

BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN



www.BCHNG.org

Fall 2012 NEWSLETTER

BCHNG CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- OCT 9** – CoTrails General Meeting
- Oct 20** – Team Conasauga Volunteer Picnic
- Oct 25** – Farewell Lunch for George Bain
– CONF Forest Supervisor
- Oct 27** – CoTrails Volunteer Picnic
- Nov 1-4** – BCHNG Fall Fun Ride
– Cottonwood Patch Campground
- Nov 13** – CoTrails General Meeting
- Nov 16-17** – Team Conasauga Working Weekend
– Tearbitches & Chestnut Lead Trails
- Nov 20** – BCHNG Board Meeting
- Dec 7** – BCHNG Annual Meeting, Elections &
Christmas Party (RSVP to info@bchng.org)

ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS & DIRECTORS AT DECEMBER 2012 ANNUAL MEETING

BCHNG Board member Bob Goggins has again agreed to serve as head of the Nominating Committee. Positions for which five incumbents' 2-year terms are expiring at the end of 2012 are:

- Vice President (currently held by Carol Martel)
- Treasurer (currently held by Martha Fillingham)
- Director (currently held by Bob Goggins)
- Director (currently held by Nanci Tarrant)
- Director (currently held by Melinda Towe)

Please submit names of members you wish to nominate to serve as officers and directors of BCHNG to fill these expiring terms to: Bob Goggins at rgoggins@tds.net. Deadline for receiving nominations is November 20, 2012. Additional nominations can be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting and Christmas Party on Friday evening, December 7, 2012.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Fellow BCHNG Members,

We hope you enjoyed a good summer and lots of trail miles with your horses. We look forward to many pleasant rides as the fall colors are showing and the weather is turning cool.

Since our Summer 2012 newsletter, your BCHNG chapter and its members have been active with a number of events and workdays, as you will read in this issue. You'll also read about new staff transitions among our USFS partners. Most significant is the departure of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest (CONF) Supervisor, George Bain.

BCHNG and our sister chapter, BCHSG, were founded in 2006 in part because of the imminent threat that equestrian access on the CONF would be severely restricted, or prohibited altogether, because of what was perceived as severe resource damage to the land caused by horses and pack stock. It would be fair to say the relationship between the equestrian community and USFS land managers at that time was neither cordial nor constructive.

Shortly after his appointment as Forest Supervisor in 2007, George immediately reached out to the principal Forest recreational trails user groups, including the equestrian community. Also, very quickly, he directed that any imminent decision to restrict access to horses and pack stock on the Forest should be put on hold pending further study and discussion with the principal stakeholders: saddle clubs, trail riding groups and the newly formed BCH chapters in the state.

One of the immediate outcomes of George's outreach efforts was the initiation of an FS-led Horse Trails Assessment on the Conasauga Ranger District (CRD). To the pleasant surprise of equestrians and other Forest trail users, the user group community was invited – *and encouraged* – to attend and participate in public meetings where our opinions were sought and our recommendations were heard and recorded.

The CRD Horse Trails Assessment report was published a few months later, with positive conclusions and recommendations. It was the beginning of a new relationship based on mutual respect, cooperation and collaboration.

On September 9, 2010, George convened a small group of respected and experienced volunteers, regarded as key representatives of the principal recreational trails user groups on the Forest.

That meeting marked the beginning of the **Collaborative Trails Initiative – “CoTrails.”**

Since then, BCHNG, our sister chapters in Georgia, CTHA and other equestrian groups, plus many other user groups – hikers, mountain bikers, motorized riders and conservationists – have been actively engaged in a collaborative effort to develop and implement the CoTrails Strategic Plan, which was launched at a big meeting and weekend of trail workshops in January 2012.

We are grateful to George for his unbiased and fair approach to the equestrian community and all other recreational user groups of the Forest, for his vision and leadership in launching the *CoTrails Initiative* whose mission is *“To provide a diverse, quality trail experience that is maintainable and ecologically sustainable,”* and for his partnership with trail volunteers to see it through.



