



GMHA News

The Newsletter of the Green Mountain Horse Association

September 2011

Irene's Destruction

Tropical Storm Causes Extreme Flooding at GMHA and Across Vermont

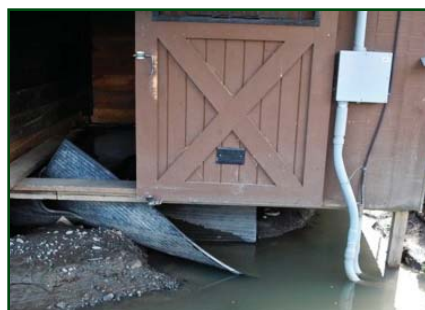
August 28, 2011 was scheduled to be the final day of GMHA's annual Combined Driving Event. The day usually includes several hours of cones competition, followed by awards presentations and victory gallops. Instead, the GMHA grounds withstood the heavy rains brought by Tropical Storm Irene, and the subsequent flooding. Luckily, the Combined Driving Event schedule was modified so that the competition finished on Saturday afternoon, allowing drivers to travel home safely before the storm hit.

As many of you know by now, the GMHA grounds were mostly underwater during the storm. Our gentle babbling brook grew to resemble a ranging river, washing away our bridges, rings, porta-potties,



Our brook rerouting itself around C barn towards B Barn and the main parking area.

cross-country jumps, and the floors of C and D Barn. The brook re-routed itself through much of the cross-country course and grounds, leaving a carpet of silt, rocks, and debris in its wake.



The floor of C Barn, post-Irene.

In addition to the destruction of our grounds, our community, along with many across the state, suffered mass destruction. Major roads washed away, making travel nearly impossible for a few days, and still a challenge in many places. Now two weeks after the storm, some parts of our area are still lacking power and phone service. Homes and businesses in Woodstock, Bridgewater, Reading, and Quechee, to name a few, sustained severe damage

The destruction left GMHA unable to hold several of our popular fall events.

Continued on page 3....



The Upwey Ring is now under construction and scheduled to be completed in time for the Fall Dressage Show.

In This Issue:

Irene	1, 3
Chef's Night	2
To Catch A Thief.	2
Executive Director Letter	3
From the Trails	4
Cross-Country Upgrade Project	5
Events Round Up	6
GMHA Raffles & Annual Meeting.	7
Upcoming Events.	8

Chef's Night: Courses & Horses

The Fifth Annual Green Mountain Horse Association Chef's Night showcased three exciting equestrian elements as part of a very festive evening under the big top tent. It was a celebration of the area's unique and diverse culinary talent, artisan cheese makers, local brewers, area chefs and caterers. Over 350 people participated in the event held August 1. Luckily, the threatening skies held off until the conclusion of the event.

Dressage performances included a pas de deux ridden by the father daughter team of Keith and Kaylee Angstadt— both dressed as characters from Star Wars. Emily Kannenstine performed a festive musical freestyle that brought the crowd to their feet.

The jumping event was held next to the dressage area in GMHA's Jump Field. Three teams competed for bragging rights and syndicate owners bet on which team would best the competition. Third place went to the Tom White Hill Blue Team (Kylie Lyman, Taylor Faccio and Sam Scheu), and second place to the Greylock Farm Orange Team (Sue Berrill, Ariel Grald and Brit Kvinlaug). The winners were the GMHA Green Team (Ashley MacVaugh, Jaqueline Bradshaw, Caitlin Romeo and Peter Atkins).

GMHA thanks all of our special performers and vendors for participating in this year's Chef's Night! We look forward to another great event in 2012.



Wendy Jackson of the Kedron Valley Inn provides tasty treats.



Emily Kannenstine and Toronado de Raposa perform a musical freestyle. Photo by Nick Goldsmith.

Thief Arrested at GMHA

Woodstock Police, perhaps best known for writing speeding tickets in the village, captured a thief at GMHA on August 13. Undercover officer Jim Ortanto made the arrest during the August Horse Trials. Ortanto, who also frequents GMHA in his role as an EMT, was investigating a string of thefts of cash from purses and wallets. Competitors from the previous weekend's event had given Ortanto a description of a suspicious man. When a competitor reported a man fitting the description, word went out to all staff and the man was quickly apprehended by Ortanto. Gilbert Leblanc, a "self-employed horse broker" with no apparent ties to GMHA, was arrested and held at the Springfield, VT jail.



Job well done Officer Jim!

