

Meet Linda Clarke

I first met Linda when I was new to Coast Mounted Assistance in 1989. It turned out she had moved to Arroyo Grande in 1987 on a promotion to CMC. When she joined Coast Mounted Assistance I noticed her strong grey Arab gelding and her professional ability to handle him, along with her correct tack and riding gear. I made it my business to ride with her to get to know her better. I've never regretted that day. Linda, I discovered, also competed regularly in North American Trail Ride Competitive Rides (NATRC) – which I also had been doing since 1964–65 when I won the Lightweight Division High Point for 2 years! So our riding interests were indeed alike and we agreed on many issues about riding and handling horses properly in order to keep them conditioned and sound. When she wasn't enjoying her horses, Linda worked for the California department of Corrections, beginning her career in 1968 in Southern California at the women's Unit at CRC. Over the next 32 years she promoted up through the Peace Officer ranks, working at CRC and CMC a couple of times, Avenal once and CTF–Soledad three times. She went on to become the first woman warden at CTF–Soledad in 1995, a position from which she retired in 2000. Throughout those many years she rode her horses and advocated for trails wherever she lived.

Linda is also a musician! She has played her Viola in local orchestras, again wherever she lived at the time. She currently plays in the San Luis Chamber Orchestra, a community orchestra made up of volunteer musicians who just enjoy playing together. (www.sanluischamberorchestra.org)

Recently Linda has been hampered by shoulder injuries (all horse related – yikes) and has endured 4 Rotator Cuff procedures. In spite of all this, she continues to work diligently for continued trail procurement and maintenance. she has been active with SLOPOST since it's inception and works closely with the county to save and develop trails in spite of invasive development into our rural areas.

Linda's Arab partner of 27 years passed on last year, but Linda found a new love with Rocky Mountain horses shortly after her retirement, affording her a more comfortable ride with a delightful personality and good looks! Since owning Rocky Mountain horses, Linda joined with other local Rocky Mountain Horse owners to form the West Coast Rocky Mountain Horse Club. This club has west coast state(s) membership with a member group of 250. It is based in Arroyo Grande and Linda serves as the club president.

This is one lady you have GOT to meet! Thanks Linda for all you've done over the years for our trails and riding pleasure.

(Barbara – Here are some additional pieces of information you might want to include, but it could get too wordy

I got involved in trails and trail preservation in the 80's when I moved to this area. I had already met Julie Crawshaw (she formed SLOHAHTA) the forerunner of SLOPOST.

It was called San Luis Obispo Horse and Hiking Trails Association (SLOHAHTA). A small group of us wanted to establish a means to save local trails that we used that were usually on empty land or crossed private land where the landowners allowed us to ride. This was the precursor to establishing a county trails plan.

The head of county parks at that time was very supportive (first name Tim, I don't remember his last name) and I was also a member of the County trails subcommittee, that is still in existence. Also on that committee was Debby Lyon, Skip Dyke, Gary Felsman and others. In 89 we took our trails plan public, had public hearings that were attended by local cattlemen who blew us out of the water because they were convinced we wanted to take away their land. (not unlike what they said during some hearings before the county BOS's in the past couple of years, however, by then the original approved trails plan and trails advocates had lots of credibility and the BOS approved of the updated plan).

I got very involved as a spokesperson on behalf of trails and saving Oso Flaco equestrian access in the early 90's, and appeared before the Coastal Conservancy hearing in San Francisco.

Although the final decision was not in our favor, we did force the Conservancy and Coastal Commission to follow the rules and have public hearings on the equestrian matter prior to closing the area to us. That gave us an extra 18 months of use.)