Forest Supervisor George Bain working alongside CoTrails volunteers at a workday celebrating National Public Lands Day

It is a fitting tribute to George Bain’s legacy on Georgia’s National Forests that as he prepares to leave his post in Georgia for his new one in Montana, he has been honored at a national awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. as the *2012 Federal Land Manager of the Year* for the USDA Forest Service.



Leslie Weldon, Deputy Chief of the US Forest Service, with George Bain, Forest Supervisor, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, at the 2012 Federal National Land Manager of the Year award ceremony.

This prestigious award is given annually as part of the U.S. Department of the Interior’s *Take Pride in America*, a nationwide partnership authorized by Congress to promote the appreciation and stewardship of our nation’s public lands.

George is honored for his contribution to our National Forests in Georgia and *for his effort in engaging communities in creative and innovative ways.* This is a major national recognition of the unique and first-in-the-country **CoTrails Initiative** and the progress and success it has achieved since it was conceived at that milestone meeting that George convened in September 2010.

We will miss the strong relationship and partnership we have established with Forest Supervisor George Bain and wish him much success in his new assignment. We will work to establish a similarly productive relationship with his successor when he or she arrives on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest.

We look forward to seeing you on the trail, at upcoming workdays, at our Fall Leaf Ride, and at our Annual Meeting and Christmas Party. Enjoy the good weather and Fall rides!

Carlos Martel,
President

A WARM SOUTHERN WELCOME TO NEW USFS ARRIVALS

As we prepare to say farewell to George Bain, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest (CONF) Supervisor in early November, we are at the same time welcoming four new arrivals to our nearby ranger districts. They are: Jeff Gardner and Karen Larsen on the Conasauga, Taylor Hamilton on the Blue Ridge, and Ed Hunter on the Chattooga River Ranger District.

Jeff, Karen, Taylor and Ed are by no means strangers to the South. Jeff, originally from Crossville, Alabama, served on the Talladega National Forest for eight years before moving to his most recent post on the Manti-La Sal National Forest in Utah where he served as District Ranger for three years.

Jeff takes over as District Ranger for the Conasauga Ranger District. This position was previously held by Michele Jones, who moved to Oregon to serve as District Ranger for the Central Coast RD, Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area on the Suislaw National Forest.

Karen, a mid-westerner by birth, has followed her parents who moved south to nearby Big Canoe over a decade ago. Karen serves as the Recreation Manager for the Conasauga RD. She fills the position vacated by Larry Thomas, now serving as Developed Recreation Program Manager and volunteer coordinator for the CONF in the Forest Supervisor's office in Gainesville. Prior to her arrival, Karen was the district Trail, Wilderness and Dispersed Recreation Technician in northern Wisconsin on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. She and her husband Mike met while hiking along a trail.

Taylor, who marched with BCHNG members in the Blue Ridge 4th of July Parade, serves as Forestry Technician for Trails and Wilderness on the Blue Ridge RD. Also a Southerner, she was born in Birmingham. Passionate about trails, Taylor has hiked in the Himalayas and worked seasonal trail crews in Yellowstone, the Tetons and Big Bend National Parks. She came to our area from the Talladega National Forest where she most recently served as a senior fire fighter.

Earlier this year, the Chattooga River RD in northeast Georgia welcomed a new District Ranger, Ed Hunter. Originally from Louisiana, Ed has worked on national forests in Utah, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas before coming to Georgia.

We welcome Ed, Jeff, Karen and Taylor and look forward to working with them. We encourage BCHNG members to get to know each of them. They are our partners as we work together to protect and preserve recreational trail opportunities for all on our nearby public lands.

VOLUNTEER TIME *by Bob Goggins*

BCHNG members are still hard at work volunteering their time and efforts to maintain the Jacks River Fields Campground and maintain equestrian and other trails in the north Georgia area. Also, considerable volunteer time has been spent in certifications, education and trail planning with the Forest Service.

Volunteer time reported for 2012 thru 09/30 totals 1,174.25 hours. In contrast, total volunteer time reported for all of 2011 was 1,486 hours and 926 hours for all of 2010. **We are on track to exceed 2011 contributions, so let's turn out for a strong finish of volunteer workdays in 2012!**

Remember to report your volunteer time and efforts to Bob Goggins at: rgoggins@tds.net or 706-838-4170. Please report your work time as soon as possible after the work date so that accurate and current records are maintained. Volunteer time is reported to the Forest Service monthly, and to BCHA national annually.

