

## AERC BOD meeting –Teleconference Call – December 14, 2010

President Connie Caudill called the meeting of the AERC Board of Directors to order at 6:00 pm Pacific time.

Present at the meeting are: Connie Caudill, Laura Hayes, Jan Stevens, Michael Campbell, Monica Chapman, Sue Keith, Susan Schomburg, Patti Pizzo, Sandy Terp, Tom Noll, Gail Williams, Lisa Schneider, Susan Kasemeyer, Joe Schoech, Roger Taylor, Maryben StoverRandy Eiland, Susan Keil, Kim Fuess, Roberta Harms, Michael Maul, Forrest Tancer, Kevin Meyers, John Crandall and Patrick Perkins.

Members not present: John Parke. President Connie Caudill requested that the excusal for John Parke be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

Additional AERC Member present: Kathleen Henkel – Executive Director of AERC, Olin Balch, DVM – AERC Director At Large for 2011, Terry Woolley- Howe – AERC Director At Large for 2011, and Molly Krumlaw-Smith – AERC Director At Large for 2011.

President Connie Caudill asked if there were any additions to the current agenda. It was requested by Roger Taylor that a year-end financial report be included as well as discussion on the Michigan State Research Grant. Susie Schomburg requested that discussion be held on the dates of the AERC National Championship for 2011.

The minutes of the November 8, 2010 were then discussed with Kathleen Henkel requesting that the section concerning the Research Grant printing of the questionnaires have more definition concerning the cost of copying the questionnaires. She wanted to specify that the cost of the first two questionnaires would come out of the General Operations funds while the remainder would come out of the Research Grants Funds. The motion passed unanimously.

The AERC International Committee minutes were then approved by an unanimous vote of the BOD.

Kathleen Henkel then presented the BOD with the Membership Report for December 13, 2010

Membership as of 2/11/2009 – 2148  
12/13/2010 – 2219

Dues collected to date for 2011: \$96,949

Rider fees in 2009 - \$107,634  
Rider fees in 2010 - \$102,948

Sanction fees for 2011 to date \$7,910

New members as of 12/11/2009 - 73  
New members as of 12/13/2010 - 84

The BOD then was presented with the Research Committee Motion. The BOD had several questions concerning the request for Olin Balch, DVM – Chairperson of the AERC Research Committee and they included:

If the Grant from USEF doesn't come through will the study be completed? They hope to have a college or university student do it for a research project.

It was noted that funding approval needed to be by the Executive Director, not the Executive Director and the Treasurer (as the motion currently states). It was noted that the change requested here was approved by the AERC Research Committee through Olin Balch, DVM.

It was felt that we should not be spending any extra monies on additional studies – rather we should maybe consider subsidizing 100-mile rides that aren't as well attended.

It was pointed out that the money for this grant request comes from the Research Grant funds and not from the general funds.

The "100-mile Group" of AERC is the smallest group and it is felt that the study should be expanded to cover more of the AERC ridership.

It was pointed out that the most of the fatalities are from 100-mile horses.

Anything that we (AERC) can do to reduce horse mortality is good from the horse welfare and public relations standpoint.

The Research Summit indicated that this is what the people (AERC members) wanted.

Of the 57 fatalities over the past 10 years the percentage of mortalities is really low – finding the 'reason' is difficult due to the differences in riders, horses, and rides – very hard to compare one to another.

Completions vs non-completions are the real basis of the study rather than only looking at the mortality.

A great deal of money can be saved by having the Ride Managers handle giving out the questionnaires - thereby not requiring members of the AERC Research Committee to travel to rides to hand them out.

The projected deadline for completion of this research grant is Midyear/Winter of 2013.

The opinion from the AERC Office staff concerning the research grant included having the Ride Managers or appointee who plans on attending the ride hand out the questionnaires rather than requiring additional travel expenses of someone from the AERC Research Committee having to attend.

The vote was then taken by roll call which showed 18 for the motion and 6 against. The motion passed.

Susan Kasemeyer then brought before the BOD the Special Sanctioning requests. The rides are The Outlaw and The Virgin Pioneer – 9/16-18/11, a 55, 50 and 50, MT Region, Karen Chaton ride manager, Dave Nicholson head control judge. Jan Stevens, MT sanctioning director has given her approval for this ride and The Outback-Hallelujah Trail Pioneer – 5/5-7/11, a 50/25; 55/25; 50/25, with a 10 mile intro ride on each day, NW region, Linda Tribby and Dennis Tribby ride managers, Jennifer Strelkauskas head control judge. Gail Williams, NW sanctioning director has given her approval for this ride. The motion passed unanimously to approve both of these events.

