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Red Hills International Horse Trials Announces Changes in 2016 New Cross Country Design Team and Ground Improvements Announced.

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., May 21, 2015 –

The organizers of the Red Hills International Horse Trials announce the launch of two major initiatives today in preparation for the 2016 event that will be held March 10-13, 2016,

World renowned cross country course designers Michael Etherington-Smith and David O'Connor will combine their efforts and design new courses for 2016 and beyond. The priorities for the new design team are to improve the footing and to make the courses more galloping, giving the horse and rider teams increased distances out in the open. This will also increase the viewing options for the thousands of spectators that come to Red Hills each year.

“Etherington-Smith’s international experience at the highest levels of the sport, combined with U.S. Olympic coach O’Connor’s 17 years of experience competing and coaching at Red Hills creates a true dream team” said Marvin Mayer, co-organizer of Red Hills. “Needless to say, Red Hills is extremely proud to have two of the sport’s premier professionals as part of our family,” he continued.

Improvement of the cross-country tracks, which began immediately after this year’s event, has been the number one priority this spring. The dedicated crews of the City of Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Department have been busy aerating the ground and planting grass seed, and the greening results are already evident. Another improvement will be the addition of fiber to the crushed stone arenas that were first introduced in 2015. This application is intended to give competitors a more cushioned surface for the Dressage and Show Jumping phases and continues the organizer’s commitment to improving event infrastructure. Introduction of the new arenas and their continued improved would not be possible without the cooperation and assistance of the Northwest Florida Water Management District, Visit Tallahassee and the Leon County Board of County Commissioners. By the 2016 event dates, it is expected that a marked improvement to the grounds will be evident to both competitors and spectators as a result of these efforts.

In closing, Mayer remarked that, “The future is bright with a spotlight already shining on the next event. We look forward to welcoming everyone to the new and improved Red Hills in 2016.”

Red Hills International Horse Trials is a United States Eventing Association annual event held at Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park in Tallahassee, Florida. It is a cooperative effort by many, including Red Hills Horse Trials, Inc., Visit Tallahassee and the Leon County Board of County Commissioners, the City of Tallahassee, and the Northwest Florida Water Management District. For more information, visit www.rhht.org or find us on Facebook.