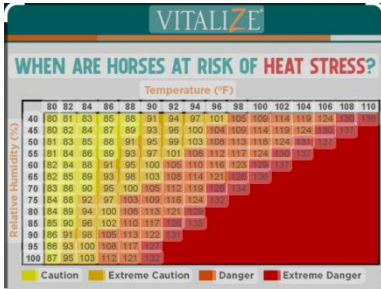




Texas Trail Challenge Club Newsletter

July/August 2024

BEAT THE SUMMER HEAT!



As the heat of summer sets in, it becomes a little hard to get excited about riding. Early morning or late evening rides and less strenuous workouts become the rule for horse and human. Remember that it is not just the temperature but the added humidity that can create a dangerous situation. The age and condition of the horse (and rider) and previous heat episodes might also be a factor. Be especially careful when trailering; a traffic jam can allow the heat in your trailer to build quickly. Provide extra water and electrolytes for yourself and your horse and take breaks as needed. However, it is important to stay active during the summer, so you and your horse remain acclimated to the heat.

TRAIN Explore new ways to connect with your horse. Consider adding water features to your obstacle course such as a sprinkler or a child’s wading pool. A short bareback ride or wading and swimming in a lake can be a great way to cool off. Try something new like writing your horse’s name with your trail app or teaching your horse a few tricks (laughter is sometimes the best medicine). Think about your last competition and practice skills you need to perfect. Read books and magazines and study videos on the internet to connect with favorite trainers. Exercise yourself and your horse as much as possible. Just remember that water can sometimes make things slippery so be careful.

GET CREATIVE Maybe a few of these ideas will lead to inspiration. Consider embellishing a halter, making a new hatband or hell hat, displaying your ribbons and awards, creating a photobook, or framing some of your favorite pictures. Create a new favorite photo by trying different tack, backgrounds, lighting, angles, or maybe an action shot. Although most cameras have a zoom feature it is better to move closer to the horse if possible. Design an equine costume so you will be ready for the October costume contest. You might also want to photograph your horse, saddle, and trailer for security purposes and create an emergency ID card to put in a phone pocket. Categorize, backup, and delete old photos on your phone

CLEAN AND ORGANIZE Pick a rainy day to clean out the tack room. It’s time to either use it or lose it! Clean it, mend it, store like items together, and donate items no longer needed, perhaps to the TTCC raffle or a rescue organization. Dispose of items that are not usable. Wash your winter blankets on a sunny day and hang them in the shade, they will dry quickly in the summer heat. Maybe new hooks, shelves, or boxes will help keep your tack room clean and organized. Straighten your tack area in your trailer as well so you will be ready to haul to

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 1st Registration opens
Wild West Wrangle
October 5 & 6

Fall Clinic, October 25

Monster Mash
October 26 & 27

August 1st Registration opens
Salute the Troops
November 9 & 10



Haley Altomare

fall events. Clean and oil your tack, examining the leather, Chicago screws, metal curb chains, bits, girths, helmets, spurs, halters, and saddlebags. Service your trailer, tires, and hitch as well as your tow vehicle. Update your LQ by changing bedding, hanging pictures, or adding a new rug or pillow.

MEDICAL Review your first aid kit carefully, dispose of expired drugs, and write a list of things to add back to your kit. Learn to monitor your horse's condition by measuring pulse, respiration, temperature, listening for gut sounds, checking gums and pinching skin on the neck for capillary refill, keep notes so that you have a record of what is normal for your horse. Make sure shots and Coggins are up to date.



Jean Wilson

TAKE SOME TIME OFF It's summer after all, take a break, you and your horse will both benefit. A little rest and recreation will leave you rejuvenated and ready to go back to work.

DREAM Research new trails and camping spots to explore with your horse. Plan a camping trip or to attend a clinic with your riding buddies. The hot weather won't last forever!

UPDATE ON THE TTCC REGISTRATION AND REFUND PROPOSAL

June 11, 2024

Recently there has been some discussion on the TTCC Facebook page concerning the new ride registration and refund policy. Since I am not a Facebook user someone had to call my attention to the discussion. I am responding so all club members can participate. There were many things discussed but I want to respond to the following: Registration Policy, Refund Policy, Attendance, Communication, and Centralized Payments.

In our previous email (See below) explaining the proposed changes we were clear that there are two parts to the process, Registration and Refund.

1. **REGISTRATION:** Changes to registration went into effect on the first of June. The website now allows 100 members to make a reservation, and members must pay the \$107.00 ride fee within 30 days to register and reserve their place on the ride. As of June 10th, 75 people have reserved online and 35 have paid for Hog Wild. Lost Concho has 54 reserved and 35 paid. There is still space for many more people to make a reservation. The new policy seems to have fixed, or at least greatly improved, the problem of members not being able to reserve on the website.

