

H/H-A Standard of Proficiency Information on Land Conservation Notes for Candidates and Examiners:

- Discuss the relationship between land conservation concerns and initiatives and equine sports and horse management. Discussion may include current and future challenges from the local area to the global environment.
- Describe appropriate methods to include land conservation awareness into an unmounted curriculum.

The Problem

Open space (defined as forests, rangeland, pastureland, cropland and other nonfederal undeveloped land) is being lost to development at the rate of **6,000 acres per day!**

Rate of loss is accelerating- 1982-1992 14 million acres lost (1.4 m per year)

1992-2002 22 million acres lost (2.2 m per year)

To put numbers in perspective. 2.2 million per year

= 6,000 acres per day

= 251 acre per hour

= **4.2 acres per minute**

4.2 acres of land to support horses is lost every minute 24/7

To a horseman that is: 14 large dressage arenas or 6 large stadium rings or one Novice to Preliminary XC course in one day.

Reductions Include: Trails, Pasture/Crop land, Stables – Private and boarding, Show facilities, Eventing Facilities, Land for Foxhunting

Often overlooked: Forage Space (Pasture) and Hay Crop Land

Adult horse in moderate work requires 1.5 pounds of forage (hay/pasture grass) per 100 pounds of body weight. An 1100 pounds horse requires 17 – 20 pounds per day. To meet this requirement requires approximately 3 acres of land (for pasture or to grow hay). As development forces open land farther away from population centers hay must be substituted for grass which in turn requires more hay which incurs increased costs of shipping distances just to get hay. (Ex: during drought in South in recent years, Alfalfa/timothy hay was trucked from Michigan to the Carolinas at a time that diesel fuel was \$5.00/gal and consequently hay was in excess of \$11/bale!) Also, equine studies show that lack of natural “grazing” causes emotional stress problems for horses as well with resulting bad vices and even ulcers.

Litigation issues compound the problem of the use of land that is undeveloped.

To Help With The Problem:

- Identify farms/facilities in danger of being developed.
- Organize equestrian community and approach owner.
- Fee simple purchase – If money can be raised and have organization to take title
- Conservation Easement –Excellent tool with great tax advantages for the donor
- Agricultural Programming
- Zoning Changes – Can be two edged sword (If changed to protect equestrian now can be changed to eliminate equestrian in future; i.e. Rails to Trails that now ban use by horses)
- Include in your unmounted curriculum
- Lobby your local, state, and national political leadership for support of land conservation and liability measures impacting the equine business and sport