



*Michigan*  
**Trail Riders** ASSOCIATION, INC.

[www.mtra.org](http://www.mtra.org)

Chuck Fanslow, President

Jan Wolfin, Secretary

## December 2019 – NEWSLETTER

### Ride Schedules & Other Important Dates

January 5, 2020.....	Board of Director Meeting.....	Jay's Sporting Goods, Clare – 1:00 p.m.
March 21, 2020.....	Annual Banquet & General Membership Meeting.....	Doherty Hotel, Clare
March 22, 2020.....	Board of Director Meeting.....	Doherty Hotel, Clare – 9:30 a.m.
May 14 – 18, 2020.....	<b>PROPOSED</b> Blossom Ride.....	5 days at the South Branch Trail Camp
May 28 – June 7, 2020.....	<b>PROPOSED</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> June Ride (trophy ride).....	Empire to Oscoda
June 13 – 28, 2020.....	<b>PROPOSED</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> June Ride (trophy ride) .....	Oscoda to Empire
August 8 – 15, 2020.....	<b>PROPOSED</b> August Family Ride.....	Sheck's and Goose Creek
September 8 -27, 2020....	<b>PROPOSED</b> September Criss-Cross Ride, Trophy X 2.....	Mackinaw to Oscoda Oscoda to Empire
October 9 – 17, 2020.....	<b>PROPOSED</b> October Color Ride.....	Sheck's to Cadillac

## **Annual Banquet & General Membership Meeting March 21, 2020 – DOHERTY HOTEL, CLARE MICHIGAN**

MTRA is headed back to Clare for the Annual Banquet in 2020 and the plans for a wonderful weekend are in the works. Room reservations can be made at (877) 236-4378. The Doherty Hotel is pet friendly at an additional cost of \$20.00 per night. McCarn Entertainment will once again serve as our DJ so be sure to pack your dancing boots. The buffet on Saturday evening will cost \$30.00 per person and will feature oven roasted herb chicken, vegetarian southwestern sauté, beef tips ala burgundy over rice, herb roasted red potatoes, green beans, California blend, mashed potatoes and gravy, the Doherty's famous salad and bread bar, fountain soft drinks, hot or iced tea, and decaf or regular coffee. You can order banquet tickets when you renew your membership (form included with this newsletter) or go online to the [www.mtra.org](http://www.mtra.org) website. MTRA has contracted with the Doherty for a minimum 100 meals at the banquet. We need at least 100 people to pay for dinner. But let's party like it was the '80's when we had upwards of 150 people at our banquet. As always, dance only tickets will be \$10.00. There will be a silent auction the day of the banquet so begin collecting your donations to share with fellow members to benefit the Youth Riders' Fund. If anyone is interested in being a vendor to sell items the day of the banquet, please remember to request permission from the Board of Directors. Send your request to the MTRA office either by mail or email by the January Board Meeting so you can be approved. Tables will be available for your use at a cost of \$10.00 per table or bring your own. If you have any questions, call the MTRA Office at 989-723-1425 or send an email to [mtra.office@gmail.com](mailto:mtra.office@gmail.com). Banquet reservations are due by March 6, 2020.

### **BOARD BRIEFS:**

1. The Board of Directors would like to thank Ed Gosdzinski and Steve Ross for their past service on the Board. Both Ed and Steve have decided not to seek re-election in March.
2. **MTRA is looking for individuals to become active Board Members. As a board member, you will become part of the governing body of the MTRA. You will be involved in the organizing of work bees and special projects such as boardwalks, trail and camp maintenance and grant garnering. You will be given the opportunity to work with the MDNR and the USFS in an effort to protect, preserve and promote the Michigan Riding and Hiking Trail. As a board member, you will be assigned a section of trail and a camp to oversee and maintain. To compensate your time and efforts, you, your spouse and your children under the age of 18, will be able to ride for free during your term as a board member. If you are interested in running for the board, please contact the MTRA office at (989) 723-1425 or [mtra.office@gmail.com](mailto:mtra.office@gmail.com) before January 1, 2020.**

There seems to be some confusion about payments for the MTRA rides. The Board wishes to clear some things up.

#1. The ride deadline dates are listed on the ride registration form and are printed in the newsletters. Members are still going online after the deadline date for a ride and registering at the \$12.00 per day rate or they are putting payment of \$12.00 per day and registration form in the mail after the deadline date. Pay Pal records when a payment is made (day and time) and mailed ride registrations have a post mark on the envelope. Starting in 2020, those members who sign up for a ride after the due date will be billed by MTRA for the additional \$2.00 per day for the days they attend the ride. The Board feels it is only fair to those who pay the additional \$2.00 per day that everyone who does not register on time pay the additional daily fee.