Also, if you notice trail problems that need attention, please report them to Bob Goggins so that they can be addressed. Report date noted, trail and location, and a description of the problem to be corrected. Thank you for all your efforts!

BCHNG MEMBERSHIP *by Paul Saunders*

What's new in the membership corner? We currently have more business members than ever before. This is a milestone and we are grateful for the support of our business community. Our membership committee, comprised of Paul & Susan Saunders, Nanci Tarrant and Hanley & Kathleen Rose, think we also need to really focus our efforts on recruiting more individual and family members as we head into the New Year. We have started to actively market our organization using handout cards, new membership forms, direct contact with the community including friends and family, businesses we support, and other local equestrian organizations as well as participation in community events.

You can help us in this effort by communicating with your equestrian friends, and businesses and

organizations that you support. If you need information related to our mission, please visit our website at www.bchn.org, or contact any of the membership committee members.

This year we are also implementing a new membership approach. The membership period will be 12 months from the date a renewal or new membership is received. In the past, membership ended on December 31, making it more difficult to recruit members in the second half of the year. So, please renew now so we can start the New Year off with another strong member base.

BUSINESS SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: ***Cohutta Country Store***

The store, located on Dunbarton Road just west of downtown Blue Ridge, is owned and operated by Laurie and Jim McClellan. Laurie has been involved with horses since childhood, and Jim is a veterinarian at the Tri-County Animal Hospital in Murphy, NC. Their current menagerie includes beef cattle, Dartmoor ponies, 4 dogs, and 3 cats.

The McClellans opened their original store in November 2006 and have been in their current location for about 5 years. Their 6 full and 2 part time employees are extremely knowledgeable and actively involved in many local organizations and events including the Union County and Copper Basin Saddle Clubs. The staff is quick to point out that they are the only true tack store in Blue Ridge and that special feed or tack orders are not a problem. You need it, they can get it. For additional information, call 706-946-6366 or visit <http://www.cohuttacountrystore.com>. And don't forget to stop in and support this great asset to our equine community and all other BCHNG business members.

REPORT ON 2012 SOUTHEASTERN EQUESTRIAN TRAILS CONFERENCE (SETC) by Kathleen Corcoran

This year's Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference was held in Lexington, Kentucky, July 12–14th. What a backdrop – the Horse Capital of the World! The conference took place at the Hilton downtown and the horse world was everywhere; horse farm pictures on the walls, horse statues, and the Kentucky Oaks conference room.

On Thursday there were two field trips/workshops for conference attendees. One was about “Developing Trail Partnerships” and was held at the historic Shaker Village. The other was called “Horses and History” and was a tour of several

famous Lexington horse farms. The choice of which workshop to attend is always hard. That evening there was a networking reception where everyone could reconnect with old friends and meet other attendees.

At Friday morning's breakfast, attendees got an introduction to Kentucky through equestrian tourism and heritage that was highlighted by a dynamic speech by the Governor's wife, Kentucky's First Lady Jane Beshear, an avid equestrian and a vocal advocate of horse trails.

The first session Friday morning was “The Pristine Principle – When You Go, Leave No Trace” by LNT Master Educator, Bob Hoverson. Bob lives in Montana and is the retired national LNT Program Manager. He worked for the US Forest Service and is a pack and stock use instructor. Bob's message was that no matter where you ride or where you camp, leave it pristine, as if you had never been there.

The other session on Friday morning was “Kids, Horses and Summer Adventure: Learning to be Stewards of the Trail” moderated by Michelle Adams from Central Kentucky Back Country Horsemen. Michelle admitted that when she took up the call for youth participation from the Alabama SETC Conference, she had a hard time getting participation in the beginning. But she persisted and found a cadre of young people who started to get excited about horsemanship, camping, and taking care of the trails. By the time of the Kentucky conference, they were enthusiastic partners who individually spoke about their learning experiences. The final youth speaker that morning was MacKenzie Beck, a 16-year-old girl from Benton, Tennessee, who had been a youth participant at the 2011 Alabama conference. She asked to be a speaker that morning and related her year of growing and learning about stewardship of the trails in a very stirring speech that touched everyone in the room.

