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**Back Country Horsemen of America Welcomes Parker Elizabeth
Riding Club as New Advocacy Partner
By Sarah Wynne Jackson**

Are you hearing about “No Horses” signs being posted at trailheads in other parts of your state? Do you want to do something to prevent those signs from appearing at your local public properties? That’s why many riding clubs become advocacy partners with Back Country Horsemen of America; they’ve seen BCHA’s success in preserving our right to ride horses on public lands and want to know how they can do that in their state.

Act Now

The Parker Elizabeth Riding Club, a nonprofit group located in the towns of Parker and Elizabeth, Colorado, is one example. They’ve seen horses nearly eliminated from many trails in and around nearby Boulder, simply because other trail users complained about trucks and trailers taking up too much space in trailhead parking lots and manure left on trails.

Although their area is more rural than Boulder, the group is concerned it’s just a matter of time and have resolved not to allow that to happen on their local trails. To that end, PERC has become an advocacy partner with Back Country Horsemen of America.

A Meeting Place for Horse People

Consisting of about 140 members, the Parker Elizabeth Riding Club was incorporated in 1985 and is dedicated to promoting equestrian activities and educational opportunities for its members and the communities of Douglas and Elbert Counties. Members participate in training clinics, trail rides, overnight camping trips and numerous social events. Monthly meetings include speakers who discuss relevant issues such as trailer safety, veterinary care, and feeding.

Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

The group shares Back Country Horsemen of America's vision of preserving trail riding opportunities in the midst of development. Douglas County has more front country trail systems and open space than any other county in the state of Colorado. These resources are used extensively by many different trail users and PERC members are determined to keep horses on those lands.

Members maintain and clean trails on public properties throughout Douglas and Elbert Counties. PERC also sends members out each year on National Trails Day. Being located in a rural area, many members are ranchers who are experienced with chain saws, hand saws, and other equipment necessary for trail work. Saddle mules haul equipment and material.

In their efforts to get the word out about our right to ride on public lands, PERC members usually pick a trail near the city that's heavily used so they can meet as many people as possible, while providing a service for a high number of trail users.

Getting Involved

In Back Country Horsemen of America's spirit of cooperation, the Parker Elizabeth Riding Club seeks out relationships with other local organizations, such as the Douglas County Sheriff's Office Mounted Patrol, the Douglas-Elbert County Horse Council, Roundup Riders of the Rockies, and the Colorado Horse Council.

PERC also works with federal, state, county and town governments, as well as private entities to protect and expand trail riding opportunities. They identify and create trail corridors, and encourage the granting of easements and rights-of-way for the purpose of horseback riding and other compatible, non-motorized recreation.

As the voice of horse users in their area, PERC members routinely participate in meetings concerning public lands. They recently attended meetings with Colorado State Parks and the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission brainstorming ideas on how to encourage young people to utilize the state's beautiful forests and open space.

Another Ally

Back Country Horsemen of America is pleased the Parker Elizabeth Riding Club is taking seriously the protection of our right to ride horses

on public lands. Every new advocacy partner adds to our voice as horse users across the country.

About Back Country Horsemen of America

BCHA is a non-profit corporation made up of state organizations, affiliates, and at large members. Their efforts have brought about positive changes in regards to the use of horses and stock in the wilderness and public lands.

If you want to know more about Back Country Horsemen of America or become a member, visit their website: www.backcountryhorse.com, call 888-893-5161, or write PO Box 1367, Graham, WA 98338-1367. The future of horse use on public lands is in our hands!

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