

## Greetings from the desk of *Executive Director, Tracie Hanson*



The staff and volunteers have been busy this winter taking care of the beautiful grounds at FENCE. Like most of the Polk-Landrum area, we have been cleaning up from the torrential winter rains.

In addition, we've been working on clearing out some of the invasive plant species and teaching local residents how to do the same on their property. It was a very productive winter!

Now that we are moving into spring, our focus has shifted to prepping our show rings and covered arena for a full slate of equestrian events, getting our trails cleaned up for hikes and breaking ground on the downstairs bathroom renovation.

Spring is the time for us to come out of hibernation and take every opportunity to play outside. We hope you choose to do that with us!

Be sure to check our calendar online and Facebook page for upcoming events at FENCE as we celebrate our 40th year! Many exciting things happening this year.

# 40th Year Anniversary

As FENCE celebrates the 40th year anniversary , we have been discussing our past, our present and our future. FENCE's past created this beautiful greenspace for the community to use and enjoy for generations to come. The present has carried on those values and grew them into what we do now. FENCE has expanded the original 110 acres into 384 acres of protected land via a conservation easement. FENCE is home to many events year-round for the community. *Project FENCE* has reached thousands of children over the years teaching them about nature, animals and more. TROT continues to thrive and help students with special needs. FENCE's future will remain a greenspace for generations to come. FENCE will prosper and reach even further into the surrounding communities.



### Our Staff:

Tracie Hanson

*Executive Director*

Summaiya D'Adamo

*TROT Director*

Ashley Brewington

*Admin Assistant*

Amy Schmittee

*Nature Event Coordinator*

Amy Waterbury

*TROT Instructor*

### Maintenance:

Roy Flores

Salvador Garcia



### Board of Directors:

Allison Rhyne

*President*

Judith Kerns

*Vice President*

Russ Rock

*Treasurer*

Kate Barkschat

Holly Dake

Aaron Greene

Nancy Mahler

Derrick Overholt

Chuck Stark

Kim Wawzysko

## Welcome New Board Members!



**Kim Wawzysko** joins FENCE with a great knowledge in all things equine. Kim is currently the director of Equine & Agribusiness Sciences at Isothermal Community College and is also the owner of Grand Haven Farm. Kim's philosophy on her farm is to educate and learn through a career anchor of customer service, is to Improve life through learning. "I am thrilled to become a Board Member at FENCE, as this new role aligns with my philosophy to educate and learn. Enamored with FENCE and its mission, being all inclusive, it is a prestigious organization that is fundamental in the sustainability of a community enthusiastic about equine and the ecosystem."

**Chuck Stark** is a licensed Realtor who entered the real estate field in 2010 after retiring from a successful career in industry. Prior to embarking on his industry career Chuck worked for over 20 years as a professional horseman in nearly all aspects of the horse industry. He remains active in the equestrian world today riding, teaching and judging horse shows. He served the local community as a member the Board of Directors for the Polk Equine Emergency Rescue (PEER) for the past 7 years and has recently transitioned to assist as a member of the Board at FENCE. "We are blessed to have the resources of FENCE available to all visitors and members of our local community. The nature trails, the FENCE house and the equestrian facilities are a jewel in our local landscape."



**Aaron Greene** is currently Superintendent of Polk County Schools. This is his 30th year as an educator. Aaron began as a math teacher, then moved into the high school principalship, and was the district's Director of Curriculum and Instruction before taking on his current role. He sits on a variety of community organization boards, and has been on the FENCE Board in past years. Aaron says he is passionate about being a champion for FENCE and its programs as he has seen first hand the impact FENCE has had on local citizens young and old. Although admittedly biased toward programming for young people and nature, Aaron stands ready to help with any and all aspects of the incredible organization that is FENCE!



# DOG WALKERS & HIKERS



## BECOME A TRAIL ANGEL

*FENCE needs your support!*

*Please consider donating \$100 to help  
us maintain our 5.5 miles of trails.*

*Call the office, come by the office or go to our website to  
donate!*



**EMAIL**

[info@fence.org](mailto:info@fence.org)

**WEB**

[www.fence.org](http://www.fence.org)

