



## Great Lakes Distance Riding Association Newsletter March 2026



GLDRA members spent time at the Michigan Horse Expo promoting distance riding. Pictured left to right: Aurora Walsh, Jan Wylie, Stephanie Boomgaard, and Shannon Weston. Thanks to all the members who volunteered their time this past weekend in East Lansing! Special thanks to Diane Meinders who coordinated the event and made copies of the upcoming ride clinics/membership forms. With the help of her husband, Kurt, Diane also brought a very nice spreadsheet summarizing all the MI rides! Thanks Kurt!!

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The first ride of the season is on May 2-3, White River Spring in Hesperia, MI at Timbers Edge Campground. Camping reservations have already started booking, so if you're planning on attending RSVP your spot!

<https://www.timbersedgecampground.com/>



On February 28, Michigan Horse Trails Association (MHTA) held their annual banquet and awards presentation. GLDRA is a member of MHTA to support their mission of protecting and promoting equestrian trails and camping in Michigan. Two of GLDRA's members were award recipients for the Trail Hero Award! More details below.



Nominations for this can be for someone whose efforts or advocacy made an incredible difference for our equestrian trails and camps. Or it could be someone who showed up in a time of great need. Nominate those who have shown Herculean efforts for our trails, riders and maybe even our equines.

*Advocacy: For going above and beyond in support of our riding community. Your countless hours, unwavering enthusiasm, and love for Michigan's trails make a lasting difference for all who ride them. With deepest gratitude, we honor your trailblazing spirit.*

**2025 Recipients:** Amanda Still, Jennifer Shooshanian, Michele Jones, Scott Vorachek, Barbara Kurti, Melissa DeWitt, Brian Besinger, Jenny Cook, Amy Scharmen

**Barbara Kurti** - In 2025, Barb managed the HUGE undertaking of the 7-day Shore-to-Shore Distance Ride which brought riders from 28 states AND Canada to Michigan's Shore-to-Shore Trail, promoting the trail, far and wide. Barb has served as president of the Great Lakes Distance Riding Association, on the ride manager committee with AERC and is on the board of MHTA. Barb is passionate about educating new riders to the distance riding sport and horse camping. She has recently accepted the Equine Trails Subcommittee Southwest Representative position. Barb is key in maintaining horse trails and relationships with land managers at Silver Creek, Bass River and beyond. In 2025, she took the lead in demanding that an AuSable resident who had been harassing riders for years, be held accountable for her actions. She has an eye for the big picture and the determination it takes to get there and Michigan is lucky to have her.

**Jennifer Shooshanian** - Jennifer has stepped up to volunteer her time and knowledge for GLDRA by becoming the Secretary for GLDRA and volunteering with 3 different Endurance Rides in 2025 alone. One of those was the week-long and HUGE undertaking of the Shore to Shore Endurance Ride which brought riders from 28 states plus Canada to experience Michigan's Shore to Shore trail. She was also the ride manager/secretary/trail marker for the Detroit Horse Power's endurance ride as well as the secretary at Oak Leaf Run. She does all of this with a positive attitude and smile for all.

## 2025 Board Members

President- Stephanie Boomgaard  
Vice President: Audrey McMurry  
Secretary: Jennifer Shooshanian  
Treasurer: Kristen Mikula  
Member at Large: Damaris Smith  
Rider Reps: Teresa Mulherin, Dawn Bouwkamp  
Webmaster and Newsletter: Sara Hall  
Points Keeper: Kathy Macki



**SAVE THE DATE**

**Next board meeting: March 26 7:45PM**

## MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

### Dawn Bouwkamp- Rider Rep



Dawn started endurance riding 3 years ago when she wanted to find something to do with her Paso Fino horses, other than just regular trail riding around home. She looked online, found endurance riding, went to a clinic, and now she's hooked! She then joined GLDRA, along with UMECRA and AERC.

Dawn has volunteered at rides by helping in the vet check area when not competing. And at the Shore to Shore ride last summer, on two days when she wasn't riding, she provided the trailer and transportation for any horses that were pulled at a vet check and needed a ride to the next camp.

Dawn has two Paso Finos that she rides, named Bailey and Dancer. Bailey is the one that has carried me the most miles in competition so far. Dawn likes to compete in Competitive Trail Riding. Bailey and her did their first 50 mile ride at the end of last season. She's looking forward to doing more 50's this coming summer.

### Damaris Smith- Member at Large

Damaris first started in distance riding in 2018 with a clinic and then jumping right in to experience the Shore to Shore Trail via LDs. That experience instilled a love of distance riding which matched well with her established passion for gaited horses. She hopes to see you at a ride this season and is eager to serve GLDRA and its members as Member at Large!



## Teresa Mulherin- Rider Rep



Hi there! This is simply the best sport as it puts the horse's health first and foremost! Teresa has been interested in endurance since roughly 2012 when she ran into Diane Maxey at Yankee Springs. Diane invited her to do the 9 mile trail in training ride fashion! When they came back to camp, Diane asked if she wanted to do the 6 mile too and the rest is history!! 🤠 Finally someone who wanted to go for MILES! 🐾

While Teresa has done many training rides with Diane since that time, unfortunately, she was not able to compete until 2022 due to family obligations. She now has 145 competition miles. One 30LD being the longest. Teresa started camping with this wonderful group of equestrian's in 2021 and it's honestly her favorite part of summer. 😊

So most of the time you'll find her riding around on Bean (her MFT) and checking on people in camp and on the trails as they compete. Let Teresa know how she can help you in your journey!

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### **NEW MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENT!**

This year I'd like to update everyone with our new members! If you see a new face or hear a new name announced at a ride, be sure to welcome them!

New GLDRA Member(s)- Kelly McKolay, Tiffany Patchak, Julie Poirier

