

# Sharing Our Trails



## A Guide to Trail Etiquette

Help Make Our Trails a Safe Friendly  
Place for All Trail Enthusiasts  
Horsemen-Bikes-Hikers-Runners-OHV-Dirt Bikes



Loomis Basin Horsemen's Association

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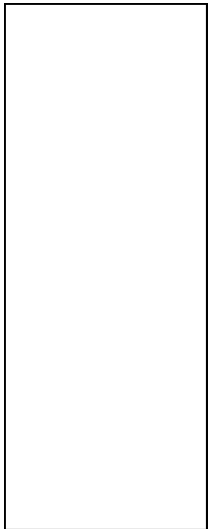
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Share Our Trails—A guide to Trail Etiquette



Responsible trail enthusiasts, both motorized and non-motorized, have much in common. They have an appreciation for our public lands and want to enjoy what our public lands have to offer.

In many parts of the country trails are open and are shared by OHV riders, equestrians, bicycle riders, runners and hikers. Trail sharing can and does work when people respect each other and work cooperatively to keep each other safe.

While it is important for people to respect each other on the trail, it is important to remember that equestrians are dealing not only with other trail enthusiasts' personalities, they also are working with horses whose temperaments are as individual as our own. Horses' natural instincts can influence their behaviors and affect the way they react to circumstances encountered on the trail.

For these reasons, it is important that equestrians know their horses well enough that they are confident that they will be able to control their horses when they encounter other trail enthusiasts who are allowed on the trail.

Conversely, OHV riders, bicycle riders, runners and hikers must understand that "equestrian only" trails must be respected for the safety of both the horse and rider. These trails offer the opportunity for horsemen to acclimate their horses to basic trail conditions without encountering "unseen threats" that can trigger the horse's natural instinct of flight.

No Enthusiast group should use a trail specifically closed to their group, i.e., equestrians, bicyclist, OHV, etc. Trail usage could be limited and marked that way for SAFETY reasons. Safety issues could include being steep, narrow or have limited sight lines. This could make a trail a Hiker/Equestrian trail for example

When young or inexperienced horses encounter new conditions on the trail like OHVs, bicycles, runners and hikers, and even certain scents, the flight response can end with disastrous results for the horse or the rider.

When equestrians on well-trained horses and other responsible trail enthusiasts meet each other on the trail the encounters can be enjoyable social exchanges if the groups understand how to work together to keep the encounters safe.

- Give the time and date of the violation or problem.
- Give description of the individual, clothing, helmet color, type vehicle, bike or rider/horse description, license number.
- Give detailed description of the trail problem, tree down, trail blocked, eroded or other trail problem.
- **When you get home, report on the Trail Comment Form found at [www.garlic.com/~lbha](http://www.garlic.com/~lbha). This way trail incidents will be recorded in the LBHA data base for future use.**

#### DISPATCH PHONE NUMBERS

Nor-COM STATE PARKS 916 - 358 - 1300

PLACER COUNTY TRAILS 530 - 866- 4901

Georgetown Ranger Station-El Dorado NF: 530-333-4312

Organizations and agencies involved in the development of the guide include the

American Endurance Ride Conference, Americans for Responsible Recreational Access, American Motorcyclist Association, American Trails, Back Country Horsemen of America, BlueRibbon Coalition, California State Parks Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan, Equestrian Land Conservation Resource, International Mountain Bike Association, Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, Loomis Basin Horsemen's Association, Motorcycle Industry Council, National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council, Off-Road Business Association, Open Beaches- Trails, Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association, Specialty Vehicle Institute of America, Tread Lightly!, and United States Forest Service.

**Produced by Loomis Basin Horsemen's Association**

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- Preserve our right to ride on public land by following the rules. It is your responsibility to know the rules and regs of the trails you ride or use. Stay on the trail, do not cut across switchbacks. Watch speed in areas of poor line of site. Do not smoke or drink on the trail.

