



# BLACK FOREST TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWS

## President's Corner

### BFTA 2018 Strategy

By Larry Fariss, President



Each year your Black Forest Trails Association develops a strategic plan for the upcoming year. This is necessary to insure our limited resources -- time and money -- are spent in a way that best benefits our membership and meets our mission:

**"To create a safe legitimate non-motorized, multi-use recreational trail system that connects Black Forest neighborhoods to each other and to the El Paso County regional trail system"**

To that end your BFTA Board adopted the following strategic priorities for 2018:

1. Finish Pineries Open Space
2. Restore Black Forest Regional Park
3. Map Regions Private Trails
4. Encourage New and Existing Friends Groups

Pineries Open Space remains our number one priority. Currently slated for partial opening by Fall 2018, this will be the biggest improvement Black Forest trail users have seen since the opening of Section 16 over 25 years ago! Thousands of acres of open space and over 15 miles of trail will greatly enhance our outdoor experiences in Black Forest. This ambitious El Paso County project is very important to our community and membership and we pass that on to county park officials regularly to insure it remains a high priority.

Black Forest Regional Park was devastated during the 2013 fire. Work has been ongoing since then to fall trees, remove debris, prevent erosion, and repair trails. We are grateful for the resources El Paso County has applied to that end. The common area is fully restored, many trails are open, and trail traffic has increased. Now is the time to relocate the trails in drainages to ridge lines so future erosion does not damage park trails. The county has a plan to accomplish this and we will work along with them to accomplish this task.

Private trails, that land owners allow neighbors to use, are the real "Gem of the Forest". Unique to our area, they foster friendly neighbors and allow users to get off the "beaten path" and have a more intimate nature experience. Old timers know where these gems are located, but our newer members are often in the dark for years. With owners concurrence we will map these trails and post them on our website. Also we will hold a yearly Trail Exploration Hike where an old timer will take new members to trails in their neighborhood.

Friends Groups are needed for several parks in Black Forest. BFTA is the Friends Group for Section 16. Fox Run Regional Park and Homestead Park have existing groups as well. These groups watchdog trails in their domain and lobby with the county for scarce maintenance resources to repair and restore existing trails, improve facilities, and highlight problems that users face. Examples of Friend Group successes are are the benches installed on trails, grading and water culvert installations, toilet facility and dog park improvements. BFTA will assist any and all organizations that want to fill this need for Black Forest Regional Park and the Pineries Open Space.

Sincerely, Larry Fariss

President BFTA

## Knowing & Practicing Trail Etiquette Improves Safety

By Cheryl Pixley



Imagine you are riding your mountain bike on a trail in a county park, when you see 3 horses ahead. Do you know what to do?

What if you are running down your favorite single-track trail, and 2 mountain bikes are approaching you coming uphill?

Keep in mind that guidelines can vary by location, but generally the following can be applied:

- Hikers, runners and bikers should always yield to horses.
- Bikers should yield to hikers and runners
- Downhill traffic should yield to uphill traffic.

When approaching others from behind, a friendly greeting does wonders to let others know you are coming and common courtesy will always go a long way!

From the *North America Skills & Ethics Booklet*: “Groups leading or riding livestock have the right-of-way on trails. Hikers and bicyclists should move to the downhill side and talk quietly to the riders as they pass, since horses and other pack stock frighten easily.”

Moving to the downhill side, when letting horses by, reduces your size and appearance and makes them less likely to spook. If you find yourself in an awkward or unsafe situation it is always best to communicate with the lead rider to ask them what they prefer, as they know their animals the best.

So far it seems pretty easy. Everyone yields to horses, bikers yield to hikers, and downhill yields to uphill.

But what if a downhill hiker meets an uphill cyclist? The guidelines say the biker yields, but it is a lot easier for someone on foot to stop and start than it is for the biker, so consider stepping off the trail when hiking or running. The cyclist should not have an expectation that the hiker will let him pass, but it might happen out of courtesy.

When yielding to other traffic, remember to always look for safe and durable surfaces to step onto. And finally, the International Mountain Biking Association recommends when riding single track to come to a complete stop and then side step off the trail, as opposed to just riding off the side of trail, and thereby widening it.

