

January 2020

Several members voiced concerns and posed questions regarding AERC, USEF and FEI. We hope this letter will help in clearing things up and we can move forward and all enjoy riding together.

Over the last several years, the AERC board has made many attempts to inform USEF and FEI of AERC's thoughts regarding the equine injuries and fatalities that occur in Group 7. We have had very limited response from either organization. It is important to note that within FEI a catastrophic injury does not always mean broken or shattered bones or immediate death. A catastrophic injury could refer to colic, etc., or any reason an equine is put down.

The AERC board passed a motion on January 14, 2019 board conference call to suspend the endurance affiliate agreement between AERC and USEF effective December 1, 2019 (the first day of the 2020 ride season).

AERC has never co-sanctioned rides, each ride manager is independent and makes that decision. AERC was not the endurance affiliate of USEF during the 2019 ride season, however, an operating agreement consisted between USEF and AERC. This allowed the rides that had already been sanctioned for 2019 through USEF to move forward. It was expected that USEF would line up a new national endurance affiliate before the beginning of the 2020 season. The 2019 operating agreement also allowed time for the AERC-International Committee members to develop a continuation plan regarding international riding for the 2020 season. The operating agreement between USEF and AERC is not in force for the 2020 ride season. AERC was recently advised by USEF they are updating their application and review process for potential new affiliates.

Since the January board meeting in 2019, an election of directors and a vote on a member-proposed amendment pertaining to equine welfare took place. The amendment did not pass. AERC's bylaws, mission statement, and rules address equine welfare within the confines of AERC sanctioned rides and is an integral part of AERC as a whole.

AERC's ride managers have always been able to run their own rides and sanction with Ride and Tie, Competitive Trail, USEF, etc. AERC has no rule preventing this practice. AERC's official position on concurrently held endurance rides with any other endurance organization requires that all endurance entrants must be cross-entered in the AERC event and agree that AERC rules take precedence. If you do not desire to attend an AERC ride that will be co-hosted with FEI, contact ride management before the ride and inquire about the status and then make your decision.

USEF communicated to AERC during the week of January 13th that endurance rides recognized by FEI must also have a USEF license and are placed on the USEF/FEI calendar regardless of sanctioning by any other entities. The USEF licensing is for the FEI portion of the events only. At this time there are no events considered "unsanctioned" by USEF and FEI in the United States, however, this could change in the future. If such a change were to occur USEF would provide notice of such change in order to mitigate any negative impact on endurance athletes as a result of said changes.

Some AERC ride managers have chosen to sanction their 2020 rides with USEF so those interested can continue to pursue their desire to ride internationally. This is a personal choice. As stated above, if you do not want to attend one of these rides, contact ride management before making your plans so you are able to make an informed decision.

We hope this helps to clarify AERC's position with respect to USEF and FEI. As things move forward and additional information is imparted to the AERC board, you will be informed. For now, AERC will continue to sanction rides within each region and we are hopeful all of you will enjoy the 2020 ride year.

AERC Board of Directors