

The Western States Trail Foundation



Dedicated to Preserving the  
Integrity And Heritage of  
The Western States Trail

# IMPACT REPORT

Fall 2023

No-Hands Bridge, Tevis Mile 96

# COMMITMENT TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT

- The Annual Tevis Cup Ride – held since 1955 – is managed each year by the Western States Trail Foundation (WSTF) with support from the Western States Trail Endowment Fund.
- The WSTF is chartered to stage the annual ride as well as to preserve and protect the historic legacy of the Western States Trail. Staying true to the values of our founders, the WSTF also sponsors endurance horse welfare studies each year. This report provides an update on our activities for the past year – we've been busy!



*Barbara White, 2023 President  
(34-Time Tevis Finisher)*

*The Western States Trail Foundation*

In 2023 we successfully met the challenges presented to us – damage from the Mosquito Fire and the ravages of a record-setting winter – and had the Trail prepared for the 67<sup>th</sup> Tevis Cup. With a heightened focus on safety for horses and riders, we staged a ride that allowed a well-prepared field to make the annual journey to Auburn. Through the actions and support of our WSTF Board of Governors, our network of hundreds of volunteers, and the generosity of our donors, our stewardship of the Ride and the Trail will continue - Thank-you for your ongoing support!



# MOSQUITO FIRE RECOVERY

“All Hands On Deck” in the first half of 2023 as funding and volunteer hours from the Ride and Run communities partnered with the Land Managers (Auburn State Rec Area, US Forest Service) to restore the Trail.

**The Fire Scope:** Starting on 6 Sept 2022 near the Oxbow Dam, the fire quickly grew to some 76,000 acres, including the central portion of the Western States Trail. (Fully-contained by 15 Oct 2023)

**Recovery:** In the Fall, mitigation of hazard trees and soil erosion were the two big priorities. Federal and State resources were applied, including \$50,000 from our WSTF to speed the recovery efforts. In the Spring, multiple trail-work sessions involving 100's of volunteer hours were conducted to make the trail safe and passable.

## High-Fives!

Our community celebrated with the 50<sup>th</sup> Running of the WS Endurance Run (24 June), and the 67<sup>th</sup> Tevis Cup Ride (29 July).

100-Mile One-Day Trail Ride

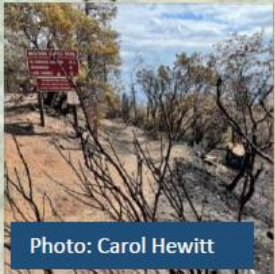


Photo: Carol Hewitt



Lower Quarry



# BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

The WSTF manages an annual budget of nearly \$300,000 with activities to support our Mission that run throughout the year.

## Income:

60% - Donations through our Annual Appeal, the Virtual Ride, and Support From Our Core Donors.

20% - Annual Ride Entry Fees

20% - Support from the WST Endowment Fund

## Expenses:

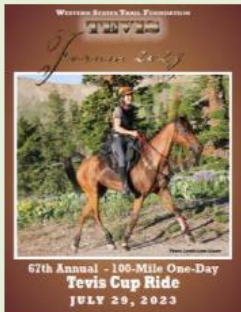
Trail Renewal & Maintenance / Fire Recovery

Staging the Annual Ride

2023 Capital Equipment: Equine Rescue Kits, Portable Saws, Communications Gear.

## Continuation of the Tevis "Virtual Ride"

Initiated in 2020, the Virtual Ride brings the trail to life for a world-wide fan base. Over 900 participants went the distance in 2023, raising funds to support our ongoing obligations!



This year's FORUM was mailed in May to over 5000 horse enthusiasts, and was immediately viewable worldwide at [Teviscup.org](http://Teviscup.org).

## Growing Our Donor List – Now at 500!

This list is used for outreach in our direct-mail campaigns and for passing along news and updates to our core supporters.

## Maintaining Our "Public Face" at Virtually No Cost to our WSTF:

Merchandise Sales through our Tevis Store

Our Annual Publication (the FORUM)

Maintenance of the [Teviscup.org](http://Teviscup.org) website

The Annual Tevis Educational Ride Weekend



# EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The WSTF strives to form partnerships that can best leverage a broad base of resources to achieve our Mission to “Preserve and Protect” . . . two examples:



Shown Here: Work Crews Along the Granite Chief re-Route, Sept 2023.

## Trail Re-Routing in the Granite Chief Wilderness

As a result of joint planning between the WSTF, the WS Endurance Run (WSER), and the US Forest Service, the USFS has secured an \$800,000 grant to re-route the trail in miles 15 to 22 of the Tevis Ride – placing the trail onto a ridgeline that is less erosion-prone, and less densely vegetated. The 3-year project is underway – the WSTF has contributed \$38,000 to help meet this year’s overall project budget and we have committed to further financial support as the project progresses.



## Work Begins – Last Chance to Michigan Bluff Trail Improvements (USFS / Legacy Trails Grant)

The WSTF has received a \$100,000 Grant to improve the solid rock steps, chisel back rock to widen the tight areas, and strengthen the trail bed. This Grant requires us to provide a “match” through volunteer hours or financial contribution over the coming 18 months - work is underway!

# HORSE WELFARE



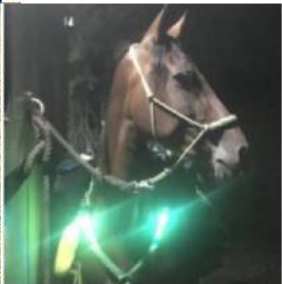
A Renewed Emphasis This Year on Horse & Rider Safety

Meet Dr Briana Hamamoto – our Tevis Rescue Team Leader Trained in large-animal rescue at UC Davis, Dr. Hamamoto oversaw the training, deployment, and real-time management of large-animal rescue teams, pre-staged along the course for the 2023 ride.

Trail Upgrades – through the generous support of our donors to the Western States Trail Restoration Project, we have been able to do targeted upgrades for improved footing on portions of the trail.

Preparedness - The Ride Management Team for 2023 upgraded its communications gear (Starlink) and pre-staged veterinarians and safety kits (“Loops Rescue System” shown).

Cultural Change Accomplished - in just one year of focused effort: Through a strengthening of our rules, and through education and outreach, our 2023 riders universally adopted a “soft illumination” approach to night riding that we feel favorably impacts the ability of our horses to navigate the trail at night (glow sticks / red headlamps.)



# LOOKING AHEAD

Our long-term goals include proceeding with plans for a significant upgrade of the finish line at the Auburn Staging Area, working to ensure trail access and right-of-way (both for our event and for all visitors to the historic Western States Trail), and continuing with our annual equine health studies.

Looming large is the possible acquisition of private property that includes the first few miles of the “California Street Section” of the Western States Trail. The WSTF is currently exploring this rare opportunity to secure access to a section of the Trail for generations to come. Stay tuned for more news on this “Gateway Project” acquisition in the coming months!

Collectively, all of the effort described in this brochure is made possible by your generous financial support. Please consider a 2023 donation to sustain our efforts – contributions qualify as a charitable deduction for tax purposes, and can be directed to our office in Auburn (below). Our need has never been greater – please join with us to pursue our Mission.

We are fortunate this year to have the generous support of the Purebred Arabian Trust. Their Mission is to promote activities that showcase the beauty, strength, and stamina of the Arabian Horse, and is closely aligned with our role to sustain this magnificent sport of Endurance. The Purebred Arabian Trust will provide matching funds up to the first \$10,000 donated to this, our annual appeal – Thank-you!

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