

Bay State Trail Riders Association Inc.

Betsy MacDonald

The Bugle February 2026

www.bstra.org

BSTRA's 2025 Year in Review: Stewardship, Service & Strengthening Our Trails

As we look back on 2025, one thing is clear: even in a year of transition, BSTRA's commitment to trail stewardship never wavered. Our members showed up, boots on the ground, hands in the dirt, voices at the table, to ensure that equestrian access and sustainable trails remain protected across Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

Thanks to your dedication, generosity, and volunteer spirit, BSTRA continued to make a meaningful impact on the landscapes we love.

Fundraising & Events: Powering Trail Improvements.

Through the combined efforts of our members, supporters, and event participants, BSTRA raised \$15,430.86 specifically for trail projects in 2025.

Our events remained a cornerstone of community engagement, with volunteers contributing 689.54 hours to planning, hosting, and supporting rides and activities. Fundraising efforts added another 150.42 hours, ensuring that every dollar raised was backed by countless hours of behind-the-scenes work.

We hosted 15 rides with 472 riders, including 166 non-members and 35 juniors, helping introduce new faces to our mission. We also enjoyed two campouts and gathered 34 attendees for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon.



Meetings, Advocacy & Representation

BSTRA members continued to serve as strong advocates for equestrian access and responsible land management. In 2025, volunteers dedicated 75.63 hours to meetings, site visits, and public engagement, including:

- Touring Wyndham Land Trust properties
- Participating in the Thompson, Groton, and Douglas Trails Committees
- Representing BSTRA at the RI Federation of Riding Clubs
- Meeting with the North Brookfield Sportsmen's Club to secure a new ride venue
- Attending DCR public hearings for four State Forest Trail Master Plans
- Engaging in educational webinars
- Meeting with Douglas and Upton State Forest Supervisors
- Learning about the Environmental Bond Bill and its implications for trail funding
- Participating in Friends of Upton State Forest meetings

This work ensures that equestrian voices remain part of statewide trail planning and conservation conversations.



Trail Projects: Planning, Partnerships & Progress

Behind every mile of trail is a story of collaboration. In 2025, BSTRA volunteers invested 24.40 hours in project development, scouting, and coordination, including:

- Partnering with Camp Marshall and Spencer Snowbirds on bridge repairs
- Assessing Franklin State Forest trails
- Exploring a potential Mid-State Trail relocation in Douglas State Forest
- Reviewing Wyndham Land Trust's new parcel for future connections
- Evaluating the Pump House Trail in Oxford
- Assisting Upton State Forest with relocating the Middle Trail Bridge and reviewing a reroute on Old Hopkinton Spring Trail
- Receiving Certificates of Compliance for BSTRA property and the Red Pine Trail project in Douglas State Forest
- Touring BSTRA property with Metacomet Land Trust
- Donating geotextile material to Glocester Land Trust for a horse-safe bridge

These efforts lay the groundwork for future improvements and long-term trail sustainability.

Trail Work: Hands-On Stewardship Across Three States

Our volunteers put in 159.63 hours of physical trail work-valued at \$6,704.46-with \$124.73 spent on lunches to keep everyone fueled. Work included:

Douglas, MA – Town Property & School Trails

- 8 work days, 28 hours. Cleared 1.4 miles of trails

Thompson, CT

- 5 work days, 41 hours

Oxford, MA – Hodges Village Dam

- 1 work day, 12 hours. Cleared 0.86 miles

Upton State Forest

- 1 work day, 42 hours. Cleared 0.48 miles

Douglas State Forest

- 2 work days, 3.5 hours

BSTRA Property

- 1 work day, 1.17 hours

Groton, MA

- 1 work day, 6 hours



Exeter, RI

- 2 work days, 20.5 hours

Every hour represents sweat, teamwork, and a shared belief that trails matter.

Writing, Communications & Outreach

Behind the scenes, BSTRA's communications efforts continued strong. A total of 171.6 hours went into:

- Website updates
- Facebook posts
- Bugle articles
- Legislative support letters
- Event paperwork
- Fundraising materials
- Surveys and reports



Clear, consistent communication keeps our members informed and our mission visible.

Giving Back: Donations That Strengthen Our Trail Community

BSTRA also supported partner organizations whose work aligns with our mission:

- Wyndham Land Trust – \$500 to preserve land open to horseback riding
- Mass Parks for All – \$500 to advocate for accessible, well-maintained public lands
- Friends of Upton State Forest – \$201.23 for future trail improvements
- LeGrand Reynolds Horsemen's Camp (Exeter, RI) \$250 for new campsite numbering posts
- Glocester Land Trust – Donated geotextile material for a horse-safe bridge

These contributions help ensure that equestrians remain valued partners in conservation.

