

Sterling Pointe Equestrian Staging Area

Loomis Basin, southern Placer County, California

by Robert H. Sydnor, M-AERC, M-LBHA, M-ACE

August 17, 2008

One of the nicest equestrian staging areas within Loomis Basin is Sterling Pointe. The purpose of this report is to showcase this equestrian trailhead for newer members of the Loomis Basin Horsemen's Association, using 35 digital photographs with detailed captions.


Sterling Pointe Equestrian Staging Area is part of Placer County Parks. There is ample space for horse trailers and the equestrian staging area is available free-of-charge. Sterling Pointe Equestrian Staging Area provides key access for the Pioneer Express Trail within Folsom Lake State Recreation Area. From the center of Loomis Basin, a number of bridle paths converge at Sterling Pointe, and the Pioneer Express Trail connects to Granite Bay (to the south) and Rattlesnake Bar (to the north). In addition to equestrians, Sterling Pointe is also for hikers, Scout troops, and families with an interest in natural sciences (botany, mammals, and bird-watching).

Location Information


Consult a road map of southern Placer County, or visit the Loomis Basin Horsemen's Association website to download a map.

From Auburn-Folsom Road, drive eastward on Lomida Lane for 0.8 miles, following brown county signs with white letters. Look for these street signs.



In the first mile, Lomida Lane ascends into a residential neighborhood of expensive homes. After 0.8 miles on Lomida Lane, turn left  on Sterling Pointe Court at the intersection with Lake Forest Drive with these signposts:



 Turn left at this intersection and proceed for 0.4-miles on Sterling Point Court. Look for these detailed equestrian signposts. The total distance is 1.2 miles from Auburn-Folsom Road to the equestrian staging area.

Continue to this bend in the street, then swing right ↗ when you see this signage:



Two steel pipes on hinged posts form the gates.



The key to happiness.

Entrance Gate

The entrance gate to Sterling Pointe is generally open and unlocked during county park hours (8:00 AM to 9:00 PM, daily).

As a member of Loomis Basin Horseman’s Association, you can obtain a brass key to the padlock for a \$5.00 deposit. (Non-members: \$10.00) This way, a prepared rider with a loaded horse-trailer and truck cannot be inadvertently locked-out or locked-in. LBHA members plan ahead and have a key; and thereby avoid predicaments of returning in the evening later than planned — due to equestrian delays on the trail.



Informational Signage at Sterling Point

There are excellent signs explaining all the rules. The upper (paved) parking lot is generally used by hikers and handicapped parking. One portable out-house is located at the upper parking lot, with two steel hitching rails located under the oak trees. There is no water available in the upper (paved) parking lot.

Peregrine Trail “to wander”

The Peregrine Trail begins at the upper (paved) parking lot. It is a slow-paced, meandering trail designed so that you can “wander” and browse among the oaks to observe nature. It is relaxing to get away from the hectic pace of the city, and “to wander” leisurely in blissful solitude along this short trail.

The etymology of the word *peregrine* is derived from the Latin *peregrinus*, which means “wanderer.” In turn, this name is given by ornithologists to the peregrine falcon, a raptor that “wanders” the skies in search of the next field mouse.

We recall the aphorism of J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings*: “Not all those who wander are lost.” Our horses would happily agree — because they love to wander outside of their pasture fences.

The wandering Peregrine Trail intersects with the Sterling Pointe Trail (0.1-mile) in an X-pattern, and also with the main Pioneer Express Trail 0.4-miles distant. The botanical signs along the trail were researched and designed by Monica Finn, a professional botanist who has also assisted LBHA with botanical signs at Traylor Ranch nature reserve.



Equestrian Staging Area

The road descends eastward to the lower parking lot with a gravel surface. There is ample parking space for horse trailers and equestrian staging. Signs notify everyone that dogs must be on leash at all times, and any potential vandals are warned that Sterling Pointe is under surveillance.



Excellent equestrian signage at the entrance gate with rules and trail distances clearly explained. The horse trough is located at far edge of gravel parking lot, with a cute figurine of a little boy playing on top of the granodiorite boulder in foreground.

Horse Trough

A reliable clean horse trough is vital for hydrating horses in our hot Mediterranean climate. So the horse trough at Sterling Pointe is one of the most important features of the equestrian staging area.

It was a considerable expense to lay a water pipe for a thousand feet and construct a horse trough. Many equestrian organizations (such as LBHA, AERC, the Robie Foundation, and Western States Trail Foundation), many commercial stables (such as Knickerknob Stables and Loomis Equestrian Center), and a number of feed stores (such as Scott's Corners, Douglas Ranch Supply, Echo Valley Ranch Supply) contributed money for the horse trough and related construction of Sterling Pointe facilities. The names of these benefactors are engraved in 17 oval stones along the edge of the horse trough.

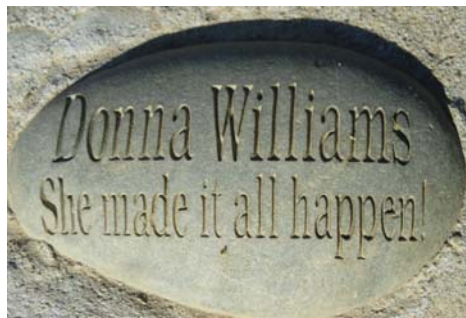


At left, refilling the horse trough with fresh water after cleaning. Note the orange carrot (a horse treat to distract my horse while scrubbing) and the clippers for trimming brush along the trails. The horizontal steel pipe across the top is designed to prevent vandals from stealing the plastic insert of the horse trough.

