The Western States Trail Foundation

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

IMPACT REPORT

Fall 2026

Elephant's Trunk, Mile 25

Stacey Tierman Photography

ABOUT the WSTF:

Based in Auburn, CA with a support network worldwide, the Western States Trail Foundation was established to repair and maintain the famous Western States Trail from Lake Tahoe to Auburn and to keep alive its historical associations more than a century since the Gold Rush days of California. We stage the annual Tevis Cup 100-Mile, One-Day Endurance Ride and sponsor veterinary-led studies of equine health and fitness.



Jerry Wittenauer (and Carlos)
2026 President
Western States Trail Foundation

From Our WSTF President:

It has been a strong year for our Organization – our finances are on a solid footing, we continue to engage in a robust list of projects in pursuit of our Mission, and our volunteer support has been huge!

The 70th Tevis Cup Ride (1 August) was successful. 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!

Picayune Bluff, Mile 19

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 Keep Our Organization Running Across a Broad Front:

- Merchandise Sales through our Tevis Store
- Our Annual Publication (the FORUM)
- Maintenance of the Teviscup.org website
- Numerous Community Outreach Events (Booth)
- Nurturing a Social Media Presence
- The Annual Tevis Educational Ride Weekend
- Our e-newsletter – the *Mochila*
- Established a Warehouse (Ride Equipment Storage)

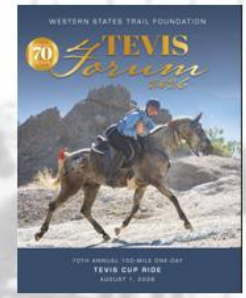
Continuation of the Tevis "Virtual Ride"
Initiated in 2020, the Virtual Ride brings the trail to life for a world-wide fan base. Nearly 1200 participants went the distance in 2026, raising funds to support our ongoing obligations!

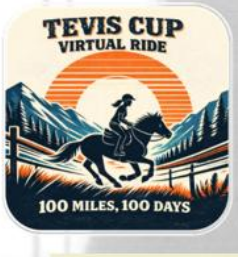
Successfully Staged the 70th Annual Ride
102 entrants started the historic journey from Tahoe to Auburn California on 1 August 2026. Read all about it at Teviscup.org!

Hosting a Robust On-Line Community

- 44,000 Followers at our Tevis/WSTF Facebook Page
- 675,000 visitors to our Teviscup.org website (12 mos) including 280,000 visitors on Ride Weekend
- Now on both Instagram and YouTube

Sustained Our 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!"



