

# THE FALL 2008 RESOURCE

Advancing the conservation of land  
for horse-related activities

## To Live and Ride in L.A.

by Cynthia Higgs

**W**hat comes to mind when you think of Los Angeles? Traffic—famous people—a buzzing nightlife, perhaps. How about horse trails? Believe it or not, tucked along the foothills and mountains surrounding L.A. is a growing equestrian community, as well as a slew of multiuse trails that advocates hope will soon become linked together to form an amazing recreational opportunity known as the Rim of the Valley (ROV) Trail.

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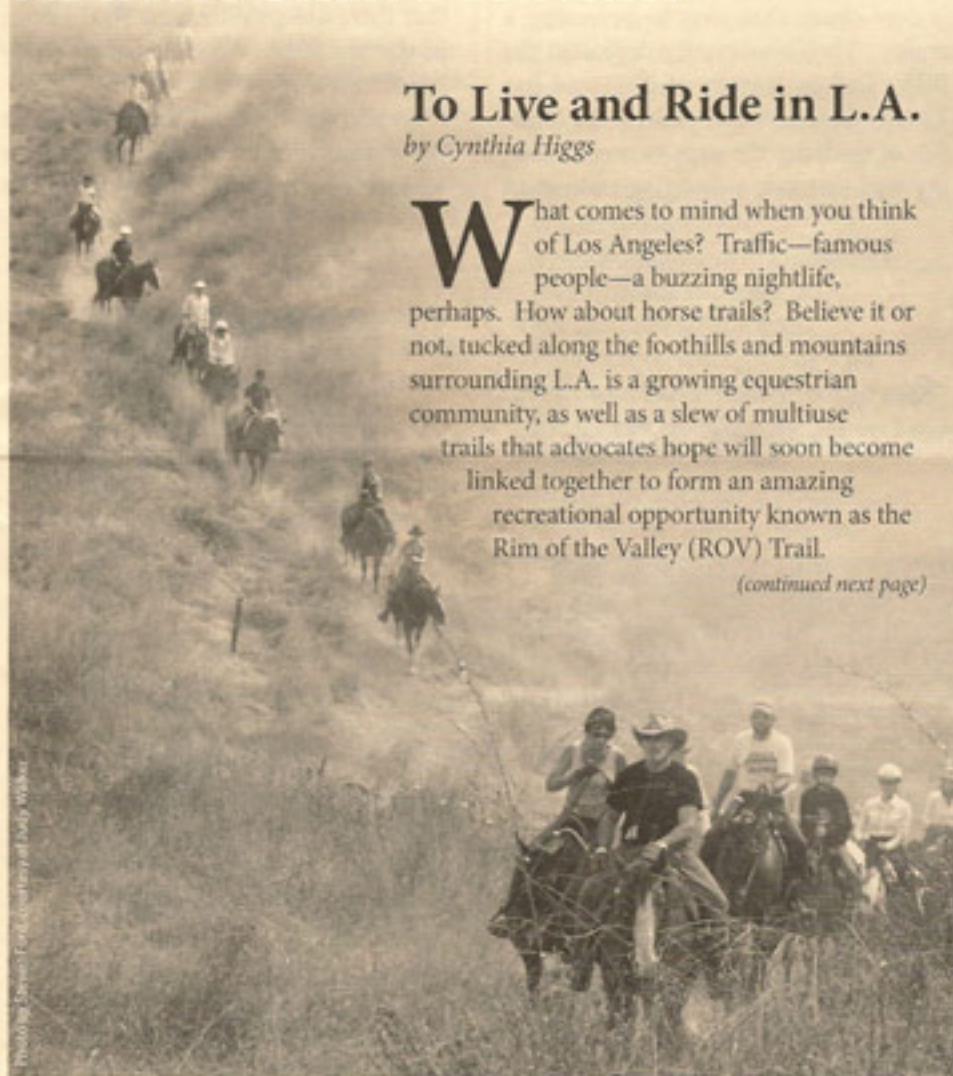


Photo by Steven Fox for equestrian.com and Judy Wilbur

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Where Will  
You Ride  
Tomorrow?



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## Equestrian Partners Spotlight: Gallatin Equestrian Partnership Working to Preserve Access to Public Trails and Parks *by Maire O'Neill*

There are those amongst us that remember riding across the floor of Gallatin Valley, Montana into the nearby foothills to gallop in the stubble fields or onto the higher slopes to visit a fresh mountain spring. It was safe for kids to ride the valley's unpaved roads for miles because everyone with an automobile knew about horses, and they were slow and careful in passing. We live in different times.

In our valley, as in other parts of the country, land values have risen steadily and housing developments—the new cash crop—have eroded the agricultural landscape and infrastructure. Our agricultural neighbors are being gradually forced to close or relocate their businesses. Our rural roads are being paved, traffic is increasing in both volume and speed, and very few drivers seem to have any notion of the danger of passing horses without slowing. All our great spring trotting on the wet unpaved roadbed is gone with a simple decision, often made in complete ignorance, by the county commission or the roads supervisor. The asphalt trucks roll in and we know our neighborhoods will never be the same. Overnight our shared



roads become the domain of motorized vehicles alone, and horses are out of place—we have lost our local riding and harness terrain.

Since equestrians in our region work, ride, drive, train, teach, learn and compete in such diverse equine disciplines, we have lacked a unified presence and clear representation in the local growth policy-making and planning process. Marianne Amsden and Maire O'Neill founded Gallatin Equestrian Partnership (GalleP) in 2007 with the belief that equestrian activities are a critical part of

the cultural heritage of the region, are fundamental to its identity—past, present, and future—and are critical to the valley's quality of life. GalleP represents all concerned equestrians in the Gallatin Valley, and is working toward increasing public awareness of the vanishing resource of equestrian lands and trails. We have gathered the endorsement of approximately 25 local and regional equestrian organizations whose interests we strive to represent. We are getting involved in helping to formulate public policy that determines access to public trails and parks.

GalleP is helping to safeguard our western heritage by restoring our vanishing equestrian landscape. Our mission is to advocate, educate and unite to enhance opportunities in the Gallatin Valley for equestrian activities for two main purposes: to establish equestrian trails through cooperative efforts with government agencies, other nonprofits and landowners; to create an equestrian park serving diverse equestrian needs for the larger region. ■

For more information about GalleP, visit [www.gallepmt.org](http://www.gallepmt.org).

## Why Is It Important to Support ELCR Today?

We have a slight reprieve in the rampant rate of farmland development, but when economic prosperity returns, as it will, we need to defend the land, our heritage, hobby, sport and industry. Your charitable donation today will enable ELCR to:

- Continue our awareness-raising activity on the equine land-loss issue
- Produce and disseminate widely educational materials and information which will enable individuals to protect land and trails
- Develop an "army" of equine land conservationists who are knowledgeable and active throughout the fifty states

Your gift will help us protect what we need most – land which supports our horses. Help us take advantage of this important opportunity. Visit [www.ELCR.org](http://www.ELCR.org) to donate online or use the form on the back of this newsletter. Thank you! ■