Treasurer Roger Taylor then updated the BOD on the AERC Financials. He stated that all the financials are going to be finished and to the CPA prior to the end of the year so that the report can be presented to the BOD at the February meeting and then go into the March issue of *Endurance News*.

The dates of the AERC National Championship were then discussed. It was requested that Roger and Sue Taylor consider having the ride in the fall rather than the current August date. It was noted that in the SW Region that there are several other rides that take place in September/October/November and that the BLM has other conflicts at the Fort Staton location that would cause problems with the ride. Roger then asked the BOD for input on whether to have the 50 first or the 100 first. He requested that the members of the BOD contact him with their opinions on which to do first.

Roger Taylor then brought before the BOD the Michigan State Research Grant by Hal Schott. He indicated that the last activity of this grant was received in 2005. Kathleen Henkel is requesting that the BOD consider closing out the study. She indicated that this is about \$8,000 left. Kathleen received a request from Dr. Schott that the monies left over be split between AERC and payment of student wages from 2004-2006 (\$4,000 each), however, she received nothing to substantiate the request for wages. Kathleen felt that she couldn't approve such a payment on good faith. As the Treasurer, Roger Taylor, recommends that the BOD close out the account and put the remainder of the funds back into the Research Grants Fund. The AERC BOD voted unanimously to have Kathleen close out the account.

President Connie Caudill then reported to the BOD that Jan Stevens will be the AERC representative to the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Board of Directors for the next four years. Mike Tomlinson, DVM had been nominated and approved by the AERC BOD at the last meeting, however, he has relinquished that position, thereby moving Jan into that position. It was noted that as a spokesperson of AERC, Jan is representing the grassroots of endurance riding.

It was reported that during the 2010 American Trails National Symposium held in Chattanooga, Tennessee on November 14-17, 2010 that the Eastern and Western Weed Studies funded by AERC were brought up several times acknowledging that equines do not spread weeds through their feces.

The BOD was also informed that AERC Member Helen Koehler of Morrilton, Florida received the 2010 State Trail Worker Award from the American Trails National Symposium. Helen Koehler is an active Ride Manager, Trail Volunteer, and is Grants Program Liaison for the AERC Trails and Land Management Committee.

With there being no further business before the AERC BOD, Susie Schomburg made the motion to adjourn at 7:05 pm Pacific time with Laura Hayes seconding the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **AERC Board of Directors MOTION PROPOSAL**

<b>This Motion Proposal form is to be used in the development, presentation and approval process of submitting motions to the Board.</b>
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**Motion Name** Authorization/funding of a research questionnaire for self-selected 100-milers at 2011 and 2012 national competitions

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**Proposing Committee** Research Committee

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**Date of Motion** December 9, 2010

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**Classification of Motion Request** Authorizing/funding request for \$5,750

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**Proposed Motion (use exact wording)** Authorization/funding (\$5,750) for the distribution and collection of research questionnaires for self-selected 100-milers at 2011 and 2012 national competitions

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### **Background, analysis and benefit**

Last summer's Research Summit identified the absence of follow-up on pulls and treatments as a central AERC horse welfare issue. Although the AERC has systematically investigated fatalities at its endurance rides for nearly a decade, there is currently no systematic collection of information on endurance horse morbidity. The Research Summit recommended collecting morbidity information on 100 milers who statistically have the most fatalities. This relatively small group of riders is highly motivated and likely to be cooperative. In addition to collecting information on pulls and treatments, the same questions should be asked of successful horses immediately in front of and immediately behind pulls or treatments for statistical analysis in case-control studies.

A 16-page pilot questionnaire was distributed to 100 milers by ride management personnel at the Goethe Challenge, Florida, (December 19, 2009) with the request that the completed forms be mailed back to the Research Committee. One completed questionnaire was received. At Reno's 2010 annual Research Committee meeting, the questionnaire was extensively revised and shortened while still asking sufficiently detailed questions to identify significant risk factors. At the July 4<sup>th</sup> Ride Over the Rainbow (Merritt, BC, Canada) where the Research Committee's chair was the HCJ, the questionnaires were distributed to the seven 100-milers with a short "pep" talk. Two completed questionnaires were initially returned; with some coaxing, an additional 2 completed forms have been received.