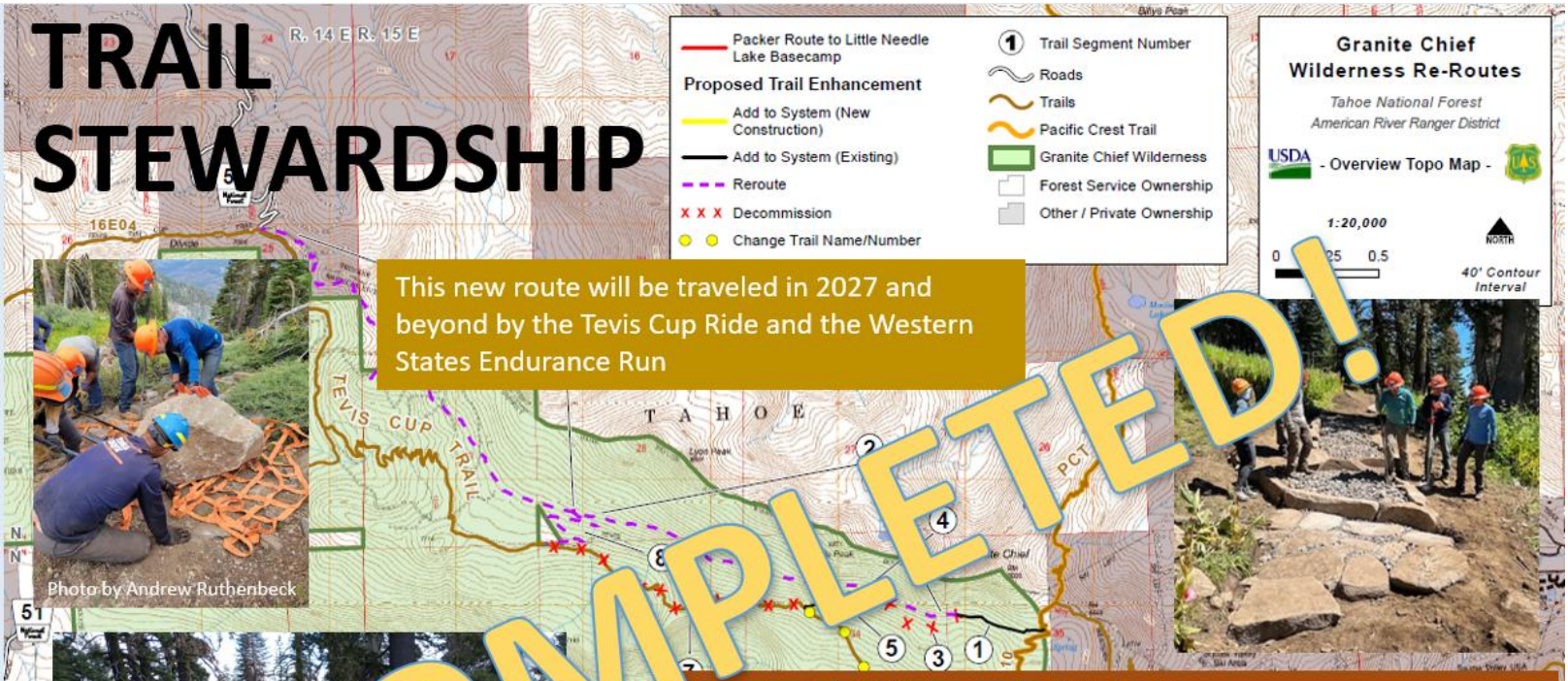






WSTF is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Org.
Our Tax ID Number is 68-0009186

TRAIL STEWARDSHIP



This new route will be traveled in 2027 and beyond by the Tevis Cup Ride and the Western States Endurance Run

Photo by Andrew Ruthenbeck

COMPLETED!



Photo Courtesy of WSER

Granite Chief Wilderness Trail is Ready

As a result of joint planning between the WSTF, the WS Endurance Run, and the US Forest Service, efforts have been underway since 2023 to re-route the Trail in miles 15 to 22 of the Tevis Cup Ride – placing the Trail onto a ridgeline that is less erosion-prone, and less densely vegetated – and offering Trail users stunning new views of the high country. (The WSTF contributed $190,000 to help meet the overall project cost.)

LEADERSHIP

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

Meet Crysta Turnage

Treasurer, Founder - Tevis Virtual Ride, Board Member Since 2016:

Crysta has been involved in endurance riding for over two decades, approaching an incredible 5,000 AERC miles, including ten 100-mile rides and three Tevis completions. Since becoming WSTF Treasurer in 2017, she has played a key role in guiding the organization's financial health—working closely with the Board to build budgets, analyze trends, and ensure resources are used wisely to support our Mission. She has been instrumental in the growth of our social media presence, helping to grow our followers from less than 6,000 to over 50,000.

When the ride was cancelled in 2020, Crysta didn't step back—she stepped up. She created the Tevis Virtual Ride, opening the trail to a global audience and establishing a vital new source of support for the Foundation. She continues to lead the Ride Day "Livefeed" committee each year and has also served as President of the Endowment Fund, strengthening the organization for the future.



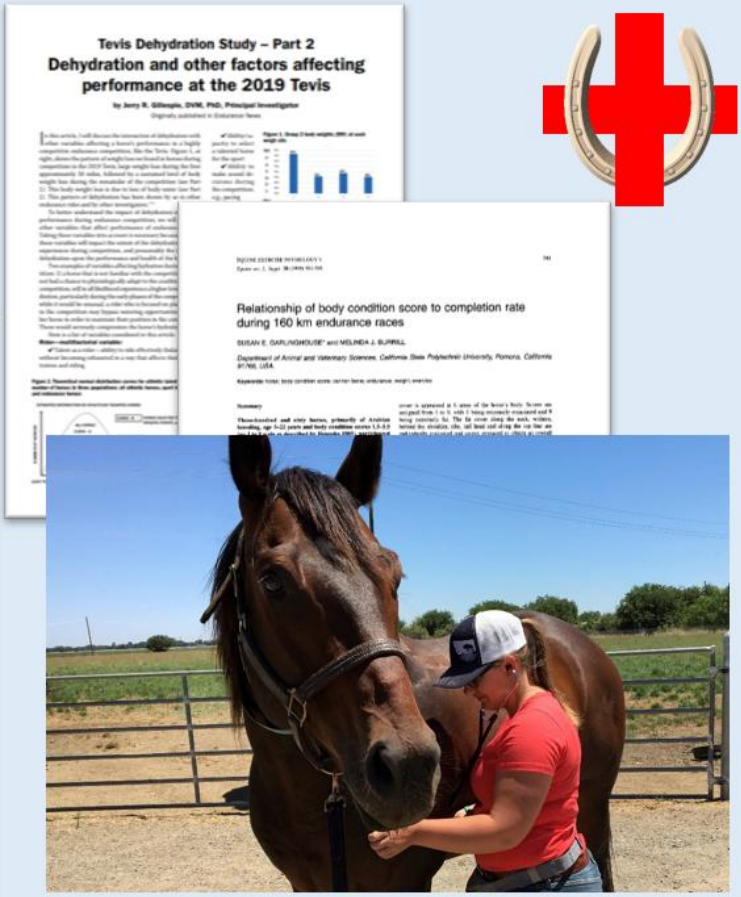
From Crysta:
"The Tevis Cup Ride has given so much to all of us—memories, friendships, challenges, and growth. Volunteering is a way to give that back. It doesn't matter how big or small your role is; every effort helps keep this tradition alive for the next generation. If you love this ride, there's a place for you to be part of it."

