Special Instructions For Equestrians

Make sure your horse has the temperament for riding on congested public trails. Busy multi-use trails are not the proper place for schooling green horses.

Advise other trail users of your horse's temperament, e.g. a horse with a tendency to kick should always wear a red ribbon in the tail or a stallion should wear a yellow ribbon. Assume that not everyone will know what these ribbons mean, so be prepared to explain or take the necessary precautions to avoid trouble.

No cantering or galloping at any time, unless posted.

Move to the right to allow faster trail users to pass. Announce your intentions to pass, and reduce your speed in order to pass safely.

Do not ride if your horse is experiencing behavior problems.

Stay on equestrian-approved trails.

As a courtesy to others, use appropriate hand signals for turning, slowing, etc., and give verbal warnings for dangers in the trails (e.g. low branches or holes).

How you ride is a reflection of the local horse community. Other trail users may not be familiar with horses and this may be their first impression. You are an ambassador for the entire horse community- act responsibly.

If you trailer to a location, do not clean out your trailer in the parking area.

On multiple-use trails, step off the trail if your horse needs to relieve himself when ever possible.

Equine use is on a trial basis at this site. Future privilege to ride horses is dependent on user behavior.

Proper Trail Etiquette

1. Use Open Trails Only

Trails may be closed for a variety of reasons. Trail users should respect closures and avoid trespassing on private land.

2. Leave No Trace

Be sensitive to the dirt beneath you. Recognize different types of soils and trail construction. Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable to damage.

3. Always Yield Trail

Yielding means to slow down, establish communication, being prepared to stop if necessary, then passing safely. Bikes yield to horses and hikers.

4. Never Scare Animals

All animals are startled by an unannounced approach, a sudden movement or a loud noise. This can be dangerous for you, others and the animals.

5. Plan Ahead

Know your equipment, your ability, and the area in which you are riding—prepare accordingly. Be self-sufficient at all times.

6. Educate Others

Talk respectfully with other trail users about proper trail etiquette, especially new users.

PLEASE STAY ON DESIGNATED TRAILS

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BLUEFIELD RANCH NATURAL AREA

TRAIL ETIQUETTE GUIDE

A trail user's guide to getting along on multi-use trails and preserving our trail resource.

Use Site at Own Risk

Whether you hike, bike or ride a horse on the trail, proper trail etiquette is your responsibility. From protecting the trail surface to protecting the user experience, trail etiquette helps you minimize your impact and maximize everyone's experience.

HIKERS
ARE PEOPLE, TOO

Hikers come from many backgrounds and in all ages. Some are more experienced than others. Some even like to carry all their stuff in backpacks and sleep out overnight.

For the most part, these are our original trail-blazers. When hiking became popular as a pastime, folks began working with land managers and property owners to establish trails and trail systems all over the place. Today there are other ways to enjoy the outdoors, and here's what you need to know about hikers...

Like most trail users, hikers use trails to "get out there," away from it all. Maybe just "a chance to get some exercise and spend some time in the woods" is a hiker's motivation. For others, it may be a social event, connecting with old friends, or meeting new people.

Whatever the motivation, hikers are out to have a good time on the trail.

Respect Hikers By:

- Slowing down
- Politely making them aware of your presence
- Yielding where appropriate

BIKERS
ARE PEOPLE, TOO

Mountain bikers come in many varieties. There are recreational riders, cross country riders and the more extreme downhill riders.

Recreational riders tend to stick to the easier trails, preferring railroad grades and trails that are less physically and technically challenging to ride. Recreational riders love to get out in the fresh air and enjoy the countryside.

Cross country riders like riding more challenging–both physically and technically–singletrack trails. To the cross country rider, singletrack is like fresh powder snow to the skier. Often motivated by fitness and fun in the outdoors, the cross country rider also appreciates the beauty of our woods and park systems.

Respect Bikers By:

- Politely greeting them when they yield the trail
- Making them aware of your presence

EQUESTRIANS
ARE PEOPLE, TOO

Equestrians are horse and mule riders. They are usually a lot more concerned about safety when encountering other trail users. This is because horses can be unpredictable.

Most equestrians are on the trail for a fun, shared experience with their horse and friends. Equestrians enjoy the outdoors and sights. Horses have a mind of their own, so use caution when approaching them. It's best to approach horses slowly, especially when coming from behind. Be sure the horse and the rider know you're coming well in advance. Avoid startling the horse or rider by talking to them until they acknowledge you.

Depending on the terrain and who the users are, equestrians may chose to step aside, or to ride through. Be sure to communicate with equestrians, as they know their horses better than you do.

Respect Equestrians By:

- Calmly letting them know you are there
- Communicate with the rider and follow instructions
- Avoid sudden movements when passing