Looking Ahead

2025 was a year of transition, collaboration, and steady progress. Thanks to our volunteers, donors, and riders, BSTRA remains a trusted steward of the trails we all cherish. Every hour, every dollar, and every mile reflects your commitment to keeping our forests, parks, and open spaces accessible for generations to come.

Together, we ride forward into 2026 with purpose and pride. BK

Slate of Board of Directors for 2026

Kelly Berthiaume	Valerie Clark	Sharron Cochran	Becky Kalagher
Suzanne Nicholas	Karen Parlin	Sue Quirk	Joyce Sandvik
Kelly Shaw	Mary Wood	Rose Zariczny	

How Our Election Process Works

Each year our members play an essential role in shaping the leadership of our organization. The process begins with a membership vote on the slate of Board members. Any member who is interested in serving is welcome to nominate themselves for consideration, ensuring an open and inclusive path to leadership.

Once the membership vote is finalized, the results are announced at our Annual General Meeting. At that time, the newly elected board convenes to elect the organization's officers:

President Vice President/Clerk Treasurer Recording Secretary

This two-step process—membership voting followed by board officer elections—helps maintain transparency, continuity, and shared responsibility in our governance.

If you've ever considered getting more involved, this is a wonderful time to step forward. Your experience, perspective, and passion can make a meaningful difference.

Ambassador Award

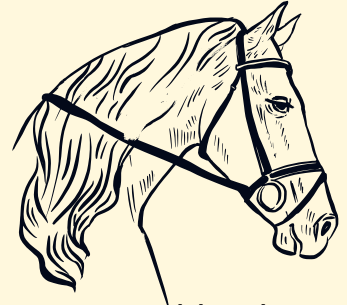
Since 1995, this award has celebrated the people whose kindness, camaraderie, and unwavering spirit lift us all. Below is a list of past honorees whose contributions have already been recognized. As you cast your vote, please choose someone not on this list—someone whose generosity, teamwork, and quiet acts of support continue to make our community stronger. Thank you for helping us honor the heart and soul of who we are.

List of past recipients who have been recognized and not to be included in your vote:

Becky Kalagher, Rose Zariczny, Lynn Paresky, Sharron Cochran, Lurissa Marston-Capobianco, Pat Gipps, Karen Fleming-Brooks, Linda Chita, Dan Salvucci, Bill & Angie Knott, Jane Rutledge, Sue Quirk, Deb Deschenes, Karen Parlin, Valerie Clark and Mary Wood.

The voting deadline to submit your votes is 8 pm February 20, 2026. [**VOTE HERE**](#)

Pet Estate Planning Webinar



BSTRA hosted a Pet Estate Planning Webinar on Saturday, January 10th. Estate planning is often associated with designating how our property and assets are distributed to spouses, children, friends, or relatives after we pass away. However, it is also important to consider the future of our horses and other pets in these plans.

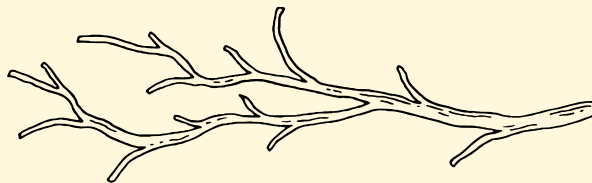
Key Topics Discussed

- Including pets such as horses in your estate planning.
- Deciding who you want to care for your pets if you are no longer able to do so.
- Allocating money specifically for the care of your pets.
- Outlining care instructions in the event you become incapacitated.
- Specifying your wishes regarding your pets' end-of-life, including whether you want them cremated or buried in a special place.

Allison T. Piorier, a partner at KKC Law in Vernon, CT, guided attendees through the available options for including pets in their estate plans. She addressed important questions to ensure the well-being of pets, such as who will care for them, how to provide financially for their needs, and what to do if the owner becomes unable to make decisions.

These considerations are essential for ensuring the best for your horses and pets if you are not able to care for them. To discover more about the available options, view Allison's presentation here: [PET ESTATE PLANNING](#).