Although GMHA is still advising visitors to the grounds to lock their belongings, we are happy to report that there have been no further thefts since Leblanc's arrest.

Thank You Volunteers!

GMHA can't do it without you- our volunteers make the organization what it is today!

The GMHA staff offers our sincere thanks to all who give their time.

We hope to see all of you at the Volunteer Breakfast on October 16.

Irene continued...

The 100-Mile Ride, Fall Driving Classic, and September Horse Trials were cancelled.

Since putting out the word about the destruction of our grounds, GMHA has enjoyed terrific support from our members, competitors, and friends. Our recent volunteer work days, which focused on clearing debris from our grounds and silt from our buildings, drew over 50 people to GMHA. Armed with shovels, rakes, and other tools, volunteers enthusiastically set to work, while others helped with an office mailing. Contractors will carry on with the cleanup, removing silt and debris, restoring our bridges and barns, and repairing our rings.

Already, the grounds are improving, but much work remains. We know that with the support of our friends, we will be ready to open for 2012 with the grounds looking better than ever!

Dirty Jobs

Thanks to all who gave their time to help us recover!

Video footage of our volunteers in action can now be viewed on our website.



From the Executive Director

Destruction Abounds

We were 8 weeks away from the end of our fiscal year, which promised to be another year with a balanced budget, expenses slightly lower than expected, revenues slightly higher, our planning paying off, when the storm hit. In a matter of hours, we were faced with cancelling events, refunding fees and digging deep into our pockets to pay for restoring our property which suffered nearly \$200,000 in damage. If you can get to our web site, view the pictures of the day the storm hit and days afterwards; they are amazing.

My first reaction on Monday morning was total shock and sadness- how could so much be destroyed in a matter of hours? How could this beautiful place look so ruined? As I learned more about the devastation around us, loss of life, homes, business, and precious

landscape, I was able to put things into perspective. We lost dirt, and that can be replaced. And replace it we will.

Bulldozers, excavators, tractors, and chainsaws are in full force already restoring our cherished grounds. Combining the rebuilding with our cross country upgrade project, we are full steam ahead to get done what we can before the snow flies. When we open next season, we will be even better than we have ever been.

Thanks to so many of our members and friends for your outpouring of donations, offers to help and sincere wishes for our full recovery. It is gratifying to see so many come to our aid and the aid of others nearby and throughout this beautiful state.

— Marty Hunt

Ways to Help

- GMHA is planning a **Pasta Dinner with Silent & Live Auction**, to benefit GMHA's grounds restoration, on Saturday, October 1st at 5pm. Dinner tickets are \$25/person, please contact Molly to purchase yours! We are looking for donated items for the Silent and Live Auction- please contact Annie Penfield at annie@straffordsaddleryshop.com to donate an item.
- **Purchase a raffle ticket!** Support GMHA AND get a chance to win a fabulous riding safari for two in Kenya with Offbeat Safaris, or \$5000. See details on pg. 7.
- **Make a donation to GMHA!** Donations are now being accepted by check or credit card at the office, or make a donation by visiting our website.

From the Trails...

Opinion:

Betz Haartz of Hartland, Vermont, steps up to give voice to her views on trail riding in extreme wet conditions, such as those after Tropical Storm Irene.



About Betz: Before moving to Vermont 13 years ago, I lived in a Massachusetts community, which was a leader in land conservation and recreational access. During that time, I learned not to ride if trail conditions were not suitable. My husband, Walter (Walter Davis, GMHA Board Member) and I have ridden all over the world, thanks to the goodwill and generosity of landowners. When we bought our property, we opened it to trail riders soon after.

Q: People have varying definitions of what wet conditions are; what do you look for?

A: After a while of knowing a trail, you'll know what signs to look for that tell you when conditions are too wet. Functionally, this can be when your horse is leaving more than one skid mark when going down hill, leaving more than an occasional divot when climbing a hill or churning up the soil on a level area that would ordinarily not reveal much evidence of your riding through. I watch the impact of my horse on the land; it tells me a lot.

Q: Why is this so critical now?

A: Tropical Storm Irene and the remnants of Lee have created a unique dynamic on our trails. Not only are many sections of trail washed out and streams diverted, the soil is too wet now. Even with our smaller, lighter Icelandic horses, which are barefoot, I consider it too wet to be on trail for the near-foreseeable future at least, possibly not until the ground firms up (from fall temperatures). I'm concerned about trail damage, which can lead to damaged relations with trail-sharing landowners.

