

VP of Public Lands **Kim McCarrel**



Things have been very quiet on the legislative and regulatory fronts, given the holidays, a new administration, and a new Congressional session. We understand that Senator Wyden and Rep. Blumenauer plan to introduce legislation soon that would create a National Recreation Area on Mt. Hood. We've been following the preparations, and so far, it looks like this bill will be favorable for equestrians and other trail users. More to come as things develop.

Since there isn't much else to report, this seems like a good time to remind everyone of an important message:

If you don't show up, you don't matter.

Suppose your local land manager is considering a trail project and no equestrians go to the meetings. I guarantee no one else who attends will be thinking, "What might equestrians need from this project?"

How can we protect their interests?"

This doesn't mean other trail users are thoughtless. After all, if you think about a local trail project, you probably consider how equestrians, hikers, and mountain bikers will use the trail. You might not be thinking about the needs of trail runners. You probably weren't thinking about how a family with small children might use that trail. And I'll bet you lunch that you didn't think about whether a person in a wheelchair could access the trail. It's human nature to think about the things we experience the most often. And "out of sight, out of mind" is human nature, too.

So, if you want equestrians to have a say, you need to show up. Attend meetings about trail issues. Participate in your local trails coalition. Respond to land managers' requests for public comments. And reach out to the land managers, so they know we care about our trails and they understand equestrian issues.

Nobody loves going to meetings, so share the load. Make sure someone in your chapter acts as the liaison with the land manager for each park, horse camp, or trail network in your area. The land managers appreciate having a go-to person they can call, and that way, it's easy for us to stay on top of emerging issues.

If you show up, you'll matter.

Kim McCarrel
