

# Endurance Riders of Alberta



## Ride Management Handbook

Rev. 0 August, 2000

## PREFACE

“An Endurance Ride is a competition to test the speed and the endurance ability of a horse. It should demonstrate at the same time the competitor's knowledge of pace and use of his horse across the country. The horse's performance over various types of ground and over natural hazards is significant to determine the horsemanship of the competitor and the manners of the horse. In an Endurance Ride any member of the Genus Equus counts as a horse.” - *FEI Rule Book*

“Endurance riding is a test of the stamina and fitness of the horse.”- *FEI Rule Book*

This handbook has been assembled to help Ride Managers put on a fair ride that tests the horses and is enjoyable by all participants and volunteers.

This handbook is based on ERA rules, experience of ERA members, the old AERC (American Endurance Ride Conference) Ride Manager's Handbook, Articles on ride management from the AERC Endurance News by Courtney Hart (reprinted in November 1997) and Randy Eiland - January 1998, the FEI rule book and a host of other sources.

We have plagiarized freely from these sources and hope that none of the originators of these articles take offence. We have attempted to contact the various sources to ensure there are no copyright issues of concern. It is believed that all the material included in this handbook is in the public domain.

This handbook was created in the spirit of furthering the sport of endurance riding. If there is anything useful in it for you or your organization, feel free to use and distribute it with the same intent.

This hand book was created by a committee of members of ERA:

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2000 ERA Board and other Ride managers.	- Editorial review and comments

In 1998, ERA initiated an annual Ride Manager's Award for the best managed ride. During 1998, riders were given ride evaluation forms to fill out and send in after each ride so a list of what makes a good ride can be maintained by ERA. The survey has been informative, and has been incorporated as part of the Ride Management package sent to each Ride Manager. The 1998 survey results have been taken into account in developing the handbook.(Which would not have happened if my computer had not blown up in the summer of 1998 and destroyed 60 % of the handbook - rewritten in 1999 to August 2000. However, it is finally done.

Wayne Delbeke, August , 2000.

Rev. 0 August, 2000

# Favourite Sayings

To Finish is to Win

Ride Your Own Ride

Go to Heaven, Ride Like Hell - TRAC bumper sticker

Ride, Really Ride - motto of the Western States Trail Association - Tevis Cup

This is not ride for whiners and snivellers - Wendell Robie on the Tevis Cup

At completion a horse should be used, but not used up - Dr Charles Barseleau

If you ride to complete, you can have a lot of good days. If you ride to win, you may not have so many. I like to have a lot of good days - Dr. Matthew McKay-Smith

Be careful how much you invest in a ride. Over investment can take away the fun - Dr. Matthew McKay-Smith

Been there, done that, bought the t-shirt

If you want to win, just get in front and stay there - Becky Hart

There are no problem horses, just problem riders - Mary Manyponies

Looks like a duck, smells like a duck, walks like a duck - it probably is a duck

Heard on the trail - What breed is your horse? 100% pure A--h-le! (Short for hot headed Arab)

There are gifted horses

No foot, no horse!

We just want to ride

**We Just Want to Have Fun!**

Add your own:

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## 1.0 Introduction

This handbook has been prepared to assist Alberta Ride Managers to put on a successful ERA ride. It should be read in conjunction with the ERA Rule Book and the ERA Veterinary Handbook. There is also an ERA Rider Handbook. Members may also wish to refer to the AERC web page at <http://www.aerc.com> for additional information.

Ride Managers should be familiar with the rules, both written and unwritten, and should be familiar with the typical practices of ERA. ERA wants to promote rides with equal opportunity for all members at all levels. This requires striking a balance between the experienced riders who like to ride distances of greater than 80 kilometres (50 miles) (Endurance Rides); those riders who prefer to ride in the Limited Distance events of 40 to 55 kilometres (25 to 35 miles); and novice riders. Many Ride Managers put on fun rides of 25 to 35 kilometres (15 to 20 miles) to introduce novice riders to the sport. Depending on location, the number of riders in the Limited Distance is often twice that in the Endurance Ride; and the number in the fun ride can be twice that in the Limited Distance. Ride Managers should plan appropriately.

ERA sanctions endurance rides in Alberta. ERA participates in the Alberta Equestrian Federation (AEF) and the Canadian Long Distance Riding Association (CaLDRA). Through AEF and CaLDRA, there is participation in the Canadian Equestrian Federation (CEF). CEF coordinates national and international competitions with the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI). Members of ERA frequently participate in the Endurance Management Committee of CEF to coordinate international events. Endurance Riding is now one of the disciplines on the Canadian Equestrian Team. Local rides are the grounding for higher levels of competition, although many riders never progress beyond riding just for the fun of it.

Ride Managers need to consider and provide for all types of competitors.

From the 1999 Rule book:

*While the ERA assumes that most participants are responsible and caring, it is recognized that a highly competitive and demanding sport requires regulation. The ERA's concern in establishing rules and regulations is to assure that competition occurs within standardized parameters considered fair and reasonably safe for equine and rider. The ERA services the requirements of the competitor by promulgating and establishing rules and regulations, recording and publishing results of events, and providing awards; but the competitor is totally responsible for self and mount before, during and after an endurance ride. ERA Rules and Regulations provide minimum conditions and directives for managing and competing in ERA sanctioned endurance rides. Additional measures may be taken by any ride to provide greater safety for equine and rider. However, except in the event of emergency, these additional measures must be explained to the competitors and made available to them in written form at a pre-ride meeting. We not only feel it is necessary to regulate our sport, but also to penalize infractions and to provide mechanisms for addressing grievances and appealing decisions.*

## **2.0 Who can Put on an Endurance Ride ... and why would they want to?**

### **2.1 Who?**

As of 1998 any person, club, society or group can request sanctioning for and ERA Endurance Ride. In 1992, the Board of Directors of ERA voted to only allow charitable organizations to put on an officially sanctioned endurance ride, or in the absence thereof, the ride would be an “ERA” ride with all profits or losses to the account of ERA. However, this rule was not rigidly enforced. As a consequence in 1998 ERA confirmed that anyone wishing to put on a ride could apply to the ERA Sanctioning Committee for a ride date. The Sanctioning Committee will review the application for compliance with the rules. If in compliance, approval will be granted. If not in compliance, required revisions will be noted. If any rules are violated or have been violated in the past, the Sanctioning Committee can withhold the sanctioning of the ride. Sanctioning can also be withheld for poorly organized rides or rides which do not meet other criteria of the Sanctioning Committee. The Sanctioning Committee can remove sanctioning before during or after a ride for violation of the rules or specified sanctioning requirements.

ERA will sponsor new rides and assist new Ride Managers to organize their rides. A number of Alberta rides each year contribute to charitable organizations. To assure ERA members that they are making appropriate commitments, ERA reserves the right to audit charitable rides and publish the results as part of the promotion of the sport. ERA will also assist Ride Managers in the promotion of charitable rides.

### **2.2 Why?**

Why would anyone want to donate all their time and effort to put on an endurance ride? It can take months of planning, weeks of cutting and marking trails, a lot of organization of veterinarians, food, volunteers and materials, and there is always the risk that bad weather or other circumstance beyond the control of the Ride Manager could result in a financial loss. So why would anyone want to be a Ride Manager and/or organize a ride?

Firstly, because our members know that we need to put something in to our sport if we want to get anything out of it. Many people ride for years without putting on a ride. Others put on many rides and may ride little if at all. There is great satisfaction in organizing a successful ride. On the other hand, many of our members lack the organizational skills, drive or free time to put on a ride (but will often volunteer to help others where and when they can). Our members contribute to the club in many different ways. ERA members should all give great respect and thanks to the members that organize rides. They provide us with the opportunity to participate in a wonderful sport.

Most rides in Alberta are sponsored by local clubs and/or charitable organizations. Well run rides can provide significant financial returns to the sponsoring organization. This in itself can be a good motivator for ride management. However, financial reward should not be the only goal.

Friendship, rider development, horsemanship, recognition, volunteer development, veterinary development and just having fun should be a part of every ride. Good meals, good trails, completion awards and recognition of participants should also be a part of every ride to keep people coming back year after year.

Everyone - riders, crew, volunteers, veterinarians, land owners, ride management and all associated with the ride should have FUN. Create an environment that promotes having a good time, and the ride will be a success.

### **Thank you for considering the toughest job at a ride.**

“PUTTING ON A RIDE does not have to be defined as STRESS TO THE MAX.

If you make a checklist, and keep the ride simple, it will work. Lay out a trail that you would like to ride, treat everyone as guests, remember to relax, and try to have FUN, the ride will take care of itself. One thing is for sure, the ride generally reflects the attitude of the Ride Manager, if you are stressed the ride will be stressed...if you take things in stride, stay relaxed, the ride will reflect that attitude. I think most experienced Ride Managers will agree that once the ride starts, it kind of develops a life of it's own. It is just like raising children, if you provide a strong foundation and support, in the end both children and rides will turn out to be good.” - *Randy Eiland*

## **3.0 What is an Endurance Ride?**

### **3.1 Endurance**

An **Endurance Ride** is a race over a prescribed course in the prescribed direction over a distance of 80 to 160 kilometres in one day (50 to 100 miles) or up to 240 kilometres (150 miles) in three days with no minimum time for completion. All horses start at the same time. The placings are decided in order of crossing the finishing line. In order to place, however, the horse must be judged to be “fit to continue” by the veterinarian judges. The total time allowed for completion is 6.667 kilometres per hour (4.167 miles per hour) including compulsory rest stops. A minimum of one rest stop each 40 kilometres (25 miles) is recommended. The rules require only one rest stop in an 80 kilometre (50 miles) race, although many rides will have three or four. Similarly in 160 kilometre races (100 miles), five stops are recommended. Many rides have more, particularly if the terrain is difficult. Endurance rides are open to any equine over 60 months of age.

### **3.2 Limited Distance**

**Limited Distance** rides are not the same as the Endurance Rides but a different classification with slightly different rules. This “Division” was designed to accommodate development of young horses (open to horses over 48 months of age), young riders, new riders, reintroduction of injured horses and/or riders, conditioning rides for development prior to entering the Endurance, and for riders who just want to ride a little shorter distance. Because the ride is developmental in nature and meant to be highly controlled, and frequently involves younger or inexperienced horses and riders, veterinary controls and guidance should be significantly more stringent. Completion is based on the first horse to meet the pulse and respiration criteria. Controls for Limited Distance are meant to prevent over riding of the equines by young or inexperienced riders.

### **3.3 General Ride Information**

All equines are subject to drug testing. ERA has a ‘0’ (zero) tolerance for performance enhancing substances. Drug testing may be undertaken at any ride at anytime. A minimum of two rides per year are tested with at least three horses selected for testing at each tested ride.

All horses must not be medicated within one hour of the finish or face disqualification. All horses must reach a pulse of 64 beats per minute within 30 minutes of completion (unless special weather conditions warrant and the criteria is changed by head veterinarian). Often the criteria is reduced to 60 bpm in the Limited Distance to reduce the risk to young equines. It is also sometimes reduced at the first or early vet checks in the Endurance distances where there is challenging terrain to reduce the speed and risk of injury to the mounts.

Junior riders must be accompanied by a competent adult sponsor throughout the ride, although it need not be the same person, and one adult may sponsor more than one Junior. Juniors must wear helmets.

All riders who successfully complete will receive a completion certificate. The top four finishers in Endurance will receive an award. The Best Conditioned horse selected from the first ten finishers in Endurance will receive an award, provided the veterinary judges feel an award is warranted. Ride Management may use stricter rules provided they are announced prior to the start of the ride (The Sanctioning Committee may need to be advised to ensure compliance with the intent of the rules). Ride Management may also provide other awards such as “Top Vet Score”, “Best Horsemanship”, “Most Congenial Rider”, etc. at their discretion. Awards in Limited Distance may vary from ride to ride. Some rides historically have not given placing

awards in Limited Distance to discourage racing of young or developmental horses.

Endurance rides are a test of horsemanship and the athletic ability of the horse. For many riders, just completing the ride and enjoying the magnificent scenery and companionship of equine and human friends is reward enough for participating in the sport.

### **3.4 What Is Important to the Riders?**

ERA created a survey form to find out what was important to its members attending rides. Number one (aside from having a ride) is to have a well marked trail. This is followed by good veterinarian controls (a given), completion awards and recognition of participants, and camaraderie. The members also expressed their appreciation for good food at breaks and after the ride, and for the support of the volunteers at vet checks, check in, and at camp. Well selected and safe trails are appreciated. Safety at the start, finish and during the ride should be considered. However, everyone involved in this sport must be reminded that the sport is inherently dangerous given that we are dealing with large, unpredictable animals in an outdoor environment.

### **4.0 What is ERA?**

The Endurance Riders of Alberta (ERA) is the sanctioning body for endurance riding in the province of Alberta. The Endurance Riders of Alberta was formed in 1980, and was incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act in 1986.

The governorship is provided by a Board of Directors and a series of committees. For more information, see the ERA web site at <http://www.enduranceriders.ab.ca>.

The most frequently quoted Objects of ERA are:

to promote amateur athletics in the form of endurance riding in the province of Alberta

**C** to establish a minimum standard for such competitions

**C** to ensure that all competitions are humanely run so as to avoid cruelty and suffering to horses

- C to co-ordinate endurance riding within the province of Alberta
- C to compile a list of qualified veterinarians, lay judges, pulse and respiration technicians and technical advisors who are familiar with endurance riding
- C to aid in the development, preparation and selection of qualified Alberta representatives for National and International competitions
- C to promote endurance riding through education
- C to co-operate with the Alberta Equestrian Federation and the Canadian Equestrian Federation in the education and promotion of endurance riding

## **5.0 Ride Type and Length**

So you have decided you would like to put on a ride. What type of ride do you want to put on and what distances should be involved?

