

Woodside Pony Club Horsemasters
General Meeting Minutes
August 23, 2005

Attendees:

Woodside Pony Club Horsemasters (WPC/HMs) members Jane Kawasaki, Katrina Deane, Catherine Swent, Patti McCrory, CJ Kolb, Christine Southgate, and Martha Dunn. Guests Katie Graham (Mid-Cal Regional Supervisor) and Jennifer Godoi (interested potential WPC/HMs member).

Announcement:

Katie Graham announced at the beginning of the meeting that WPC/HMs Liaison Dana Heirich, submitted her resignation and her disaffiliation with the WPC/HMs group in a letter sent to former WPC DC Susan Robertson and to Katie Graham. Katrina Deane clarified that membership in a Horsemasters group is for one calendar year (commencing with membership fee payment) and a member desiring “disaffiliation” is technically considered an “inactive member” until the term of the membership fee payment is expired at the end of December.

Objective of the Meeting and Possible Outcomes:

Katie Graham opened the meeting with a proposed objective: to understand where WPC/HMs is going as a group and how this fits with USPC’s mission for Horsemasters. Catherine Swent, who holds the dual role of WPC/HMs member and as Woodside Pony Club Acting DC, suggested that the group in attendance also consider the relationship between the functions and activities of the WPC/HMs vis a vis the Woodside Pony Club and the appropriate relationship between the two groups. Other meeting participants added the following items as objectives for the meeting:

- focus on the issues
- improve communications
- determine a “term limit” (1 year coinciding with DC appointment?)
- sort out the “leadership gap”
- clarify a “chain of command” for WPC/HMs

Katie Graham then suggested there are four possible outcomes for the WPC/HMs group

- WPC/HMs remains under the auspices of Woodside Pony Club with a liaison to communicate between the two groups;
- WPC/HMs remains under the auspices of Woodside Pony Club and a second, Mid-Cal Regional Horsemasters group is formed;
- WPC/HMs disbands as a group and a new Mid-Cal Regional Horsemasters group is formed;
- WPC/HMs disbands.

Discussion:

Martha Dunn, WPC Sponsor and first WPC/HMs liaison, recounted the history of the formation, two years ago, of WPC/HMs. A discussion began of the history to date, the processes followed, the leadership transitions (three liaisons in two years), the roles and responsibilities of the liaison, and the issues and concerns of members and guests present at the meeting. Each individual was given the opportunity to speak their perspective and members and guests were then given the chance to reflect and respond to what was said. Some of the issues raised were:

- how does has the WPC/HMs fulfilled the USPC objectives for the group up to this point?
- If the group is designed to bring together “like-minded people” (in USPC guidelines for Horsemasters groups), what is the WPC/HMs understanding of “like mindedness” and how is that working for the group;
- What is the obligation to meet the needs of the WPC/HMs riders at all levels of their riding ability?
- How are the priorities ordered in the group with respect to supporting the youth organization (WPC) as well as supporting the riding interests and general culture of fun in WPC/HMS?
- What, if any, guidelines exist for the inter-club activities (lessons and clinics) between the adult Horsemasters group and the WPC youth?
- How does WPC/HMs strengthen the WPC youth organization?
- How best can we respect volunteers in the WPC/HMs group for their service?
- What is the appropriate process when a liaison for any Horsemasters group is in conflict with the local pony club DC over matters of policy, procedure, activities, or goals?
- Should there be a “chain of command” strictly followed when conflict does arise between members or the liaison of WPC/HM and the WPC/DC or Region (i.e. what are the consequences of a liaison or DC going “above the head” of the person with whom they need to find agreement?
- How is or how should WPC/HMs increase the volunteer base for WPC?
- Perhaps a liaison should be voted in rather than appointed by a DC (a suggestion to National?)
- The existence of guidelines versus clear policies for Horsemasters groups is seen as a source of some of the conflicts arising in WPC/HMs. Should WPC/HMs recommend specific policies to USPC regarding this issue?
- There are pros and cons of adults and children riding together (including a wide range of abilities, the expense of lessons and keeping riding affordable for the youth, the USPC insurance and Town of Woodside permit requirements). Which aspects of this type of activity should be considered if WPC/HMs chooses to ride with youth members of WPC?
- What are the pros and cons of WPC/HMs instructors riding with their peer members?

- Is email the appropriate venue for discussion of WPC/HMs issues or grievances?

Conclusions and Proposals

A wide variety of opinions were offered by the group on all of the issues however, no specific vote was taken on resolutions or specific program ideas regarding any of the items (other than consensus was reached on the fact that email is not an appropriate venue). The group decided another meeting is necessary to reflect on the issues and move the group toward specific decisions. The group did develop the following list of tentative goals (which may be expanded upon in a future meeting):

- WPC/HMs should be fun
- We should discuss expanded membership with members from other Pony Clubs
- WPC should continue to receive volunteer support from WPC/HMs if the group continues in its current relationship to WPC
- Horsemasters should attempt to meet the different riding levels of its members
- The local Horsemasters group should create a handbook
- Written guidelines should be developed for conduct and lines of communication in the WPC/HMs group
- WPC/HMs should engage in outreach to the larger Peninsula horse community

The group proposed that another meeting is organized for next month to continue the dialog about WPC/HMs. At that meeting, it is proposed that a mission statement, the guidelines/rules of conduct, and goals for the group are on the agenda.

Interim Activities Coordinator

The group agreed that an Interim Activities Coordinator would be helpful in keeping information circulating to the current members about upcoming horse-related events and competitions. Patti McCrory offered to serve in this capacity. At present, since no decision is yet final about the structure of the WPC/HMs group and its relationship to WPC, Catherine Swent offered to appoint an "Acting Liasion" to coincide with her term as Acting WPC DC; she asked interested members submit their name to her ASAP for consideration. Catherine stated that she will consult with her "Executive Team" (WPC JDC Susan Robertson, WPC Secretary Dana Heirich, and WPC Treasurer Belinda Hanson) to determine the best person for the role of Acting Liasion.

The meeting was adjourned by Katie Graham.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Southgate