Q: How do you feel about riding on roads?

A: Right now the road crews are working full-steam to just get the roads passable. GMHA's membership needs to be patient and understand this. Any recreational, non-essential use of roads should be carefully considered until the immediate response work is completed. As good citizens, we need to stay out of the way until the infrastructure is back in place. The overall process to get some of the roads back to where they were will be a long one, maybe even a year or two.

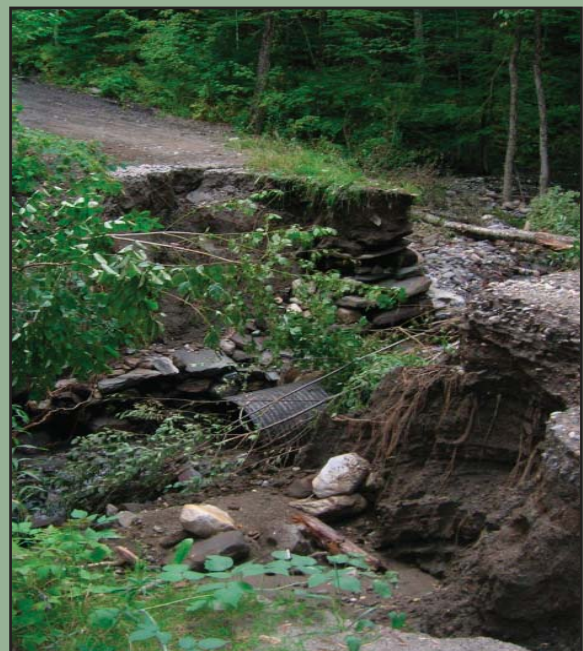
Post-Irene Trails Update

Reports on flood damage in our trail network are filtering in as trail riders and stewards get back onto the trails. Obviously, trails nearest to water courses and culverts did the worst, as the sheer volume of water forced flows to jump culverts and divert another way.

A blown culvert on Cady Brook Trail and damage on the Cummings Trail were immediately remedied by locals and their own equipment. Thanks go out to Steve Rojek, Martin Miller, John Caceres, John Sammel, Thatcher Fields, Bill Stillson, and John Greenall (and anyone else involved).

The Savage Forest, conserved through the New England Forestry Foundation, received severe damage, as did many roads and properties in Reading, including Class 4 Kittridge Pasture Road (shown below).

However, let us end on a more positive note, as many reports have come in to say that other trails have sustained only mild to moderate damage, and some none at all! We are looking forward to a great (if modified) trail riding season this fall- hope to see many of you here at GMHA.



Kittridge Pasture Road in Reading, VT: post-Irene.

Cross Country Upgrade Project- Full Steam Ahead

Even Irene's wrath can't slow GMHA's Cross-Country Upgrade Project, which is moving ahead as planned with site work and jump building already underway. In spite of the mess that Irene deposited at the facility, the long-planned Upgrade Project is on schedule, with work getting underway this fall in order to ensure completion of the all-encompassing upgrade by the start of the 2012 competition season.

Through the generosity of multiple individual and corporate donors, nearly \$150,000 has been raised to pay for necessary site work, repair of existing cross-country fences and the building of new jumps at all levels, as well as the re-introduction of Intermediate-level eventing in August, 2012.

The goal is to raise an additional \$50,000 in order to reach the project's target of \$200,000 for improvements as specified in designer Tremaine Cooper's multi-year plan.

Clean-up from hurricane Irene, which caused significant damage to the facility, is concurrent with the upgrade work in progress, but operates under a separate fundraising effort and budget.

All of the monies donated to the Upgrade Project will be used exclusively for planned cross-country improvements, though economies may be realized as equipment and labor can be utilized by both projects.

Barn Fundraising Contest- Deadline Extended

As part of the fundraising effort, a contest for the barn raising the most money was created, with the winning barn members earning bragging rights and saddle pads with the Upgrade Project logo. In light of Irene's interruption, the deadline for the contest has been extended to October 15—so get your barn's act together, pool your resources and send donations to GMHA!



Course builder Levi Rychkewaert collaborates with Janine McClain on the repair of GMHA's existing cross-country jumps.

From the Trails continued...

