



Fall/Winter, 2006

# ACCESS ADVENTURE

## *Challenging the Limits of Disability*

Volume 1, Number 3



*“Keep close to Nature’s heart... break away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.”*

**John Muir**



**Our Mission:** To provide wilderness and open space access for people with disabilities using innovative, wheelchair accessible horsedrawn carriages.

### ***A Good Thing (and Getting Better!)***

We are growing fast in our first full year of operation. Access Adventure is a program of the Solano Land Trust. We work the horses from April through October each year, carrying people with disabilities back into nature. The off season is busy with efforts to raise awareness about our work, train horses and volunteers, and raise money to support the program. (All of our services are provided without charge to people with disabilities with our programs operated entirely by volunteers).

Each week we hold regular training sessions for volunteers, with special programs for youth interns. We are increasing our outreach to 4-H and FFA programs, and to youth with special needs. Access Adventure offers regular outings for individuals and groups of people living with the challenges of disability, as well as their caregivers, supporters and family members. Check out the Calendar for our growing list of special events and regularly scheduled programs.

Expanding our role as educators, we demonstrate the role of horses in the history of farming, as well as their current contributions to sustainable agriculture in a modern environment. Our headquarters, the 2,070 acre Rush Ranch, serves as the perfect venue for this. The ranch was once a thriving horse breeding farm, with teams of workhorses used in raising hay and grain. Efforts are underway, in cooperation with the Solano Land Trust and other agencies, to use the property to demonstrate modern sustainable range management techniques, the preservation of unique wildlife habitat and the restoration of native plants and grasses. The draft horses and volunteers of Access Adventure are taking part in this important conservation work.

### ***Spotlight on Robert Boardman***

In any organization, there are always some who stand out and carry more than their share of responsibilities. Access Adventure is staffed entirely by volunteers, and the broad shoulders of Robert Boardman serve to carry the program in many capacities. Up before dawn, Robert swings by the Rush Ranch on the way to his work to feed the hungry horses. He dotes on the Belgian mares Cherry and Sadie (while his wife Randie speculates about losing his affection to “a pair of brassy blondes”). Randie, too, puts in lots of time in service to Access Adventure. Making it a family affair, sons Dallas and Chris are enlisted, whenever an extra hand is needed.

Robert is the “go-to-guy” whenever something needs fixing. He goes the extra mile on the hard jobs like bucking hay. When Access Adventure hits the road, Robert is there, usually pulling a trailer, and jumping in to lend a hand on all the routine tasks. An avid carriage driver, Robert takes the reins whenever possible, and looks forward to the day when he is ready to “go solo”.

Our hats are off to Robert Boardman. We couldn’t do this work without you!

# ACCESS ADVENTURE

## Spotlight on Cherry and Sadie

Cherry and Sadie are a pair of blue-collar gals, Belgian Draft horses from an Iowa farm, about 13 years old. They have no papers or fancy pedigrees, but make up for the lack of status in the social register with a gentle demeanor and a great work ethic. Everyone in the program has grown to love these mares loaned to us by Susan Hassett of Winters, California. Susan operates Buzzard's Roost Ranch and a commercial carriage business where Cherry and Sadie work when not moonlighting for Access Adventure.

These mares demonstrate all the qualities we seek in horses that work with people with disabilities. They are remarkably patient and stand quietly while we load and lockdown wheelchairs on the carriage. Responding quickly to any driving command, we never have to ask them twice to get to the task at hand. They are tireless and willing workers for the program, and serve as lesson horses for our volunteers learning to harness and drive. Cherry and Sadie show a special sensitivity and gentle curiosity when meeting someone in a wheelchair. They stand quietly and carefully when a blind person gently "sees" them by touch. This fine pair of mares has earned our respect and affection.

## On the Road Again

When we are not busy with programs at our Rush Ranch headquarters, Access Adventure takes our act "out on the road". The team, again ably supported by horses and crew from Simpson Percherons, shipped in to the California State Fair August 12<sup>th</sup> for a special exhibition of Access Adventure. We also brought the awesome Percheron, Rock, towering over nineteen hands high (six feet, four inches, plus, at the shoulder!). He thrilled the kids with special needs who got to swarm over the friendly beast at the Junior Rodeo. We demonstrated how our program works with our Thornlea trolley, recruiting a visiting family to demonstrate the wheelchair lift. World Champion horseman Jason Bexson put the Simpson high stepping blacks through their paces before a cheering crowd.

