Thanks for inviting us to your meeting. A little history might be helpful.

1981 Cliff Pladsen, in MN, created CMO as an educational and fun game for his family while trail riding. Dave’s job moved us to MN in 1986 and we found CMO in 1987 or so. It was a way to meet horse people who were fun to be with and got us to explore lots of different parks. When we moved back to IN in 1991, we started the IN/IL chapter to meet those same fun people.

Roxie Bank and Cecelia Wozniak came to the first IN/IL CMO in 1992 at Kankakee State Park, and are still riding with us today.

John and Kathy Haas were at that first CMO in 1992, also, and are still active today. Here with their daughter, Kristin who is now bringing her daughter.

IN 2012, we celebrated our first 20 years of CMO in IN/IL. In 2022 it will be 30 years!

Truly a family sport, riders ride at any pace and find as many or as few markers as they like. It is a great way to spend quality time with your family and have a purpose to your ride.

Mules are popular mounts……

As are gaited horses – TWHs

Even a Percheron and 2 arabs.

Three generations of one family. Svenja, second from left, is here with her daughter, and her parents, who time their visits from Germany to coincide with our CMO schedule.

Even new riders can go along – like this youngster on a lead line.

And it’s a great way for kids to develop good riding skills.

CMO isn’t just for amblers – some teams are very competitive.

Getting ready to go out – check out the cool hell hats!

OK, so what do you need to compete? The only real requirement is a compass – which basically is a device for determining which way is NORTH, and a pencil for writing down the letters that are on the plates when you find them.

“Orienteering” type compasses are readily available and feature a baseplate, a moveable dial and a double ended needle that floats freely - ideally in liquid. This makes it “settle” faster – a real bonus when your horse is moving around.

We have found a fisherman’s vest is handy to keep your compass and pen or pencil from getting lost and has pockets for snacks, water, first aid or emergency items.

Ride your horse in any gear that is comfortable for you both.

We strongly recommend helmets and cell phones be a standard part of your kit whenever riding.

You will receive your map when you start out and many of us like to have them in a plastic sleeve – helps keep them readable and in one piece.

At the pre-ride meeting the ride manager will show you a blank map of the trail system and tell you about any hazards or rules that apply to that area. There will be a marker set up in the campground area, that you can practice finding on foot.

Time starts when the Ride manager hands out the maps. Teams are sent out at intervals of 10-15 minutes

Map of the area to be ridden is on one side – with the general location of the “markers” or plates shown by numbered circles.

On the other side are clues corresponding to the numbered circles that will help you find the plates.

Spend a few minutes looking at your map and deciding on your best route through the trails.

When you have decided which marker to find first, off you go.

Use your map and pay attention to natural features – creek crossings, ponds, trail intersections to find the circled areas. Let’s look at #16

Look for the landmarks described for that number.

The plate will always be somewhere within the circle. The landmarks may or may not be in the circle.

Here’s one of the landmarks – The left turn arrow at the north end of the trail.

Here’s the second landmark –The small tree with an orange ribbon.

170 degrees is almost straight south of the sign.

338 degrees is northwest of the tree – between 270 (W) and 360 (N).

The plate should be right here.

Look around that area and find the plate!

When you find the marker – write down the letters **IS** next to the #1 on your map – then head for the next one. Make sure to check the date!

While it is legal to dismount at any time, all plates must be visible and readable from horseback. Be aware that conditions may change and leaves, grass, etc. may make reading the plate difficult. Your horse must be agreeable to getting into a position so you can read it!

When you have found them all, head back to camp.

Hand in your map with all the letters written in, and you’re done. Only one member of a team needs to hand in a map.

Your time stops when the LAST member of your team crosses the finish line.

The ride manager will time you in down to the minute and second. Some rides have come down to less than a minute!

Since you may find the markers in any order you like, it is very possible that you may encounter other competitors also looking for the same marker. Lie convincingly, develop a code to let your teammates know when you’ve found it, but you may not interfere with a marker or another rider. Notice the number on the grey horse – we number the horses to identify our riders as part of an organized event and to allow for identification of individuals.

What is obvious to one rider may be almost invisible to another. It’s fun to find out which skills the different members of a team bring to the game.

