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## August 2017 Newsletter

### *2017 Kansas Horse Council Foundation Scholarships*



On August 14th, Gabrielle Hamler joined the Kansas Horse Council office as assistant administrator. Gabrielle is a native Kansan, born and raised on a farm in Paola, KS. Horses captured her heart as a small child growing up in rural Miami County. Upon moving to Manhattan in 1989 with her husband Michael, it didn't take long to get back into the groove of things with Quarter horses and Paints. These days, Gabrielle enjoys frequent trail riding trips with her gaited horses. Previously, Gabrielle showed for several years in the Black Jack Saddle Club and participated in Kaw Valley Rodeo performance with sponsorship flag runs between events. She brings public relations experience based on years in retail and real estate industries. Gabrielle will help with membership, marketing and social media as she brings a lot of creativity and tech skills to the office!



WELCOME GABBY!

## Legislative Updates

<http://www.wichitapolo.org/>

### The American Horse Council



#### **Congress Continues to Promote Land Access, Gives Momentum to "Trails Act" Victory August 3, 2017**

On July 26, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT) introduced the "Recreation Not Red-Tape Act (RNR)" (S. 1633, H.R. 3400), legislation that expands the scope of the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (PL 114-245), signed into law in late 2016. While the RNR focuses on streamlined permitting to access public lands, the bill includes provisions that would authorize the Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), to enter into cooperative agreements with private parties to promote the role of volunteers in trail maintenance. The bill also authorizes the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and BLM to develop an interagency trail management plan that will assure uniform maintenance standards for trails crossing jurisdictional lines between the two agencies.

The Trails Act outlines a detailed program including goals and timetables by which the USDA will leverage private partners to clear trails long overdue for maintenance. Unlike the RNR Act, which applies to both the BLM and USDA's National Forest System (NFS), the Trails Act focuses only on trails under the jurisdiction of the NFS.

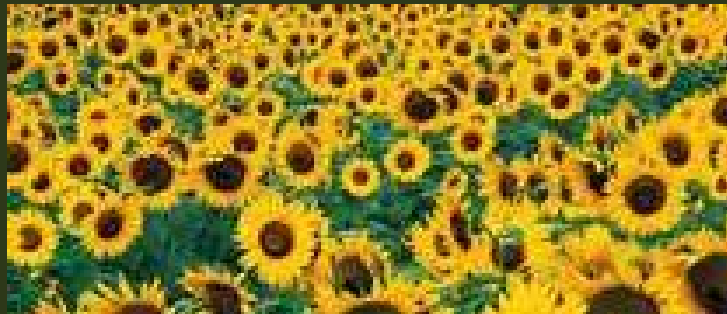
Chairman Bishop and Sen. Wyden worked closely on the bill to emphasize key issues - especially outdoor recreation permit streamlining - that will likely attract bipartisan support. GOP staff with the House Natural Resources Committee, which is the committee of

jurisdiction for federal land issues, are encouraging AHC and allies to help drive cosponsors for the legislation, which currently has none. Committee staff also state that the Subcommittee on Federal Lands will conduct a markup in late September or October, giving members the opportunity to offer technical corrections and amendments to the text. To review a summary of the legislation, please see the following link: <https://www.wyden.senate.gov/download/?id=DDF411A6-5D21-40BD-B17C-2BF73A2B9C51&download=1>.

If you would like more information about the RNR Act and related lobbying activity, please contact Bryan Brendle at [bbrendle@horsecouncil.org](mailto:bbrendle@horsecouncil.org) or 202-296-4031.

FALL KHC TRAIL RIDE  
Save the Date!  
October 28th at the Saddle & Sirloin Club  
KC area-Martin City, MO

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## KANSAS NEWS



Clay Whitham - Kentucky Derby

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

It's the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs. As the beautiful thoroughbreds race down in the track in the historic run for the roses, owners and fans cheer from the stands. In 2017, one of those owners was from rural Kansas. In fact, her Derby horse bears the name of a rural Kansas town. This is today's Kansas Profile.