**PHONE**

828-859-9021

# FENCE



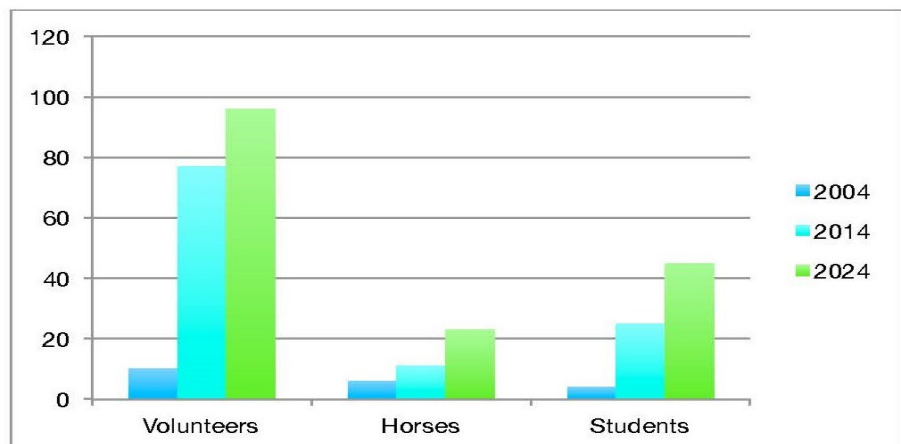
FOOTHILLS EQUESTRIAN NATURE CENTER

# TROTTER'S CORNER

## 20 Years of TROT

Therapeutic Riding of Tryon, affectionately known as TROT, came to fruition thanks to the vision of Norm Powers in 2004. Originally serving Polk County, this beloved FENCE program now has students from more than 5 counties. Therapeutic riding harnesses equine connection to help individuals with a wide range of challenges build confidence, promote strength and balance, and improve focus and communication skills. We are a truly unique program in that our horses are also volunteers, and they are trailered in for their students. Our TROT Family, made up of our students, volunteers, instructor and generous donors, make it possible for us to continue offering this sweetheart program to our growing community. We are beyond grateful to those who paved the way and for those who passionately continue TROT's vision.

### See How We've Grown!



### Fun Facts:

\* Our 96 dedicated volunteers gave 3500 hours to last year's spring and fall sessions! Without them, our lessons and annual TROT Student Horse Show aren't possible!

\* For the first time, Polk County was represented at the Special Olympics NC Equestrian Tournament in 2023, and both athletes were TROT students!

If you're inspired to volunteer your time, your horse or to make a donation toward our student Riderships, or if you or someone you know would like to become a TROT student, please reach out. We look very forward to meeting you!





# COMMUNITY YARD SALE

It's back! The Community Yard Sale is finally back after a long hiatus. We are already taking vendors so get your spot now! The stalls are 10x10 with some frontage space also. Wanting to clear out all that dusty stuff that is sitting around and make some money from it or will you be looking for something to take home? Either way we want you here June 1st!

Steps to Hope will be on site toward the end of the sale to take anything vendors don't want to carry back home!

Call or email to reserve your space, they're filling up fast!

## ANNUAL COMMUNITY YARD SALE

10x10 Stall Space  
**\$30 per Stall w/ \$10 back after cleanup**  
**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

Call or email to  
reserve your space!  
828-859-9021  
info@fence.org

**JUNE 1, 2024**  
**8AM - 12PM**

Steps to Hope will be  
on-site at 11:30 to haul  
away any unwanted  
items

**3381 Hunting Country Rd**  
**Tryon, NC**

**FENCE**  
FOOTHILLS EQUESTRIAN NATURE CENTER



## EASE

Equine Assisted Senior Engagement at FENCE

E.A.S.E (Equine Assisted Senior Engagement) is a new program at FENCE aimed at early onset dementia, MCI (mild cognitive impairment), and Parkinson's participants. It is a four-week program consisting of a Spring and Fall session. The goal of this program is to inspire connection and improve the lives of those



impacted by dementia, MCI, and Parkinson's through equine engagement. The program focuses on a sensory experience for each participant while creating a sense of awareness, confidence, and social connection within a structured and supervised environment.

The program takes place at Rosemary's Barn. Participants will spend time and connect with equine animals, along with other therapy pets, in a beautiful, natural setting. Equines are highly intuitive creatures, receptive to both verbal and nonverbal communication.

While the E.A.S.E program targets the care receiver, caregivers can take advantage of their free time running errands or enjoying walks on the nearby FENCE hiking trails.



# FENCE

FOOTHILLS EQUESTRIAN NATURE CENTER

## CELEBRATION BASH

Join us for FENCE's 40th Year Anniversary Bash, we aim to bring the community together like never before. This event is all about you, the people who have made FENCE's journey possible throughout the years. Prepare to be occupied by a diverse range of activities and entertainment suitable for all ages.

