

COMMUNITY
EQUESTRIAN



RESOURCES FOR YOU

Community Equestrian Quarterly Update: March 2024

Coming Into Focus

The first quarter of 2024 continues to build the vision, the network, strengthen alliances, and generate new ideas to preserve and protect our horse community.



Karen Hersh, State Representative Lindsey Daughterty, and Michele Hovet meet at the capitol to launch Equestrian Legacy Corridors

About a year ago the announcement was made that yet another boarding facility in Jefferson County, this time the iconic and historic Table Mountain Ranch, had sold to developers. The time horizon would be approximately two years until demolition to make way for approximately 90 new homes on the site, home to nearly 100 horses and venue for

many shows, training clinics, and summer camps. This barn was the latest in a string of local barns to fall to similar fate, and it spurred local equestrians into action. Community Equestrian was born out of this small group of horse people looking at the realities at work forcing a shrinking of the equestrian community on the Front Range.

Since then, Community Equestrian, led by co-founders Karen Hersh and Michele Hovet, along with a half dozen or so other key people, have worked steadily to sound the alarm, raise awareness, engage with stakeholders, unite the horse community, shape policy and development, and find creative solutions to protect and preserve our horse industry and way of life here on the Front Range. We are optimistic about the future. Yes, we will lose more ground, but there is enough ground to save to anchor our horse community here. By building the foundation of support within and outside of the horse community we believe we can preserve our equestrian life here for future generations and serve as a model for other communities who will inevitably confront the same fate.

This newsletter is the first of four quarterly newsletters we plan to issue summarizing our progress as we push forward. We hope you will support us by subscribing to our mailing list and following us on Facebook. To subscribe to our email list please sign up on our website at www.communityequestrian.org.

THIS QUARTER'S HIGHLIGHTS



Equestrian Legacy Corridors

Equestrian Legacy Corridors is aimed at anchoring the equestrian industry and community in the suburban environment through investment in target properties. We propose to introduce a bill to fund a study to evaluate the costs and benefits of preserving equestrian venues and undeveloped land along strategic corridors. Such corridors will complement recreational zones and open space buffers to preserve a balance of lifestyle serving all residents in and out of the horse community. Such innovative investment and planning will provide access to the equestrian experience for a growing and diversifying population and preserve our connection to our rural and western heritage.

- Timeline 2024: 1st quarter stakeholder meetings and input; 2nd quarter drafting bill to fund a study; 3rd quarter refining the bill and gathering support; 4th quarter final preparations for taking the bill to session in January 2025.
- Timeline 2025: complete the study, develop plan for implementation
- Update 1st Quarter:
 - Met with Rep. Lindsey Daugherty, received support and guidance to proceed.
 - Completed stakeholder meetings with lobbyists for Colorado home builders and county governments; department of agriculture pending.
 - Developing a working map bringing key target properties into focus.
 - Raising awareness and support.
 - Gathering data on the economic and social issues involved.

Jefferson County

It is critical to raise the equestrian voice with respect to land use and zoning, especially right now since Jefferson County is set to complete their 3-year overhaul of the county's comprehensive master plan that will guide such decisions into the future for years to come. The project is called Together Jeffco and Community Equestrian has been actively involved in and promoting awareness and engagement in the process.

Michele Hovet was voted in as newest board member on Jefferson County Horse Council in December and has been leading efforts with the county along with key team mates at the JCHC. Community Equestrian wholly supports the JCHC and their extensive agenda expanding to serve the horse community in Jefferson County. We collaborate on projects and will continue to serve as a resource to the JCHC to extend their reach beyond the county.

On March 7, Karen spoke during the public comment portion of the Jefferson County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee meeting emphasizing the importance of the equestrian community economically and socially, urging the group to shape policy to support the community.

Arvada

The city of Arvada is particularly well endowed with equestrian centers, equestrian private residences, parks and trails, and open spaces with the potential for serving the horse community. Building a strong relationship with Arvada key policy makers is critical to the horse community. First quarter highlights focused on Arvada include:

- In February Karen and Michele met with city councilman Bob Fifer and had a very positive and enlightening exchange of ideas and information laying groundwork for future discussions.
- Community Equestrian was invited to present to the Arvada Parks Advisory Committee in March. Karen and Michele gave a 20 minute presentation on the challenges being faced in Arvada, Equestrian Legacy Corridors, and how Arvada can be a key partner to the horse community and why it will benefit them doing so.
- Karen and Michele have conducted other miscellaneous meetings on projects in and around Arvada to assist with networking and laying groundwork for future projects.

Connecting the Equestrian Community

One of Community Equestrian's primary goals is to strengthen and unite the horse community, in Jefferson County and beyond. To this end, we are actively engaging with other horse clubs and groups regularly to serve as a resource and support where we can.

- Jefferson County Horse Council: Community Equestrian applauds the progress the JCHC has made with revamping their tools and organization, especially with a movement toward more actively advocating on behalf of the horse community. We will continue to serve as a resource to them.
- Arvada Area Horseman's Association: Community Equestrian supports the Arvada Area Horseman's Association and the re-shaping of their leadership. We are looking forward to integrating the AAHA into more of the work we have been cultivating in Arvada specifically.
- Engagement with professional equine services is an important aspect of our horse industry. We have been actively communicating with Mobile Veterinary Services and Littleton Equine to promote their issues and gain their feedback to guide our direction.
- We have begun developing a voluntary Community Outreach plan to hold Seasonal Open House events at local barns to bring people outside the horse community into our local barns and will be introducing this to barns in the coming months.
- Table Mountain Ranch: Michele has been engaging with City of Arvada and Remington Homes to explore the feasibility of donating the indoor arena and other assets at Table Mountain Ranch to the equestrian community at a location to be determined.

- Colorado Horse Council: In February, Karen was invited to present via zoom to the Colorado Horse Council board of directors. She presented the pressures in Jefferson County, Equestrian Legacy Corridors, and how working together with organizations like the Colorado Horse Council is critical to our mutual success.

Alliance with Ralston Valley Coalition

The Ralston Valley Coalition is a collaboration of homeowner's associations, residents and businesses in the surrounding area who have a strong track record and reputation making positive influence in Ralston Valley with shaping land use. With so many of our mutual goals and objectives in alignment, Community Equestrian was invited to join the RVC, and Karen Hersh was approved recently as their newest board member.

Collaboration with Biking Community

In February, Community Equestrian connected with the Colorado Mountain Bike Association and started discussions on collaborations going forward. In March, additional meetings have been and are scheduled to work together on plans to expand and integrate the trail systems used by both cyclists and equestrians, with the potential to connect Golden to Boulder via trail. We are excited about this new partnership and look forward to accomplishing a great deal together.

Community Equestrian Growing

Our community started as a small Facebook group page, which is now nearly 500 members. We launched our website in February and have logged thousands of visitors since. Our email list grows, and we are about ready to add new board members to our team and shuffle assignments to spread the load. The work continues and we are looking forward to our next newsletter in June to report more progress. Stay positive, stay tuned, and stay informed!

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)