### TRAIL MISUSE—PLEASE REPORT INFRACTIONS

- **Before you ride on any trail, program your cell phone with the dispatch number for the trail you are riding.**
- If you encounter vandalism, fire, theft .
- Any driver or rider of a vehicle, bicycle or horse illegally gaining access to a trail that is not an approved trail entrance or trail head.
- Any person who harasses or injures an animal or person.
- Trail enthusiasts not staying on designated trails.
- Rudeness of a trail enthusiast.
- Excessive speed by a trail enthusiast.
- Trails blocked by trees or debris or other maintenance need on the trail.
- Loose dogs if trail has a leash rule.
- If you see any of the above , call and report what you have seen, but please do not engage or confront the individuals.

### To report a Trail Misuse or dangerous situation

- **Call the trail authority dispatch number** - before you go on your ride, make sure you have a number to call in case of an accident, see a problem on the trail or a breach of trail regulations.
- Give your full name.
- State your phone number.
- State your location to the best of your knowledge. Trail mile markers, other makers, or a land mark.
- State the problem or violation.

These basic rules will help ensure that meeting on the trail will be a safe and enjoyable experience:

### All Trail Enthusiasts Should

- **Respect all trail restrictions and use only trails open to your mode of transportation**
- Do not cut across switchbacks, stay on the trail
- Do not disturb surrounding wildlife or plants.
- Dispose of all trash property-what you bring in take out.
- Clean up after your dog. Do not smoke or drink.
- Be considerate of others on the road or trail.
- When traveling on shared use trails, continually watch for other types of recreationists.
- Slow down when sight lines are poor.
- Keep speeds low around other recreationists.
- Keep noise and dust down.
- Listening to headphones or ear buds can make it difficult to hear and communicate with other recreationists. In some areas it is illegal to operate vehicles or bikes with both ears covered.

### Yield to other Trail Enthusiasts

- Yield the right of way to those passing you or traveling up-hill.



- Motorized vehicles yield to mountain bikes, hikers, and horses.
- Mountain bikes yield to hikers and horses.
- Hikers yield to horses.

### Safety for All Trail Enthusiasts

- Bicyclists, riders of motorized vehicles, and equestrians are urged to wear a helmet.
- **COMMUNICATE** with other users, let them know your needs.
- Travel at a reasonable speed and reduce your speed when approaching slower trail enthusiasts and areas of reduced visibility such as curves and trail intersections

### Rules for Equestrians on shared trails with OHV

- Be sure you can control your horse and it has been exposed to other trail recreational uses before riding on shared trails
- Cooperate with local OHV/ATV and Bike riders to expose your horse to vehicles in a gradual manner in a safe environment
- Be alert and move to the side of the trail, if possible, when you hear oncoming OHVs or bicycles.

Ask the Horseback rider what he or she needs you to do. Some may let you pass easily, others may want to have you stay still while they pass.



- A hiker with a back pack and/or walking stick can look very frightening to a horse, Greet the person on foot and ask for a response. When a horse hears a human voice they will calm down.
- Dirt bike engines can be a real horse frightening experience. When racing the throttle, remember there may be panic-stricken horse and airborne rider around the next turn. Go slow on the blind corners.
- Bikes could have bells when riding multiuse trails so they can warn others they are coming if line of sight is poor. Follow speed limits and bell rules from East-Bay Trail Organization. It is understood that IMBA has even recommended this on some Multiuse trails.
- Horses and other trail enthusiasts should also follow speed limits if posted on trails being ridden. If there is a blind curve or poor line of sight SLOW DOWN.



- Only ride on trails that permit horses. Same for other trail enthusiasts. Follow trail use rules as to what the trail use is.
- Be courteous to all trail enthusiasts.
- Leave no trace.
- Night riding only where permitted.