First time Ride Managers should keep it simple. Remember, the more distances and complexity, the more volunteers, planning and organization required. The more facilities provided to or for the riders, the more effort needed.

### **5.1 No Frills**

Some first time Ride Managers put on a “No Frills” ride. This generally means there will be a minimum of services provided. This can mean no lunch, no supper, minimal services, and untested trails. The ride circular provided should indicate the “extent” of the no frills especially if there is a lack of water such as in a “dry camp” ride where there is little water available for people or stock.

### **5.2 Point to Point**

The first endurance rides were “point to point” rides of up to 160 kilometres (100 miles). These rides are difficult to manage as it requires careful management to ensure services are available to

the front runners and to the last riders through the controls. It also requires special “crewing” capabilities since the equine/rider teams do not return to the start. Drivers and trailing capabilities must be available to move rigs or return the equine/rider team to the start point.

### **5.3 Out and Back Loop**

The logistics difficulty with the point to point rides is partially solved by designing a trail that loops out and returns to the start point. This may involve one or several vet checks and crewing points along the route with the finish being at or near the starting point so that there is no need to relocate. However, there is still the logistics of getting crew, volunteers and veterinarians to the “out” vet checks and control points and dealing with the faster and slower riders.

### **5.4 Cut Off Times**

In order to deal with the problem of spreading out riders over too large an area, with the slower riders having little chance of completing the entire course in time, and overextending the volunteers, many rides of the above type establish cut off times at the control points. Riders arriving at a control point after the designated cut off time are obliged to withdraw so that the volunteers may move on to another designated control point. However, no control point should ever be abandoned before all riders and mounts are accounted for. Given the hazardous nature of our sport, risk of injury to rider or mount is high. It is important that Ride Management endeavour to be aware of where participants are on the trail and their status in case veterinary or medical treatment is required. A control point must be maintained until Ride Management is certain the last riders are accounted for. (See also Drag Riders and radios.)

### **5.5 Clover Leaf or Loop Rides**

In order to deal with these logistical issues, many rides are designed as a “clover leaf” so that the ride starts and ends at or near the same point, and all (or most) veterinary checks are at the base camp. Each loop goes out from the base camp and returns to it. There may or may not be crewing points or additional control points on the loops. This allows a ride to be done with fewer volunteers and allows more than one distance to be run over the same trails using different combinations of loops. This is the most common design in our rides in Alberta.

## 5.6 Distances - One Day Rides

The most common, and **minimum** distance for an Endurance Ride is 80 kilometres (50 miles). Rides of less than this distance are **NOT** considered to be **Endurance Rides**. ERA sanctions **Limited Distance** rides of 40 to 57 kilometres (25 to 35 miles) but **ONLY** in conjunction with an Endurance Ride. A Limited Distance Ride may not be held on its own. In addition, some Ride Managers put on shorter “Fun” rides of 15 to 25 kilometres (10 to 15 miles) for new comers as an introduction to the sport. However, the Sanctioning Committee will normally ask that Ride Management provide assurances that the “Fun” ride will not interfere with the “Sanctioned Activities” and that there are adequate volunteers and trail. Fun rides are **NOT** sanctioned by ERA, are not part of the sport of endurance, and are not insured under ERA’s insurance as they are not part of the officially sanctioned event. Ride Managers’ should be sure to have the proper insurance if they include unsanctioned activities at an ERA event. They must also make it clear it is not part of the event or the coverages. Should there be problems due to unsanctioned activities conducted in concert with the ERA sanctioned event, sanctioning of future events may be withheld. Fun ride activities must not be allowed to interfere with the sanctioned events of ERA including access to trails, veterinary services, volunteers, transportation, emergency response, and other activities related to the Endurance Ride. (Note also to ride management that only members and volunteers participating in a sanctioned event are covered by our insurance. Non-members who ride are not covered. They should be encouraged to join.)

Typically, one day rides are limited to 160 kilometres (100 miles) although there have been longer rides of up to 200 kilometres (120 miles) and more in one day in the past in other countries. Rides of any distance between 80 and 160 kilometres are common. Often more than one distance is offered by seasoned Ride Managers. (e.g. Limited Distance of 20 km, Endurance of 80, 120, and 160 km on the same day.)

## 5.7 Elevator Rides

This type of ride is not common in Alberta. It takes special planning to allow for an Elevator Ride. An Elevator Ride can only take place when specifically offered by Ride Management and Sanctioned as an Elevator Ride. An Elevator Ride normally requires that the “different” distances start at the same time and follow the same trails in the same direction and order of loops. A rider may enter a lesser distance, and after completing the lesser distance successfully, may elect to “elevate” to a longer distance. However, once having elevated, they can not drop back to the lower level even if they are unable to complete. In some instances, where two distances start at

different times, riders may be allowed to elevate, but may then only ride for distance with no placing.

## **5.8 Multi-Day Rides**

Multi-day rides started typically as “three-day fifties” totalling 150 miles as referenced in various rule books around the world including ERA’s rule book. (Three days of 80 km totalling 240 km.) There have been several multi-day rides held in Alberta of two days of 200 km and three day rides of up to 250 km. A **true** multi-day ride requires successful completion of each day of the ride and a final post ride veterinary inspection. Failure to complete any segment results in non-completion. For this reason, many people are reluctant to enter true multi-day rides given that they could have a problem on the last leg of the last day and not get any credit for the miles ridden. The plus is that there are usually fewer competitors. Because of this, many Ride Managers offer several “one day” rides in conjunction with or instead of a “true” multi-day ride. Two day 60 km (total of 120 km) are popular internationally. The different days may be on the same trails, different trails or combinations of different loops and trails.

## **5.9 Historical Rides**

In the United States, there has been special sanctioning of “**Historical**” rides of several hundred miles over a period of 5 days - typically 400 to 500 km (250 to 300 miles). These rides are becoming increasingly popular as people can plan their holidays and attend 5 weekends of rides in one week. In addition, many horses seem to thrive on these multi-day rides (which are typically ridden at a lower speed.) These rides are held as multiple **individual** one day rides where riders can use more than one horse and may choose to ride successive or alternative days at their choice or capability. Typically, no alternative distances, Fun rides or Limited Distance rides are held, sanctioned or allowed in conjunction with these rides due to the need to focus. These rides are traditionally point to point rides along historical equestrian or pioneer trails which require a lot of planning and organization.

## **5.10 Special Events**

ERA and other organizations do sanction special events. ERA sanctioned the one and only 24 hour ride where each rider was allowed to use four horses riding continuously for 24 hours

subject to normal veterinary controls. Several riders where able to complete over 300 km with the winner doing more than 325 km (200 miles). ERA considers special events on their own merits. In the United States, up to 2000 miles (3200 km) of special events have been sanctioned as individual 80 km (50 mile) rides over a period of eight weeks.

## 6.0 TRAILS

**The number one issue from the survey of our members is good, well marked trails.**

Our members accept lack of volunteers, lack of food, lack of amenities, and other ride issues with little complaint. The thing they want most out of a ride is well marked trails. Recently in Alberta, our rides have had so much ribbon that it sometimes could be tied end to end to form a continuous ribbon from start to finish. Congratulations to our trail markers and ride management as they have definitely gotten the message. However, there are always the night stalking de-ribboners and anti-horse types who not only remove ribbon but re-ribbon trails to go the wrong way and into dead ends. In addition, there are areas where use of ribbons are not allowed or inadvisable. New ride managers need to have the issues surrounding trail marking clarified.

**“Ribbons - before the ride they are a necessary nuisance, during the ride they are essential, after the ride they are litter.”**

### 6.1 Trail Selection

However, before you can mark a trail, you must have selected it. The different types of rides (point to point, clover leaf, etc.) have been discussed previously. Trails should be selected with the type of ride in mind. If you have a ride with less than an 80% overall completion rate, maybe the trails were too difficult for the participants. Remember, the experienced riders who regularly compete at 160 kilometres have a very different perception of the trails than the newbies doing their first 40 kilometre ride. While many rides have common trail for different distances, make sure the shorter distance has the easier trails.

Also, if all the trails are all easy, add vet checks to slow the pace down to prevent over riding. Many of our rides with high pull rates have been on easy rides where high speed caused problems. The saying, “Speed Kills!” applies to our sport. In Alberta we have recently seen as many or more injuries and metabolic problems on the “easy” rides as we do on the more difficult rides. On rides with hills, bush trails, and difficult terrain, riders tend to be careful and pace their horses. On four track trails and lots of road and open fields, and good visibility, riders seem to have difficulty maintaining an even pace. They see other riders and speed up to catch up and pass. They have what looks like good footing and they may run into hidden obstacles, or not realize the toll that miles of hard gravel road can exact on an equine.

However, the type of trail is often not an option. It depends on your location. Your ride plan

should take the type of terrain in your area into consideration.

Remember, riders do appreciate lots of well groomed off road trails. If a primary trail must go through a bog, down a slippery hill, through dead fall, or other obstacles, consider putting in an alternate trail for the less adventurous riders. Where possible provide corduroy roads (riders and horses hate this stuff but if nothing else is possible ...), bridges, and cut out the dead fall. If creeks have a good bottom, they should be tested and marked on each side to show riders where the safe place to cross is. If a creek (bog, or low spot) has poor bottom, go around. If the trail has steep sections that could be difficult or impassable during rain or snow, have alternate trails. If a river, creek, bog or low spot is subject to flooding in wet weather, plan ahead for alternate trails.

Remember - a good guideline is to lay out a trail that YOU would like to ride.

## **6.2 Trail Making**

In Alberta we are blessed (or cursed depending on your point of view) with multiple use of our lands by snowmobilers, ATVerers, hikers, outfitters, and the ever present forestry and oil industry. The multiple use of the land results in development of a lot of trails that can be adapted for equestrian use. It is always desirable to make use of existing trails. It can take months or even years to develop equestrian trails on ride specific trails in heavily treed country. In our region, we are also fortunate to have many local equestrian clubs that have not only developed some superb equestrian trails, but are willing to sponsor or help to put rides on.

When clearing trail, overhanging branches should be cleared. People should not have to duck under heavy branches that can clear them out of the saddle. Small branches that could take an eye out or stab someone should be trimmed back in so far as possible. There are places where we have had rides where there are large branches just above wither level that are very dangerous and for environmental or land owner restrictions, they can not be trimmed. The same goes for small branches. In those circumstances, riders should be warned at the ride briefing. Many long time Alberta riders wear safety glasses, helmets, and have knee pads in their trailers for those rides that have a lot of knee knockers. These types of riding conditions are less frequent in 2000 than they were in the 1990's, but they still may occur. Ride management may not be able to remove all obstacles, but they can give the riders a warning.

Logs and dead fall that can not be stepped over at a walk or trot should be cut out. Bridges should be at least a half metre wide and preferably one metre wide. Riders should be cautioned about narrow bridges. Many riders do not like to ride freshly slashed trails due to the potential of

“spikes” that may cause lower leg injuries, or that may jab a horse or rider when passing. Many trail developers have had access to bush hogs to mow the brush. Others do the work by hand. Riders should be briefed to ride according to the condition of the trail, and ride management should be aware of these concerns.

Ride management should put up caution ribbons or pie plate signs to warn riders of difficult sections of trail or obstacles. White or yellow ribbon have traditionally been used in Alberta to warn riders of hazards.

### **6.3 Permission**

Obtaining permission to ride on private land is an absolute necessity. Without the concurrence of the land or leaseholders of the land, including the municipal, provincial and federal governments, we will soon run out of places to ride. It is important to obtain permission to ride on the land, make trails, carry out the marking, and do appropriate cleanup. It is important to understand the land or leaseholder conditions for use of their land. Many land owners will not allow use of ribbon where cattle are grazing due to their propensity to eat them where they can reach them. Some provincial agencies have the same concerns with respect to elk, moose and deer. Alternative trail marking methods may be required. In addition, some agencies require immediate removal of markings after the event.

It is good practice to invite land owners to the ride awards meeting and thank them. In addition they should be well thanked after the ride. Ride management should check that all landowner issues have been dealt with after the ride including the sending out of thank you notes to landowners and other ride sponsors.

At times it is necessary to get permission for use of municipal lands or other private groups. When using private forestry or oil roads, permission and coordination with these groups is needed. Similarly, when using multi-use trails, whether they are equestrian trails, motorcycle, mountain bike, hiking or other use, ride management should check with other groups. It could create some problems for ride management if another club scheduled an event for the same date, or if the group responsible for certain access roads or facilities had them tied up or under construction for the ride date. Often, these groups will offer assistance when contacted. Most people love horses and will be more than willing to cooperate when contacted. Conversely, not contacting them can have long lasting negative consequences.

## 6.4 Measuring

Many riders get very frustrated when a trail is significantly longer or shorter than advertised. Most long term endurance riders have a very good idea of how fast their mounts travel over specific types of terrain. They know how fast they trot on level ground, they know how fast they lead up and down hill, they know both their slow and fast trot speeds. Thus they have a very good idea of how long it should take them to cover a specified distance during a ride.

When it takes significantly more, or significantly less time, these experienced riders start to question the trail measurement.

The best way to avoid complaints is to measure the trail accurately. There are many ways to do this. Many ride managers use a scale map and simply take the distance off the map. This is generally the LEAST accurate method. As a rule of thumb, this measurement method usually underestimates the distance as it does not take the changes in elevation and all the minor twists and turns into account.

Some ride managers use computerized methods which are more accurate. In addition, some use GPS (Geo positioning satellites) navigation systems to measure the trail and then plot it on aerial or topographic maps. This is more accurate than manual scaling, but must be done carefully as public GPS technology has built in inaccuracies in it do to purposefully introduced inaccuracies by the operators of the satellite systems. (Special ground stations are required for correction.)

It is recommended that all trails be PHYSICALLY measured to avoid any doubt as to distance.