2. **REFUND POLICY:** In our email we were clear that the proposed change to the refund policy would not go into effect until the 2025 ride season and that we wanted feedback from members on what they thought would be the best solution. I want to thank the many people who emailed us with their thoughts. Please keep them coming. Again, there is **NO CHANGE** to the refund policy for ride year 2024.

3. **ATTENDANCE:** In our email we stated that our rides "often go 30% to 50% unfilled." It was suggested that this is an exaggeration. The actual percentage is 42%. (331 unused slots / 780 total slots.). Here is a summary of 2024 ride attendance.

<u>RIDE</u>	<u>2024</u> <u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>UNUSED</u> <u>SLOTS</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
Rocky Road Sat	38	27	58	-20
Rocky Road Sun	40	25	62	-22
High Tail It Sat	46	19	66	-20
High Tail It Sun	45	20	54	-9
Smiley Sat	29	36	57	-21
Smiley Sun	31	34	50	-19
Cat Springs Sat	42	23	45	-4

Cat Springs Sun	37	28	47	-10
Equifest CANCELLED				
Cactus Sat	32	33	45	-13
Cactus Sun	29	36	40	-11
Reveille Sat	55	10	New Ride	
Reveille Sun	25	40	New Ride	

4: COMMUNICATION: It has also been implied that the board has not consulted all Ride Managers concerning the policy changes. This may be true, as I have not spoken with everyone. I have spoken with the following 2024 Ride Managers who have all agreed that there is a problem, and this proposal is a step in the right direction. Kate Hollar, Nancy Williams, Teresa Corgill, Karen Pantel, Suzie Tielke, Nancy Fenimore, Mary Ann Brandon, Connie Standridge, Tiffany Janke, Alexandra McStay, Melanie Vague, LeeAnn Boore, Jim Miller, Leah Lynch, Greg Dial, and Kris Maley.

5. CENTRALIZED PAYMENTS: It has been suggested that we consider using a program like Evite to allow people to register and pay for our rides. There are some potential issues to consider in using a program that sends all payments to the club Treasurer. TTCC is set up as a Club, with our ride managers as independent contractors who each handle their own expenses. We are not a “non-profit.” We consequently have a small budget which makes tax filing simple. If we centralized income our tax status could change, and we would probably need to make the Treasurer a paid position because of the increased workload. I am NOT an accountant (and pay one to do my own taxes), so I am relying on others for this answer. Currently the BOD thinks the current system is our best option.

Finally, the reason for these proposed changes is not only to help our Ride Managers plan more accurately for the number of riders they will actually have on their rides, but also to assist more members to take advantage of our rides. TTCC is an amazing organization! We all learn, develop better relationships with our equine partners, and enjoy riding across Texas. Your Board of Directors, along with the Ride Managers, Judges, Secretaries, and Volunteers are all working hard to provide the best riding experience possible.

Bill Phillips
 Interim TTCC President
 bill.phillips02@gmail.com

Emailed to TTCC members on May 24th

TTCC REGISTRATION CHANGES (Changes to Rules 2.5 and 2.6)

Over the past year the Board of Directors has received many complaints concerning our ride registration process. The BOD has identified some problems and wishes to make changes to the process in an attempt at improvement. The three problems we hope to address are the following.

First: Members have complained about the difficulty of logging onto the TTCC website when rides open for registration on the first of the month. The number of people attempting to access the website overwhelms the system and they cannot log on. As a hopeful solution, the number of available registration spots will increase to 100 from 65. (Please understand that our rides are still limited to 65 riders, or the number each Ride Manager sets).

Second: The first issue above leads to frustration from those individuals who had trouble logging on, and then come to find out they were not among the first 65 to register and had to be added to the waitlist. By increasing the number of registrable spots to 100, our hope is that more members are able to register right away and reduce the need for a waitlist.

Third: Ride Managers routinely report that shortly after their ride opens for registration, it is at full capacity with 65 riders and additional registrants added to the waitlist. When the ride weekend actually arrives however, over half of the registered riders have cancelled. This is a hardship for a Ride Manager who has planned for 60+ riders and only 30 pay. Ride Managers are losing money on catering, prizes, and other expenses.