# APRIL 28<sup>th</sup> 12<sub>pm</sub> - 4<sub>pm</sub>

### TOUCH-A-TRUCK

Polk County Sheriffs Office, Columbus Fire Dept, Polk County EMS, NC Forestry Service, Jackson's Towing, Landrum Fire Dept, Holberts Grading & Excavating, NC Forest Service, etc!

### POLICE K-9 DEMOS

Polk County Sheriffs Office K-9 handlers will demonstrate what their K-9 officers are trained for!

1PM  
&  
3PM

**FREE  
FOOD**

**RAFFLES**

**CLASSIC  
CARS**

### PERFORMERS

The Basement Bunch will provide live music throughout the event. Sizemore Gymnastics will be performing a routine at 2:30pm

**LOCAL BUSINESSES  
&  
ORGANIZATIONS**



3381 Hunting Country Rd. Tryon, NC 28782  
fence.org 828-859-9021



# 40TH CELEBRATION BASH

FENCE will be holding a huge free community event April 28th 12-4 pm. To celebrate 40 incredible years serving the community, FENCE will continue that by inviting the community out and engage with local businesses and organizations. We have planned a event filled with lots of activities for everyone to enjoy. Local first responders will be on site with their vehicles on display, police K9 demonstrations will be at 1 pm & 3 pm, The Basement Bunch will preforming live during the event, Sizemore gymnastics will preform a routine at 2:30 pm, free lunch will be offered, classic cars will surround the water complex, several raffles will be going on, a bounce house and inflatable slide will also keep the kids entertained, fresh popcorn and cotton candy will also be available, lastly many businesses and organizations from the community will have informative tables set-up.

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## Dave Kirby's Outlook

The restoration of the Dave Kirby Bench in honor of FENCE's 40th anniversary is definitely worth celebrating. It's amazing how a simple bench can hold so much history and meaning.

The bench, originally unveiled on Dave Kirby's 90th birthday in December 2000, holds a special place on Hawks Ridge, where Dave used to do his best thinking. Unfortunately, it faced some damage during a storm, but thanks to the generous help of Susan Beardslee and Bill Crowell from Saluda Forge, the bench has been beautifully restored.



Susan Beardslee's contribution in replacing the tiles and Bill Crowell's skillful work in fixing up the bench itself truly showcase the power of community and dedication. Now, the Dave Kirby Bench stands proudly once again on Hawks Ridge, ready to be enjoyed by all.

*"If you love nature, come love it at FENCE!"*

*- Dave Kirby*

# FENCE History

Over Forty years ago, FENCE was a vision by five men who were very involved in the community. Paul Culberson, Jim Flack, Gus Hoffman, Dave Kirby and Tom Moore had a vision of providing greenspace for all generations to use and enjoy.

In 1984 FENCE became a non-profit nature education and outdoor recreation center, built around an original land grant of 117 acres generously contributed by the Mahler family, who had come to Tryon in 1933. Along with the gift of land, the Mahler's included stipulations to ensure that FENCE would meet those broader goals. It was agreed that FENCE would be a 501c3 charitable organization; that it would include a nature side to educate children both at FENCE and in the schools; that it would offer summer camps and ongoing educational and entertainment programs; and that the land would be protected in perpetuity, never to be developed. Since then, FENCE has grown to approximately 384 acres, straddling Interstate 26, with approximately 359 acres in Polk County, NC and approximately 25 acres in Spartanburg County, SC. FENCE serves thousands of people each year with programs in nature study, outdoor recreation and equestrian competition. It is



governed by a volunteer board of directors working with a small salaried staff.

The original 117 acres that the Mahler's donated became the site of a steeplechase course and horse show grounds and riding trails. FENCE's Sandlin Track, named for its builder, measures seven furlongs just under a mile and features rolling hills that give spectators a sweeping view of the horses as they gallop over the fences. The Blockhouse Steeplechase moved from the historic Blockhouse to the new facility at FENCE in 1988 and was the home of the event from 1988 to 2016.









# FENCE

FOOTHILLS EQUESTRIAN NATURE CENTER

## Cross Country Jump Sponsors Needed!

Help us add more jumps  
to our Cross Country  
course!

FENCE is seeking sponsors for our Cross Country Jumps. We are looking to add more jumps to our course in 2024. Your business or organizations logo will also be placed on the jump! If desired, you can design the jump you sponsor.

### 5 Divisions Available for Sponsorship

Starter  
Beginner Novice  
Novice  
Training  
Preliminary



**EMAIL**  
[info@fence.org](mailto:info@fence.org)

**WEB**  
[www.fence.org](http://www.fence.org)

**PHONE**  
828-859-9021



# Current Land Uses



The FENCE center houses staff and volunteer offices and meeting rooms as well as facilities for special events. Inside the center it has public restrooms, a kitchen, dining room, outdoor pavilion and lawn areas.



