

NORTHERN VIRGINIA COALITION OF EQUESTRIAN ORGANIZATIONS POSITION PAPER – WOODLAWN STABLES

The Northern Virginia Coalition of Equestrian Organizations (NVCEO) stands with Save Woodlawn Stables in urging the Federal Highway Administration to choose the widen in place plan for improving Route 1, or any other plan that preserves Woodlawn Stables.

At one time, Fairfax County was home to many facilities where the County's children and adults could take lessons to learn the fundamentals and joys of horsemanship and where horse owners could board their horses. In addition, Fairfax County was once the number one county in the State for 4-H participation in equine and horsemanship activities. The County is now last in the State.

The three largest riding lesson facilities in Fairfax County were Great Falls Horse Center, Bay Ridge Stables, and Woodlawn Stables. As development eliminated more and more open land in the County, one-by-one, the horse facilities disappeared. Great Falls Horse Center, which taught 600 lesson hours per week and provided board for 30 privately owned horses, taught its last lessons and closed on November 30, 2001. Bay Ridge Stables, which taught 400 lesson hours per week and provided board for 23 privately owned horses, closed in August 2002 after a developer gave them only six week's notice of its intention to develop the property it had leased for many years. The loss of these two facilities left Woodlawn Stables as the last large riding lesson and boarding facility in Fairfax County.

In addition, since the lesson program at the stables located on Quantico Marine Base closed in 2004, Woodlawn is the only facility close enough to an area military base for the children of our servicemen and women to learn to ride and enjoy the benefits of horsemanship. Also, Quantico Marine Base Stables will permanently close and be demolished later this summer, thus eliminating it as a horse boarding facility, and since Meadowood Stables is also threatened, horses belonging to military personnel and their families will likely have to be boarded at Woodlawn Stables or moved out of Fairfax County altogether.

Besides the historical significance of the property housing Woodlawn Stables, adults and children from across Fairfax County ride and board their horses at this facility, which teaches 300 lesson hours per week and boards 15 privately owned horses. In addition, Woodlawn Stables provides employment for 6 full-time and 25 part-time employees. The people who work and ride at Woodlawn Stables patronize nearby shops and restaurants, and the closure of Woodlawn Stables would eliminate this source of revenue for local businesses. The care of Woodlawn's horses produces revenue for the veterinarians and farriers who provide services for these horses, and the closure of Woodlawn Stables would also have a serious negative impact on the businesses of these service providers.

NVCEO is a regional organization representing 19 equestrian organizations in Northern Virginia. Our mission is to provide a unified voice for these organizations and their members in all matters affecting the Northern VA horse community, as well as to educate the region's non-horse community to the benefits of horsemanship. From this position and as a representative of our member organizations, NVCEO urges the Federal Highway Administration to choose a Route 1 improvement plan that preserves Woodlawn Stables.

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