## General rules for Horsemen on the trail

- **KNOW YOUR HORSE**
- Horses are prey animals and as such regardless if they have been exposed to outside stimulus such as dirt bikes, ATV's cars and trucks or hikers and runners on a trail, they can still go into the prey mode if startled by a loud noise from an unseen source (dirt bike or ATV) coming at them. Same is true of a bike or even a runner/hiker on a trail. If there is a sharp curve or no line of site, **all trail enthusiasts need to slow down.**
- If you have a young inexperienced horse, ride behind another horse that is more trail wise. The younger horse will work off the older one. Time and hours on the trail will build confidence in the youngster. Horse groups should have the steadiest horse up front.
- Riders should be aware of traffic ahead. Check the trail for tracks and droppings. This will help you not be surprised that there other trail enthusiasts in your area.
- Have your pets under control. Dogs should be on a leash if rules of the trail calls for that. If ponying another horse go slow, and never take a loose horse on the trail with you.
- Before you ride a trail, know the rules for that trail, if there are speed limits, usage limits- pedestrian/equestrian trail, multiuse trail that permits bikes, or if OHV are permitted. Ride only on trails that you are permitted on. Follow all trail rules, know your Trail contact number if there is an incident, program it into your cell phone.
- With the use of common sense and courtesy on the trail there will not be the need for a referee to oversee our sports.
- Always approach BLIND CURVES and areas where there is poor line of site with CAUTION and look out for other trail enthusiasts.

- At trailheads or staging areas, park vehicles and secure stock in a manner that provides a safe distance between the horses and passing traffic.
- Be prepared to let other trail enthusiasts know what needs to be done to keep you, the horse, and other trail enthusiasts safe when you meet on the trail.

## General Rules for OHV riders when encountering horses on the trail

- Move to the side of the trail far enough for horses to pass safely as soon as you see horses.
- Move to the downside of trail if possible as horses tend to perceive unknown threats on the uphill side as predators.
- Shut off your motor and remove your helmet if possible. The horse will be more likely to recognize you as human.
- Speak to oncoming rider and horse in a friendly, relaxed tone
- Horsemen may pull to the side of the trail a safe distance if they hear an OHV approaching but this DOES NOT necessarily mean it is safe for you to ride by. Stop and wait for instructions from the horseman.
- Ask the horseman how they would like to proceed..
- Horsemen will know his/her horse and how they react to other trail enthusiasts.
- The horseman may ask you to stay put and ride past you
- The horseman may ride to the side of the trail and ask you to ride or push your OHV past them.
- If you ride by a horse, keep your rpm's low and steady and

your sound as low as possible.

- Keep your ears open – no ear buds for MP3 or iPod .
- Be alert – be aware and on guard for oncoming traffic

### **Guidelines for bicyclists when encountering horses on the trail**

- Pull to the side of the trail far enough for horses to pass safely as soon as you see horses.



- Pull to the downhill side of the trail if possible since horses tend to perceive unknown threats on the uphill side as predators.

- Speak to the oncoming rider and horse in a friendly, relaxed tone.

Remove your helmet if it conceals part of your face. The horse will be more likely to recognize you as a human.

- Horsemen may pull to the side of the trail a safe distance if they hear a bicycle approaching but this DOES NOT necessarily mean it is safe for you to ride by. Stop and wait for instructions from the horseman.

- Ask the horseman how he/she would like to proceed.
- The horseman will know his/her horse and how the horse reacts to other trail enthusiasts.
- The horseman may ask you to stay put and ride past you.

- The horseman may ride to the side of the trail and ask you to ride or push past them.
- If you ride by a horse, do so at a slow, steady pace and avoid making any sudden movements or sounds that might startle the horse.
- Keep your ears open – no ear buds for an iPod or MP3.
- Be alert – be aware and on guard for oncoming traffic.

### **Rules for hikers, joggers or runners on shared trails**

- A hiker/jogger should always slow down and stop when they see horses on the trail ahead or behind them. Stop and greet the rider so the horse knows you are human
- Step to the down-hill side of the trail
- Speak to oncoming rider/horse in a friendly, relaxed tone. Back packs and walking sticks can be scary to horses and may startle them. Speaking to them lets the horse know you are human.



- Keep pets under control. Some trails require dogs to be leashed. Be familiar with local rules.