#2. The last days of the rides are a "depart by noon" or a "ride to and go home". Our fees are a "per day", not a "per night" fee. Just because you go home that day and do not sleep in that camp does not mean you do not pay for that day, as MTRA has to count you and pay MDNR or USFS for you. You have access to MTRA perks on that day, meaning MTRA has reserved that camp with the MDNR or USFS so you have the privilege of being there, you have access to the water well with a generator, you have the expertise of the trail boss, you have access to the bus on a "ride to and go home" day and if you have been with MTRA for the entire ride, you get a trophy. Starting in 2020, those members who are in the camp on the last day of the ride will be billed by MTRA for the additional day fee.

#3. If you are leaving the ride early, please take the time to talk with the trail boss and let him know you are going home. We need to have accurate records of who is in the camps. You will not get a refund if you leave the ride, however, that extra \$12.00 per day that you have paid will go into the MTRA general fund to help offset the cost of the trail boss, the bus driver, the cost of running and maintaining the bus and the many other expenses of putting on our rides. At the end of the ride season, any profit MTRA makes from the rides goes into camp and trail development and maintenance.

**MTRA has some volunteer positions available. If you would like to help MTRA, volunteer for one of the following positions;**

1. **Historian:** This position keeps all MTRA records and history including but not limited to recording work bee information including pictures and volunteer hours, pictures from annual banquets, newsletters, board members and their terms, presidents, photos from MTRA rides and any special events. You will not be required to attend these events, however, you will need an email address to which members can send photos and information.
2. **Facebook Administrator:** As an administrator you will need to be facebook and MTRA knowledgeable. You will answer questions that members and prospective members ask in a timely manner. Other duties will be to read all posts to be sure they conform to MTRA policy and to change cover photo. Facebook is an important means of promoting MTRA and our page needs to be fun and current.
3. **Web Page Host:** This person needs to be computer literate and comfortable making updates to our web page, including our newsletter, calendar, ride information and work bee information.
4. **Graphics Person:** The MTRA ride certificate and the registered Michigan trail horse certificate need to be updated. If you have computer and graphic skills, you are who we are looking for.
5. **Horsemen's Corral article writer:** MTRA uses the Horsemen's Corral to promote our Association and rides. Each month, MTRA has an article about what is coming up with MTRA published in this magazine that covers 4 states. If you like to write and would like your own by-line in an equine magazine, MTRA is looking for you.

In all of these positions, you will be working with the Secretary and Treasurer to help get you the information you need. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact the MTRA office at (989) 723-1425 or [mtra.office@gmail.com](mailto:mtra.office@gmail.com)

## FAQ's...

1. Just to remind members and prospective members, it is not a requirement to sign-up for an entire MTRA ride. Many people jump in and out of rides due to other commitments. It is recommended that you sign-up for at least one (or more) day(s) of the ride that you intend to attend so that your name is on the roster. If you sign up for only one day, you can extend your ride for as many days as you wish at the \$12.00 per day rate. You can always “drop in” on a ride without pre-registering – as long as your membership is current (2020) – but the daily rate increases to \$14.00 per day due to the late fee. The Trail Boss will handle all of the details at the ride or you can call the MTRA Office for more clarification. Check out details on the 2020 Ride Registration Form which will be posted on the [www.mtra.org](http://www.mtra.org) website shortly. Ride Registrations Forms will be sent to all members who receive their newsletters via US mail with the February newsletter.
2. Don't forget to get your Recreation Passports for your vehicle license plates in 2020 so that you can be “legal” on our rides. Having a Recreation Passport is important since we use the MDNR boat launch next to the Lake Huron access point and they will be checking for the passports. Out-of-state members can purchase the Recreation Passport at the following web address or at any state campground – even at the boat launch: <http://media.state.mi.us/michiganestore/public/categorydisplay.aspx?categoryId=5>
3. MTRA does **NOT** share, sell or in any way distribute email addresses or phone numbers with anyone including our membership!! If someone contacts the MTRA office for information about a member, we contact that particular member and have them make contact with the inquirer. Our goal is to protect the privacy of our members!!
4. **It is time to renew or purchase a new subscription to Horsemen's Corral. MTRA has an article in this magazine each month. If you are looking for a Christmas present for an MTRA member, a subscription to this “horsey” magazine would be a great gift. Send \$10.00 to the MTRA office in Ovid with the name and address of the person to receive the magazine.**
5. When you are riding along paved roads – wear BRIGHT shirts so that drivers will notice you!
6. Just a reminder as it is time for membership renewals. According to our bylaws, a family membership is defined as family members living in the same household, and be comprised of father/mother/son/daughter, and excludes children over the age of eighteen or married. If you want to bring your grandchildren on a ride, they are not covered under your membership and will need for their parents to have a membership. FYI, memberships make wonderful Christmas gifts for grandchildren who love our rides.
7. The MTRA Office email address is: [mtra.office@gmail.com](mailto:mtra.office@gmail.com) and the mailing address is: Post Office Box 72, Ovid, Michigan 48866. The office phone number is (989) 723-1425. Do not hesitate to contact the office if you have a question.
8. The MDNR is requiring that MTRA riders wear orange on our fall rides. If you are planning on a September or October ride in 2020, start planning now for an orange hat or vest or jacket or sweatshirt. It would not be a bad idea to put orange on your horse also. This is for your safety in the woods.
9. FYI, you may purchase orange apparel with the MTRA logo from [www.webstore.com](http://www.webstore.com)

