

# The Western States Trail Foundation



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

## IMPACT REPORT

Fall 2025

High Camp, Mile 13

Lynne Glazer Imagery

## ABOUT the WSTF:

Based in Auburn, CA with support worldwide, the Western States Trail Foundation (WSTF) was established to maintain the famous Western States Trail from Lake Tahoe to Auburn and to keep alive its history, now more than a century since the Gold Rush Days of California, when it was the major route through the mountains. We stage the annual Tevis Cup 100-mile, 1-day Endurance Ride and sponsor veterinary-led studies of equine health and fitness. The event was initiated in 1955 by Wendell Robie, a horseman, athlete, banker, and major influence for the conservation of the Sierra.

### *From Our WSTF President:*



**Tony Benedetti**  
2025 President  
WSTF

This past year the Western States Trail Foundation purchased the Robie Equestrian Park - permanently linking the WSTF to Wendell Robie's goal of creating a dedicated starting location for the Tevis Ride. There was a different feeling at Robie this year, a sense of history and a connection to Wendell.

The 69th Tevis ride in 2025 was successful. Although our number of participants was lower this year, we continue to support the vision of our founders to preserve a way of life from a bygone era when our forebears "crossed the mountains" to find a better life. Crossing the Sierra Nevada on horseback on the Tevis Trail continues to be an awesome experience!

The WSTF works tirelessly to make Tevis happen every year, to protect and maintain the Trail, and to keep horse welfare front and center. Thank you for your continued support!

# BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

The WSTF manages an annual budget of over \$400,000 with activities to support our Mission that run throughout the year.

## Our Volunteers Maintain Our "Public Face" at Virtually No Cost to the WSTF:

- Merchandise Sales through our Tevis Store
- Our Annual Publication (the FORUM)
- Maintenance of the Teviscup.org website
- Nurturing a Social Media Presence
- The Annual Tevis Educational Ride Weekend



## Our Mission:

... to create and maintain public interest and historical memory in the type of an event made famous by the Pony Express Riders of more than a century ago ...

## Continuation of the Tevis "Virtual Ride"

Initiated in 2020, the Virtual Ride brings the Trail to life for a world-wide fan base. Nearly 1200 participants went the distance in 2025, raising funds to support our ongoing obligations!

## Earned a Charity Navigator 4 Star Rating!

...based on our financial health, a commitment to governance best practices, and our demonstrated impact. With a program expense ratio of 88%, Charity Navigator advises to "Donate with Confidence!"

## Hosting a Robust On-Line Community

- 35,000 Followers of our Tevis/WSTF Facebook Page
- 600,000 visitors to our Teviscup.org website (12 mos) including 115,000 visitors on Ride Day

## Successfully Staged the 69th Annual Ride

105 entrants started the historic journey from Tahoe to Auburn on 12 July 2025. Read all about it at Teviscup.org!

WSTF is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Org.  
Our Tax ID Number is 68-0009186

# TRAIL STEWARDSHIP

Together with the Western States Endurance Run Foundation, over \$1M has been invested to preserve and protect the Trail over the past 25 years – that's \$10,000 per mile!

Packer Route to Little Needle Lake Basecamp	Trail Segment Number
<b>Proposed Trail Enhancement</b>	Roads
Add to System (New Construction)	Trails
Add to System (Existing)	Pacific Crest Trail
Reroute	Granite Chief Wilderness
Decommission	Forest Service Ownership
Change Trail Name/Number	Other / Private Ownership

**Granite Chief Wilderness Re-Routes**  
Tahoe National Forest  
American River Ranger District

USDA - Overview Topo Map -

1:20,000

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

40' Contour Interval



## Trail Re-Routing in the Granite Chief Wilderness

As a result of joint planning between the WSTF, the WS Endurance Run, and the US Forest Service, efforts are underway 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. With completion expected in 2026, the WSTF has contributed \$70,000 (to date) to help meet the overall project budget.

## Our Mission:

... To save and preserve for future generations the historic Western States Trail established by pioneer Gold Rush emigrants to California. ...

# LEADERSHIP

The WSTF is managed by an all-volunteer Board of Governors, each selected for their dedication to preserve the legacy of the Trail, stage the Annual Ride, and a demonstrated connection to their equine partners

**Meet Nicole Wertz – Trail Preparations Leader, 7-time Tevis finisher, WSTF Governor since 2016 and now serving as Vice President:**

Nicole has been involved in endurance riding for 40 years. Her mother (Pat Chappell) is a 20+ completion buckle holder – (13 of those on one horse!) - which started Nicole's involvement with Tevis many years ago as a Junior rider. In her professional life Nicole manages construction projects which lends to her expertise leading the trails stewardship team for WSTF. She also maintains person to person liaison with land managers of United States Forest Service, Auburn State Recreation Area, private landholders and partnership with the Western States Endurance Run community for trail maintenance and long-term trail improvements.

Nicole was recognized in 2025 for her outstanding efforts at trail stewardship by the American Endurance Ride Conference with the Ann Parr Trails Award. Says Nicole: *"I hope to continue to inspire more equestrians to see the importance of volunteering for trail work to preserve trails. We need equestrians to prioritize trail volunteering!"*



Nicole Wertz



Dominique Cogne Photography

## SEIZING AN OPPORTUNITY

Established in 1990 by the Wendell and Inez Robie Foundation to honor the legacy of Wendell Robie, the Robie Equestrian Park has long-served as the base camp and starting point for the Annual Tevis Cup Ride. This 160-acre parcel of land was made available for purchase in March of 2025. In keeping with our charter to "save and preserve" the Trail for future generations, the WSTF took action to acquire this property and safeguard it for future public access. This is a milestone in trail preservation for our organization!

### Familiar Sights at Robie:

Horses "vetting in" at the Mansfield Arena and Riders attending the pre-Ride briefing at the Barsaleau Pavilion.



# LOOKING AHEAD

Exciting times for us as we look ahead to progress on existing projects and taking on new challenges:

- This coming year will see continued effort on the new route through the Granite Chief Wilderness. Motorized equipment and use of power tools is prohibited within this federally designated wilderness area, so the project relies on supplies hauled in by pack stock and humans, and the use of hand tools to dig out a new trail bed, cut back vegetation, and build rock retaining walls. We appreciate your patience!
- We are developing a care and maintenance plan for the newly-acquired Robie Equestrian Park.
- Planning is in-work to add polish to the McCann Stadium finish area, and the awards venue at the Fairgrounds.
- Although most of the trail traverses public lands managed by the US Forest Service and the Auburn State Recreation Area, there are sections of the trail that pass through private lands, and our access to the trail requires our steady attention. We allocate resources to engage with legal, real-estate, and trail architecture specialists to ensure that we have a safe route each year to conduct the ride. The WSTF remains anchored to the vision of ensuring year-round access for all users – a tall order, but we are committed!
- We will continue to solicit ideas and fund veterinary-led studies that could further increase our knowledge of factors that contribute to the success of our equines in the Tevis Ride.

Collectively, all of the effort described in this brochure is made possible by your generous financial support. Please consider a 2025 donation to sustain our efforts – contributions qualify as a charitable deduction for tax purposes, and can be directed to our office in Auburn (below), or submitted (via credit card) through [Teviscup.org](http://Teviscup.org). Collectively, we are getting it done – please join with us to pursue our Mission!

The Western States Trail Foundation  
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## Swinging Bridge, Mile 53



Lynne Glazer Imagery



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Permit No. 229

## Join With Us – Make an Impact!

Your generosity helps us to achieve our Mission to preserve and protect the WS Trail, to stage the Annual Ride, and to sponsor annual veterinary studies.

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