There are many options. On roads accessible by four wheel drive, the vehicle odometer can be used. On roads where survey information is available, it can be used. Many people also use ATV's, motorcycles and mountain bikes equipped with odometers. Survey companies (and many forestry and exploration companies) have string odometers that can be carried on foot, on horseback, or by any other mode of travel to measure the trail. A surveyors wheel can also be used. This is a wheel that has an odometer on it with a handle. They are used in a number of industries for measuring relatively short distances of 1000 to 5000 metres before turning over. By attaching a broom handle or hockey stick to the handle with duct tape, you can ride the trails at a good trot or even a canter with the wheel on the ground in front of your horse. Horses adapt to this method of measurement very quickly.

You can also build a measuring wheel out of an old bicycle wheel and a bicycle odometer and some scrap wood or metal. Be sure to calibrate the wheel against a known distance of one or two thousand metres and develop a correction factor.

Once you know the exact length of your trail, there can be no arguments over distance. You don't want to have to say: "Well I rode that section in three hours on Cactus and he trots 5 miles an hour so it must be 15 miles". At that point you will have four other riders saying: "Well my horse goes 7 miles an hour and it took me ...." Or: "My horse walks 4 miles per hour and it took me ...."

Measure the trail, and those comments go away,

## **6.5 Trail Marking**

Trails are most often marked with ribbons. Colour selection is important. Multicoloured ribbons are best. Light green ribbons are almost invisible in the early spring when leaves are coming out. Orange is the common colour for survey ribbon, ATV clubs, motorcycle clubs, hunters, and so on. It is best to ensure that you use colours or colour combinations that will so riders will instantly recognize the trail markings. Trail markings should be reasonably close together with "confidence" or "reassurance" ribbons at closer spacing in heavy bush than on roads. Many rides have ribboning at 100 metre intervals or less. As a rule of thumb, riders should be able to see at least one ribbon from the one they are at. Some rides with open country have ribbons spaced at 400 to 800 metres (1/4 mile to half mile) but many riders can not see the ribbons when they are this far apart and lose confidence that they are on the correct trail. As a general rule, the farther apart the ribbons are, the longer and more visible the colours should be. And don't forget, many riders are colour blind or have poor distance and peripheral vision. If in doubt, put in extra ribbons.

Try to keep the spacing of the ribbon fairly uniform. If you are putting up ribbons every 200 metres and suddenly change to 500 metres, riders will start thinking they are off trail because they have not seen a ribbon in the distance they have become accustomed to.

In areas where ribbon may be removed, flour, gypsum, chalk or biodegradable survey marker paint can be very useful. They can all be placed on the ground or used to mark trees. Chalk and biodegradable spray paint are available in pressurized containers. Trees, branches and rocks can be marked quickly from horseback. In some areas, permanent markers may be appropriate.

Signs are useful especially at intersections and on common trail. Distance signs to let riders know where they are in reference to the ride map, and warning signs on hazards, or ad vice on road or stream crossings, distance to the vet checks are very useful.

At critical points where riders could easily go the wrong way, it is useful to have people to point out the way.

Also remember, the speed when marking the trail is significantly different than when racing. In addition, the people marking the trail know which way the trail goes. On race day, moving at speed, it is easy to miss a turn. As a safety measure, it is advisable to have people who do not know the trail try to ride it and add additional markings wherever they have difficulty.

As a general rule to help riders, we try to encourage marking only on the right side of the trail where possible. That way, people know they are going in the correct direction. In addition, we traditionally put up triple ribbons just before a turn, sometimes of a different colour or combination of colours to make them more visible. The triple ribbons are put on the side of the trail that the turn is to be made so the riders start to look for the turn before getting to it. (The triple ribbon should **NOT** be **AT** the turn. By then it is too late, and the riders will already have missed it!) Then there should be another ribbon just before the turn, a ribbon at the turn, a couple of ribbons just after the turn, and another 50 to 100 metres down the trail so riders know they have made the correct turn. In addition, when turning off of roads or into a different sort of trail or terrain, add in pie plates stapled to a tree or stake with a diagram or words to describe the turn and identify the loop or trail as appropriate. (Eg - Loops A & B turn left going out, Loop C turn right to vet check; Turn left off road; turn right onto 4 track; etc.)

To reiterate, triple ribbon on the right means right turn ... triple ribbon on the left means left turn.

When entering a lane, bush trail or pasture, put a ribbon on both sides of the trail. When passing through a gate into a pasture, put a ribbon on both sides of the gate and a ribbon on a stake in the pasture to ensure people go thorough the gate. Use signs if appropriate. There is nothing more frustrating than to go 1600 metres past a gate and then find out you are on the wrong side of the fence, with no gate, and you have to go back along the fence to the gate again. If ride management or the trail manager uses the fence to tie ribbons on, then it is very easy for riders to end up on the wrong side of the fence if the turn through the gate is not well marked.

Remember the old adage: "Tell them what you are going to say, tell them, then tell them what you said." In ribbon parlance: "put up three ribbons to tell them a turn is coming, put ribbons on the

turn to tell them the turn is here, put ribbons up after the turn to tell them they did it right.”

## **NIGHT TIME:**

### **Glow sticks, glow sticks glow sticks.**

Generally speaking, our rides of less than 160 kilometres do not require night time riding. In fact, our more northerly rides held near the June solstice do not need any lighting as there is little darkness. Due to the length of the daylight during most of our ride season, it is usually only the last loop or the last few kilometres of a ride that needs to have glow sticks. In addition, most ride managers try to arrange for the last part of the ride to be on a road or in the open so again there is little if any need for glow sticks.

However, when riding is going into the dark, there should be adequate glow sticks and light coloured trail markings to reassure riders that they are on trail. In addition, drag riders should depart the vet checks after the last riders to ensure no one gets lost on the trail. Roving checkers are also appropriate to reassure riders in the dark. Remember that not all riders, and not all horses have good night vision. As a note - many riders use glow sticks on their breast collars and head lamps. While this is probably self assuring to the riders, it may actually be detrimental to the horses' vision as they cast shadows that can cause a horse to stumble. Lighting is a riders choice, but it may be worth telling riders to rely on the moon and their horses natural night vision. Riders should NOT put lighting devices on the tails of their horses or any rearward facing lights as this blinds horses overtaking them.

Ride management planning a 160 kilometre ride should try to schedule it near the full moon to take advantage of the moonlight.

Glow sticks should be spaced often enough to reassure riders that they are on trail. Riders should be advised to ride the last few kilometres of the trail before the ride if they can so that the horse knows the trail before it get dark. Many “looped” rides make the first loop, or another loop early in the ride the same as the last loop so that the horse and rider will have already been over the loop in the daylight in the event that they do end up riding in the dark.

Battery powered flashers may be of use to mark obstacles or sharp turns.

## **The following is from the AERC, 1979 year book:**

### **Courtenay Hart:**

Trail Marking: (How to avoid being lynched.) If there is one single most important thing in the minds of the riders, it is "how well is the trail marked", and if there is one single, easiest thing to have go wrong during the ride is to have the trail marking altered. Therefore, the utmost concern must be placed on trail marking.

Trails have been successfully marked by using one or a combination of the following: surveyors ribbons, flour, trail directors and signs. Surveyors ribbons are a very popular method and are very good when used with the proper discretion. Ribbons are very readily removed and appear to entice hikers and other horseback riders to remove them.

It is not uncommon to cross a boundary line that is marked with surveyors ribbon, therefore, it is important to check the entire trail before selecting the color of the ribbon, however, if you use two ribbons together of different color such as one orange and one white ribbon, you probably will not have to worry about this problem, Two different colored ribbons also minimize the problem of the ribbon blending into the foliage. Color of ribbons can also be used to mark different sections of the trail, an example of this would be to use different colored ribbons between different "vet" checks, however, this has been known to confuse riders.

Flour: Can be a very useful means of trail marking provided the terrain and weather are amicable. Flour works very well on road surfaces and very poorly on terrain covered with leaves. It is not ideal for races that go cross country through such terrain as sagebrush. The advantages of flour are ease of marking a trail, it is possible to mark a one hundred mile trail within twelve hours. Flour is very difficult to remove, therefore, the probability of still having a trail that is well marked throughout the ride is very high.

Signs: Are most useful as a supplement to ribbons or flour. They can be used as a detailed description of which direction to go through an intersection, or to inform a rider that a "vet" check is just ahead, as well as many other uses.

People: Can also be used at critical junctions to direct riders and also to ascertain that all riders have gone over the correct course.

Several additional points to consider about trail marking are: The closer to the time of the ride you mark the trail, the greater the probability that the trail will be marked the day of the ride: however, do not wait so long that the front runners of the ride catch up to you when you are still marking the trail. If at all possible, have a vehicle equipped with trail marking paraphernalia go over the trail several hours in front of the horses to ascertain that the

trail is properly marked.

The most important thing to remember about trail marking is that Endurance Riders will not forgive you for a poorly marked trail, so the life you save may be your own.

## **6.6 Start**

Pay attention to the start of the ride. Most accidents happen at the start or the finish. Starts of large rides can have many people trying to get into the same narrow trail. Many start in the dark or low light. Everyone is packed together, the horses have excess energy and may be over excited. People may have forgotten to tighten girths, they may be going in different directions. There may be hazards.

On large rides, it may be appropriate to have a controlled start. This can be done by having a volunteer ride out ahead of the riders at a slow pace for 10 to thirty minutes to keep the ride under control. If the start is on a road, a vehicle can be used to pace the riders at the start.

As with the finish, the start area should be well clear of the camp area.

Some rides start up a steep hill to settle the horses down right away. Unless the horses are warmed up before hand, this can lead to tie up problems with some horses. This should be explained at the ride briefing. One method used frequently in the United States, is to do a controlled start up a steep hill and difficult terrain. Everyone is happy to ride a slow pace and there is no pressure to overexert the mounts early. The hill takes the extra energy out. Then after the hill, some open terrain that allows people to set their pace and pass safely promotes an incident free ride.

## **6.7 Finish Line**

The finish line should **NEVER** be in or near the camp area or vetting area. Remember, there could be several horses racing to the finish at a full gallop. There must be room for three horses abreast to cross the finish line. There must be room to get the horses under control after the finish line. This can take 200 to 400 metres. Remember, we have seen runaways in our club that have gone 2000 to 3000 metres without stopping. Think about that at the finish line. Where will the horses go?

Horses coming into camp will try to go to their trailer or follow a previous route into camp.

The finish should be situated with this in mind. A number of major rides put the finish line 300 to 800 metres up the trail from camp to ensure there are no accidents in camp due to racing horses. (Note: this does not apply to Limited Distance as they have to come into camp and pulse down. There is no reason for them to race, and, in fact it is disadvantageous for them to do so.)

There should be no obstacles, barriers, steep banks, turns or vehicles at or near the finish line. There should be a line across the finish line perpendicular to the direction of travel. All vehicle access, people, pets, trailers should be barred from the finish area. The camp should not be in a position where the horses might try to turn to go to their trailer instead of going to the finish line; and never put the finish or finish run out just past a previous turn into camp. We have all seen the situation where the horse turns and the rider does not. Keep this in mind when setting your trail and your start and finish lines.

Finish areas should not be near camp where children could inadvertently cross the trail or the finish run out. There have been some terrible accidents from vehicles entering the finish area, from spectators being run over, and from playing children running into the path of horses racing in.

Once many equines break to a gallop, they become far less controllable, they can not be stopped or turned quickly. The finish area should be selected with this in mind. The life you save could be your own. Or of your volunteer finish line timer(s) and other officials.

**BE SURE TO BAR VEHICLES FROM THE FINISH AREA.** Five hundred kilograms of horse flesh does not look good on the hood of a truck.

Think of running into a wall at 50 kilometres an hour. That is what can happen at a poorly planned finish. Think about galloping across the open prairie with no fences in sight. That is what a good finish should feel like.

## **7.0 MAPS**

But first you have to get to the finish. There are many sorts of maps that are used as a base for ride maps. County maps are often used. Sometimes aerial photography or topographic maps are used. Some ride managers use schematic maps. The representation of the trail is also often

schematic rather than exact. It is often more important to highlight certain landmarks and turns than to have a diagrammatically correct map. High points, landmarks, streams, lakes, watering points, check points, veterinary control points, roads, hazards and so on should be highlighted. If different coloured ribbon is used for different loops, that should be noted on the map.

Some rides have provided diagrams of corners, landmarks and other information on the back of the maps to allow riders to confirm where they are, where they should turn, where vet checks are and so on to provide the riders with assurance and direction on the trail.

Maps should be of a size that they can easily be read. But they should also be of a size that they can be easily folded up and placed in a shirt pocket or fanny pack for easy reference by the rider during the ride. When using “baggies” to hold the “Vet Card”, the map should also be able to be folded and placed in the baggy if the rider chooses.

It is useful to provide information on the ride time, various loops, hold times, veterinary criteria and other information either on the map, or in a separate handout that riders can take with them. See samples attached in Appendix B.

If there are out checks or you are doing a point to point ride, you may need “crewing” maps to guide crew to the pit stops and veterinary checks.

## **8.0 Vet Cards**

ERA provides a standardized vet card to ride management for reproduction and use during the ride. These cards are normally carried by the rider and presented to the veterinarian secretary at each veterinary control point. When the horse passes the vet check, the card is returned to the rider to carry to the next check point. If the horse does not pass the check, the card is held by the vet secretary.

On clover leaf rides where all checks are held in camp, the veterinarian may elect to keep all the vet cards with the vet secretary for safe keeping.

A copy of the standard vet card is included in Appendix A, Ride Management Package.

## **9.0 Veterinary Controls**

The Veterinarian Handbook describes the duties and responsibilities of the Veterinarians. Ride management must select veterinarians that they can work with. They must have the experience required to meet ERA standards. Ride Management must recognize that every veterinarian has individual ideas and opinions. ERA has produced the Veterinarian Handbook with the objective of having uniform vetting procedures. However, every ride and ride management team is different. Some ride managers like to have many control points. Some ride managers prefer fewer control points. Sometimes terrain and trail availability dictate the control points. The veterinarians and ride management must be satisfied that the veterinary controls are adequate and satisfactory during the planning stage of the ride. In addition, the veterinary controls and control points should be explained clearly at the pre-ride briefing by ride management and/or the veterinary staff.