HORSE WELFARE

Among our proudest achievements is our annual veterinary study of performance, recovery, and overall health for our equine partners.

Our WSTF-sponsored studies have resulted in over 20 published research papers since 2005, check out this body of work on the "WSTF" tab at https://teviscup.org/

For 2026/27, we are pursuing efforts at the UC Davis Center for Equine Health on research that improves injury prevention, recovery, performance, diagnostic accuracy, and overall equine health outcomes. Specifically, we are supporting a study that could result in an improved method for evaluating diagnosis of Equine Metabolic Syndrome. We eagerly look forward to reporting on the results of this study!



A day-in the life for a member of the UC Davis Center for Equine Health "Teaching Herd"

LOOKING AHEAD

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

- **With completion of our project to re-route the Trail in the Granite Chief Wilderness, we will be applying our resources in the coming year for the following:**
  - **Site Improvements at the Chicken Hawk Staging Area**
  - **Replacement of footbridge decking along the first 8 miles of the route.**
  - **Trail Machine work to re-bed selected portions of trail along the California Loop**
- **Care and maintenance for the newly-acquired Robie Equestrian Park.**
- **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 route that pass through private lands, and our access 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 and well-being of our equine partners.**

Collectively, all of the effort described in this brochure is made possible by YOUR generous financial support. Please consider a 2026 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. We are getting it done – please join with us to pursue our Mission!

The Western States Trail Foundation
150 Gum Lane, Suite 103 Auburn, CA 95603

Watson's Monument, Mile 14

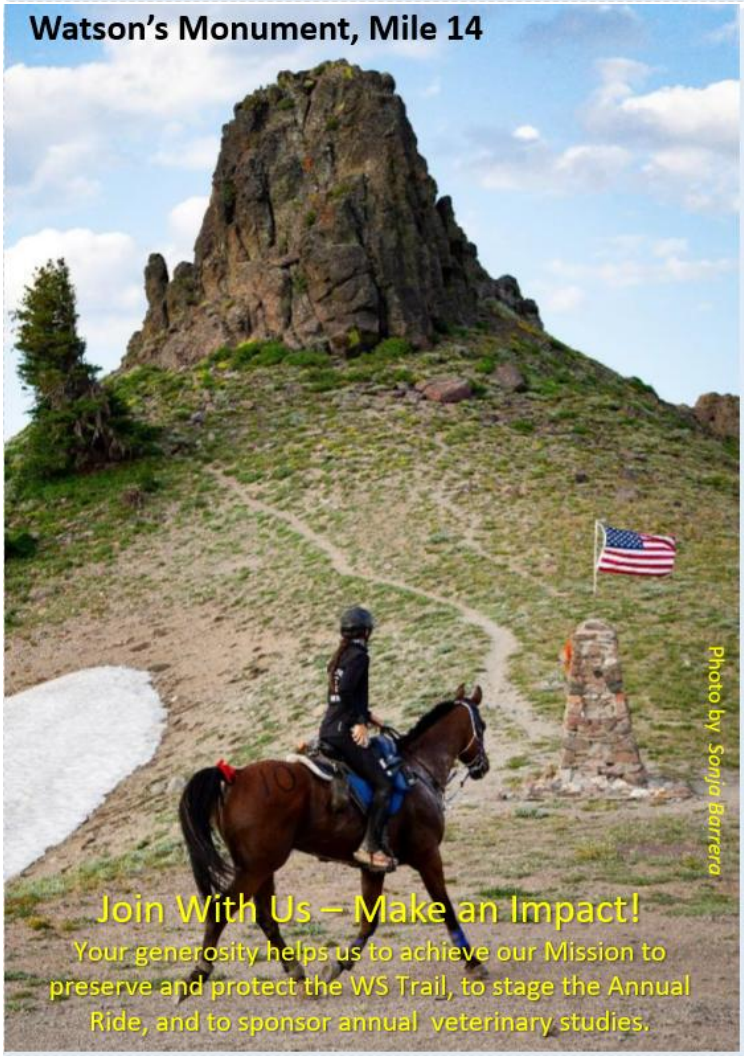


Photo by *Sonja Barrera*

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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