

# TRYON DAILY BULLETIN

## Block House Steeplechase could move

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Proposed facility in Green Creek could host event If plans for a new equestrian facility are approved by the Polk County Zoning Board of Adjustment, the Block House Steeplechase may one day move from FENCE to Green Creek.

In a letter to the editor (see page 4), Roger and Jennifer Smith of Green Creek have said they plan to donate the 95.76 acres planned for the equestrian facility to Tryon Riding & Hunt Club, which has run the Block House Steeplechase since 1946.

Roger Smith last week applied for a conditional use permit for "a non-profit equestrian event facility" on land he purchased May 30 on Hwy. 9 across from Stirrup Downs Lane. The application describes plans for construction of five stables with 100 stalls each, ten riding rings, an RV park with 20 to 30 hook-ups, and a steeplechase track.

In their letter, the Smiths said, "It is our intent, if everything is approved, to gift the land to Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC), a 501(c)3 (tax exempt, charitable) organization, for use as an equestrian facility.

"Tryon Riding & Hunt Club was chartered in 1925 with the goal of preserving and supporting the equestrian tradition and land preservation in Polk County and the Upstate South Carolina region. This community-minded organization has been doing this for over 83 years and has contributed over half a million dollars to our community over the last five years."

Chuck Lingerfelt, TR&HC president, said he would wait until after the Zoning Board of Adjustments had reviewed the permit application to discuss the club's plans in any detail. A hearing is scheduled July 8.

"We are thrilled about these plans, but we are going to reserve making further comment until we have had a chance to meet with the Zoning Board of Adjustments in July," Lingerfelt said.

In their letter, the Smiths said TR&HC events would likely be moving to Green Creek.

"If approval is met and the land donated to Tryon Riding & Hunt Club, the goal will be to create a park-like atmosphere and facility that will house their (TR&HC's) equestrian events, including Steeplechase."

In addition to the Block House Steeplechase, held every April, the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club will this year run its 80th Annual TR&HC Horse Show this month, its 6th Annual TR&HC Horse Show in July, the TR&HC Horse Schooling Trials in August and the 34th TR&HC Horse Trials in October.

Rental fees and other revenues from TR&HC events have been an important part of the

budget for years at FENCE, which was founded in 1985 in part to provide a more permanent home for the Block House Steeplechase.

Prior to the founding of FENCE, the steeplechase had been held – on a course running through two states and three counties – at the historic Block House, a private, residential property on the state line south of Tryon.

Many in the community, upon hearing of the plans for a new equestrian event facility for Tryon Riding & Hunt Club, have wondered where that leaves FENCE, which is located in Tryon's Hunting Country.

Norm Powers, president of FENCE, said, "FENCE is grateful that the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club has kept us fully informed of this proposal during these very early days, and our board looks forward to learning more in coming months. I think this early exchange of information is a sign of the continued close cooperation between our two organizations."

The Smiths also sent an announcement of their Green Creek plans to Equestrian Sports Productions News, a wholly owned subsidiary of Wellington Equestrian Partners (WEP). According to a report in "Equestrian Sports" last Friday, the Smiths were among the founding partners of WEP that acquired the Palm Beach International Equestrian Center in Wellington in 2007. WEP operates horse shows including the Winter Equestrian Festival through its ESP management company.

"This endeavor (in Polk County) is in no way affiliated with our involvement in Wellington Equestrian Partners (WEP) or Equestrian Sport Productions (ESP)," the statement said. The Smiths own homes in Tryon and Wellington, Florida.

The Polk County Zoning Board of Adjustments is charged, under the Multiple Use District zoning regulations, with determining whether the proposed land use will be in harmony with the surrounding area, will not injure property values and will not endanger public health and safety.