



June 5, 2015

Leon County Board of County Commissioners  
301 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the tremendous support you have given the Red Hills Horse Trials for the past three years. The construction of an entirely new cross-country course on the Elinor Klapp Phipps Park property has proved to be a major undertaking, one requiring more resources and manpower than our volunteer organization could possibly have mustered by itself. Your support has been invaluable, and we deeply appreciate what you have enabled us to achieve.

The following objectives have been accomplished in the past three years:

- Design of the cross-country course to be constructed on the Elinor Klapp Phipps Park
- Clearing of the woods for the cross-country course, cleaning up the debris from the timbering operation and defining the cross-country tracks
- Preparation of the footing and the planting of sod and grass seed on the tracks
- Construction of two water jumps and seven additional permanent obstacles in the Park
- Complete refurbishing of the pads for the stable tents
- Completion of an engineering study for purposes of relocating the Dressage and Show Jumping Arenas, as well as the upgrading to code of the electrical infrastructure in the Park
- Grading of north field for proper drainage and relocation of the Dressage and Show Jumping Arenas
- Procurement and installation of all-weather footing for the Dressage and Show Jumping Arenas
- Complete upgrade of electrical infrastructure
- Live streaming of Show Jumping – CIC 3\* Division

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners' funding for the 2013 Red Hills International Horse Trials helped defray the expense of the international officials required by the Federation Equestre International, freeing resources for Red Hills to study and plan the construction of an entirely new cross-country course on the Elinor Klapp Phipps Park. Funding for the 2014 event was dedicated to clearing of the actual track and the physical construction of the course, which began in the summer of 2013. The City of Tallahassee Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs undertook major portions of the heavy clean-up of the debris from the timbering operation undertaken by the Northwest Florida Water Management District in June of 2013 while the Red Hills course builders focused on the definition of the track and the construction of the permanent jumps. The track was literally carved out of the thick woods.

The initial design and relocation of the new cross-country course in no way anticipated the relocation of the Dressage and Show Jumping Arenas. The deluge during the running of the 2014 event flooded these arenas, creating major safety concerns for the competitors. We undertook a professional engineering study in order to make the relocation of these arenas a rational one, and to understand the requirements for electrical infrastructure, both due to the move and to the age of the wiring that existed in the Park.

Roberts and Roberts Construction Company, Inc., contributed the major grading of the north field of the Park to prepare the site for the arenas. Engineers from the City laser-graded the field to insure proper drainage as well as appropriate grades for the Dressage and Show Jumping arenas. Phase one of the installation of all-weather footing in the arenas also began.

It has become universally expected in the equestrian sports that an upper-level event have all-weather footing in the arenas; a very expensive proposition. In 2015 we invested \$65,000 in the first phase of arena footing improvement. This only covered the cost of producing and transporting the granite screenings to Midway, FL. The City of Tallahassee personnel transported the screenings by truckload...roughly 126 truckloads...from Midway to the site, with the last load being delivered as the first horse arrived on site.

Once the earth moving and grading were completed, the relocation of the electrical stanchions began. The improvements to the electrical infrastructure, now completely up to code, cost \$45,000. The pads constructed as foundation for the stabling barns, which also washed out in 2014, were reworked for the 2015 event at the cost of approximately \$35,000.

Moving forward, Red Hills needs to refine what we have accomplished. The organizers of Red Hills International Horse Trials have embarked upon a plan for the future sustainability of the event which intends to achieve three objectives:

- Establish the sustainability of the event through restructured management and public/private partnerships
- Refine the infrastructure that has been developed in Elinor Klapp Phipps Park
- Develop the broadcasting of the event for greater outreach and advertising opportunities

The Red Hills event has outgrown the ability of an all-volunteer army to assure its success. It demands full-time administration and stewardship. The event requires a more professional fundraising effort than can be sustained on a purely volunteer basis. To address these needs we intend to engage a contracted management group to assist with the identification of an executive administrator who can make it feasible for Red Hills to become sustainable on a managed volunteer basis. We intend to begin this process in 2015. We estimate that \$40,000 per year for three years would allow contracted management to establish itself to the point that it would, through fundraising efforts, be in a position to support itself as similar events do. We are currently pursuing private funding for this initiative.

This spring, Red Hills entered into three-year agreements with internationally acclaimed FEI course designer Michael Etherington-Smith, former designer of the Rolex CCI 4\* cross-country course as well as the Sydney and Hong Kong Olympics, and with David O'Connor, former Olympic Gold Medalist and current Chef d'Equipe of the US Olympic Team, for the designs of the CIC3\* and CIC2\*/1\* cross-country courses, respectively. These designers have been engaged to refine the cross-country courses at Red Hills, both in terms of the quality of the technical questions asked of the competitors by the course and the footing on the course, and to further improve the quality of the all-weather footing in the arenas. A fresh evaluation by perhaps the most highly respected designer in the sport and his understudy will reestablish Red Hills' preeminence and confirm the caliber of our facilities.

We have already been instructed that the granite screening forming the base of the arenas need to be blended with fibrous material to cushion the surface. This will cost \$45,000 to \$50,000 in materials alone. City machinery can work the fibers into the screenings to complete the project. A grass perimeter around the arenas needs to be established and with the City's help, this has already been planted. We have made tremendous improvements in our facility in the past three years. Concentration on major relocations has severely reduced time available to focus on fundraising. This must become a major focus in 2016 and beyond.

Red Hills begs to be broadcast. A trial run at modified live-streaming Show Jumping of the CIC3\* Division was definitely a success in 2015. The Red Hills live stream had 8,978 total video views and 67,694 content views including ad views. The first year broadcast was a tremendous achievement! We are continuing to work with What's Up Media of Ocala, FL, to improve production in 2016.

To date only three events in the US other than the Rolex Three-Day Event have been live-streamed. Because of the isolated successes of the three events, the United States Equestrian Federation Network plans to coordinate these efforts and develop a protocol for live-streaming of a few select events, of which Red Hills would be one. This participation would cost Red Hills approximately \$30,000. Advertising revenue may be generated to help defray this cost.

Specific Funding Requests for 2016:

Capital Improvement Request

Cross-country course design and improvements	\$ 45,000
Fibrous footing materials for arenas	<u>\$ 45,000</u>
	<u>\$ 90,000</u>

Operating Request

Emergency Medical Services	\$ 10,000
International officials	\$ 20,000
Live-streaming	<u>\$ 30,000</u>
	<u>\$ 60,000</u>

A significant drop in the need for additional funding is anticipated after 2016 as the facilities are completed. Courses would be freshened by moving portable jumps with a minimum of new construction. This should not require major investment. Track maintenance would be under the auspices of the City, following the direction of Michael Etherington-Smith.

With a majority of the capital projects projected to be completed in 2016, the physical plant should be stabilized, with only routine maintenance required in future years. With an executive in place, fundraising efforts should be markedly improved. With the broadcasting of the event, the generation of revenues from areas outside of Leon County should have begun to take momentum.

We sincerely appreciate your interest in sustaining an event that has grown exponentially, to the point that the efforts to maintain its prominence in the sport require year-round attention. Red Hills is truly a community effort, and we hope, an effort in which the community takes pride of ownership.

All the best,

Jane Barron and Marvin Mayer, Organizers