Janis Whitham is the owner of this wonderful Kentucky Derby horse. Janis's son Clay Whitham told us this remarkable story.

Janis grew up at Scott City. She met and married Frank Whitham who worked in farming, cattle feeding, and banking. The Whithams moved to Leoti and had five children.

In 1993, Frank Whitham was tragically killed in a private plane crash in western Kansas. Janis continued the family's interest in horses.

"My mom is a horse lover," Clay said. "My parents owned quarter horses in the 1960s, when a lot of county fairs had quarter horse races." Their interest in racing led them to become interested in thoroughbreds. In the 1970s, the Whithams bought their first thoroughbreds, and they have developed their line of racehorses over time.

"Mom never wavered," Clay said. "She has kept our horse activity going through the years."

Clay got a double major from K-State in accounting and finance, and later got a master's degree from K-State. He worked in business and in banking, and is now president of Frontier Bank in Lamar, Colorado.

"Mom still manages the horse breeding," Clay said. "She looks at the pedigrees, looks at the traits, and picks the breeding lines we want." The Whithams constantly work to improve their bloodlines. The horses are boarded in the heart of racehorse country in Kentucky.

"I think Mom gets as much enjoyment in raising the mares and foals as she does in racing them," Clay said. "It is always fun to see the new foals and then to see how they grow."

Another part of Janis' job was to name the horses. In honor of her state, she has chosen to use Kansas place names. For example, a few years ago, the Whithams raised an excellent bay horse they named Fort Larned. That horse won three races, including the prestigious Breeders Cup in 2012.

In 2013, another outstanding foal surfaced among the high quality colts produced by the Whithams. Janis chose to name this colt McCracken after a rural town in Rush County. McCracken is a community of 209 people. Now, that's rural.

However, a typo occurred somewhere in the process of submitting the horse name to the Jockey Club online and the last letter "c" was dropped from the name. As a result, the official name assigned to the horse was McCracken - M-C-C-R-A-K-E-N.

Whatever the name, this was one amazing horse. The Whithams used the same trainer and jockey they had used to win the Breeders Cup, and the horse developed quickly. He was described as a "closer," because he tended to finish strong. The bay horse had four starts as a racehorse and won every race. His record was so successful that he qualified for the Kentucky Derby.

In the twenty-horse field of the 2017 Kentucky Derby, McCracken finished eighth. Muddy conditions on the rain-soaked track probably did not help his performance, but he ran well.

"It was a neat experience," Clay Whitham said. "The Kentucky Derby is the one event in horse racing that everybody knows. With grandkids and everybody, we had about 50 people there," he said. "Having a horse in there made you nervous, but it was enjoyable just to soak it in."

It must have been especially rewarding to know that this was a home-bred horse. In other words, rather than simply buying a top horse at an auction somewhere, the Whithams bred and raised McCracken themselves.

It's time to leave the Kentucky Derby, where a horse owner from rural Kansas saw her horse finish in the upper half of the world's most famous horse race. We commend Janis, Clay and all the Whitham family for making a difference with homegrown equine entrepreneurship. By selecting names from her home state, Janis is making rural Kansas a winner.

## News from Mission Valley Hunt Club

Polo in Kansas: The Fairfield Polo Club is one of the oldest polo clubs in the country. It was founded in 1931! The Club offers fun and competitive polo starting in May and continuing through September. The full schedule can be found under the Upcoming Events page. Games are played every Saturday and Sunday. Spectators are welcome! Come cheer for your favorite team!

[Check it out!](#)



**PARK CITY  
POLO CHALLENGE**  
**HARTMAN ARENA**  
**A SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL AND  
INTERCOLLEGIATE POLO EVENT**  
**SEPTEMBER 16, 2017**  
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**VS  CSU WOMEN'S TEAM**  
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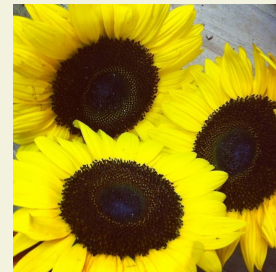
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