This response to a low-key distribution of the questionnaire was disappointing and judged unlikely to yield adequate numbers of responses to produce scientifically reliable information. In hopes of increasing response at the Tevis Cup Ride and the '10 National Championship, a more enthusiastic approach was adopted by offering significant "carrots," an onsite Research Committee members to explain and distribute questionnaires, and an aggressive email follow-up for those slow at submitting their questionnaires. Also, a signature sheet is provided where each 100-miler who asks for a questionnaire signs their name as willing to participate.

At this time, the more enthusiastic RC approach has netted 89% (24 returned of 27 distributed) at Tevis (with reminders) and 71% (17 returned of 24 distributed) at the NC without reminder emails.

In 2011 and 2012, it is proposed that surveys be given to at least 20 riders at 100 mile rides; administered by RC member or designee; responses submitted to RC chair or designee. The intent is to administer surveys at 5 rides per year and collect 100 responses or more per year as circumstances allow. Surveys are to be prepared and mailed by National Office to Research Committee or Ride Manager representative who is attending the 100-mile ride. Progress Reports and Updates are planned for 2012 and 2013 Mid Year or Winter Meetings; Final Report Presented Mid Year 2013 or Winter 2013.

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**Budget effect** If the Research Committee's representative attends the ride for the sole or primary reason to distribute these questionnaires and answer questions, then that committee representative should be reimbursed for round-trip mileage (@ IRS mileage rate) to attend the ride to a maximum of \$500.

The breakdown of the project expenses is as follows:

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|--|----------------------------------|
| 1) Travel expenses for RC member/designee  | \$ 2,500 per annum x 2 = \$5,000 |
| 2) AERC memberships (5 per year x 2 years) | \$375 per annum x 2 = \$750      |

This is a 2-year project for data collection completing in 2012. This 2-year cost will not exceed \$5,750.

All travel expenses must be submitted by November 1, 2011 for RC committee travel in 2011 and likewise, by Nov 1, 2012 of calendar year 2012 for RC committee travel in 2012. Vehicle expenses are reimbursed at the approved IRS rates. If any expenses are not submitted by these cut off dates, late expenses will not be reimbursed. These expenses are not to include cost of meals, only cost of travel and lodging.

Reimbursements require written approval by two of these three entities: the ED, the chair of the RC, or the AERC treasurer. Approval may be given by e-mail. Travel expenses greater than \$500 for any RC member or designee's participation must be approved prior to the event by the same two-signature authority.

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**Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization** Better understanding of morbidity/mortality risk factors in 100-mile horses will improve endurance horse management in all competing endurance horses (LDs to 100 milers). Ultimately, better endurance horse management will reduce the frequency/severity of injury in endurance-horse competitions and improve overall horse welfare in this sport.

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**Impact on AERC Office** (Work load, budget) AERC office will prepare, collate, staple, and mail the questionnaires with their stamped, preaddressed return envelopes to the designated person at the ride. This paper work will be paid by the general fund.

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**Committees consulted and/or affected** Research Committee has been consulted.

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**Implementation plan** 2011 and 2012 is planned for the distribution and collection of 100-mile questionnaires.

The 2011 Research Proposal from the United States Equestrian Federation, Inc is attached. That sister organization is soliciting proposals of "special concern to performance and show horses" with funding up to \$25,000. Travel money is specifically prohibited, but funds are available for other expenses. Please read the proposal. The submission deadline is January 31, 2011, less than 2 months away.

While the Research Committee, as such, is not eligible to apply for this grant, specific members of that committee with positions at academic institutions would be eligible to apply in their institutional roles. I have spoken to no members of the RC about this possibility. I have no idea if anyone (or a group of people) will be interested. As chair of that committee, I need a positive commitment on this project that has been discussed almost to death but is seemingly universally regarded as the best bang for the dollar to get the valuable information to address important welfare issues in this sport. However, I am unwilling to send out the USEF proposal to all the Research Committee members and suggest an innovative collaboration between the AERC and USEF, until the AERC formally steps up to the plate and commits funding.

While I have no particular insight information about how the USEF awards its research grant, I would like to think that a

USEF collaboration with the AERC (itself offering both personnel and limited funding) would be positively regarded as mutually beneficial for both organizations to reduce morbidity and mortality in endurance riding.

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**Supporting materials.** Research Summit conclusions were verbally presented at the 2009 mid-year meeting, and a formal summary was published in the 2010 October EN.

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**Supporting approvals** None has been requested.

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