

## **Kick Up Your Heels and Have Some Fun with Governor Dodge Equestrians!**

Article by Sandy Rogers & Photos by Lori Brose

While our furry 4-legged riding buddies are kicking up their heels and enjoying some time off from trail riding, The Friends of Governor Dodge-Equestrians have been very busy making plans for the upcoming riding season. We'd like to take this opportunity to provide a snapshot of our activities in 2017, and give you a brief overview of our plans for 2018. May 1st is just around the corner, right?



Last June many of you joined in the fun at our annual fundraiser. The poker ride showcased horse trails in the northeast corner of the park, followed by a picnic lunch and silent auction/raffle. We were blessed with perfect weather and many generous donors, raising over \$3,500 in support of equestrian facilities at Governor Dodge.

In August we hosted a "Meet the Horses" open house and ice cream social with the theme of how to safely share trails with horses. Over 250 park visitors stopped by to meet and pet our gentle volunteer steeds, feeding them apple treats, and taking a turn at brushing. Horse committee volunteers chatted with non-horse guests about shared trail safety and handed out WHC Trail Safety brochures. And of course, the ice cream donated by the Kiwanis concession was a big hit!

In 2017 our committee continued to make progress on the new campground project. After receiving several plan options from DNR landscape architects, we conducted a series of personal interviews with individuals around the state to gather input on the plans and to assess the level of support for this ambitious project. We are using this interview feedback to further refine the campground plan and hope to have a final version, including a budget, later this year.

In the coming season we will be working with the park on improvements to the horse trails, including trailside location markers and a rest stop with picnic table and hitching rails on the southern section of the Outer Loop Trail. We are excited about having a much-needed break option on this long and beautiful more remote trail segment. Fingers crossed that a WHC grant will provide matching funds!

Mark your calendars now for Sunday, June 3rd when we will again host a poker ride fundraiser covering a different section of the beautiful trails. A yummy catered lunch and lots of great silent auction items are planned. And if you are in the area, stop by for an ice cream cone at the "Meet the Horses" open house at the horse campground on Saturday afternoon, August 25.

We have a lot of exciting things planned for 2018 and truly welcome new members. Please show your support for this great state park by joining Friends of Governor Dodge-Equestrians. Dues are just \$20 and include membership in the general Friends of Governor Dodge organization. What a great way to support this great park! Visit our newly revised website [www.GovDodgeEquestrians.com](http://www.GovDodgeEquestrians.com) for more information and to join.



Remember, even though the horse trails at Governor Dodge State Park are closed until May 1, the park is open year around and there is still plenty of fun to be had there! Get out and kick up YOUR heels and enjoy the park!