Ride Management should have a clear written agreement with the veterinarian staff prior to the ride covering responsibilities, duties, and hours. On a 160 kilometre ride, veterinary services must be available from vet in through best condition judging. This is a considerable period of time that may last from the day before the ride to the day after the ride.

There should be “judging” vets and at least one treatment vet. When negotiating with your veterinary “judges”, check to see if they carry drugs and treatment capabilities with them. There have been a number of rides where ride management has assumed that the veterinary judges had drugs and equipment with them when they did not. In fact, some of our “qualified” veterinary judges are not authorized to treat equines due to certain Alberta Veterinarian Medical Association restrictions. Therefore, ride management is responsible for arranging for emergency treatment services during the ride as well as judging. Be aware that if a veterinarian “judge” is required to also do treatment, additional judges may be needed in the event that treatment of an equine is required.

As a rule of thumb, there should be one veterinarian for every 15 riders. If there were 15 Endurance riders, and 30 Limited Distance riders, then there should be a minimum of three veterinarians (at each vet stop). More vets may be required depending on the layout of the ride, the time to commute from check to check, and the gap time between the leading riders and the tail draggers. In our sport, no allowance is made for “FUN” riders. If ride management wishes to do any vetting or provide any services to this group, it is to be done outside and separate from the endurance event and is in NO WAY to use the resources of, or detract from the endurance event. Endurance and Limited Distance riders are to be given priority in all areas, on the trail, in the vet checks, and in services by the volunteers.

It is also an unwritten rule, oft debated, that the longer distances get priority service at veterinary checks and other services (within reason). For example, if ride management sponsors a 160 km ride, a 120 km ride, and an 80 km ride as well as a Limited Distance ride, if a rider from each group arrives at the veterinarians at the same time, the priority attention will go to the horse and rider team going the longest distance to the shortest distance.

To avoid disputes, some rides will assign vets and vetting areas to each distance. That way they are kept separate. However, as there may only be 5 to 10 riders in each distance, separation is not always possible.

Ride management should review hold times and likely arrival times at vet checks to avoid traffic jams and overworking the veterinary staff. This should be reviewed with the veterinary staff at the planning stage and explained to the riders at the pre-ride briefing.

Veterinary control points should be discussed with the veterinarian during the preliminary discussion stages. Some veterinarians are comfortable with less control points than others. Veterinary inspection, support and criteria should be discussed well in advance with the veterinarian staff to ensure there are no misunderstandings.

## **9.1 Veterinary Control Points**

The number and location of control points may be determined by a number of factors. Ride management and the head veterinarian should ensure riders get adequate briefing on veterinary controls. On remote rides with limited veterinary controls, the ride briefing should emphasize the riders' responsibility for their equines. There are 50 and 60 mile (80 to 96 km) rides held in with only one vet stop and a final vet check. Riders at such a ride should be cautioned to stop and do their own checks.

### **9.1.1 Limited Distance**

ERA rules require one intermediary vet check with a gate into hold in Limited Distance. The holds for Limited Distance are typically one hour although some rides have shorter holds, subject to veterinary approval.

### **9.1.2 Endurance**

ERA rules do not specify the number of veterinary control points for Endurance Rides. FEI rules require that each day of an endurance competition be divided into at least two phases with an intermediate veterinary inspection and hold of at least 40 minutes. FEI also recommends that 160 km (100 mile) rides have holds totalling at least 120 minutes.

It is common in ERA rides for there to be vet checks about every 20 to 22 km (12 to 13 miles). The earlier checks usually have less hold time with a lunch time hold of 45 minutes to an hour for the typical 80 km ride. The shorter rides may have fewer veterinary controls. Generally the longer the ride, the higher the risk, and the more veterinary control points required. Similarly, veterinary controls should be considered with respect to the difficulty and speed anticipated. A flat fast course may in fact require more veterinary control than a steeper more difficult course in order to protect the equines from over exertion. (Speed kills).

### **9.2 Layout**

Veterinary control points should be laid out with adequate space and amenities. See attached figure. The layout should provide for the rider to pass by the timer controls, proceed to the crewing area, then to the pulsing area. The layout and ride requirements should be such that the riders proceed directly from the pulse down area to the veterinarian check. Some people try to delay their arrival to the vet from the pulse down area as long as possible in order to ensure their mount has the maximum recovery time before being seen by the veterinarian. Ideally the veterinarians should see all equines about the same length of time after they have pulsed down so that they get a proper “impression” of the animal. In addition, many feel that a CRI evaluation (Cardiac Recovery Index) done more than 10 minutes after exercise begins to lose its importance. When possible, the layout should ensure that once a rider arrives at the pulse area, they must proceed directly to the vetting area before exiting back to the crewing area.

### **9.3 Location/Distance to**

The first timed hold should be at least 16, preferably 20 km into the ride (10 to 12 miles). This is because many fit endurance horses take at least this distance to calm down. It is not unusual for some of the higher strung horses to have standing pulses of 100 to 200 beats per minute at the start of a ride. Some rides have had pulse and go vet gates at 10 to 12 km into a ride. Typically some of the very best horses take extra time to pulse down when a hold is placed this close to the

beginning of the ride. Their adrenalin is high and every waving branch, person or horse going by causes their pulses to elevate. It is recommended that hold type gates are not placed within the first 16 to 20 kilometres. If it is felt desirable to check the horses in the first part of the course, use a "trot by". In addition, you may want to provide water and the election for riders to stop and review their mount with the veterinarian. It is not normally necessary to check pulses at this stage in the ride. Pulse checking may actually penalize the better horses.

Typically 80 kilometre rides will have a veterinary control point at about 20 kilometre intervals. This results in 3 intermediate veterinary control points and the finish line. Typically the first hold will be 15 minutes (recommended minimum for hold type gate, FEI). The middle check is usually about an hour. The third check frequently varies from a pulse and go to a half hour hold depending on conditions.

Many rides put in an additional check near the end of a ride. For an 80 km (50 mile) ride this check should not be closer than 10 km (6 miles) from the finish line. Some rides have put checks at 3 km (2 miles) from the finish line - per Competitive Trail Ride rules. However, as endurance is a race, this results in people increasing the stress on their mounts. Riders who know their horses are slow at pulsing down will try to beat other riders to the control point by extra time to allow for time to pulse down. In addition, the last two miles can end up being a flat out race between riders leaving the control point near one another.

When the distance to the finish from the last vet check is adequate, there is more time for riders to pace themselves and less likelihood of overstressing the mounts.

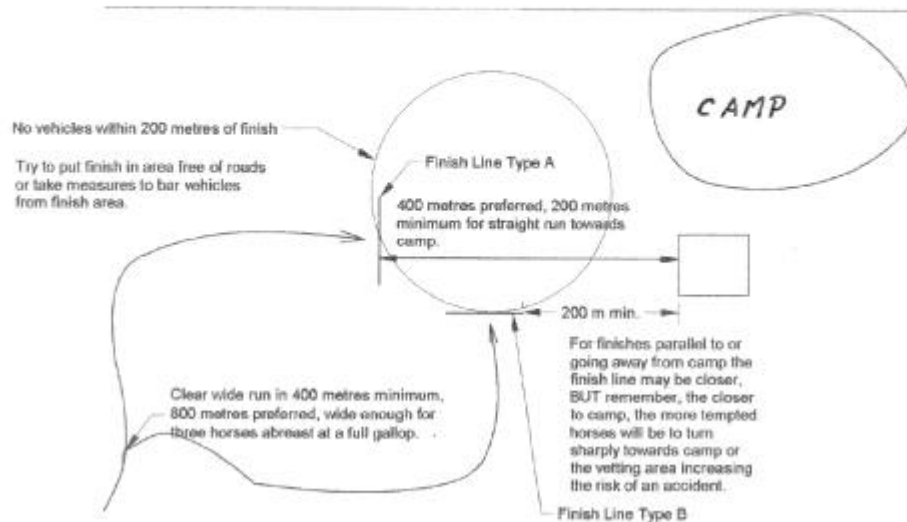
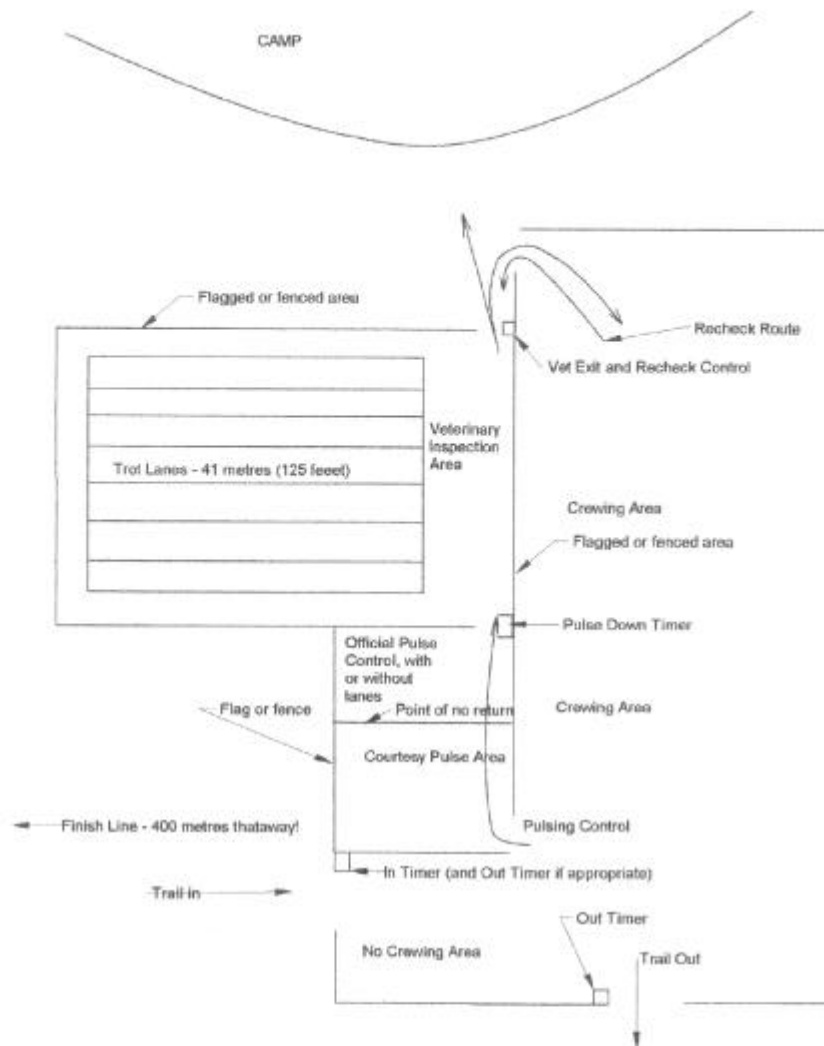
Frequently a pulse and go is used for the last control point when there have been three or four vet checks with holds already in the race, but a review of the horses is felt to be needed prior to the last leg.

With 160 km rides, the last control point is frequently closer to the finish line often as little as 5 km (3 miles). This is because these horses are under added stress and there is less likelihood of racing. Mostly the last control point is 8 to 16 km from the finish but there will have been a number of control points at roughly 20 to 30 km spacing throughout the ride. The trot by and pulse and go checks are more common in the longer rides as they reduce hold time.

Note however, that all control points are to be staffed by a veterinarian. It is not appropriate to have a pulse and go to "control" the speed of horses or to "give them a rest" without a veterinarian present. Water and hay and additional crewing spots may be provided along the trail

and it will be the riders option as to how long they spend at such spots. However, they are not considered 'veterinarian' control points.

# Veterinary Control Point Layout



DeltaCad DEMO

### 9.3 Types of Control Points

There are a number of control points. The most common is the “gate into a hold” in ERA rides. The second most used is the trot by. A description of the various types follows.

**Fixed Hold** - this is traditionally the oldest type of control gate. All contestants are held a specific amount of time after their arrival. The recovery time does not count against the riding time. The horses are examined at a specified time after their arrival at the vet check. For example after 10 minutes for a 15 minute hold, 30 minutes for a one hour hold.

Timing of arrival is critical for this type of hold.

Drawbacks to a fixed hold include a greater chance of stiffening up in cold weather, and the fact that less fit horses are not separated from more fit ones in a pulsing down. An over paced horse may pulse down to criteria in the allotted time and leave with more fit horses. Fit horses that would have been ready to go earlier, are held back. A fixed hold of any length early in the ride is unnecessary.

**Pulse and Go** - with this vet gate, there is no hold time. The rider may leave as soon as the horse meets the required veterinary criteria and is approved by the veterinarian. There may be enough people to pulse all the horses that arrive at the same time. Normally, the rider and crew check the horse and ensure it meets criteria before entering the official pulse area. If the pulse meets criteria, the pulse staff call out the horse number to the timers and the horse is taken directly to the veterinarian for a check. If the horse does not meet criteria, it may be sent to the end of the line OR in some rides a specified wait or penalty may be assessed. In FEI rides, a horse that does not meet criteria may have to wait until 30 minutes after arriving at the gate to go to the vet. If the pulse is not down in the necessary 30 minutes, it is removed from competition.

In ERA rides we normally just send people to the back of the line. Where there are a lot of riders and insufficient pulse crews, riders and their crews may be allowed to call their down time for their pulses. However, if the pulse is not down when the horse is presented to the veterinarian, the down time will be changed and a penalty may be assessed. This needs to be determined beforehand and explained to the riders at the pre-ride briefing. Equines are not allowed to leave the vet gate unless they meet all veterinary criteria. A horse may be held even though its pulse and respiration are normal if there are other signs of problems (gut sounds, hydration, membranes, gait). It will be held until the veterinarian is satisfied it is ok to proceed or the equine is removed from competition.

