

Board of Directors Conference Call Meeting Minutes, February 10, 2025

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 8:01 p.m. EST.

Board members present were Nick Kohut DVM, Olin Balch DVM, Bruce Burton, Connie Caudill, Diane Connolly, Marci Cunningham, Maureen Fehrs DVM, Susan Garlinghouse, DVM, Dawn Hilliard, Mollie-Krumlaw Smith, Bob Marshall DVM, Mike Maul, Stephanie Palmer-DuRoss, Maribel Paulsen, Naomi Preston, Melissa Ribley DVM, Regina Rose, Tami Rougeau, Eric Rueter, Khristin Seymore-Norsworthy, Jan Stevens, Vance Stine, and Laurie Underwood. Executive Director Kathleen Henkel, AERC-I Committee Chair Tom Rajala, Elizabeth Farina and Lara Worden were also on the call.

Connie Caudill made a motion to accept the agenda which was seconded by Susan Garlinghouse DVM. Motion passed.

Susan Garlinghouse DVM made a motion for the approval of the January 13, 2025, Board meeting minutes which was seconded by Jan Stevens. Motion passed with one abstention.

Susan Garlinghouse DVM made a motion which was seconded by Vance Stine to excuse John Parke due to an employment conflict and Bridget Helms due to an equine emergency. Motion passed.

Susan Kasemeyer was absent.

Kathleen Henkel presented the statistical report:

Membership as of 02/07/24: 2,736	02/07/25: 2,522
Sanction fees as of 02/04/24: \$12,080	02/04/25: \$13,710
Rider fees as of 02/04/24: \$1,801	02/04/25: \$2,532
New members as of 02/07/24: 138	02/07/25: 120
Ride Starts – Jan/Feb 2024: 680	Jan/Feb 2025: 400

Tom Rajala, AERC-International committee chair, updated the Board on the status of AERC/FEI co-sanctioned rides.

Junior and Young Rider Committee – Pony Club

Elizabeth Farina contacted Pony Club and has been working with them on a possible awards recognition program for Pony Club members who participate in AERC rides. Pony Club has discipline specific programs, such as dressage and fox hunting. Pony Club is interested in partnering with AERC if AERC administers the program. The Committee is adapting the current Pony Club program for endurance and is seeking input from the Board. After some discussion, the Committee will prepare and submit a motion to be heard at the March meeting.

Cache Creek Ridge Ride Trail Restoration Project

Dawn Hilliard presented the motion on behalf of the Trails and Land Management Committee.

Proposed Motion: The Trails and Land Management Committee moves that AERC, using designated Trails Grants, assist in funding a portion of the Cache Creek Ridge Ride Trail Restoration project taking place on BLM land managed by the Ukiah Field Office (Ukiah, CA). Funds requested: Up to \$5,000.

This request is coming from the Stalley family, who founded the Cache Creek Ridge Ride in 2009. This will be the 16th year of the ride and the family works closely with BLM land managers. There are two areas of concern which will be addressed by this project. The first is a section of trail which has been overrun with saw grass, resulting in loss of a distinct trail. Multiple parallel trails have been created as users attempted to navigate the long grass and many of these are badly rutted. A trail machine will be used to level and widen the trail while maintaining a grass buffer between the trail and the nearby creek bank. An additional section of trail which has washed out over the years will also be leveled and stabilized.

Motion Name: Cache Creek Ridge Ride Trail Restoration project

Proposing Committee: Trails and Land Management

Date of Motion: February 10, 2025

Classification of Motion Request: New

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Background, analysis and benefit: This request is coming from the Stalley family, who founded the Cache Creek Ridge Ride in 2009. This will be the 16th year of the ride and the family works closely with BLM land managers. There are two areas of concern which will be addressed by this project. The first is a section of trail which has been overrun with saw grass, resulting in loss of a distinct trail. Multiple parallel trails have been created as users attempted to navigate the long grass and many of these are badly rutted. A trail machine will be used to level and widen the trail while maintaining a grass buffer between the trail and the nearby creek bank. An additional section of trail which has washed out over the years will also be leveled and stabilized.

This project will include work by an AERC Trailmaster.

The Cache Creek Ride will provide materials with an estimated cost of \$6200. This project received a grant from the Ride & Tie Organization for \$2500. Overall expected project cost is approximately \$13,700.

Budget effect/impact: Funds from dedicated Trails Grant fund.

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization: This trail system hosts a long-standing AERC ride and many AERC members train on this trail system. The Stalley family has been involved in many trail improvement projects over the years, including a 2014 project which received an AERC grant. The proposed project will be good publicity for AERC as many other user groups enjoy this trail system.

Impact on AERC Office: Minimal staff time.

Implementation plan: Work to begin ASAP.

Supporting approvals: Trails and Land Management Committee

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Motion from committee passed unanimously.

Motion from the National Championship Regarding Change of Venue for the 2025 National Championship Ride

Connie Caudill led a discussion concerning the 2025 AERC National Championship ride. The ride that was to be held at the Biltmore Estate was canceled due to damage by Hurricane Helene. The Committee had met to discuss the best path forward for the 2025 ride. After much consideration, the committee came to the reluctant conclusion that it would recommend that the 2025 National Championship ride be cancelled. While some ride managers showed interest in hosting it this year, the Committee determined it was unfair to ride managers unaware of the opportunity, and that the short timeframe would not allow sufficient preparation for a true National Championship ride.

The motion which was presented to the Board was: The National Championship Committee recommends that the 2025 National Championship ride be cancelled based on the inability of all ride managers to submit a bid to hold the ride and the inability of riders to plan to attend the ride.

After discussion by the Board, the motion, which was from committee, passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mollie Krumlaw-Smith at 8:39 p.m. to enter into executive session, to discuss legal fees, which was seconded by Jan Stevens. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Connie Caudill at 8:49 p.m. to exit Executive Session, which was seconded by Tami Rougeau. The motion passed.

Tami Rougeau made a motion to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. Motion was seconded by Khristin Seymore-Norsworthy. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill, Secretary