The Equestrian Center is used primarily for equestrian events and activities. The barns and facilities have been used for emergency stabling and shelter for horses escaping storms.



Rosemary's Barn and adjacent riding area are used for TROT (Therapeutic Riding of Tryon) and "Horse Camp"



The Wildwood Trail is an asphalt paved near the Nature Center with interpretive nature signage accessible for everyone.



A "Nature Play Space" has been developed off the Wildwood Trail near the Mountain Laurel Natural Area as a playground utilizing natural objects and animal carvings in logs.



Wooded areas of the property are primarily used for nature exploration and education, hiking and summer day camps, and horseback riding on the FETA trails. High School track teams also use trails for cross-country events.



The Log Cabin is used as an education center and is the information kiosk for spur sections of The Palmetto Trail, the South Carolina mountains to sea trail.



Open fields are used for passive recreation, dog walking, equestrian cross-country, disc golf, bird walks, and special events such as "Go Fly a Kite" and star gazing.

# FENCE Spotlight: A LOOK BACK

**1984:** The “Founding Five” (Paul Culberson, Jim Flack, Gus Hoffman, Dave Kirby & Tom Moore) turn their vision into a reality and FENCE was born.

**1985:** Mrs. Ernest Mahler donates 117 acres. Steeplechase course & Nature Pond/Boardwalk break ground. 11 acres was donated by Metcalf & Panther.

**1986:** The FENCE house, log cabin and Rosemary’s Barn (used by TROT) was purchased from the Kimberly Estate, approximately 80 acres.

**1987:** Final touches to seven furlong steeplechase track and Kidd Barn completed. Construction begins on the judge’s towers, show/warm-up rings and cross country course.

**1989:** “Critter Room” started with funding from PCCF. It houses turtles, snakes, lizards & toads.

**1993:** FENCE began Project FENCE a school age educational program.

**1994:** Tryon BBQ Festival held at FENCE. 9 acres donated by George & Dottie Webster.

**1995:** 10th Anniversary. 2 acres donated by Gerwill & Kramer. 16 acres donated by Pete & Nancy Mahler.

**1996:** Wildwood Trail, a handicap trail, asphalted. 50th Running of Blockhouse Steeplechase held at FENCE. 35 acres donated by Katherine Metcalf. 50 acres donated by the Lincoln Trust.

**2000:** FENCE purchased 71 acres to be included in FENCE property to preserve last undeveloped land in Hunting Country.

**2002:** 71 acres purchased by FENCE.

**2004:** TROT (Therapeutic Riding of Tryon at FENCE) is certified. FENCE hosts 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner.

**2005:** New barns are completed adding 100 new stalls.

**2006:** Jim Cockman memorial water complex on the cross country course opens. Kimberly Barn had a facelift, became the permanent home for TROT and renamed Rosemarys Barn.

**2007:** FENCE along with PAC established an easement on all 384 acres protecting the land from development.

**2008:** Covered arena (later named Chinquapin Arena) was completed.

**2012:** The “Classroom” is added to the back of the FENCE Center.

**2013:** Tracie Hanson named Executive Director.

**2014:** 30th Anniversary.

**2017:** First annual Round Up Rodeo.

2016: Chinquapin Arena became the home for TROT Lessons.

**2019:** 35th Anniversary. First annual Roastin’ on the Ridge.

**2020:** FENCE continued to be a safe outdoor space during COVID.

**2021:** Renovation in the Great Room completed.

**2022:** Wildwood Trail was repaved. Equestrian sensory trail opened.

**2024:** Revamping on the downstairs bathrooms began.



# Foothills Equestrian Nature Center

## *"A Community Greenspace"*



Foothills Equestrian Nature Center is a wonderful community resource providing natural spaces with room for kids to run and play, places for families to picnic, quiet places to connect with nature, shelter for wildlife, hiking trails, and places to walk your dog. The property is open for you to enjoy daily from dawn til dusk. Additionally, FENCE offers excellent equestrian show rings, stabling, a cross-country course, and so much more. Come visit FENCE, fall in love with the land, and help us to maintain this beautiful green space for years to come.