**Gate into a Hold** - This is the most common form of timed hold in ERA. This is similar to the pulse and go except that after pulsing down, there is a fixed timed hold. The vet gate should be set up so that the riders enter a timing gate, into a crewing area. They may stay in the crewing area working on their mount, letting it urinate, eat and drink, however they must enter the pulsing area and achieve the established pulse and respiration criteria within 30 minutes of arrival at the timing gate or be disqualified. The pulse area should be set up to funnel the riders to the vet immediately after being pulsed down. Ideally all equines should be checked within 10 minutes of reaching criteria so that all mounts are evaluated on an equal basis.

Where a rider could pulse down in a few minutes, then leave the area and come back to the veterinarian for the vet check near the end of a one hour hold, the vet check results could be dramatically different than if the check was done immediately. This should be controlled by the vet layout and discussed at the ride briefing.

This type of hold separates the fit and less fit horses as usually the fit horses pulse down faster and will therefore clear the vet gate sooner. The less fit horse will leave the vet gate after the other horses are out of site and will be less inclined to work over its ability. This type of hold also gives the horse and rider a chance to eat, drink and recover during the ride.

While riders and crew are responsible for knowing how long they have been at a vet check and for knowing how long the hold time is, ride management usually arranges for the out timers to announce the out times of the riders and usually provide a one or two minute warning call as well.

NOTE - However, it is not mandatory to leave the vet gate when your out time is called. If the rider or mount require more time to rest, urinate, eat and drink, they may take what they need in the interest of ensuring they complete. On the other side of the coin, many rides establish vet gate closure times. This is the latest that a rider may enter or leave a vet gate with reasonable expectation of completing the ride within the specified maximum time for the ride.

With the timed holds, the veterinarians may wish to have a second look at the horses before they leave. Also because there is a timed hold after the pulse down, it gives the veterinarians a bit more time for evaluation.

**Trot By** - as noted above, a hold early in the ride is not necessary, but it may still be advisable to have a vet control in certain areas to ensure there are no injuries showing up. There are a number of variations on the "trot by" as well. The typical trot by is manned by a veterinarian and support staff. The area is selected so that the veterinarian can observe the equine approaching under

saddle, at close quarters as passing and from the rear. The veterinarian has the option of asking the rider to stop for a more detailed inspection, either under saddle or dismounted. Ride management often arranges for the trot by to be adjacent to water and feed so riders can stop and care for their mounts if they wish. Some rides have variations on the trot by that require the horses to be trotted out by hand, ask for circles, or backing up so that the vet can observe the quality of movement of the equine. The simple trot by is recommended.

The trot by is frequently used as the first vet check in a ride where the potential for problems is low, and near the end of a ride where the veterinarians and ride management feel another look at the horses is warranted but a hold is or pulse and go is not. It is also used in areas where access is limited or difficult. A trot by requires less support from ride management and crewing, but does allow for veterinary control for the safety of the equines.

**Veterinary Time In** - This is not recommended for use in ERA. This is a type of gate where the rider enters the gate and is timed in. The mount is allowed to rest, drink and eat, the rider takes the horse to the veterinarian at the rider's discretion to have it vetted. The hold time is started at the time that the veterinarian receives the vet card. If the horse does not meet criteria, it goes to the back of the line and the hold time does not start. If the veterinary exam is passed, the equine may continue after the hold time has expired. The hold time may be of any time appropriate.

This type of hold is used on narrow trails where it is desirable to spread riders out for safety and control reasons. Since it is highly unlikely that two riders would have the same departure time with this system, it relieves congestion on the trail. It is useful for rides with 50 riders or more on the same trail. It is used on rides like the Tevis, Outlaw Trail and other large rides in the US. There is little if any need for this type of vet gate in ERA rides.

**10/10 or 10/20 or 10/30 etc.** - this is also a type of gate not used by ERA. With this type of gate, the equine is required to report to the vet 10 minutes after arrival at the vet gate. It is checked and if it meets criteria, the 10, 20 or 30 minute hold commences. If it does not meet criteria at 10 minutes, then it must go to the end of the line and re-enter the vet check. Alternatively it may have to wait 5 or ten minutes before coming back for reinspection. The advantage of this type of gate is that all horses are examined at a standard time after arrival at the vet gate, and all horses coming in together get to leave together. The disadvantage is that more fit horses have to wait longer than they might otherwise have to, and may leave with less fit horses tailing them. In addition, it is more difficult for the timers to keep track of those equines that did not meet criteria and have to re-enter the vet check.

## **9.4 Veterinary Controls**

The responsibilities of the veterinarians is covered well in the ERA veterinary manual. Ride management should be familiar with this manual and ensure that all their veterinary staff have been given a copy of the manual. Ride management and the veterinary staff should be in agreement with the veterinary controls.

### **9.4.1 Pre-Ride Inspection**

The pre-ride inspection is covered well in the veterinary manual. The pre-ride veterinary control area should be roped or flagged off before the arrival of the first participants. A wide open, flat area with good footing and shelter for the veterinary staff should be provided. In the pre-ride inspection, as with other inspections, equines of questionable gaits may be allowed to go on, equines of questionable metabolism or other concerns should be withdrawn.

### **9.4.2 Veterinary Control During the Ride**

This is well covered in the ERA veterinary manual.

### **9.4.3 Completion and Best Condition Judging**

There is continued discussion about the difference between a “completion” exam and a full veterinary exam and best condition judging.

At the end of an endurance race, and the limited distance event, the equines are required to meet pulse and respiration criteria. Thus, all horses that complete have been pulsed down and checked before they go to see the veterinarian. In ERA rules, all horses must pass a post ride completion examination.

The “interpretation” of the rules in this regard has resulted in a number of disputes centred around the rule book words: “Veterinarians must also be flexible enough to evaluate the equine injured after completing the course, etc.”

We have had many cases where horses have passed the pulse criteria and trotted across the finish

line sound. For various reasons, often rider error such as riding the horse around to cool it down, or getting in a minor wreck, we have had horses presented one hour after finishing that do not meet criteria and a dispute then occurs. In addition, there are some veterinarians that do not distinguish between “Best Condition Judging” and a completion exam, and some vets that do not want to take the time to “look at a horse twice”. Some vets have refused to evaluate an equine's gait at the finish line and will only look at the horse when doing the complete post ride evaluation. Or, they will insist that the full evaluation be done immediately if a post ride trot out is done.

In most international rides, there is a clear and distinct “post” finish line evaluation in addition to a more rigorous post ride evaluation and the best condition judging of the top 10. Many ERA rides have adopted this process. It is recommended that all ride managers adopt a similar process for fairness and equity.

Under this scenario, as soon as the horse is pulsed down by the volunteer pulsers, it is trotted for soundness in front of the vet. If the horse is sound, it gets a completion, even if its pulse goes up later or gets a cramp from the cold, provided of course that all other parameters are met in accordance with the rules: “2.1.3 Each Equine will receive a substantive physical examination of metabolic and mechanical parameters before the ride, at control points within the ride and after the ride.” It is also recommended that a CRI be done immediately on the top 10 horses. An inverted pulse would not be reason for disqualification at this point. The purpose of the CRI is for comparison purposes amongst the top ten finishers only.

The post finish line evaluation does not require a CRI. The rider may choose any time within the hour to present the equine for a post ride evaluation. Some horses may present better earlier rather than later. However, remember this is a post ride evaluation.

Best Condition Judging is a separate evaluation. In 160 km (100 mile) races, it is often conducted the following day. In this case, the difference between the completion exam and the “judging” is clear. However, in shorter races, the distinction is not clear and the post ride examination and best condition judging seems to get blurred.

Thus the desire to have three levels of review :

- Finish Line Evaluation
- Post Ride Evaluation
- Best Condition Judging

Each evaluation is progressively more rigorous.

The finish line review involves pulsing down and a gait evaluation. It is recommended that the equines eligible for best condition do a CRI at this time.

The Post Ride Evaluation is to be done at any time up to one hour after the finish per the rule book. All equines receive an appropriate evaluation.

Best Condition Judging will be done at the time agreed between the veterinary staff and ride management in accordance with the agreed to guidelines in accordance with section 9 of the ERA rule book.

The veterinary judging guidelines are explained in more detail in the ERA Veterinary Handbook in Sections 8 and 9.

In accordance with the rules, it is understood that completion criteria are not necessarily as rigorous as criteria during the ride given that the equine is not continuing on. "Because an equine at the finish line is not, in actuality, going on - and not going into the wilderness far from veterinary aid-the standards for completion need not be as strict as those on the trail..." Nevertheless, the minimum standards as per the rules, and as outlined for the ride, must be met.

Note that once an equine has passed the final veterinary exam, it may not be removed from competition for veterinary reasons.

## **9.5 Cardiac Recovery Index (CRI)**

The Cardiac Recovery Index (CRI) sometimes referred to as the Ridgeway Trot, is described in the ERA veterinary handbook. It is a dependable indicator of what is going on with the equines when used properly. A lengthy description and validation of the use of the CRI is contained in Appendix C. Ride management and the veterinary staff should be familiar with the use of the CRI.

## **9.6 Drug Testing**

ERA drug tests a number of rides each year. The head veterinarian is normally contacted by the testing agency. The veterinarian should advise ride management if the ride has been selected for testing. Blood should be drawn before the equines are taken away from the post ride evaluation.

It is important that the selection of horses to be tested be done early so this can be done. A horse that is not returning for best condition evaluation may be given NSAIDS (non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) or other drugs to alleviate soreness or injuries even though it passed the final exam. It would then be inappropriate and untimely to request a blood sample. The method of selecting the equines to be tested is up to the veterinarian and ride management. Sometimes this is done by random draw. Sometimes the first place in each distance is selected, or a combination, depending on the number of test kits.

## **9.7 Best Condition Judging**

This is well covered in Section 9 of the ERA Veterinary Handbook.

For additional reference, the following is excerpted from the latest edition of the American Endurance Conference Veterinary handbook:

Note - A rider may elect not to show for Best Condition at their discretion.

### **Best Condition Examination**

This examination is to select the horse considered the fittest, freshest, and in the soundest condition at the end of the ride. If no animal is in acceptable condition, the award may be withheld. The evaluating procedures for Best Condition may be more demanding than the routine control procedures but should be sufficient to discriminate between contenders. The examination is usually performed one hour after the finish but may be at such other time as the management may specify.

Guidelines for Veterinarians: Judging Best Condition (B.C.)

1. Veterinary Definition: It is recognized that there are many ways of defining best condition (e.g. against the ideal, against the group examined, against itself, condition throughout the ride, or condition at the time of examination). For the Veterinary portion of the score, the definition is "the horse, at the time of the Best Condition examination, that is in the best condition and deemed most fit to continue..."
2. The actual award is modified to include finishing time and weight factors in addition to the veterinary aspect.
3. It is very important to use the full range of points allowed in each category. If only the upper end of the scale is used, a quite fatigued or lame horse ridden by an exceptionally fast or heavy rider will be the highest scoring horse after factors of weight and time are considered. This is not to minimize factors of weight and time but to prevent the award

from going to an unfit or lame horse.

4. Standard: All horses judged for B.C. will be judged against a standard of a well conditioned, fit, sound and metabolically normal endurance horse. CAUTION: With regard to gait and movement one must consider what is normal for the breed, type, and disposition (animation level.)

5. Any horse with a severe abnormality in any category should not be considered for best condition. Any horse that is Grade 3 or more at the time of the Best Condition exam cannot be considered for Best Condition judging.

6. If all horses score "low" using these standards, recognize that it is possible that no horse meets acceptable standards for awarding a B.C. Award. If none of the horses evaluated are worthy (in the opinion of the veterinary examining committee) they may elect not to award a best condition award.

7. Consider what is only "showmanship" that serves to "hype" the horse and detracts from evaluating the animals' true state of ability to continue. Note particularly if the horse's head is held in such a way as to prevent easy observation of movement.

8. Horses should be evaluated for gait abnormalities, impulsion, etc prior to any palpation. Avoid excessive pressure when palpating during this exam. Remember that these horses are going to be tired and sensitive following a 50 or 100 mile ride. Undue pressure is unkind.

9. BE CONSISTENT!

## **10.0 Planning - Volunteers, Meetings, Ride organization**

The following is taken from the 1979 article in the AERC year book by Courtenay Hart. It describes many of the volunteer duties and planning activities necessary to have a successful ride. Items in italics are added from Randy Eiland's comments in the January 1998 Endurance News. Comments by ERA members are noted separately.

**Facilities:** Can vary greatly in requirements depending on the size of the ride, weather, trail layout and terrain, also the availability of some of these services locally.

**Base Camp:** Must be large enough to handle the maximum crowd that could come to the ride.

**Food:** If you are offering food, be sure that you can deliver. Note when using a caterer, be very certain you understand what his terms and conditions are and are capable of accounting for the meals served or you may be eaten out of house and profit.

**Water:** Water that is alright for horses is not always a water supply for people. If you have to haul water to several locations, one water truck can do this if you have large enough water

troughs. Your water supply will last longer if you have a separate container for the riders to dip their sponges in. (ERA note - buckets at water troughs allow dipping and less chance of contamination of the water trough from dirt as well as a reduction in the chance of disease transmission. Buckets also allow people to pour water on their horses. If water is limited for drinking only, advise participants at the ride briefing not to use hauled water for cooling and put a sign at the water point.)

**Communications:** They are very important if you want to have control of your ride. The larger the ride, the more important communications become. List below are some more important examples.

**General Information Board:** Should contain at least the following information: camp rules, rider and crew rules, ride map, food and drinking water situation, time of awards presentation, time of pre-ride “vet” check and pre-ride briefing. (ERA recommends that the hold times at vet gates, type of gate and other trail information be included on the bulletin board.)