After the morning break there was a panel discussion with photographic examples about using pack stock to help public land managers. Edith Conyers, Roy Cornett, Emily Dennis and BCHNG member Joanne Mitchell talked about using mules, oxen and pack stock to haul old cars out of the forest, pack in trout fingerlings, pack out trash and tires and move materials to help repair a trail. Public land managers have been listening and are utilizing pack stock more and more in the eastern front country.

The Friday lunch keynote speaker was Dr. Susan Stormer, who spoke about “Good Equestrian

Trails Can Change Your Life, Great Equestrian Trails Can Change Your World.” Her talk was a reminder that some of the best trails can be in your own nearby forest. The breakout sessions that followed addressed water quality, invasive plants and riding in local city and county parks.

After wrapping up the Friday session, attendees were hosted for refreshments and dinner by the Kentucky organizers at the historic Red Mile Round Barn at the Red Mile Racetrack.

Saturday morning’s breakfast speaker was Tom Gilbert, Senior Conservation Finance Director for the Trust for Public Lands, who talked about an “Introduction to the Trust for Public Lands and How It Can Help Equestrian Organizations.” After breakfast there were two breakout sessions, “Understanding the New US Forest Service Rule” and “An In-Depth Introduction to Water Quality.”

Other breakout sessions included a focus on wildlife, water on the trail, trail planning and building, legislative issues and the success of the “Trail Towns” tourism initiative.

At lunch Darley Newman, host of the Emmy Award winning PBS show, “Equitrekking,” gave an energetic talk on “Exploring the World on Horseback” complete with videos from her show. It was very entertaining and several people quickly volunteered to be her assistant on her treks.

Being a part of the SETC Conference helps trail riders understand the importance of sustainable trails, while presenting new information on maintenance ideas and the value of cooperation between trail user groups. It also provides BCHNG exposure to equestrians from other states, public land managers from across the nation, and others who are influential in making decisions and taking actions that impact access to public lands by horses and pack stock.

STIPENDS AVAILABLE FOR CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

For those who haven’t attended an SETC conference, please consider going to one. BCHNG members can apply for a stipend to help cover expenses and the learning experiences are priceless. The next conference will be in Rock Hill, South Carolina, July 18-20, 2013. If you are interested in applying for a stipend, contact info@bchng.org for information, and help represent BCHNG at the South Carolina conference!

GOVERNOR CONTINUES RTP PROGRAM IN GEORGIA

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) of the Federal Highway Administration returns to the states non-highway motor fuel taxes collected at the pump by off-road recreational vehicle users of trails on public lands. Funds for the RTP program are included in the federal transportation bill that, over the years, has been routinely passed by the US Congress.

As this year’s bill was being debated, RTP funding was in jeopardy. But with extensive and diligent grass roots support from recreational trail users across the nation, including the equestrian community, RTP funds were re-authorized in the MAP-21 transportation bill passed last summer. This year’s bill, however, included a new provision that gave each state’s governor the option to “opt-out” of the program.

We are grateful to Governor Deal for his decision to continue Georgia’s participation in the RTP program, which makes it possible to maintain and enhance many of the trails we enjoy. A big **thank you**, also, to BCH members who appealed to their elected officials to support this important program. Local communities in Georgia have received, on average, \$2 million in grants per year.

Below are excerpts from the press release issued by Governor Deal to announce his decision:

*ATLANTA, AUGUST 31, 2012 -- Governor Nathan Deal today announced his intentions to continue state participation in the **Recreational Trails Program**, a matching grant program funded through the Federal Highway Trust Fund to support the creation and maintenance of trails in Georgia’s local communities.*

“In every region of Georgia, recreational trails attract tourism, enhance recreation opportunities, and improve public health, while also promoting job creation, effective partnerships, and successful service projects,” said Deal.