## Seasons Greetings From The School In The Woods!

By Larry Fariss



A unique aspect of the Section 16 Trail here in Black Forest is that it has a school crossing! The Partnership Trail, sponsored by BFTA, actually crosses the school yard of one of those partners along Vollmer Road. This, of course, is District 20's School in the Woods.

The mission of School in the Woods is to enhance, nurture and develop well-equipped, lifelong learners and responsible citizens who value and become stewards of our communities and world in an academically challenging program with a unique science integrated curriculum for 4th grade naturalists with expanding interests in nature within a trusting, emotionally healthy and safe field-based environment.

With that mission, the school has become a very healthy addition to Section 16, as its students conduct cleanups, experience joy of hiking, and study nature. They are also very appreciative of BFTA for maintaining the Partnership Trail. They express this yearly by sending us a batch of homemade Christmas Cards. Each card is beautifully and painstakingly created by a student. We set up the best for display next to Indian Joe in the R & R Coffee Shop. But this year we want to also share the student's sentiments with our membership. Here are some of the Season Greetings sent your way as written by the youngsters:

*"I appreciate all you do for the community. Thank you for making safe recreational trails. Have Happy Holidays. Thanks again!" Maddie*

*"Thank you for keeping us safe, so we don't fall. I love hiking with friends and seeing views. Thank you for watching out! Merry Christmas!" Evey*

*"I appreciate what you do. You make are forests better. More people hike because there's no vehicles. You make a better community. Happy Holidays!" Michael*

*"Thank you for making a lovely trail for us to love. I am so glad we are part of your community. I am very happy that everyone gets to enjoy your trails. I hope you have an awesome Christmas. Happy trails to you!" Ava*

*"Thank you for helping our ecosystem. It was nice of you to make a trail that connects to neighborhoods. It gives everyone a chance to once, in a wile, hike. It is also saving oil. Merry Xmas" Cade*

*"Thank you for making amazing trails. Most likely I'll go on one your amazing trails. I love hiking, jogging, and a lot of other people do. So keep making %100 nature trails! Happy Holidays!" Lily*

## **Black Forest Section 16 Road & Trail Cleanup**

By Cheryl Pixley



Your help is needed at Black Forest's most popular county trail to keep it litter-free. You may have seen the signs in and around Black Forest Section 16 saying that BFTA has adopted the 4-mile trail and 2 miles of adjacent roadways. Please join us on Saturday, April 28, 2018, at 9:00 am. We will meet at the parking lot on Burgess Rd just west of Vollmer Rd and plan to finish by 11:00. BFTA members bring your friends! Students are welcome and can earn community service credits, too! Trash bags, orange safety vests and drinking water will be supplied. Bring hat, gloves and sunscreen. Rain (or snow) date is June 2, 2018. Call Cheryl at 495-9295 with any questions.



## **Find Us Online**

Did you know that the Black Forest Trails Association is online? On our website you'll find current news and info on upcoming events. You can also renew your membership online and buy BFTA gear (hats and t-shirts). Our website address is [www.blackforesttrails.org](http://www.blackforesttrails.org)

You can also find us on FaceBook at [www.facebook.com/blackforesttrails](http://www.facebook.com/blackforesttrails) Our Facebook Editor, Nancy Reinhardt keep busy posting photos and other info on hiking and riding the trails in Black Forest. Please "Like" us on Facebook so you can get all the updated info on what's going on with your Trails Association.



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## **BFTA Membership**

By Andy Meng

By supporting BFTA with your annual membership, you help provide the funding and support for a whole range of issues that affect Black Forest trails and the lifestyle we all want to protect. The Black Forest Trails Association is a non-profit organization under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). Donations are fully deductible to the extent permitted by tax law.

There are 4 tiers of BFTA membership (Dues are tax deductible):

- 1) Individual / family (\$15 per year),
- 2) Business / club (\$30 per year),
- 3) Donor (\$50 per year)
- 4) Lifetime (\$150 one time).

Membership runs from April 1 to March 31, and if you become a member now, your membership will be good through March 31, 2019. We use PayPal, which is easy and secure, to accept online payments, or you can print out an application and mail your payment in via US Postal service – either option can be completed via our website at <http://www.blackforesttrails.org/joinrenew>

Black Forest Trails Association

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