By Joyce Sandvik



Ryan Rudy
Owner

Whitehorse



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MARCH 1, 2026
**Annual General Meeting
& Awards Banquet**



LUNCHEON BUFFET:

Time: 12 to 4PM

Tossed garden salad, seasonal fresh fruit salad, warm rolls
& butter, Pasta Primavera, Chicken Florentine, Baked Haddock,
Chef's Medley of Vegetables, Roasted Red Bliss Potatoes,
assorted dessert display, freshly brewed coffee and tea.

COST: Adults \$35

Age 12 and Under: \$15

DEADLINE: Paid reservations must be received by Feb. 19th

Location: Pleasant Valley Country Club

95 Armsby Road, Sutton MA.

12:15 Present results of election of the Board. Election of the officers

Cash bar opens

12:30 LUNCH

Following lunch will be the presentation of year-end awards
and the BSTRA raffle.

All members, friends, and families are invited!

Come enjoy an afternoon filled with delicious food, celebration, awards,
officer elections, and a fantastic raffle with plenty of prizes

Register online here: [AGM](#).

AGM March 1		Adult or Junior	Amount
Name			
Name			
Street			
Town, St. Zip			
Will bring something for the raffle table			

If you are registering by mail, send registration form and check payable to BSTRA to:

Suzanne Nicholas, 96 Mountain Gait Road, Ashland MA 01721



March 21, 2026

Time: 10 AM

Horse Trailer Towing Clinic. Offered FREE to BSTRA Members Only.

Location: Thompson Speedway, Thompson CT

GPS Address: 205 East Thompson Road, Thompson CT

Improve Your Horse Trailer Towing Skills!

Join us for a hands on clinic led by BSTRA member **Jim Shaw**, a CDL licensed driver with over 40 years of experience helping drivers feel confident behind the wheel. This session focuses on **backing up, turning, and maneuvering** your own horse trailer safely and effectively.

- **Bring your horse trailer - but please leave your horses at home.**
- **Auditors welcome** if you would like to observe rather than participate.
- **Advance registration is required**, even though the clinic is free. We need to know how many people will be attending so we can effectively plan the day.

What to Expect

- **Hands on trailer practice** with expert guidance
- **Personalized tips** for improving your driving confidence
- **Safe, controlled environment** on the Thompson Speedway grounds
- **Opportunities to watch and learn** from fellow members.

A Special Thank You to the Thompson Speedway

We are grateful to the Thompson Speedway for generously hosting this clinic. Participants may want to **enjoy lunch at the Speedway's on-site restaurant** after the session.

The Speedway also offers a variety of activities worth keeping in mind, including **golf, automobile racing events, golf and racing simulators**, and an **ice cream stand** - great options when you're looking for something fun to do in your free time.

Name	
Address	
Phone	
Email	
	Check box at left if you are auditing.



Questions?

Contact Valerie Clark at 508-864-8432 (text or call)
or valerie.clark@snet.net

Start the New Year with These Quick To-Dos

- Renew your membership to continue enjoying all the benefits, programs, and opportunities we offer..
- Membership update: going forward the Barn Membership category has been discontinued due to declining participation.



TOP TRAIL HORSE
ONLINE TRAIL RIDING CHALLENGES

2026 BSTRA Top Trail Horse Challenge

The 2026 Top Trail Horse BSTRA Challenge is now open. To participate you must be a BSTRA member in good standing and a Top Trail Horse member.

Top Trail membership is \$35 per year, providing access to their website and GPS app for tracking. Miles can be uploaded with tracks from any app that allows exporting standard GPS formats such as .gpx. The Top Trail app logs directly to the website, but I have found it to be buggy at times as it is relatively new. When I use it, I still track on my usual app just in case. The Top Trail app does have a feature to edit a track if you forget to turn it off.

Existing challenge riders are automatically rolled into the 2026 challenge. New participants can join the challenge by going to the website (<https://toptrailhorse.com>). Select my groups in the menu under your username and click the **Join Group** button at the bottom of the page.

Top Trail offers their own challenges. See <https://toptrailhorse.com/news/12220> for more information.

This past year questions about “Qualified Rides” versus “Disqualified” and “All” came up. The Top Trail site automatically looks for GPS anomalies or rides upload past ten days and disqualifies those tracks from their challenges, but they do count disqualified tracks in lifetime miles. You can use the filter to see them.

The BSTRA challenge uses **all** miles filtered by ride type, **trail**. However, it is good practice to upload tracks quickly so that the leaderboard is updated. One trick when viewing the leaderboard is to set the filters to all miles and ride type trails as some members, including me, do track arena miles.