The plate can be high, low, behind or inside a bush or tree. Look all around! Since most of our parks require riders to stay on the trails our RMs have become very clever and sneaky.

Next

Next

Rules

Sportsmanlike behavior: don’t be like Tanya Harding or Mike Tyson

This is a low tech sport – no cops, no monitors. You are expected to behave with integrity. Leave all plates and landmarks as you find them. That means even if Mother Nature has tampered with them!

Trail courtesy is paramount. Horses are numbered, and riders are required to behave! When meeting other riders, we slow to a walk, ask permission to pass, pass safely, and do not move off in a rush.

If parts of more than one trail are in the circle, it is fine for your team to split up and travel both trails to find the landmarks. You must get back together before heading off to the next marker.

Let’s look at # 14. It is ok for part of your team to ride up the eastern trail to the north and the others to ride up the western leg to locate the landmarks and the plate. You must regroup and ride to the next circle together.

Here’s an example of what you may not do – you can’t split up to find both 28 and 29 at the same time. You must all ride together from one to the other.

Annual members pay for an annual NACMO membership and usually a chapter membership. These fees help fund our year end prizes and pay for our insurance costs. Our insurance requires all riders to be members, so non annual members may buy a one day “membership” for $5. Annual memberships are $40 for a family or $25 for an individual. Our chapter dues are $10. Entry fee for each ride is $12 ($17 for day members).

The use of electronic devices is prohibited. Cell phones must be stowed during the ride and taken out for emergency purposes only!

When the ride is over and all the riders are in – it’s time for awards. Since this is a low tech, low cost sport, the prizes are not monumental – usually horse related items like this bucket or camping equipment etc.

T shirts are good for bragging rights.

Handmade items are fun too. Bridle holders.

CMO riders often get to places not often seen by regular trail riders.

And we know how to relax after a long day on the trails!

Relaxation can take many forms!

For many of us, the best part of the sport is the time spent around the campfire.

With good friends.

Some campfires are warmer **and dryer** than others!

At some CMO’s there are additional activities available

But one thing is standard – there is always room for silliness.

(Silliness in another form at a Halloween ride.)

Always featured are our famous potluck suppers – held the evening of the Saturday ride.

Most of our rides take place over a weekend and we plan a pitch in dinner on Saturday evenings. Everyone brings a dish to share and we rehash the day’s events, who lied to who, who got lost, who’s horse was AWESOME!

We never run out of wonderful food!

Our annual awards banquet, typically held in February, is no exception – a grand feast followed by silly and serious awards for season – long and cumulative lifetime accomplishments.   
Awards can be bridle tags,

Cumulative horse awards. A personalized halter for 600 points and a stable sheet for 800.

When you reach 1000 points, you get a chair to rest your weary bones!

Some of the awards available – Rookie of the year and the award for having managed 5 rides.

Plaques and shirts for top team awards are popular

Horse awards may be lead ropes, hay bags, or other horsie equipment.

Silliness is a big part of our annual awards banquet also.

Here are some of the parks where we have had CMO rides in IL

And Indiana

Thanks for letting us share our sport with you. Come play with us!

We’ll keep the campfire lit up for you!

Here’s a short video showing an intrepid team finding a marker – about 3 minutes

Our daughter and son in law, Sara and Larry Dick have their map.

For simplicity, we have the map at the top and the clues at the bottom instead of using both sides of the page.

The map shows the road, the driveway, the house and the barn. North is at the top.

Sara is using her compass to show which way is north.

Look at the clues – they need a tire leaning against some jump parts and a tree at the east end of the swing.

Sara is heading to the tire and Larry is going to the tree.

Larry’s bearing is 60 degrees which is between 0 (North) and 90 (East)

He dials it in and stands so the N arrow points N. The line goes through the stump, etc.

Sara, at her tire, is dialing in her bearing – 150 which is between 90 East and 180 South.

She looks along her line and sees the tire etc.

If they both walk along their lines, the plate should be close to where the two lines meet.

(well, if they are actually looking)

Another way to work a marker is for one rider to stay at her landmark while the other rides his line. She will tell him when he gets close to her line.

OK, they found the plate – they write down the letters and they’re done!

Rhodie is a bad CMO-er – she is tampering with the plate!