The bottom line: Ride Managers must make financial commitments at least 30-45 days in advance of the ride, but our current policy allows riders to hold a reservation without paying until 30 days before the ride. And the current refund rule is that a rider will receive a full refund 14 days (2 weeks) before the ride; a 50% refund 7 days before, and no refund if cancelling less than 7 days before. Ride Managers and Secretaries then scramble to try and fill rides at the last minute. The reality is that our rides often go 30% to 50% unfilled and Ride Managers lose money. This is an unsustainable situation. We want to get more riders on the trail and encourage our Ride Managers for all their hard work.

The BOD does not normally change its rules in the middle of a ride year. However, to get more riders on our rides and to encourage Ride Managers to host rides for 2025, the Board of Directors (BOD) have decided to implement a “trial” period to see what works and doesn’t work for possible permanent changes to the rules that will take effect next year.

So, what will change during the trial period? The current ride fees for adults/juniors/buddy riders will remain the same, but the Ride Manager must receive the ride fee within the first 30 days of the ride opening up for registration. A rider has a reservation with both registration and payment. If the ride fee is not received by the Ride Manager within the first 30 days, the rider is dropped from the active registration list and added to the waitlist.

The Refund Policy changes under consideration for 2025 are:

- Full refund **60 days** before the ride
- 50% refund **45 days** before the ride.
- No refund if cancelling less than **45 days** before.
- If a Ride Manager cancels a ride a full refund.

This “Trial Period” will go into effect with registrations on June 1st

(The Hog Wild and Lost Concho rides)

People are frustrated by not getting onto our rides while at the same time half our ride slots often go empty! Ride Managers are losing money and without them hosting rides, our club members would not have so many wonderful places to experience, would not get valuable insight from our judges, and would miss out on all the fun! We need to fix this problem.

We welcome your feedback.

Bill Phillips – President, Greg Dial - Judges Director, Karen Pantel - Ride Director
Tiffany Janke – Treasurer, Mary Ann Brandon - Membership Director

Getting to know you!



*Haley riding at South Texas
Shootout*

Haley Altomare was raised in the Corsicana area. Although her dad was a banker, they had farmland, cattle, and horses, and Haley and her brother grew up riding horses and working cattle. Her dad enjoyed buying and selling horses, as well as guns and trucks, and she said she learned at an early age how to "not get killed on a not so well-trained horse." She earned extra money at neighboring roundups before heading to Southwest Texas State University where she graduated in 1992. Then she started her career as a hospital information systems project manager; Y2K was a really big project at that time. From 2000-2006 Haley worked as a mortgage banker and has lived in Dallas, but currently resides in the San Antonio area. Haley has three sons Austin, Carson, and Logan. Haley and her husband Nick have been married for 21 years.

Jake, her paint, was purchased from her aunt, who ranches in Mineral Wells. Haley also has Chymero, an Arabian, a rescued Appaloosa named Rio, and an older retired rescue. Since being introduced to TTCC by friends three years ago, Haley has enjoyed slowing down and fine tuning her skills with obstacle challenges. She earned her Iron Rider award in 2023. Her other hobbies include gardening and woodworking.



*Haley wrapping leg at
Hightail It*



Dyana Geissinger on Filson

My name is Dyana Geissinger, I'm 43 and my journey started with horses when I was 8 years old. I was born and raised in Austin, Texas, to parents that were not horsey. My family had no connections with farm life or any equine. They didn't sign me up for horse camp or find a nearby barn for me to take lessons. I fell in love with horses by getting off the school bus at the wrong stop, in the wrong neighborhood and through my tears I heard horses and followed the sounds to a heavenly place called West Bridge Stables. The trainer there helped me call my mom to be picked up and by the time she arrived I was riding my first horse. After months of begging, learning how to manipulate and bribe, I convinced my parents to allow me to take one lesson a month, which turned into 3 lessons a week and after about a dozen or more hunter jumper shows I was leasing my first horse. It was official, I had been bitten by the "horse bug". I kept giving up other after school extracurricular activities in order to have more time at the barn. It didn't matter if I was riding or mucking stalls, I just wanted to be around horses indefinitely. I took lessons in every discipline this stable had to offer, from dressage to jumpers, I loved it all. We moved to the country in Dripping Springs and in an effort to fit into the new high school, I started barrel racing with my appendix hunter jumper horse and lo and behold, we won a few buckles and saddles.

I took some years off when in college and then again when having my son, but for most of my life I have had a horse. Now my son is thirteen and lucky for me, he and my husband both enjoy trail riding. This makes my heart beat with so much joy, to be outdoors with my family enjoying the horses together.