Congressman George Miller joined the Access Adventure team for Ranch Days at the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez on August 26<sup>th</sup>. Vera Aiteman from Vallejo one of our charter members, was on hand to promote the program, along with youth interns William Stewart, Brianna and Melissa Bradford. A capacity crowd of visitors kept us (and Shire horse Andy!) busy giving rides. We were pleased to be able to accommodate so many from the community of people with disabilities who visited the Muir house that day.

The Draft Horse Classic, held in Grass Valley September 21-24, is one of the premier horse shows of the western states, playing to capacity crowds of horse lovers, with a lively, fast paced exhibition of spectacular heavy horses. Access Adventure was invited to present a demonstration of our program, again with the help of Rio Vista's Simpson Percherons. People are always interested in our unique carriages, and we make new friends wherever we travel, but it always helps to get noticed when we are hooked up to those fantastic French horses from Dan Simpson. [www.simpsonpercherons.com](http://www.simpsonpercherons.com)

## Spotlight on Josh

One of the great pleasures of being part of Access Adventure and Anywhere Wild! are the extraordinary people we are honored to meet. During our outing to Humboldt County's glorious Lost Coast, everyone on our team was charmed to meet Josh. Young Josh, with his family, was part of a local group of people with disabilities who answered our invitation to join Anywhere Wild! for a ride on the Thornlea trolley. His boundless enthusiasm was contagious. He always asked to stay board as we made each loop back to camp, peppering the crew with questions about the wagon, the mares, and the work we do. Before the day was done, Josh announced that when he grew up, he would like to lead Access Adventure. Crew member, Sumner, raised his bushy eyebrows at Mike, and dryly remarked, "I believe that boy is going to have your job!"



Cherry and Sadie



Rock at the California State Fair



Congressman Miller and friends Muir Ranch Days



Simpson Percherons







*“Mobility means freedom, and the value of freedom is priceless.”*

*Michael Muir*



Each month we offer recreational carriage driving events at Solano Land Trust and Muir Heritage Land Trust Properties



Rush Ranch, Solano Land Trust

**Access Adventure**

Michael Muir, Director  
Mary Lou Fazel, Editor  
1001 Texas St., Suite C  
Fairfield, CA, 94533  
(707) 432-0150 ext. 0

[info@access-adventure.org](mailto:info@access-adventure.org)

[www.access-adventure.org](http://www.access-adventure.org)



# ACCESS ADVENTURE

## Anywhere Wild!

### And getting wilder!

Anywhere Wild! provides remote, scenic, multi-day experiences for people with disabilities. Wildlife abounded at our first adventure in early May near Fort Hunter Liggett, in the Los Padres National Forest. Everyone enjoyed the breathtaking setting of rolling oak woodland, and some of us were thrilled by a close encounter with a bobcat and a mountain lion.

In late July we escaped the summer heat of the valley with a trip to the cool redwood country of the spectacular Lost Coast in Humboldt County. We enjoyed eight days along the Mattole River, from Petrolia to Bear Harbor. Our beautiful camp in the Sanctuary Forest was visited by a fat, glossy black bear, and we were surrounded by awe-inspiring herds of bull elk as we neared the end of the trail overlooking the Pacific.



Photos by  
Randle Boardman,  
Johnnie Burrell,  
John Fazel  
Debbie Martin



The Fall Fandango took us to the remote desert in Modoc County, along the Applegate branch of the Old Oregon Trail between Fort Bidwell and the charming Victorian town of Cedarville. Our route looked like a perfect setting for a cowboy movie. Shades of the Old West, one morning a cattle drive thundered right by our camp! Anywhere Wild! is expanding to six new events for 2007. (See Special Events Calendar)

### ACCESS ADVENTURE NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The programs of Access Adventure are provided without charge to anyone living with mobility challenges. Please help us with a tax deductible donation to the Solano Land Trust “Access Adventure”. Contribute your time as a volunteer in this rewarding work.