

Bringing Cross Country Back to the Horse Park (GIHP)



Land Conservation is important to Pony Club right? It's important as our open land we use to hack our horses or use for XC is disappearing. The D3's have to write a thank you note to somewhere they've ridden before, the D2's have to hear about a space their elders use to ride at but is now no longer around due to development of some kind. Even now, we all know of a place that has shut down – the Old Steeplechase at Bethelview in Cumming, Rising Fawn sat empty for over 5 years until the economy came back, etc. We do however, have one bright spot in this endeavor happening now - there is movement hosted by the

schooling show group AYDC or the Atlanta Youth Dressage Challenge Schooling Series at the Horse Park to bring back Cross Country, literally at the site of the 1996 Olympics.

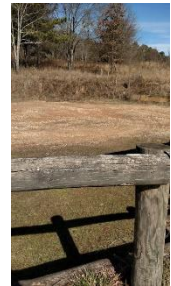
Liz Molloy, who runs the AYDC series, met with the Georgia International Horse Park in the beginning of 2017. After touring the area known as Bald Rock (which is also the site of the Olympic Rings) with fellow Eventer Nicky Buckingham, "We both just looked at each other and said what is the problem? This land is awesome!" It wasn't overly traveled, the terrain is gentle, it just required a vision, and some much needed clean up.

Indeed, the horse park came forward and began working on the original water obstacle fence. 20 years since the '96 Olympics, it now had trees growing out of the middle of it. The Park removed them, resurfaced the area, and laid sand over the bridge. They did the same with the Old Costly Mill. Both fences have the capability to hold water as well have several options of navigating through that is suitable for even the Starter division through Novice.



Before renovation began. Pine trees were growing in a ditch in the left side of the original water fence.

After GIHP graded, filled in the ditches and removed trees. The area is re-leveled.



The right side of the fence shows much potential but needs some TLC.

Resurfacing/regrading removed weeds and grass leading to clear ideas of how to use this space for any level XC course.





The bridge on the original water complex with new sand.

The Old Costly Mill, prior to clean up was ruddy on the bottom and had a rotting stump, but much potential is here.



After clean up, Old Costly Mill re-leveled, sand added, and filled with water leaving a nice wide area to flag suitable for Beg Nov/Novice.



February 25, 2017 AYDC stepped out on a limb and offered anyone in its regular CT show on that Saturday would now honor a GDCTA Recognized 3 phase if they came on Sunday and ran the XC. They offered Amoeba through Novice divisions, XC only, and a Hunter Pace which encouraged Hilltopping. The weather was Winter Georgia Perfect, and the footing was great. "I was so focused on the XC aspect of this event I was surprised when I received 25 Hunter Pace Entries", said Liz Molloy. "But being that awareness of this land is the ultimate goal so therefore was a success.

So the Land Conservation is simple. You can ask just about anyone from this generation of our Junior Eventers in our community "How many of you have ridden over at Bald Rock at the HP", and you're just met with blank stares and shrugged shoulders. Never. Many people aren't aware that you may ride there for free in between events. Of course, there are no jumps, but what a great place to hack out!



Which brings us to the Managing Expectations of this Endeavor. The GIHP is government owned. AYDC has to rent the facility. Each horse must get a stall or pay a grounds fee. Currently, they need to run the show similar to that of recognized USEA Horse Trial, meaning over 2 days. This is due to a lack of volunteers and simply number of jumps. AYDC is slowing building their arsenal of XC jumps through it's XC Jump Sponsor Program. But they have to fill in with temporary fences which are either recycled items from the park (a pyramid fence or ends for a tire fence pulled off an old jump), or stadium fences. AYDC is currently up to 37 fences combined between Stadium and traditional XC. Renown jump builder Rob Mobely, was commissioned to build the first four roll tops. "This is indeed a community project. Without our jump sponsors, this wouldn't be possible."



So far, AYDC has Caryl & Mel Berzak, Nicky Buckingham, John & Kelly Eaton, Roden Fields, Walnut Grove Animal Hospital, Jean Roten, Jean Fowler, The Marsh Family, and Amanda Ledford of Allison Creek Farm to thank for the first go around of jumps. "Everyone that has ridden has been pleased with the jumps and courses themselves." Liz said after hosting her 3rd XC in September 2017. "We just need the community to embrace this with participation, jump judging, and continued jump donations."



AYDC would love to see the South Region Pony Clubs help out with a jump donation. (Once Built), each fence is permanently names after your club, barn, or business. Just like up at Kentucky 3 Day, Sponsor signs are hung with each fence, photographed, and listed on the Course Walk as sponsored by that party. Additionally, for any Pony Clubber that Fence Judges, AYDC will offer a coupon for their next competition, similar to Chatt Hills.



The Goal for these XC endeavors is to have an Amoeba through Novice going. Teach kids how to ride out in the open. Use the XC day as a trail ride, schooling, XC only competition, 3 phase or Hunter Pace. So many options of how to enjoy this land!

Dates for 2018 AYDC with the 3-phase will be:

- February 24 & 25
- April 21 & 22
- June 2 & 3
- Sept 8 & 9
- October 6 & 7. Help bring back XC to the Horse Park – it's Important!

For more information on our Jump Sponsor program, go to www.TaramiaRidingSchool.com/aydc-shows.html OR email Missliz@TaramiaridingSchool.com or call Liz Molloy (770) 634-4089.