We spend half the year in Austin, Texas, and the other in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. We like all breeds of horses, currently we have a quarter horse, a Rocky Mountain gaited horse and we are learning a great deal with our first mule. My Rocky Mountain is young, I picked him up when he was just a yearling. Mr. Jimmy Brown helped me bring him along and then recommended Texas Trail Challenge Club. Now at almost six years old, Filson is a dream come true and is the one I've been riding during TTCC trail challenges. In the two trail challenges I have competed in, I have learned to think differently. Instead of just getting through the obstacle and finishing the task I now take more time to check in with my horse, making sure I'm listening more to him and providing suitable options. TTCC has provided us with opportunities to be seen in a different way, looking at situations with lots of variables. I'll admit, at first I didn't like that I didn't know what the judges were going to critique us on, but now I enjoy reading the feedback they provide because it's a different perspective that I get to think about and work on. I look forward to more trail challenges! Thank you for your support and encouragement.

Kindly,
Dyana Geissinger



Spotlight on Sponsors

Texas Trail Challenge Club welcomes several new sponsors for 2024. Our sponsors are so important and their contributions make a huge difference! Thank you so much for your support. New Sponsors this year include:

Bugs Unlimited, Donnie Eaton and Carin Bauer, Belton
Pests, termites, mosquitoes, and weed control
Cash Corral, Becky and Barney Cash, Boerne
Pet boarding, animal care, and handyman services
Crazy 8 Ranch, Susie and Robert Jernigan, Goldsboro
Proud supporters of TTCC
Knight's Cottage, Barbara Knight, Abilene
Cottage, corral, arena, trails, and hook-up
Pulse-May-Tion, Cheryl May, Ovalo
Certified PEMF technician
Preferred Painting, Candice and Geoff Smith, Dripping Springs
Interior and exterior painting, residential and commercial
T Squared Financial Solutions, Shirley and Dan Tarrillion, Austin
Bookkeeping, payroll, and sales tax reporting

Returning Sponsors include:

Compass Conversions, Temple
Custom LQ trailer conversions, maintenance, and repair
The Gentle Rein, Greg Dial, Blanco
Horse training, rider education, and horse shows
Iron Rock Ranch, Mary Ann Brandon, Tyler
East Texas horse stop over with pens, pasture, and hookups
Jim Miller and Kim Gehring, Harker Heights
Proud supporters of TTCC
Our Friends Campground, Leah and Tom Lynch, Lampasas
Big rig friendly camp with dog park, showers, washers and dryers by the day, week, or month

Scott Butcher Photography, Weatherford
 Custom photography
 Slice of Heaven Farms, LeeAnn Boore, Harker Heights
 Goat milk products, boarding, and overnight hookups
 Warren Equine Sports Medicine, Drs. David and Carol Warren, Goliad
 Veterinary services including chiropractic, acupuncture, and dental

Thank you so much for being a sponsor of Texas Trail Challenge Club. Your support is sincerely appreciated!

Ride Recap - Cactus Two Step

What a wonderful (and hot) Cactus Two Step for judges and riders alike. We beat the heat with an early ride out which kept everyone happy. Riders executed obstacles from simple to complex with amazing talent! Fun was had with the "Robin Hood Returns" bow and arrow challenge, doing a serpentine maneuver in the river and jousting like Medieval Knights. Watching such competent riders complete turns on haunches/fore and beautiful side passes was a joy. Saturdays learning moment was about Search and Rescue followed by delicious local barbecue for all. The ride managers put together an amazing ride in the scenic San Angelo State Park. A heartfelt thank you to all who attended, volunteered, secretaried and judged.



*Riders at San Angelo State Park
 Photo by Cindy Middleton*

Mel Neal, Senior Judge



Kelly Beard - Photo by Scott Butcher



Gretchen Fuchs - Photo by Cindy Middleton



Keenia Cowey - 2023 Ride

Ride Recap - Camp Reveille



Camp Reveille on Sunday - photo by Scott Butcher

First time ride managers Melanie Vague and Alex McStay did a great job with their summer camp theme at Reveille Peak Ranch in Burnet, Texas. Kate Love Hollar was Senior "Camp Counselor" assisted by Greg Dial, Nancy Fenimore, Jerilyn Stanka, Kelly Beard, and Doanna Daniel. Laurie Ohlerking was a surprise judge all the way from North Carolina. Tiffany Janke and Kit Shadrock were ride secretaries assisted by Kim Gehring. This new ride was very popular with about 56 riders on Saturday, including several first-time

competitors, and 21 in the Adult Tenderfoot division. Arts & crafts, S'mores, grilled kabobs, and swimming in the lake continued the camp theme. The weekend started off with a bang literally with lightning, thunder, and rain on Friday night, but the timing was perfect because everyone was inside at the ride meeting. Maps were

reviewed by flashlight when the power went off! The trails were over granite outcroppings with beautiful wildflowers, and sandy stretches of tree lined paths. Although the weather was humid, there were nice breezes with overcast skies, A perfect ending to the Spring ride season!



