

# Friends of Shimek Equestrian Trails

Dear Editor:

The letter below has been sent to the following Iowa DNR personnel: Jeff Goerndt, State Forests Section Chief; Paul Tauke, Forestry Bureau Chief; Chuck Corell, Conservation and Recreation Department Administrator; and Kevin Szcodronski, Parks and Preserves Chief to express our appreciation for the work of the Shimek State Forest Staff and their support of our volunteers to maintain and keep open the Shimek equestrian trails this year.

Dear Sir:

Great River Classical Horsemanship Association (GRCHA), Friends of Shimek Equestrian Trails and Iowa Trail Riders Association (ITRA) would like to thank the staff at Shimek State Forest this year for maintenance and improvements of the horse campgrounds and horse trails despite continuing budget cuts, trimmed staff hours, and the spring torrential rainfalls. John Byrd, Ben Hassman, Barry Smith and Jerry Marshall are to be commended for their professionalism and responsiveness and ability to get things done during these challenging times.

John has patiently answered many questions, been available for work days, followed up on donations of materials, and been considerate about the concerns of trail riders/campers. John has been instrumental in helping form and in working with the Friends of Shimek Equestrian Trails. He has helped us all accomplish a lot throughout the summer and fall. Ben used the tracked loader over most of the horse trails, blading trails, constructing water bars, moving aside downed trees, moving rock to bad wet areas, etc. Jerry supervised the camping, kept the grounds clean, painted tables, and answered campers' questions. Barry repaired hitch rails and removed manure regularly from each camp site.

The State Forestry Bureau and the DNR of Iowa are lucky to have employees of this caliber on staff.

Great River Classical Horsemanship Association represents 40 members from southeast Iowa, Friends of Shimek has an email list of about 60 Iowa residents, and the Iowa Trail Riders Association represents 100 members from all over Iowa.

Friends of Shimek Equestrian Trails, Inc. was organized this year and is now a state of Iowa registered, non-profit corporation. This group of volunteers organized work days in cooperation with John Byrd, recruited volunteers and communicated Shimek needs to interested individuals in the area. A total of 21 volunteers from

all three organizations participated and logged over 320 hours volunteering with an estimated 150 hours of machine operation with their own tractors/4 wheelers/chain saws and mowers, received cash donations of \$150, \$500 in donated gravel, many loads of donated slag and hauling labor, as well as donated paint and other supplies.

Shimek State Forest is a valuable natural resource area enjoyed by many families for recreational activities in southeast Iowa. There are few public areas available for equestrian trail riders and we are thankful that the trails and campgrounds remained open and hope our efforts to volunteer and donate time, material and dollars will help keep the state forests open for equestrian trail riders, families, and campers.

Sincerely,

Ann Bennett, President GRCHA  
Denise Schieffer, President ITRA  
Lora Conrad, Editor/Incorporator, Friends of Shimek Equestrian Trails

Anyone interested in receiving Friends of Shimek Equestrian Trails e-mail updates, helping our volunteers with this effort by working, donating material or donating money to buy needed supplies, contact Friends of Shimek through Lora Conrad at [lpconrad@tctwb.com](mailto:lpconrad@tctwb.com) or call John Byrd, Shimek Forester, at 319-878-3811.

Comments from Area Forester, John Byrd  
**October 11, 2011** – [Update #7] There has been a lot of work accomplished this year and people are noticing. As we head into fall, .... we don't have to stop thinking about the trails and campgrounds. Riders can still point out down trees and possible problems with the trails at any time so that we can address them when the time arises.

My job duties will start to shift to more Forest Management-oriented activities. Late fall and winter are actually some of my busiest times of the year. I always look forward to getting back into the timber when the bugs are dead and leaves have fallen.

Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions or ideas, regardless of the time of year.

Once again, thanks for everyone's help this year and remember to think of plans for next year.

John Byrd, Area Forester  
Shimek State Forest  
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