**Ride Packet:** A welcome letter which should include a time schedule of the ride as well as any very important information that you may want to emphasize. Rider vet card, trail map, ride rules, rider crew map, and rules, and any meal tickets. (ERA note - crew maps required to provide information to crews on how to get to vet checks and crewing areas along the course of the race.)

**Rider “Vet” Card:** If you have included the ride start time, distance between vet checks, time of mandatory holds at vet checks and the P&R requirements, you will be asked very few questions by the riders. (ERA uses standard vet cards - see the Ride Management Package, Appendix A. ERA recommends the noted information be included on the ride map if possible, on the reverse of the ride map, or on a separate card that can be put in a pocket or fanny pack for reference.)

**Ride Monitoring:** Proper monitoring of the ride can be readily done, if you have numbered your horses and has some important advantages which are listed below.

**Rider Starting Confirmation:** This assures you of who started the race and it also guarantees that nobody started the ride early. (ERA recommends that a start timer checks off all the riders as they pass the start line. Each rider should be told to call out their number to the start before leaving the start area. ERA requires that all the riders depart within 10 minutes of the published start time. Not being recorded as a starter may be grounds for disqualification. At remote rides, it is important that ride management know who is out on the trail in case it is necessary to mount a search for missing riders or horses.)

**Rider Check Points:** Are very helpful ... if a rider gets lost, you will know where to start looking. This person can also be giving directions at tricky intersections, and his check list will ensure that all of the riders have ridden over the same trail.

**Radio Communications:** If you have vet checks that are long distances apart, probably the only way you can have rapid communications between them is via C.B. radio, however, it should be noted that C.B. radio has some very definite limitations. These limitations are an

inability to communicate over mountains and possible use of the same channel by other people. You may find that your local police department may be willing to help you monitor your ride, if so you will have excellent communications for emergency messages. Telephones may also be used. Although it would be ideal to have the telephone at the vet check it may still be faster to drive to a telephone than to the other Vet check. (ERA Note - times have changed since 1979, cellular telephones and local ham radio clubs can assist with communications.)

**Rider Position Board:** A very nice feature particularly if you have a really large ride. This allows everyone to be informed of each rider's status without harassing the timers, however, it does require additional help to properly maintain it.

**Informed Staff:** The larger the ride and or the greater the distance between vet checks, the more important it is to have a very well informed staff. The more written instructions that you can give everyone helping you, the less chance there will be of a foul up.

**Sanitary Requirements:** Toilet facilities must be supplied at the base camp and may also have to be supplied at some vet checks. (ERA NOTE: Again, times have changed since 1979. Toilet facilities at all major stops are a must from an environmental, rider volunteer and landowner perspective. Remember that you will have volunteers who will need facilities, food water and shelter all day long at the base camp and vet checks.)

**Vet Inspection Area:** A specific area should be set aside for veterinary inspection at the base camp and all vet checks. Choose an area that has a smooth surface, and is large enough to accommodate the number of veterinarians using it.

**Lighting:** If your camp is in a remote site a portable electric generator will be needed. Some of the uses of lighting are; vet checking of horses, staging site for workers the morning of the ride and at the awards presentation after the ride.

**Emergency Vehicles:** Vehicles are needed to transport help to a horse and rider and transporting them back to camp. (ERA Note: make sure you have adequate first aid equipment on hand. In addition, make plans for how to treat and transport both people and horses in the event of an emergency.)

**General Transportation:** Required to transport workers the day of the ride. Note, it may be very desirable to use all wheel drive vehicles with C.B. radios. Staging: It is very important that a specific area be set aside for assembling all of the workers the day of the ride. When selecting this area be sure that it does not interfere with the riders the day of the ride. There is nothing more irritating to the riders than having a bunch of vehicles drive through their staging. (ERA Note - vehicles must be excluded from the start and finish area for safety reasons.)

**Shelter:** For your ride secretary, can prevent the loss of ride records. When possible it is nice to have your awards presentation indoors, and to provide shelter for your workers. (You should also plan to have relief workers so one person is not alone all day long or stuck in one position all day long without relief. In addition, happy volunteers make for happy rides. Provide your volunteers

with food, drinks, shelter, and other amenities. Volunteers never get enough appreciation. We need our vets and our volunteers to be happy and to keep coming back.)

**Veterinarians:** Are required and all horses entered must be under their control. The selection of the head "Vet" is extremely important for several reasons. They will have to pass judgment on every horse in the ride at the pre-ride vet check, every vet check in the ride, and the post ride vet check. Diplomacy is nearly as important as being clinically correct. When selecting a head vet set up an appointment with the prospective candidate well in advance of the ride date. Before the interview, write out a list of what you want to discuss which should include the following: fee, be realistic - the veterinarians prime time is the weekends. He cannot afford to donate the better part of a weekend for no financial remuneration, however, this does not mean that his fee should bankrupt the ride, and remember that meals and lodging that may be offered are a form of payment.

**Length of vet Coverage:** Will there be a vet to do pre-ride coverage and examination, and will they be around after the ride is over, if so, how long? (ERA Note - this is a must. All equines must be examined by a veterinarian to assess their suitability to start. Also, the veterinary controls last AT LEAST until one hour after the last rider crosses the finish line. Ride management must be sure to make it clear what the requirements are during the negotiations. There is a negotiation check list included in the Veterinary Handbook. It is important to have full veterinary coverage in case there is a problem. Also remember that the head veterinary "judge" may or may not be qualified to treat equines. They may not even have veterinary supplies with them if they have not been advised of this expectations. Many rides arrange for separate treatment facilities to be on call or to have a "treatment" vet on site. Be sure you have discussed all the issues with your veterinary staff.)

**Best Condition:** How is it going to be selected, and for how many categories? If at all possible, have the vet present the best condition award along with an explanation of what it stands for. (ERA Note - see rules on BC and guidelines elsewhere in this document and in the Veterinary Handbook.)

**Pre-ride Evaluation of the Course:** Hopefully, the vet can go over the course prior to the ride and help you select vet inspection sites as well as determine riding, P&R requirements, and water requirements.(ERA Note - Normally in ERA, Ride Management selects the vet checks, often limited by terrain and the trails. However, it is imperative to review the trail and proposed stops with the head vet. Ride Management could find itself in a difficult position if the vets do not agree with the proposed trail set up. WATER - it is imperative to have water at vet checks and elsewhere along the trail. In some places in the US, there are "dry" camps where riders and crews are expected to bring their own water. This is not the case in Alberta. Normally trails are selected where there is access to lots of water, and Ride Management has traditionally provided adequate water for the horses. Most people do not expect drinking water. However, food and

drinks on the trail is greatly appreciated by horses, riders, vets, and volunteers.

**Awards:** When selecting your awards do not forget that you must stay within your budget and that some awards are inflating faster than others. Remember that the price of silver has increased by three hundred percent this year! Engraving can be dear at fifteen cents a letter. A trophy shop may be the worst place to look for awards, quite often the same item can be purchased at a discount department store for half the price. (ERA Note - our surveys have indicated that our participants are very appreciative of 'completion' or 'participation' awards. Simple inexpensive medallions, donations, mugs, photos, small salt blocks, and other simple items of recognition keep people coming back to your ride year after year.

**Insurance:** Anyone putting on a ride without insurance is not only jeopardizing themselves, but everyone involved with the ride, including the riders. If a rider should injure a bystander during the ride, both you and the rider could be faced with a lawsuit. (**ERA NOTE:** All ERA MEMBERS and volunteers are covered by insurance. Non-member riders DO NOT HAVE COVERAGE! This should be emphasized when non-members are signing up for a ride. ALSO NOTE - ERA/AEF insurance covers Endurance and Limited Distance participants only. If you hold a fun ride in conjunction with an Endurance Ride, those people participating in the Fun Ride are not covered by our "function" insurance. It is recommended that you have all participants register in one of the "Sanctioned" events. If they choose to ride a shorter distance, they may do so. But remember, again, if they are not members, they are not covered by our insurance. You should make this clear to them when they sign the waiver for your ride.)

**Size of Ride:** Rider entry fees may be your only source of income therefore it is very important that you accurately predict the number of entries you can get. Don't plan on having one hundred entries if there never has been over fifty horses entered in any ride in your region. Consider limiting your entries so that you will be able to properly prepare for the maximum number of horses that will be entered. (ERA Note - Limited entries must be advertised well in advance and approved by the Sanctioning Committee.) If you have a well laid out loop type of trail over moderate to easy terrain with adequate water and good weather, only one experienced ride "vet" may be needed for a ride of thirty-five horses. (ERA Note - recommend 15 horses per vet. While we have seen rides with up to 20 to 25 per vet, this puts undo stress on the veterinarians and their help, and creates long waits at vet gates. Well managed rides generally have fewer horses per vet and minimum waits.) Rides up to fifty entries, put on over courses as described above, are very easy to manage and it probably is not wise for your first ride to accept more than one hundred entries.

**Help:** Remember that the majority of your help will be voluntary and you may end up with what you paid for. The amount of help required is basically dependent upon three parameters which are to some extent interrelated, and they are; course layout, number of entries and the type of vet checks. When doing really large rides or rides that are not laid out in some form of a loop, the ride

managers role should be that of a second level manager. A reasonable delegation of responsibility would be:

**Trail Boss:** Responsibilities would include: trail layout, obtaining permission of right of ways, course timing, procuring water if needed, marking trail, and drawing up rider and crew maps. This person should also be an experienced endurance rider. (ERA Note - the trail boss often gives the briefing on the trail at the pre-ride briefing. The trail boss is often responsible for obtaining accurate measurement of the trail length. At the ride briefing the trail boss should go over the trail in detail for all distances, outlining the direction and order of the loops, landmarks, hazards, watering points, tips on where to ride, land management issues, distance markers or warnings, vet checks and vet check and crewing procedures as appropriate. Some items may be handled by Ride Management.)

**Trophy Chairperson:** Responsible for getting trophies and obtaining donations. Note, if you are putting on a ride with one hundred and fifty or more entries, you may want to have a separate donation Chairperson. (ERA Note - our rides tend to be smaller. Typically it is unusual to have more than fifty at rural rides, although it is not uncommon for rides near major centres to have 80 participants. Also, it has become common for some ride managers to coordinate their rides with Competitive Trail Rides which tends to increase the number of participants.)

**Food and Refreshment Chairperson:** Their responsibilities would not only include the procurement and preparation of the food, but also the distribution. This may mean that they would have to haul food and drinks to different vet checks throughout the ride. (ERA Note - the advertising for the ride should indicate what food will be provided so riders and crews can plan. It should also be covered on the bulletin board and at the ride briefing.)

**Ride Secretary:** The ride secretary, in addition to having basic secretarial skills, should have a pleasing personality and be able to converse well via the telephone. They should also be experienced in endurance riding. This person should have plenty of free time to discharge their duties which are: processing entries, answering many varied questions regarding the ride via the telephone, and in writing, handling the majority if not all of the correspondence for the ride.

**Vet Check and Base Camp Chair people:** The base camp and each ,vet check should have one person in charge. This person is responsible for procuring the help and coordinating the activities at their site. (ERA note - our rides are small so we do not necessarily have separate people fulfilling these functions. Nevertheless, someone must be responsible for these activities.)

**Head Veterinary Secretary:** Must find and train people for taking P&R's. Note, two P&R crews for every vet is a good ratio. It is wise to have some extra stethoscopes and watches with second hands available the day of the ride. (ERA Note - Train, train, train. There is nothing more frustrating to an endurance rider to know their horse is 'down' and to have an inexperienced P&R person who can not find or hear the heartbeat. Teach the volunteers before the ride, have a practice ride for inexperienced people.)

**Transportation and Communication Chairperson:** It is quite likely that your primary mode of communication the day of the ride will be C.B. radios, therefore, it is very easy to combine both of these positions under one head. You may need vehicles to transport workers to any outlying vet checks. You should have at least one all wheel drive vehicle to get emergency help into remote areas. In addition a means of transporting an injured horse should always be considered.

**Timing and Ride Results Chairperson:** You will need a minimum of one person at the finish line and it is advisable to have at least one back up person. If you are going to run any vet checks with mandatory holds you will need "in" and "out" timers at each of these checks. Note, the second biggest complaint right behind poorly marked trails, is that the timers watches were not coordinated. (ERA Note - this WAS a problem many years ago in ERA, but has not been an issue noted on any recent surveys.) When putting on a small ride the timer can be filling out the ride results during the ride; however, on really large rides you should have a separate person doing this and it should be started well before the ride is over so that any discrepancies can be immediately corrected. (ERA Note - this has been an issue at a number of rides. It is imperative that there is someone doing the mathematical calculations AND someone checking them. Checking is imperative since it is so easy to make a mathematical error.)

**Entertainment and Awards Presentation Chairperson:** Entertainment may be virtually eliminated, particularly on small rides, however, on larger rides if done properly, it can generate additional revenue for the ride. Consider a raffle, or a bar, and if your base camp is near a large enough population centre, you may want to have a dance and charge admission for non- riders. A really good master of ceremonies can put the frosting on the cake, particularly if they are familiar with many of the riders.

**Advertising Chairperson:** This job has to be done well or you won't get many entries. The best methods of advertisement are:

- Mail out entries to local AERC list and previous ride list, if applicable.(Get the ERA membership list from the ERA secretary or the ERA Web Page.)
- Hand out entries at local rides and that means that you give everyone at the ride an entry.
- Give talks at local horse clubs. This method is very rarely used and can be very worthwhile in generating new entries, particularly if you are putting on a novice ride.
- (ERA Note - ERA provides posters with the Ride Management Package. Put them up at tack shops, stables and other places that local riders frequent. Ride Management should try to increase their local participation,)

**Clean-up Chairperson:** This is the job that nobody wants, but it is very important to do a good job. Note, most endurance riders will clean up after themselves if there is a place to put their garbage. (ERA Note - cover this in your hand out, rider packages, at the ride briefing and at the

awards ceremony. Some rides include a large garbage bag for waste in the rider package.)