### ***What does FENCE have to offer?***

#### **Equestrian:**

Dressage  
Hunter Pace  
Horse Trials  
Hunter/Jumper  
Cross-Country  
Stadium Jumping

Carriage Driving  
Schooling Events  
Western Events  
Rodeo  
Dog Agility  
Therapeutic Riding  
of Tryon (TROT)

#### **Nature:**

Hiking  
Dog Walking  
Bird Watching  
Recreation  
Picnic areas  
Educational  
presentations  
Field trips

#### **School Programs**

Summer Camps  
Pond &  
Board walk  
Nature Center  
Guided hikes  
Butterfly  
Gardens

#### **Community event rentals for:**

Weddings  
Meetings  
Fundraisers  
Seminars  
Family/Class reunions  
Musical performances  
Celebration of Life Services  
Large outdoor events  
Overnight accommodations



# SUMMER DAY CAMP



Summer Camp will be here soon! Each of the six (6) weeks provides a unique learning experience.

**Horse Camp** is offered twice. In each week-long session, campers will learn horse care basics, mounting, tacking, walk, trot and much more.

**All Day Camp** offers a different theme each day that takes campers outdoors to explore and learn.

**Half Day Camp** offers a different theme each day that takes campers outdoors to explore and learn.

**Nature/ Art Camp** gives campers the opportunity to experiment with different art media. Guest art instructors lead the activities.

**Environmental Camp** provides creative and fun ways to learn about nature and the environment. Campers spend the majority of their time outdoors, hiking, playing games and exploring.



**Summer Camp is open to children ages 5-12.**

**June 3-7 (8:30-12:30) — Horse Camp (\$225)**

**June 10-14 (8:30-12:30) — Horse Camp (\$225)**

**June 17-21 (8:30-12:30) — Half Day Camp (\$150)**

**June 24-28 (8-5) — All Day Camp (\$225)**

**July 8-12 (8:30-12:30) — Nature/ Art Camp (\$150)**

**July 15-19 (8-5) — Environmental Camp (\$225)**

Applications available at FENCE or online at [FENCE.org](http://FENCE.org).

If you are interested in **sponsoring a camper** for a week of camp, please contact Tracie at [admin@fence.org](mailto:admin@fence.org).



# IN LOVING Memory



## Peta Grafham

July 29, 1959 – February 19, 2024

What could be better than being greeted with a smile that has so much warmth it lights up your day? Our TROT family was the lucky recipients of these Peta smiles for 6 wonderful years as she welcomed both students and volunteers to their lessons. She and her husband left California for Tryon in 2014. With the corporate world behind her, she generously gave her time to the Therapeutic Riding of Tryon program filling role of Volunteer Coordinator. And what a gift. In our down time she shared stories of her childhood in Europe, her career as an IT specialist, and how her beloved family followed them here to WNC. The most cherished thing she shared was her infectious laughter – it was impossible not to join her. She had a knack for letting our students know how valued they are. Our community benefitted greatly from her intelligence, humor, and spark. She will be remembered with the same warmth and smiles she's treated us to since she came into our lives.

## Spring Calendar of Events

Items in **BOLD** are organized by FENCE. For all other events, contact the event organizer for details. Items with \* are made possible by the Kirby Endowment at the Polk County Community Foundation.

### March

- 2nd: Hunting Country Schooling Days  
**Steve O'Neil—Snake Program\***
- 9th-10th: Hunting Country Schooling Days
- 16th: Barrel Racing
- 17th: Free Family Concert\***
- 23rd-24th: FRC Combined Training
- 24th: FRC XC Schooling
- 29th: FENCE Offices Closed**
- 30th-31st: NC Rodeo

### April

- 6th-7th: FRC Working Equitation
- 13th-14th: FENCE Horse Trials**
- 19th-21st: Tryon Riding & Hunt Club
- 25th: Spring Bird Hike\***
- 26th-28th: Blue Ridge Agility Club
- 28th: FENCE 40th Anniversary Bash**

### May

- 3rd-5th: Pony Club Eventing Rally
- 8th: Spring Bird Hike\***
- 11th: FENCE Open Horse Show**
- 12th: FENCE Hunter Pace**
- 18th: FRC Combined Training
- 27th: FENCE Offices Closed**

*Check the FENCE website and Facebook for updates to this calendar.*

## FREE YOGA FRIDAYS

Free Yoga classes are held on Fridays in the Great Room at 10:15am weekly.

These free classes are made possible by Polk County Community Foundation.

\*NO CLASSES MARCH 15 & MARCH 29\*



# FENCE

FOOTHILLS EQUESTRIAN NATURE CENTER

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED  
3381 Hunting Country Road  
Tryon, NC 28782

NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
TRYON, NC  
Permit No. 135



*"Preserving  
community,  
promoting  
recreation and  
education"*