Logging miles challenges me to get out and ride more! And then there is the friendly competition..... Hope to see on and the trails and the leaderboard in 2026!

By Anna-Maria Paul

BSTRA 2026 Events Calendar

Date	Event/Location/Sponsor	Contact	Phone	Email
March 1	AGM & Awards Banquet, Sutton MA	Suzanne	508-380-2124	hc07645@gmail.com
March 21	Trailer Parking Clinic, Thompson Speedway	Valerie	508-864-8432	valerie.clark@snet.net
April 18	Douglas State Forest Trail Work rain date 19th	Becky	508-476-3960	Becky.BSTRA@protonmail.ch
April 25*	Fort Hill Farms Ride, Thompson CT	Valerie	508-864-8432	valerie.clark@snet.net
April 26	Park Serve Day Upton, rain date May 3	Suzanne	508-380-2124	hc07645@gmail.com
May 2*	Nancy Maenzo Memorial Ride, Douglas MA	Kelly	774-276-0260	krshaw13@gmail.com
May 9	Trail Work Day, Oxford MA	Becky	508-476-3960	Becky.BSTRA@protonmail.ch
May 17*	Livelark Acres Ride, Thompson CT	Valerie	508-864-8432	valerie.clark@snet.net
May 23-25	Memorial Day Campout, Carver MA			
June 7*	National Trails Day, N. Brookfield MA			
July 4-5	4 th of July Campout, Douglas MA			
July 12*	Spirit of America Ride, Upton MA			
July 18*	Goddard Brunch Ride, E. Greenwich RI	Rose	401-487-3190	rzariczny@verizon.net
Aug. 2*	Galloping Gourmet Ride, Royalston MA	Becky	508-476-3960	Becky.BSTRA@protonmail.ch
Aug. 22	Northfield Mt. Ride, Northfield MA			
Sept. 13	Sue Brainard Hunter Pace, Douglas MA			
Oct. 4	Wyndham Land Trust Ride for Open Space			
Oct. 18*	Red Rail Farm Ride, Lincoln MA			
Oct. 25*	Big Pumpkin Ride, Upton MA	Joyce	617-429-1319	bstra.org@gmail.com
Nov. 1*	Larry Underwood Classic, N. Brookfield MA			
Nov. 15*	Thompson Raceway Ride, Thompson CT	Valerie	508-864-8432	valerie.clark@snet.net

*NEHT Affiliated Rides

1. Unless otherwise, noted all rides start at 10:00 am and trail workdays at 9:00 am.
2. Most rides require advance registration and payment to receive lunch.
3. Riders 17 and under, accompanied by a guardian, ride **free** (lunch included if pre-registered). (There may be exceptions on some rides)
4. Alcohol is prohibited on State property. No smoking allowed while riding. A current Coggins within a year of the ride date is required.
5. Please leave the trail & parking areas better than you found them and be considerate of others! Clean up your hay & manure at all rides.
6. Year end awards require a member in good standing to have a minimum of 4 hours of volunteer time completed.



Curious about distance riding but not sure where to start?

Join us for a **FREE** 4-part online **Introduction to Distance Riding** series designed to take the mystery—and the intimidation—out of distance riding. Whether you're a casual trail rider, a seasoned horse owner, or someone who's curious about endurance and competitive trail rides, this series will show you what distance riding is about.

From AERC endurance rides to ECTRA competitive trail rides, we'll break down the rules, expectations, and culture in a clear, welcoming way—no prior competition experience required.

Across four engaging sessions, you'll learn how to prepare your horse, condition safely, understand vet checks, manage electrolytes, choose tack, camp comfortably at rides, and walk into your first event feeling confident and informed. Distance riding is about partnership, horsemanship, and finishing with a healthy horse—and **you don't need a special breed, fancy equipment, or years of experience to get started**. If you've ever wondered "*Could I do this?*"—this series has your answer.

Each session will be offered twice to comprise a 4-part series. The presentation materials will be provided on <https://thesawyerfarms.com/distance-riding-101/>.

Session 1 Thursday Feb 5 and Monday Feb 9

Session 2 Thursday Feb 12 and Monday Feb 16

Session 3 Thursday Feb 19 and Monday Feb 23

Session 4 Thursday Feb 26 and Monday Mar 2

7:00-8:30 EST for all sessions

Calendar Invite: <https://calendar.app.google/yvR1uy35w8HHLkEz5>

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73835592709?pwd=yU0dGn9mVEaAehjO8BCIFcdy81wVLM.1>

Contact Rob Sawyer (sawfish99@gmail.com) if you have any questions.