**Cost of Putting on a Ride:** It cannot be over-stressed that you should determine your costs and probable donations before determining your entry fee. When you have calculated your total costs and subtracted from it your donations, you are now in a position to determine your entry fee. When determining entry fee it is very wise to include a fudge factor on cost which may be as little as two hundred dollars for a very small ride and up to one thousand dollars for a very large ride. Don't forget to include whatever profit you expect to obtain from the ride in the total cost figure. Divide this number by the total number of entries you expect and that number is your entry fee. Note, do not be surprised if the first time through this exercise that you end up with an entry fee in excess of one hundred dollars, all this means is that you have saved yourself from filling Chapter 13 after the ride. Go back over your budget, item for item, and you will be surprised what you can do without. Who is giving out solid gold belt- buckles, filet mignon, and has a free bar with live entertainment. There are very few reasons for losing money putting on a ride and it usually is improper planning. For very small rides the total cost of the ride, which includes ride insurance, can be kept to under five hundred dollars.

**(ERA Note** - remember this was written in 1979. ALSO, for first time rides, ERA will assist and will sponsor the ride. If ERA sponsors the ride, it will absorb the losses. However, it also takes any profit and will manage the ride to minimize the risk of any loss.)

**Cheek List and Organization Chart:** By making a cheek list and ride organization chart that is specifically tailored to your ride, you will go a long ways towards assuring a successful ride for you and the riders. See sample check list at the end of this section.

**Overall Responsibility:** As ride manager you are responsible for whatever happens during the ride. This point is extremely important when selecting people to help you put on your ride. You will find a lot of discontent in your ride if you are not capable of making tough decisions and sticking by them.

**There are four "Golden Rules" that as a ride manager you must always adhere to:**

- Well marked trails. (In the riders opinion this is the heart of the ride.)
- Treat everyone fairly. (This does not mean that you are going to please everyone.)
- Don't make any unnecessary rules. (And what rules that you do make, be sure that you can enforce them, and if the occasion occurs, you do enforce them.)
- You must operate on a budget. (If you don't, you will lose a considerable amount of money. The present record loss for an AERC sanctioned ride is \$9,000, that's right, nine thousand dollars.) (ERA Note - 1979 dollars)

Sources of Information: There is no better source than personal experience. If possible, help put on an endurance ride before becoming a ride manager.

The AERC has an excellent handbook for ride managers or you may consider asking an experienced ride manager in your area. ERA Note - you are reading our handbook.)

Just remember that putting on an endurance ride really can be fun, provided you take the time to plan it. **Courtenay Hart, 1979**

## **Ride Management Check List**

The following check list has been developed from the AERC Ride Management manual check list.

### **9 to 12 Months Before the Ride**

- Select campsite and find trail, and measure
- Contact your ERA Secretary for dates, forms, etc.
- Select ride date and possible alternate; media deadlines for ERA sponsored publications
- Set up tentative budget, including entry fees
- Arrange for head veterinarian needed to receive ERA sanctioning (ERA maintains a list of authorized veterinarians.)
- Organize key ride officials
- Consider various options for awards and begin checking prices

### **2 to 3 Months Before Ride**

- Write up publicity, ride flyers and get them ready to mail
- Order completion awards
- Check on head veterinarian and get commitments for assistants if needed
- Clear trail, trim overhanging branches, etc.
- Arrange to rent or borrow equipment, outhouse, water tanks, water truck, generator, tents
- Have meeting of key ride personnel, discuss plans
- Determine vehicle logistics and driving times for transporting P&R teams, timers and veterinarians to the check points

### **1 to 2 Months Before Ride**

- Send ride entry forms and information package to those responding to ads
- Check supply of forms. cards, printing if necessary
- Purchase/confirm ERA/AEF ride insurance
- Plan food

- Make sure permission is obtained from land owners, provincial and municipal agencies - more and more frequently they are asking for proof of insurance and a liability waiver, and a copy of the liability waiver the ride will be **requiring** the riders to sign.
- Post flyers in local tack shops, feed stores, barns, stables, veterinary supply stores
- Organize supplies, especially trail marking needs

### **1 to 2 Weeks Before Ride**

- Confirm that all veterinarians and key ride personnel are still available
- Check communications and routes to vet checks
- Ensure adequate transportation is available to check points and be sure to know the distance and driving time to all check points
- Start to mark trail
- Buy supplies: toilet paper, pencils, paint sticks, extra trail marking material, etc.

### **1 to 5 Days Before Ride**

- Buy food
- Check and complete trail marking
- Transport equipment such as water tanks, porta potties, etc.
- Post signs to campsite
- Set up or move in ride office complete with supplies; Include a scale for weighing of riders

### **NIGHT BEFORE RIDE**

- Sign up riders
- Organize vetting-in of horses
- Hold pre-ride meeting
- Organize food, refreshments and shelter for vet stops and other ride workers
- Get good night's sleep

### **DAY OF RIDE**

- Early wake up call as appropriate, wake up and transport vets and volunteers
- Organize and monitor the start
- Place spotters and ride vet crews
- Start ride
- Deal with all problems as they arise, preferably in a calm, efficient manner
- Organize drag riders, ensure all riders and mounts are accounted for
- Have post-ride meeting, give out awards
- Thank everyone for coming, especially ride workers

## **AFTER RIDE**

- Return rented or borrowed equipment
- Clean up campsite
- Remove markers from trail signs, etc. A marker is a marker the day of the ride, it is an annoyance the day after the ride, and a week after the ride it is litter. Land owners are very sensitive to ribbons and other markings left on their land. Be sure to remove them all immediately after the ride.
- Send thank you notes to landowners and ride workers
- Prepare and send in ride results to ERA Secretary
- Write an article about the ride

**See also the Ride Evaluation Form in Appendix E. This form was developed to get feedback from riders about their concerns about rides.**

### **11.0 Sign in, Pre - Ride Briefing, Base Camp Layout, Care and Feeding of Volunteers**

The subjects above are covered generally in other parts of this handbook. We will add to the Handbook as information is added and provided to ERA.

NOTE to Board/reviewers - do you want anything added here?

### **12.0 Ride Announcements/Flyers**

It is important to properly announce your ride and get information out to potential riders. You can obtain a membership list from the ERA Secretary or from the ERA web page at <http://www.enduranceriders.ab.ca> . The ERA Secretary will send out posters for you to use to put up at tack stores, stables, etc. to advertise your ride locally. Samples of ride announcements and information packages are contained in Appendix D. Be sure to have a contact number and good directions to the ride site. We are getting more and more hits on our web site. We put ride contact information on the web site as long as we are informed.

We have recently inaugurated a “Long Distance Riding Hot Line”. This is an automated (computerized) attendant that will provide information about Endurance and Competitive Trail with ride dates and other information. Please get your ride information to the ERA Secretary to

ensure your ride information is included. Features will include “fax back” capability in the near future so that your ride information can be faxed to interested participants. The number is a toll free number - 1.866.987.0224 - for Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. Outside the toll free area, callers can call 1.780.987.0224. You can also leave messages and obtain other information at this number. It is hoped this will be of assistance to our members and ride managers in the promotion of our sport.

### **13.0 PRE - RIDE BRIEFING**

The Pre-Ride Briefing should include all the information the riders and crews will need to successfully complete and enjoy the ride. You will have some riders who are competitive and some who are out just to enjoy the scenery and the company of other riders and horses. Ride Management should consider the needs of all participants when planning their rides and the ride briefing. There will be people moving at speed, and there will be some that arrive in camp just ahead of your drag riders if you are using them. There are people who intuitively can follow maps and the trails, and there are people who will get lost and disoriented no matter how well the trail is marked. Remember, mark all hazards and explain them to all ... you may think a hazard is off trail, but remember those folks who regularly manage to find the wrong turn in the trail. Think about how people could go wrong. Remember, you know the trails. Many of your participants will not so they need to know how the trail goes, what the landmarks are, how to tell if they are off trail, how the trail has been marked, what the markers mean, and so on.

Rules and special conditions must be explained. If there are any special landowner issues they should be addressed at the ride briefing. Vet criteria, hold times, start times, vet gate closing times, distances between checks and so on should be explained. Ride Management should introduce the veterinarians and volunteers as appropriate. The details on food and water for equines and riders should be covered. The timing and procedures for the awards ceremonies, meals, and entertainment, if any, should be explained.

Remember to thank your sponsors and if donating funds to a charity, remember to tell the participants where the funds are going. Thank your volunteers. Thank the participants.

### **14.0 AWARDS CEREMONY**

The awards ceremony should be scheduled for a reasonable time. If dinner is included, it should

also be scheduled and held when scheduled.

Often this is difficult, especially on longer distance rides. If you have a 120 or 160 km ride in conjunction with an 80 km endurance ride and Limited Distance, it will not be practical to hold up the dinner and perhaps even the awards ceremony for the 160 km riders as some of them may not complete until well into the early hours of the morning. Some rides consider two ceremonies, one for the shorter distances and another for the longer distances. Some also hold over the awards ceremony until the following morning, and have a breakfast the next morning.

One of the issues we run into, and Ride Management need to consider, is that in today's busy world, many people have responsibilities and commitments for Sunday. They will commit to get to a ride Friday night for our traditional Saturday rides. We see more and more people leaving the ride sites on Saturday after they complete. Partly this may be due to how long it takes to compile the results, how late the food is scheduled for, and how late the award ceremonies are.

Ride Management may wish to consider how to make the flow of information go quickly, how to keep riders at the ride site with good food and camaradie, and to get completion awards to the riders as soon as possible. A well run ride will keep more people about than one where people are not sure that things will happen on time. However, everyone has to recognize that today, not everyone will be able to stay for all the activities. Ride Management should plan accordingly.

Award ceremonies can be quite simple and still be effective. Try to recognize everyone who participated in the ride - finishers and hard luck participants, crews, volunteers, vets. Recognition keeps people coming back.

Randy Eiland: " Nearly anything is acceptable for an award. Just be sure to remember Juniors as all junior riders want the recognition they deserve. If you want to keep your costs down, give certificates for future entries, or maybe a \$5.00 or \$10.00 discount on next year's ride. Shirts are especially popular especially if you customize your design."

## **15.0 SANCTIONING**

Ready to go? Apply to the ERA Secretary for a ride date a ride sanction form.

A ride sanction form is included in Appendix A.

**GOOD LUCK AND HAVE A GREAT RIDE**

## APPENDIX A

### RIDE MANAGEMENT PACKAGE

List of Items:

- Sanctioning Form
- Rules
- Vet Card
- Completion List
- fhj
- jdsfa
- dfh

**Will insert material from Monika here when ready for printing.**

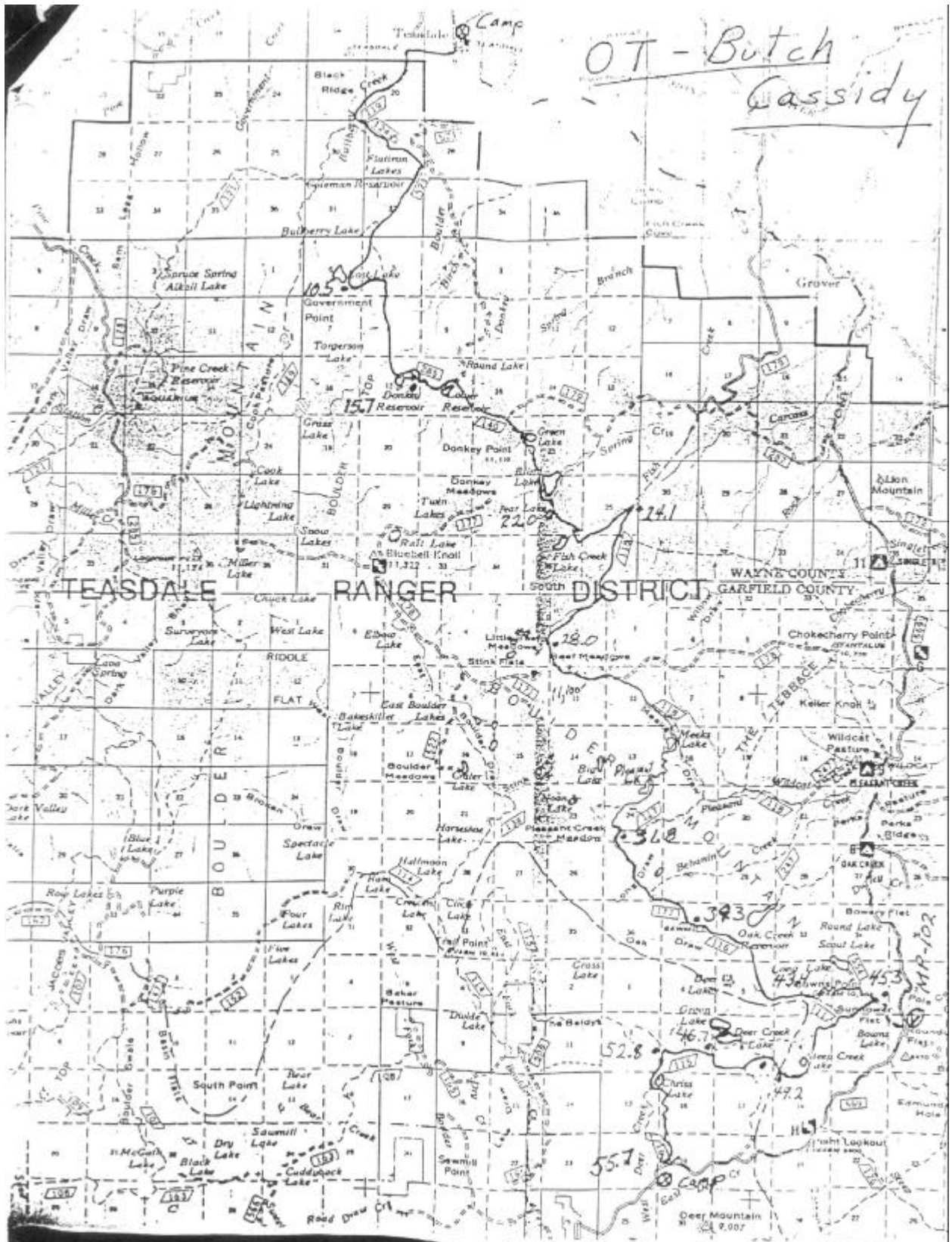
## **APPENDIX B**

### **SAMPLE MAPS**

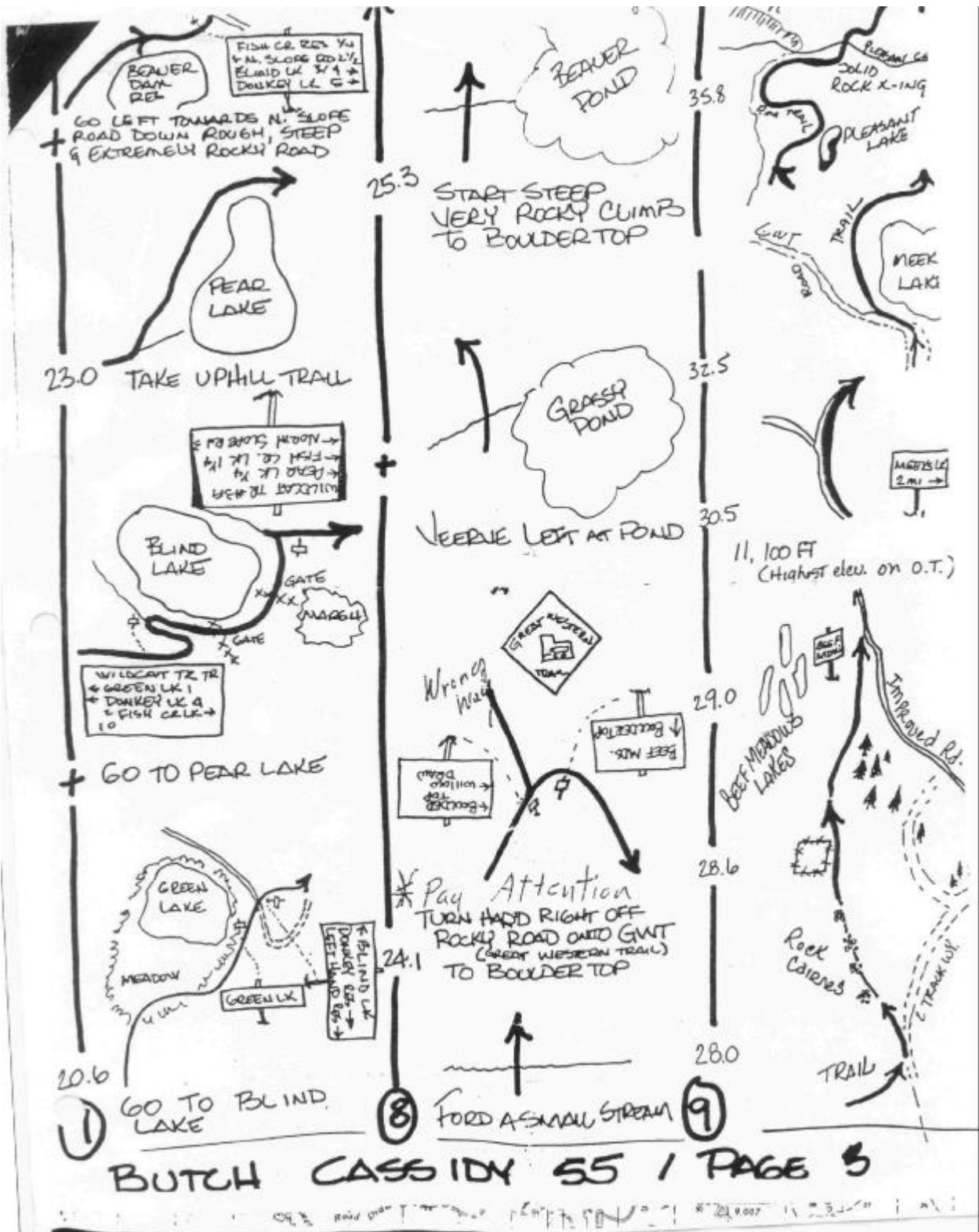
Items:

Send Me your favourite Map - Air Photo, county map, hand drawn, computer generated, miscellaneous information on the map - anything that you think makes for a better ride.

Map with orientation drawings to assist riders attached as a sample of something different from what we often see in Alberta that may be of help to some rides.



Outlaw Trail, Day One



Orientation Graphics to help riders ensure they are on the trail.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **CARDIAC RECOVERY INDEX**

**Will insert three volume article on proper use and interpretation of the CRI here prior to printing.**

**APPENDIX D**

**RIDE ANNOUNCEMENTS/FLYERS**

**DRAYTON VALLEY HORSE CLUB ENDURANCE RIDE**  
**August 18/19, 2000**

**Sanctioned by Endurance Riders of Alberta**

Welcome to the Drayton Valley Endurance Ride!

**LOCATION:** Riverside trails along the scenic Pembina River.  
Refer to the map on the back of this page.

**RIDE TIMES:**

100 mile - 5:30 am  
50 mile - 7:00 am  
30 mile - 10:00 am  
15 mile - 11:00 am

Vet checks will begin Friday at 4:00 pm.  
Rules & Regulations: As per E. R. A. rule book.

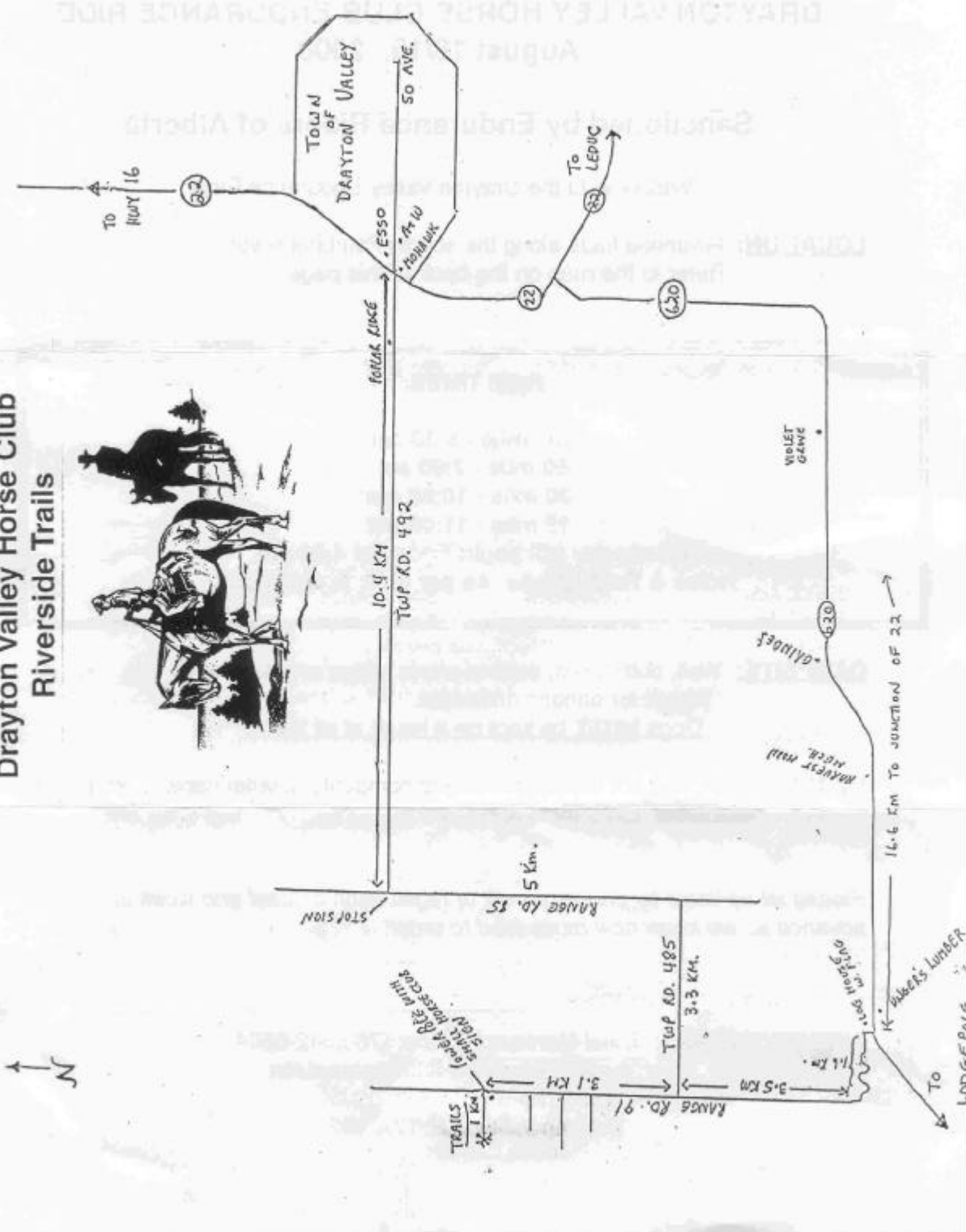
**CAMPSITE:** Well, outhouses, several picnic tables and ample parking.  
Watch for parking attendant.  
Dogs MUST be kept on a leash at all times.

**MEALS:** Lunch and hot supper provide to competitors, veterinarians, and  
volunteers. Extra meal ticket, \$6.00.

*Please let us know by phone, e-mail or registration at least one week in  
advance so we know how much food to order.*

**RIDE SECRETARY:** Ethel Mankow: Phone: (780)542-6804  
e-mail: emankow@telusplanet.net  
Box 6815  
Drayton Valley, AB. T7A 1S2

# Drayton Valley Horse Club Riverside Trails



**Riverside Trails Endurance Ride  
August 18 - 19, 2000  
Sanctioned by Endurance Riders Of Alberta**

Rider Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Junior/Date Of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Horses Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Breed \_\_\_\_\_

Registration No: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Address of Horse Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be staying for supper? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

=====

**DIVISION: (Circle One)**

<b>A: 100 Mile</b>	<b>B: 50 Mile</b>	<b>C: 30 Mile</b>	<b>D: 15 Mile</b>
\$95.00 Adult	\$55.00 Adult	\$40.00 Adult	\$20.00 Adult
\$45.00 Junior	\$30.00 Junior	\$20.00 Junior	\$10.00 Junior

**FAMILY RATE:** 2 adults & 1 junior pay full price, additional riders no charge.

A Drug testing fee is included in these fees.

*As a participant, I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of ERA. I understand that Endurance riding involves being in remote areas for extended periods of time, far from communications, transportation and medical facilities; that these areas may have natural and man made hazards which ride management cannot anticipate, identify, modify, or eliminate; that horses can be excitable, difficult to control, and unpredictable; and that accidents can happen to anyone at any time. I agree to take full responsibility for myself and the animal I am riding. I will hold the ride management, all personnel, and all property owners over whose land the ride crosses, blameless for any accident, injury, or loss that might occur due to my participation in the ride, and free from all liability or such injury or loss.*

**I have read and understand this liability release.**

Rider's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian (for Junior Rider) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mail cheques and registrations to: Drayton Valley Horse Club  
C/O Box 6815  
Drayton Valley, AB. T7A 1S2

**"TO FINISH IS TO WIN"**

## SUNDANCE CANYON ENDURANCE RIDE

WHEN: Race is Sept. 9/2000  
Vet check is Friday Sept. 8/2000

WHERE: Go west of Edson on Highway #16 about 3.5 miles. Turn right or north on to SCHLICK ROAD. Follow this as it winds west and north for about 5 miles. At the stop sign at the "T" intersection go left or west one mile to next "T" intersection where you go right or north .5 miles. Signs and ribbons up from highway on.

DISTANCES: 35 MILES      ENTRY FEE \$40.00      JUNIOR \$20.00  
50 MILES      ENTRY FEE \$58.00      JUNIOR \$28.00  
This includes the drug testing fee.

There will also be a fifteen mile FUN ride sponsored by the Ag. Society the same day.

RULES: The 35 and 50 mile rides will run under ERA rules. This means that 16 year olds and under must be accompanied by an Adult rider and wear a helmet. Horses must be 4 years or more to go the 35 miles and at least 5 years to go the 50 miles.

CAMP: Large sheltered clearing. Water for horses only. Dogs must be on a leash. Please spread manure and left over hay.

MEALS: Lunch and Supper on Saturday will be provided for all riders and volunteers. Please bring your own meat and plate and cutlery. ( Large barbecue will be supplied) and salads, potatoes etc. will be supplied. Extra supper tickets will be available for \$3.50 each.

TRAIL: One 35 mile loop and one 15 mile loop. Out vet check on 35 mile loop. Some steep climbs about 15 - 20 miles into the 35 mile loop. VERY LITTLE GRAVEL.

VET: John Jaques and Dave Holroyd

CONTACT: **PLEASE PHONE A HEAD AND LET US KNOW SO WE CAN HAVE LOTS OF GRUB FOR EVERY ONE. PHONE TRACY AT 780 723-6885 OR MAVIS AT 780 723-3974. YOU COULD EVEN PREREGISTER BY MAILING A CHEQUE TO TRACY AT BOX 7952, EDSON, AB. T7E 1W2**

**APPENDIX E**

**RIDE EVALUATION FORMS**

**Will insert Ride Evaluation form here prior to printing.**

## References

- AERC - old Ride Management Manual Circa 1975
- Courtenay Hart article from 1979 and reprinted in the AERC Endurance News in November 1997
- Randy Eiland Article from the January 1998 AERC Endurance News
- FEI Rule Book
- Australian Rule Book and others from Internet