Trail Maintenance Report

On August 6, GMHA held a Trail Work Day to clear or rebuild 30 water bars on the NEFF/Reeves Forest trail. Bill Whitehouse generously donated machine time for a skid steer loader and his labor to rough out water bars so that volunteers could finish with hand tools. Bill's idea of "roughing out" was hardly accurate, as he deftly manipulated the heavy machine around obstacles in narrow spaces and left a smoothly manicured surface with the blade. Thank you, Bill, for your fine work!

Other volunteers included Si Allen, Lindsay Robbins, Ray Johnson, Renee and Bill Wormell of Northwood, NH, Ashley Pakenham, Roy Snell, and his houseguest, David. The crew raked out debris, tamped down and raked the water bars. There was also a lot of reconnection going on as folks discovered they had lived in same places and knew same people. It was a morning filled with laughs, reminiscing and new acquaintance.

At the time of this writing, it is unknown how well those 30 water bars fared during Tropical Storm Irene's violent visit. We hope they were able to meet the challenge that week as well as the one after with Tropical Storm Lee.

Uphold the Tradition

Support the Cross-Country Improvement Project!

Several options are available for those who would like to contribute:

- **Make a donation!** Contact Molly Hutchins at (802) 457 1509 to become a donor.
- **Become a sponsor!** Sponsorship packages are available from \$99 to \$5000 (and up). Packages include banner displays, show program ads, website links, signage or recognition on a jump or site work area, and more. To learn more about the options, please visit our website.
- **Barn Fundraising Contest.** The barn members who raise the most money will win embroidered saddle pads and a private course walk with designer Tremaine Cooper.

Learn more at:

www.gmhainc.org/cc-campaign.html

or contact the GMHA office!

Events Wrap-Up

GMHA hosted many successful events during the Summer of 2011. Here are a few quick wrap-ups:

40th Annual Dressage Days

GMHA celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Dressage Days with another great competition, filled to capacity. The show, which took place on July 22-24 in five competition rings, was enhanced by an anniversary party. Partygoers enjoyed live music by the Steeplebush Family Band, a fun freestyle performance by Ruth Hogan-Poulsen, and a commemorative video (now available on our website!).

GMHA congratulates our High Score Members, Keith Angstadt (Open), Brenda Hilfrank (Adult Amateur), and Kaylee Angstadt (Junior). The full results from this show are available on our website.

We are looking forward to holding the Fall Dressage Show on October 1-2, and completing the first annual Green Mountain Dressage Championship program!



Training/Novice Level Three-Day Event & August Horse Trials

GMHA's Three Day event was held August 8-11. 72 competitors competed in 6 divisions of junior, senior and open. The event, which follows the long format of eventing (including steeplechase and roads and tracks), also included many educational clinics and seminars with clinicians such as Marcia Kulak and John Williams. One rider commented: "I love the long format; it's a challenge and true test of horsemanship! My horse and I had our best cross-country ride."

August Horse Trials, held on the heels of the Three Day, had 220 competitors in Preliminary, Training, Novice and Beginner Novice divisions. GMHA congratulates Katie Lichten, who took home the GMHA Member best score award with 20.0. Thanks to our volunteers and officials for another great week of eventing!

Both events were dedicated to Denny Emerson with wishes for a swift recovery!

First Annual GMHA Hunter Derby

Our first annual Hunter Derby was held on August 18 on GMHA's jump field. Over 30 horses came out to compete in the two divisions offered- \$500 2'6" Derby, and the \$500 3' Derby. Riders competed in two rounds- the first a classic, and the second a handy course. The beautiful course included several options, and a mix of solid cross-country obstacles and traditional show hunter fences. Congratulations go out to Sophie Allen, who won the 2'6" class aboard Vintage K. Nancy Guyotte and Conor Linsley (see photo) showed off their classic style in the 3' class to take home the blue ribbon (and prize money!). The 3' handy course included two water crossings, which presented a challenge for some riders!

GMHA thanks the Kedron Valley Inn for sponsoring the inaugural Hunter Derby. We plan to make this an annual event!



Please look for full coverage of the 2011 season in the Fall GMHA Magazine.
All event results are available on our website, www.gmhainc.org.

Don't Miss Out!

It's not too late for a chance to win one of our great prizes!

Safari Raffle

Here's your chance to support GMHA while getting a chance to win one of two spectacular prizes!

Win your choice of a fabulous riding safari for two in Africa or \$5,000 cash!

The trip includes airfare, meals, and lodging while traveling with Offbeat Safaris (valued at \$20,000). Safari trip includes fantastic food, the riding experience of a lifetime, and wildlife sightings like no other!