Since the program was first created in 1991, Georgia’s Recreational Trails Program has funded over 240 projects with over \$17 million in grants to local communities to support both motorized and non-motorized trails in Georgia, such as water trails, cycling trails and horse trails. Local communities that apply for the grants are required to provide a match of at least 20 percent of the project costs. Most of the projects’ construction work is done by volunteers and small businesses.

LEAVE NO TRACE – LNT PRINCIPLE #3: DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

– by Bob Wagner & Melinda Towe

Pack it in – Pack it out! What a no-brainer but perhaps the most abused by all user groups.

Hunting season is now upon us so the blame for unsightly trash in the forests and wilderness areas shifts from equestrians, back packers, and bikers directly on to the shoulders of the hunting community. Wait a minute, what's wrong with this picture? Isn't the hunting community basically or at least to some degree made up of the same user groups?

Talk to any outdoor enthusiast about trash and the answer is invariably the same: "I take mine out." Sort of makes you wonder who is leaving the stuff doesn't it? Disposing of waste properly isn't just about the trash that comes out of our pockets, back packs and saddle bags. I wonder how the same people who responded that they "always take theirs out" would respond to human waste?

"¿Dónde está el baño?" No matter how it's said, "Where is the bathroom?" is an important question. The four objectives of proper human waste disposal are:

1. Avoid polluting water sources.
2. Eliminate contact with insects and animals.
3. Maximize decomposition.
4. Minimize the chances of social impacts.

Whenever facilities or outhouses are available they should be used. If facilities aren't available dig and use a "cat hole." Cat holes should be at least six to eight inches deep (your accuracy will determine hole circumference!), and at least 200 feet from any water source. Two hundred feet is approximately 70 average adult steps. Step this off at home and you will be surprised how far two hundred feet really is. A third, and not so popular option, is to carry your waste out, should you decide this is the best option for the area you will be visiting, carry a couple of one gallon size zip lock bags for the waste and toilet paper and dispose of it properly back at your trailer or camp.

The biggest complaint equestrians get from other user groups? You ready for this? **Horse Manure.** Take the time to scatter the manure at trailheads and staging areas. If you use the stalls and high lines, take the extra time to rehab the highline and stalls, bag wasted hay and carry it back to the barn for disposal. If other users see you doing

this, and making the effort to minimize the impact, there are less complaints and less work on scheduled workdays for the volunteer crews. The positive perception of equestrians just gained a few points and we all know that any time that happens, it's a good thing.

It is imperative that as Back Country Horsemen we continue to "raise the bar" and educate user groups in proper *Leave No Trace* techniques. It is in everyone's best interest.



Happy
Trails,
Melinda
Towe &
Robert
Wagner

BCHNG has three LNT Master Educators among its members. For information about LNT Training for your saddle clubs, 4H Groups, Scout Troops, schools or other organizations, contact:

Susan Shedd – susan@appalachian-realty.com

Melinda Towe – melindatowe@yahoo.com

Bob Wagner – twostar@hughes.net

NEW FEATURE – MEMBERS' FAVORITES

BOB'S BLACK IRON FAVORITE RECIPES

ONE POT "GONE WESTERN" BREAKFAST

- 1lb sausage
- 1 28-oz bag frozen Potatoes O'Brien (thawed)
- 1 12-oz bag shredded cheddar cheese
- 1½ dozen eggs (beaten)
- ¼ C. milk
- 3 sliced, jalapeno peppers (optional)

Warm 12" Dutch oven and brown 1lb sausage and sliced jalapenos. Remove sausage and peppers and add potatoes to drippings, stir to coat, warm for 5 min. Cover potatoes with sausage / peppers, do not stir, sprinkle cheese over sausage to cover. Add milk to eggs, stir, and cover cheese, sausage, and potatoes – do not stir. Cover with 12-14 briquettes (depending on outside temp). In your Volcano, with briquettes only, 10 on bottom, 15 on top. In your oven, 350 degrees and wait for the smell.