First time competitor Jackie Bonner at "Buzzard Rock"



Leah Lynch and Stella among the wildflowers - photo by Scott Butcher



Karen Pantel on Windy at Camp Reveille – photo by Scott Butcher

Get ready for the costume contest at Monster Mash on October 26 & 27!



Artist Katherine Mason and her painted pony



Kay Prince pinning the tail on Geronimo



Winnie the Pooh, Tigger, and Eeyore - by Connie Standridge and Krystal Bunch



Cheryl Sofaly and her pinata, Cass.



Dorothy and the Cowardly Lion - Jean Wilson



Liz Wimberly as Teddy Roosevelt



Prince Bill Phillips with Queen Betty



Teresa Corgill "Bee" Happy



Elena Covington riding her "Lion"



Jean Wilson going Hawaiian

April 13, 2024 General Meeting Summary

Meeting called by Bill Phillips – TTCC Interim President

Attendees - Karen Pantel; Tiffany Janke; Bill Phillips; Greg Dial; Mary Ann Brandon and attending members at the Smiley Ride held in Berclair, TX

Bill Phillips –

- Bill made the announcement that he would remain Interim President for the remainder of 2024, and an election will be held in the Fall for a replacement.
- He also brought up the issue of riders cancelling from rides at the last minute, which is a hardship on the Ride Managers to be able to cover costs, and doesn't allow enough time for riders on the wait list to make plans to attend. There was a lot of discussion from the attending members, and the consensus was for a change to be made to the current rule that outlines the cancellation time frame.

Greg Dial:

- Greg mentioned the Spring Youth and Rider Clinics held in March were a great success. He thanked all that were involved.
- Greg brought up the subject of what is required of a judge to remain in good status. For example, Laurie

Ohlerking, who is still an active member, will be a judge for the Camp Reville ride in June. Even though Laurie has moved out of state and isn't seen participating as a regular judge, Laurie is aware of the current judge's skills required because Greg has personally reviewed the requirements with Laurie.

Karen Pantel:

- Mentioned that the necessary forms to set up rides for 2025 will be sent out to all current Ride Managers at the end of April.

Tiffany Janke:

- Provide to all attending members a breakdown of the club's bank records so that members can see the expenses and accounts receivable.

Mary Ann Brandon:

- Mary Ann presented a large, sturdy map that pinpoints locations of all TTCC members. So interesting to see the many different zip codes of our members!
- Mary Ann also mentioned that she would like to do a random drawing from our membership list, and then publicize a "Member Highlight" in the TTCC newsletter. The chosen member would have to grant permission for such publication and provide a little information about himself/herself.
- In addition, Mary Ann spoke about a company she has experience with who makes rider number holders for the saddle. More information about this item will be sent out at a later date.

May 13, 2024 BOD Meeting Summary

Bill Phillips –

- Bill brought up the idea of increasing the allowed number of registrants to 100 to help with the issue of members not being to sign up the day a ride opens up for registration. As far as the TTCC website is concerned, Tiffany said it is easy to change the allowed amount to a max of 100.
- Discussion was also had about implementing a "trial" period effective June 1, 2024 that will change the current cancellation rules. Since the BOD doesn't make it a normal practice to change "rules" during mid-year, the idea to adjust the cancellation rules will be presented to members for possible rule change in 2025.
- A copy of the email concerning the change in the registration process, that will be sent to all members, will eventually be attached to these minutes for permanent record.

Greg Dial:

- Greg had nothing to report.

Karen Pantel:

- Mentioned that 2025 ride forms were sent out to all current Ride Managers and she will need them back by June 1st.

Tiffany Janke:

- Tiffany reported that the remaining insurance premium has been paid and the fee for website use still has to be paid.

Mary Ann Brandon:

- Current count of paid members is 154.
- Mary Ann put the names of all paid members in the drawing, and pulled out 2 names to consider for the "Member highlight" that will be part of the TTCC Newsletter. Mary Ann plans to separate the long-standing members from new members and draw a name from each pool of names.



Becky Cash and grandson Jaxson Monroe will begin handling the raffle in the fall. Tickets for raffle items will still be \$2 or 6 tickets for \$10. If you have any items to donate to the raffle please contact Becky. All money raised goes directly to the club. Thank you Laura McLean for handling the raffle for the past year and a half.

DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NEWSLETTER IS **AUGUST 1st!**