

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
January 22, 2009

Contact: Deb Balliet, CEO
Equestrian Land Conservation Resource
(859) 455-8383 dballiet@elcr.org

**National Parks Service Awards Grant to Equestrian Land Conservation Resource
To Develop a National Equestrian Trails Organization**

The National Parks Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS RTCA) has awarded the Equestrian Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) a technical assistance grant to develop a national equestrian trails organization. The terms of the grant include assigning an NPS RTCA staff person to facilitate of process, identify issues and needs of trail riders nationwide, determine an effective organizational structure to represent horse trail users; and provide a contact point for land managers to communicate with trail riders. The determination of the needs and appropriate organizational structure will be developed by conducting a series of meetings with stakeholders in 2009.

An organizing meeting was held in 2008 at the National Trails Conference. In 2009, a series of in-person and conference call meetings are planned. The plans also call for an on-line bulletin board to post the meeting agendas and notes. The on-line forum will also provide an opportunity for trail users and trail organization representatives to share their comments. In addition to ELCR and NPS RTCA representatives, representatives from the following organizations participated in the process: American Horse Council, Back Country Horsemen of America, Southeast Equestrian Trails Conference, Ohio Valley Equestrian Trails Symposium, Pennsylvania Equine Council, US Forest Service, and the US Department of Transportation Recreational Trails Program.

The project goals are to increase to the number of trails open to horses, promote good stewardship of the trails, enhance communication with land managers, develop positive relationships with other trail users groups, and serve in an advocacy role on the above issues and other issues identified during the grant process.

If your organization would like to join our national efforts to save land and trails for horses, visit www.elcr.org, or call (859) 455-8383 for more information.

###

About Equestrian Land Conservation Resource (ELCR):

ELCR, the only national not-for-profit organization assisting in the conservation of land for horses and horse-related activity, serves as a clearinghouse and educational resource for land and horse owners on issues related to conserving land, preserving horse access on public and private lands, equine economic development, community land use planning and zoning and good land stewardship.