Danielle Lefebvre
Regional Sales Manager

315 Lake Street East, Suite 300
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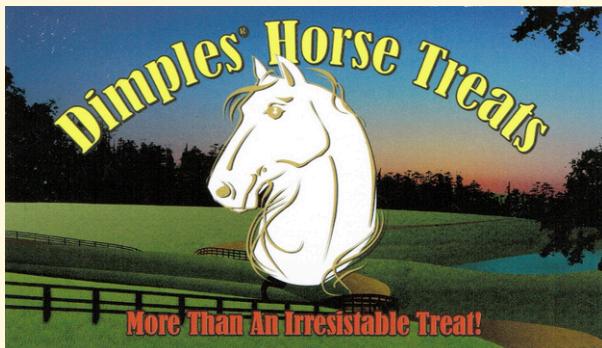


Classifieds: Free ads are for members and their items only. Please contact the editor for advertising rates for non-member classified ads. Please submit your ad in writing (mail or e-mail) to the editor. Ads will only appear once unless you notify us to run it again. Ads must be received by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

Saddle for Sale: Custom Circle Y. Older, but in great shape. The fully hand tooled saddle leather is a mahogany color. It is accented with a rope edge with silver lacing. The horn is braided rawhide with silver lacing. The gullet is 6-3/4" wide which is considered semi-quarter horse bars. Set up for double rigging. The sheepskin is really good. 15" seat. Floral engraved conchos and matching pieces on saddle. One of a kind saddle. \$1,000. Pictures available. Email Becky.BSTRA@protonmail.ch

Women's Lace Up Packer Boots: Size 8 M. Oil Resistant sole. Worn once. Golden tan color. \$50. Becky.BSTRA@protonmail.ch

For Sale: #1 SmartPak RockinClassic medium weight waterproof turnout blanket. Navy with mint trim. 220 fill, 600 denier. Size 82. Has been cleaned. \$45. #2 Dover Saddlery lightweight blue/gray trim turnout blanket. 100 fill, 1,680 denier. Size 82. Just had it professionally cleaned. \$45. #3 Black blanket storage bag with velcro closures, handle strap to pick up, and 2 velcro straps at the top to attach to stall fronts. Approximately 20" wide, 26" tall. \$15. #4 Green blanket storage bag with zippered top. Has two side straps and a handle strap that has come out on one side but could be repaired. Approximately 20" wide, 10" deep at the bottom and 22" long. \$10. #5 Tredstep Ireland paddock boots. They lace up the front with a rear zipper and reinforced snap keeper. Tan. Only worn a few times. Size 10. \$45. #6 Blue bridle bag with white trim, Green lined bridle bag with black trim and white piping, and Black with red trim extra long bridle bag. Each \$10. Contact Suzanne at HC07645@gmail.com



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Horse Training, Horsemanship Lessons, Riding Lessons; Do you struggle with loading your horse onto the trailer? Want him to self-load? Need assistance with keeping your horse on the lunge line, overcoming stall or food aggression, catching a hard-to-catch horse, or improving your horse's whoa command? Enhance your relationship with your horse and develop new horsemanship and riding skills with our expert training. We offer versatile and liberty training, among other services, to help you and your horse achieve your goals. Call Cathie (508-479-5266) bobcatfarm.com and check us out on Facebook @ Bobcat Farm

Looking To Sell Or Buy Horse Property: I service Central and Western MA from backyard farms to full equestrian facilities helping you to create life long memories. Why not have a Realtor that has been in the horse community for over 30 years. Sharron Cochran 413-668-7606 Sharron@equinehomes.com

"The Adventures of BB, the Wonder Pony" is an illustrated, first chapter children's book that will be enjoyed by readers of all ages. My Connemara Pony "BB" tells his life story in his own pony voice. BB talks about life as a foal, learning to be ridden, going to a variety of shows and having adventures with his big brother Cody. The illustrations are by a 12-year-old artist – really cute, on every few pages. You can contact me at sue.perry@charter.net to purchase a book, \$5.00 each plus shipping. You can also order the book on-line from Amazon at \$7.99.

Officers & Directors
bstra.org@gmail.com

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Excess Equine Liability Insurance is available to our **members** provided through Equisure. Once your membership is active, go to our website under Membership, choose Equisure Equine Personal Excess Liability Insurance and pay \$25 for single, \$50 for family.

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