Attention Trail Riders: The ride dates on the front of this newsletter are "Proposed". This means that MTRA has applied to the MDNR for these dates and ride itinerary. Until our dates are approved and our contract signed, these dates and itinerary is subject to change. Approval usually comes mid to late March.

## **From Board Member, Dug Jordon.**

Fellow MTRA Members,

The following is being provided to inform members on why the trail through the Mayhem swamp was closed for the remainder of this year into the spring of 2020. The portion of the trail that goes through the swamp is located on private property, and in conversation with the property owner, he stated that with our rides not accessing the swamp trail any further this year, he blocked it off to prevent trespassing during hunting seasons. He stated that this has been an ongoing issue and this is a short term solution. The owner has assured me that he does not want to prevent our use of the trail, his intentions are only to stop trespassing, and looks forward to working with us on the trail. We have discussed the flooding and beaver problem, and I have put him in contact with a few trappers, in hopes of eliminating this issue.

After the first of the year, myself and other board members, along with other organizations plan on meeting with the property owner to work out a long term plan and agreement to provide for many years of riding enjoyment.

In talking with the owner, we have discussed several options for trail improvement, and access for horse activity, and the prevention of trespassing. The work on the trail will take place in the spring, and at that time I will be looking for volunteers to assist. Anyone interested can contact me at [dvjord@yahoo.com](mailto:dvjord@yahoo.com), or 231-492-9494.

If you have any additional questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Board member, Dug Jordon, is also interested in MTRA veterans. If you were or are in the U.S. military service please contact him at (231) 492-9494 or at [dvjord@yahoo.com](mailto:dvjord@yahoo.com)

In 1975, the MTRA membership was complaining about many things about the rides. Our then president, Russell Weaver printed the following quote to the membership:

**"Maybe you are under the impression that we are a 'club' existing to put on trail rides for your pleasure. Actually, they are just the frosting. We really exist to develop and maintain the Michigan Riding - Hiking Trails. DON'T YOU FORGET IT!"**

MTRA's mission statement and non-profit status is still "We exist to develop, maintain and promote the Michigan Riding – Hiking Trails."

Your Board of Directors is made up of 15 dedicated hard working VOLUNTEERS. They do the best they can to maintain the blue dot trail and camps and provide rides each year. These members give many hours of their time to keep this organization running smoothly. In the April newsletter, after the election in March, you will receive a list of board members and their camp/trail assignments. When you see these members in camp or out on the trail, tell them "thank you" and offer to help them with their section of trail/camp, Let them know you appreciate their dedication to MTRA. It takes the entire membership of this organization to keep the beautiful Michigan Riding and Hiking Trail open and safe for equestrians.

**Plans for the MTRA spring work bee will be finalized at the January 2020 Board meeting. Details will be printed in the February newsletter and announced on the facebook page.**

The BCH work bee at Elk Hill is set for May 14, 15, 16 and 17. On Thursday, May 14, they plan to put the rail fence around the new pavilion and start camp clean up. Friday May 15<sup>th</sup> will be the dedication ceremony for the pavilion and the official handing the pavilion over to the MDNR. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. Camp and trail clean up and maintenance is on the schedule for the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Many miles of the blue dot trail are included in the clean up along with the circle riding and connector trails. Elk Hill is a beautiful place in the spring, so if you do not have any other plans, please come help.

***MTRA Employment Opportunities...*** If you would like to share your skills with the association we all know and love, please submit a resume and/or letter of interest to: MTRA Employment Director, 2475 McNamara Road, Gladwin, Michigan 48624. The MTRA offers employment in the following areas:

**Trail Boss** - responsibilities include **management of the trail rides** including safety of persons and horses on those rides.....**Bus Driver** - responsibilities include all aspects of bus management and transport of riders between trail camps.....**Secretary** - responsibilities include management of the office of the MTRA including all communications, ride management duties and maintenance of files.....**Treasurer** - responsibilities include assistance to the Secretary, website, financial duties and reports. All of these positions are part-time/seasonal jobs.

