliar objects. Such as the Octopus of pool

noodles tickling the flank or over the wooden bridge. Throughout the time spent at the clinic, you become a pilot and manage your trusty steed versus being a passenger.

Susan Bodenmiller is the annual coordinator of this event, and she can be found the night before baking pumpkin bread and planning our small gift exchange. We also have hot apple cider and Glogg to warm your cold hands.

**Join us next year — we would love to have you as our guest!**



**Online UTV and Chain Saw Safety Training for trail work!**

ROHVA Safety E-Course: UTV training <https://cbt.rohva.org>

Chain Saw Safety <https://www.stihlusa.com> <https://www.stihlusa.com/information/videos>

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incorporation of various physical therapy and strengthening devices including custom graduated controlled exercise plans, resistance band work, ground poles, core strengthening exercises and proprioceptive devices. At ESMR, the road to optimal performance and recovery is different

for each horse, so plans are built custom and dynamically changed as horses progress through the program. Available services also include aquatic therapy (underwater treadmill), deep tissue massage, heat therapy, cryotherapy (icing), class 4 high-intensity laser sessions and kinesiotape. On-site visits are always welcome, please call 940-465-3354 to schedule an appointment. Further information can be found at [www.eqsmr.com](http://www.eqsmr.com), on Facebook (Equine Sports Medicine, LLC) or Instagram (equinesportsmedicineesm).



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# LRRETA

## Branded Merchandise

LRRETA has paid to have our logo digitized. Supply your own clothing items and member Robyn Pucci will do embroidery for \$8 per item, or you can order shirts from the Norman Roscoe catalog available online or from Linda Moore.

Items can be brought to our meetings, held the first Tuesday of each month at Ernesto's in Pilot Point at 6:30.

Call Linda with questions (940) 206-9355.



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### Lake Ray Roberts Equestrian Trails Association (LRRETA) Patron Application Form

MEMBERSHIP and PATRONS - Membership in LRRETTA and Greenfest is complimentary. Supporters of the equestrian/hiking trail are PATRONS. Please support your trail by becoming a PATRON and attending the annual Greenfest events!

- Single Patron \$25 annual
- Household Patron (max 4 people) \$75 annual
- Lifetime single Patron \$250 (one time)
- Lifetime Household \$750 (one time)
- Business \$100\*

FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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*PLEASE MAIL CHECK WITH PATRON DUES OR DONATIONS TO:  
Eileen Stecik, 219 Whispering Trails, Argyle, TX 76226*

**State and Federal grants for our trails require 20% to 50% private funds as a "match."  
We need your dues and donations to access grant money!**

\*Business Membership includes a static ad each quarter in newsletter. Please provide a business card.

LRRETA does not share member information.

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**Please also consider joining our sister trail groups:**

**Join Texas Equestrian Trail Riders Association (TETRA) <http://tetra.memberlodge.org/page-201911>**

**Join Cross Timbers Equestrian Trails Association (CTETA) <http://www.cteta.org/Form-Membership-2011.pdf>**