October 31, 2018

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.
Brookfield Conservation Award
4041 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511

Dear Fellow Pony Clubbers and Leaders;

I would like to nominate Middle Tennessee Pony Club for the Brookfield Conservation Award for their work in leadership of conservation efforts in maintaining the ecological, historical and recreational facilities of the city of Nashville’s largest park. Our club is fortunate to share a rich heritage of land conservation since our earliest beginnings at the amazing Percy Warner Park. Warner Park is a multi-use facility just 9 miles from downtown Nashville, encompassing over 3,000 acres. Warner Parks is also an important historical community resource listed in the National Register of Historic Places.¹ Nearly a million people visit the Warner Parks each year and enjoy the Nature Center, picnic shelters, dog park, scenic roadways and overviews, hiking and mountain bike trails, equestrian center and horse trails and cross country running courses.

Middle Tennessee Pony Club, the Friends of Warner Park and the Volunteer State Horseman’s Foundation are three diverse groups that collaborate to accommodate visitors to the Equestrian Center, maintain the functionality of the facilities, and preserve the historic value of the park. Several of the most notable events at the Equestrian Center are: the Iroquois Steeplechase, the annual MTPC recognized horse trials, and the Full Moon Pickin’ parties. Last year we celebrated the 90th anniversary of Warner Parks and the 66th anniversary of the Middle TN Pony Club Horse Trials, which is the longest continuously-running Horse Trials in the United States. MTPC is honored to support the history and environment of Percy Warner Park and its Equestrian Center, working alongside these other charitable organizations. The Iroquois Steeplechase has been an institution at the park since 1941, and is organized and run by the Horseman's Foundation. The Iroquois brings in over 25,000 spectators to the Equestrian Center at Percy Warner Park to watch some of the best horses and riders in the world.² The Friends of Warner Park are instrumental in holding the Full Moon Pickin’ Parties during the summer months to bring music, food and fun to the Equestrian Center facilities.

The Friends of Warner Park credit Middle Tennessee Pony Club with being one of the primary organizations that utilize and contribute annually to make

² http://www.iroquoissteeplechase.org/about/
facility improvements. Each year, MTPC works to maintain the grounds of the Equestrian Center and to give back to the park and its community. The club organizes and executes clean-up projects to keep the grounds safe and clean by removing brush, debris and trash from the grounds. Club members also took charge and funded the renovation of a storage shed on the grounds that was in disrepair. The club funds the construction and upkeep of the fixed and mobile cross-country jumps at the park’s course. The club weeds the water complex and manages overgrowth. MTPC organizes and funds the design and placement of new cross country courses each year for schooling and shows. The club works with the park arborist to monitor the turf at the park and finance overseeding of worn areas. The club assists in managing park usage to maintain the quality of the grounds. Club members provide the management of open schooling days each year to allow the surrounding area the opportunity to enjoy the course. The schooling days serve the eventing community in Middle Tennessee and bringing more visitors to the Warner Park system.
The culmination of the year for Middle Tennessee Pony Club is always the annual Horse Trials in October. Club members donate hundreds of hours to plan, organize and hold one of the most anticipated Horse Trials of the year in the Midsouth. Participants come from many parts of the U.S. and many say that this event is one of their favorites because of beautiful Percy Warner Park and the excellent cross country courses. In 2017, preparing the park for Horse Trials involved a complete renovation of the all weather show jumping arena. An underground stream near the arena had eroded a retaining wall so that the support system threatened to collapse without significant attention. The club funded the removal of the wall, as well as the design and rebuild of a new support structure that would preserve the ring for future use. Many of the existing arena fence rails and posts were also in need of replacement so this project was undertaken at the same time to be safe and in good repair for the anticipated park visitors. Club members also repaired and stained the park gazebo and added gates to the jump shed for security in 2018.
Early morning on Day 1 of Horse Trials

Trail riding at Percy Warner Park
Enjoying our beautiful park during a foxhunting clinic

Maintaining the facility requires tremendous effort on the part of club leaders and members but being a part of the preservation of this historic and inviting park is well worth it to all.

Thank you for your consideration,

Delana W. Owen
District Commissioner
Middle Tennessee Pony Club