NEW FEATURE—GREAT PLACES TO RIDE

WHERE: Jake & Bull Mountain trail system, near Dahlonega GA

WEBSITE:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/conf/recarea/?recid=10537>

LAND MANAGER:

U S Forest Service
Blue Ridge Ranger District
2042 Highway 515 West
Blairsville, GA 30512
706-745-6928

GPS COORDINATES OR DRIVING

DIRECTIONS: Nimblewill Church Road, off Hwy 52 between Dahlonega & Ellijay

ESTIMATED MILES OF TRAIL: 36 trail miles plus many more miles of gravel roads

OPEN TO WHICH TRAIL USERS: Multi-use trail system – horse, hike, bike, hunt (ride after 10:00 a.m. during hunting season)

OVERNIGHT OR DAY RIDING: Day parking and overnight camping available

PRIMITIVE OR HOOK-UP: Primitive camping at Jake Mtn. parking area and Bull Mtn. parking area. No water. No electricity. No toilet. High tie areas for horses are in both camping areas. Bring your own horse and human water.

TRAIL TERRAIN AND TREAD: Trails are intermediate – not for beginners. There are some rocky sections. Shoes or boots are recommended for your horse. Water is available in several areas on the trail – but not in the parking areas.

CONDITION OF TRAILS: Good to excellent. Most are newly constructed routes or recently improved by professional trail builders.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THIS PLACE: This trail system has the most miles of any system in Georgia. The trails are in wonderful shape for the most part, with many of them having been constructed by professionals within the last couple of years. There are numerous dirt/gravel roads that can be incorporated into your ride as well – adding many miles. There are 4 colored loops so you can simply start on a color and end up back where you started.

AND It's FREE!!!! There is no cost to park, camp or use the trails!!!

MAINTAINED BY: Primarily volunteers, mainly equestrians from CTHA and mountain bikers from SORBA, maintain this trail system.

SUBMITTED BY: Debbie Crowe, BCHNG and Chattahoochee Trail Horse Association (CTHA).

NEW FEATURE – FOR THE NEXT ISSUE: CLASSIFIEDS FOR BCHNG MEMBERS

For members of BCHNG, we are offering short qualified ads *free* in our quarterly newsletter. Please limit the ads to 25 words or less, including contact name/email or telephone. Send to info@bchng.org two weeks prior to the end of each quarter for inclusion in the next newsletter. Business and items for sale are welcome. No personals please.

NEW FEATURE – MEMBERS' MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Members, please send photos of your memorable moments with your horses from rides, workdays, meetings, shows, packing and camping trips. We'll use them in future editions of the newsletter. Send to: info@bchng.org.

PHOTO COLLAGE ON NEXT PAGE – CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:

Forest Supervisor George Bain accepts CoTrails plaque presented by BCHNG president, Carlos Martel, on behalf of CoTrails Volunteers; BCHNG business member Chuck Panter volunteers and operates his tractor to move kiosk at JRF Horse Camp to a safer location, after he bush-hogged the BCHNG-adopted section of the Pinhoti Trail between FS 64 & the South Fork Trail; BCHNG display was a popular destination at SETC; Kentucky's First Lady Jane Beshear, with SETC Conference organizers Ginny Grulke (right) and BCH National Director, Edith Conyers (left); SETC presentation on the "science & technology" of trails; BCHNG board members Kathleen Corcoran & Nanci Tarrant participate in County Mounties dressage test; BCHNG's entry in Blue Ridge 4th of July Parade, joined by Blue Ridge RD's Taylor Hamilton.

NEW FEATURE – MEMBERS’ MEMORABLE MOMENTS



Sustainability Ratings based on Trail Grade & Slope Alignment Angle

Trail Slope Alignment	Study Area	Trail Grade			
		0-2%	3-10%	11-20%	>20%
0-30°	BSF	2.3	10.1	6.6	0.3

Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference
 Lexington, Kentucky
 July 12-14, 2012

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 Conserve
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The most up to date list of our Sponsors is always on the www.bchn.org website at:
www.bchn.org/Pages/BCHNG%20Sponsors.htm

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Your \$60 business sponsorship will include your 2012 membership in BCHNG AND BCMA, our newsletter and an ad like this in our newsletter and on our website. PLEASE SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS TO PROTECT YOUR "RIGHT TO RIDE." Become a Sponsor Today!!



P.O. Box 1471
 Blue Ridge, Ga 30513