Tickets can be purchased for \$100 each- only 300 tickets will be sold! Purchase your tickets at the GMHA website (using paypal), or by contacting the office.

New Member Round-Up

GMHA needs your help rounding up new members!

For each new member you recruit, you will be entered to win a \$500 SmartPak Gift Certificate!

The more friends you recruit, the better your odds of winning the prize. Only current GMHA members are eligible to win. Membership lapsed? Renew today and start spreading the word!

To be entered in the drawing, your new recruit must list your name on the "Referred by" line on the GMHA membership form. Once your recruit's membership is processed, you will be entered in the drawing.

Winners for both raffles will be drawn at GMHA's Annual Meeting!

Need not be present to win.

Event Wrap-Ups continued...

Driving Updates

GMHA's Combined Driving Event was held on August 26-27, 2011. The event schedule was compressed due to Irene's imminent arrival. Cones competition took place on Friday afternoon in addition to dressage. The competition wrapped up after marathon on Saturday afternoon. Competitors were very grateful for this change of schedule, and two days of nice weather made for a spectacular event! GMHA congratulates our champions, Nancy Slombo (Training), Dean Morgan (Preliminary),

Dwayne Pash (Intermediate), and Robin Groves (Advanced).

Despite Irene's destruction, **Wheel Runners** were present and accounted for on September 6, just a week after the storm hit. Lessons took place in the White Ring, which was relatively unaffected by the storm. **Thanks to Robin and those who turned out to get GMHA back in business!**

Drivers, stay tuned for Sleigh Rally dates! We hope to see many of you back at GMHA this winter for fun on the snow.



Annual Meeting

Please plan to join us for the **GMHA Annual Meeting November 13, 2011 at 10:30am at the GMHA Youth Center**

Coffee, tea, and light refreshments will be served.

Winners will be announced for the Safari Raffle & New Member Round Up!

Please note that GMHA has added a **Members' Day Trail Riding Weekend** in conjunction with the Annual Meeting.

On November 12 and 13, we welcome our members to bring their horses to the grounds and enjoy a bonus weekend of late season trail riding. Stabling will be available for the weekend. We hope to see many of you, and your horses, here in November!

Fall Events Still to Come

In spite of Irene, GMHA is planning to hold many of our fall events! Don't miss out on these opportunities to enjoy GMHA with your favorite friends- human and equine!

Sept 23-25: Fall Foliage I- Members Only

October 7-9: Fall Foliage II

This event provides riders with three days of pleasure riding on Vermont's most beautiful trails. Although some trails may not be usable due to damage caused by Irene, many are ready to ride. Combined with some of our local scenic dirt roads, we are confident that the ride will be enjoyed by all! Ride for one day, or all three. *New for 2011- Fall Foliage II is open to non-members! Bring your friends to enjoy GMHA and Vermont at its most scenic.

October 1-2: Fall Dressage Show

We are excited to be able to hold this show in spite of Irene! Because of the flood damage, this show will be limited to two rings, and is already full. We are looking for a few more volunteers- please contact Karey if you are interested in helping out.

October 10: Ride for the Cure

GMHA is very pleased to present the second annual Vermont/New Hampshire Ride for the Cure to benefit the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Join us for a special day of fall riding to raise money for this great cause!

October 15: 50-Mile and Limited Distance Endurance Ride

GMHA's endurance ride now offers two distance options- ride the full 50, or opt for the 25-30 mile course.

October 11-14, 16: Members' Day Trail Rides

November 12-13: Members' Day Trail Rides

Members, come out and enjoy our trails at your own pace. Choose one of our five loops of trail, ranging from 5-25 miles- or mix and match loops to create your own route. Stabling is available for \$25/night.

October 16: Volunteer Breakfast

See details above.

November 13: Annual Meeting

See details on pg. 7.



2nd Annual

Volunteer Breakfast

Calling All Volunteers!

Please plan to join us on **October 16** for our second annual Volunteer Breakfast. Come out to enjoy a tasty meal and celebrate the end of another great event season at GMHA with fellow volunteers and staff.

During the breakfast, we will honor our Volunteer of the Year, and pull the winner of our volunteer raffle. Raffle winner will have their choice of a Wellfleet Smartpak Bridle, or a \$100 gift certificate to the Kedron Valley Inn.

Breakfast will be served from 9-10am. Please RSVP to gmha@gmhainc.org if you are planning to attend.

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