The plumbing is simple: a manual valve with a short green hose for the incoming fresh water, and a drain pipe with a manual valve (shown at right). There is no automatic float-valve.

No special tools or wrenches are needed, so that each horseman can easily perform daily maintenance and cleaning of the horse trough. Cleaning the horse trough is good stewardship for the *next* horseman, allegorically “soon to arrive” with a thirsty horse in torrid summer heat.

It is recommended practice to bring a scrub brush for the horse-trough in your horse truck & trailer. The bottom two-inches of the horse trough cannot be emptied by the drain pipe. It is useful to bring a scoop-bucket with a flat side to bail-out the green algae and dregs from the bottom of the horse trough.



At left is a barbecue-sauce jug that has been modified with the bottom removed. This makes a convenient scoop-bucket for cooling and rinsing horses in hot weather. The flat shape of the jug can also be used for scooping out green algae from the bottom of a horse trough. The equestrian sponge with mesh-netting on a nylon cord stows away inside the jug. There are nylon tie-down straps for the cantle of the saddle for secure stowing while riding.

In the center photograph is the name of Donna Williams engraved in stone. Donna is a founding member of LBHA who tirelessly advocated, planned, and organized the construction of Sterling Pointe Equestrian Staging Area. At right is our LBHA name — also engraved in stone.

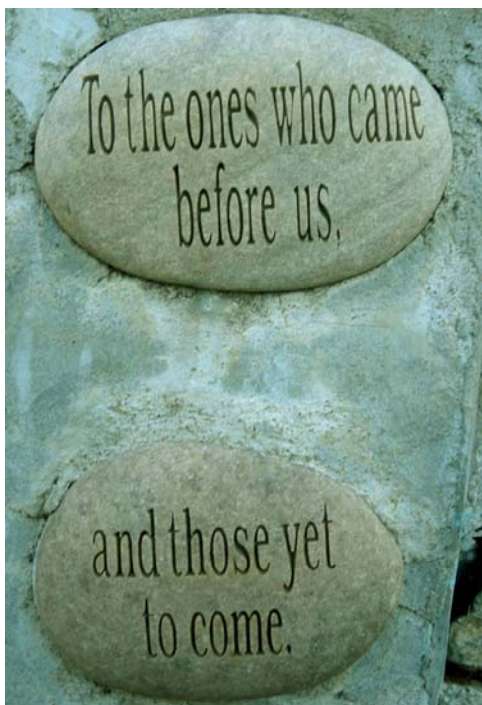
When you visit this facility, study the 17 names engraved in stone around the perimeter of the horse trough. Then, when you next see that particular benefactor, visit that feed store, or attend that organization, you can personally thank them for their sustained efforts and generous financial contributions.

We horsemen have much to be thankful to these benefactors for their vision, their work, their toil under blazing summer suns and freezing winter rains, their sustained dedication, and their abiding stewardship of Sterling Pointe.

Water Fountain, Dog Water, Manure Management Signs, Mounting Blocks



Shown at left is a low-sided trough for dog-water. In the center, horsemen are reminded to haul-out their own manure. Do *not* side-cast and disperse the manure, because the overall number of horses is too great. Some nearby trees are suffering from too much manure. Shown at right is a 3-step green mounting-block that was that was donated by Christensen’s Saddlery in Loomis.



History of Sterling Pointe Equestrian Staging Area

The history of how Sterling Point came to be an equestrian staging area is known to about a dozen key members of Loomis Basin Horsemen’s Association. Briefly the work involved hundreds of hours of meeting with Placer County officials, the local land developer, Placer County Planning Commission, and Placer County Parks.

Patricia Gibbs and Kathy Dombrowski of LBHA had the sustained vision (circa early 1990s) to see that this would be an equestrian staging area, and not a “regular” county park where horse trailers would be unwelcome and incompatible. Horse access for future generations of equestrians was the abiding vision. Much of the construction effort was undertaken by Donna Williams, LBHA founding member.

In a subsequent edition, we would like to see additional names added in this space for those LBHA members who helped in the planning, development, and construction of Sterling Pointe.





Picnic table on the north side of the parking lot.



Three steel hitching rails near the picnic table.

The labor to install the hitching posts was provided by Hans Peters and Jack Velasco. The bulletin board contains anthropology and natural history information about the Maidu tribe of Native Americans who lived here.



Equestrian Bulletin Boards & Horse Trail Maps

The trail head is at the southeast margin of the lower parking lot. Here are two double-sided bulletin boards with trail maps and natural history information. These large bulletin boards were installed by Jack Velasco, Dan Posten, and Hans Peters. The detailed horse trail maps (scale: one inch = 100 feet) were prepared by Mrs. Patricia Gibbs and her husband, Lee, using GPS on horseback. The maps are enclosed in protective plastic inside glass panels, and are slightly warped by the intense heat from sunshine. The trail maps and information do not photograph very well because of the warped surface, but they are quite legible in person.



Panoramio.com images posted on GoogleEarth of Sterling Pointe

Many of the digital photographs used in this report are also posted on < www.panoramio.com > which is owned and operated by GoogleEarth® as a mapping website with imagery. Panoramio.com currently has 13+ million virtual images with detailed captions for each photograph plotted on satellite imagery and Google street maps. Millions of new virtual photographs are added each year to this free website.

Horsemen are invited to upload their trail images and share them with other riders so that all might benefit from a safe and well-planned trail ride using virtual imagery before actually saddling-up.