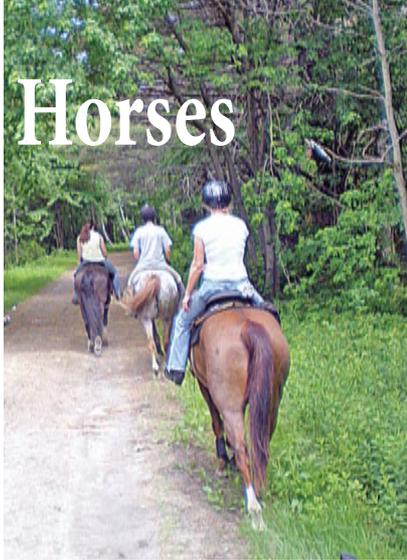


# About Horses

Horses are prey animals. Their instincts dictate they question if the things they see, hear, or smell are safe. They are sensitive to movement and unfamiliar



objects. For example, a hiker's backpack or a child in the "buddy seat" of a bicycle might look very strange to a horse. If a horse is unsure about something he will raise his head and may not want to step forward. He may even back up and/or turn away from the object. *Sudden movement or sounds may startle a horse.* When frightened a horse's first reaction is to run—called **spooking**—darting forward or to the side. Even a skilled rider will have trouble controlling a badly spooked horse.

Eyes on each side of the head allow horses to see all around them, *except directly in front of the face and behind the tail.* When a horse catches an unfamiliar movement or shape with one eye he then moves his head to bring the object into focus with both eyes. Ear direction points to what has been heard or seen. This is how a horse assesses the threat level in the encounter. Horses still gaining experience on the trail may act skeptically in this way. Horses with more experience become familiar with trail activities and seem not to pay particular attention to other trail users. Nevertheless, for safety, when meeting horses on the road or trail always keep your movements slow and steady.



## Meeting Horses

### on the Trails

**Whatever trail recreation** you enjoy, if you see a horse and rider approaching, let them know of your presence by talking. This will reassure the horse that there is no threat.

**Please yield to a horse and rider.** If any problem arises ask the rider to advise you on passing. Wait until the rider signals it is OK. Then pass wide.

**Hikers, bicycles and sled dog teams** are quiet and often *not heard by equestrians.* Bicycles and sled dog teams can appear quickly and easily startle a horse especially if approaching from behind. Cyclists/Mushers should slow down and be prepared to stop to let horses pass or wait for them to get off the trail and then pass slowly.

**Motorized recreation vehicles** can usually be heard coming and the horse/rider should be well out of the way. If not, please stop. If the horse appears nervous, shut off the engine and then allow a good distance before starting again. Always proceed *slowly* while horses are in view.



## Etiquette

### for Equestrians

Always be considerate and friendly. Promote pleasant equestrian encounters and say "Thank You!"

Respect all other trail users and their situation; pass at a walk

Ride single file on the right when meeting others on the trail or road.

Ride edges of fields when a marked route is not defined to avoid causing damage.

Let other riders know when you are going to change gait or move on so they can prepare.

Protect the environment, **stay on the trail.** Avoid wet trails during mud season.

Be sensitive about "road apples." Move horse off trail/road. Clean up when possible.

ALWAYS clean up manure, hay and bedding around your trailer—"Carry in/Carry out."

Have a basic emergency kit, helmet, cell phone and a companion. Let someone else know your planned route.

When passing sled dog teams try to get off the trail. If the team stops, wait until the brake is set and the lead dog is secured before passing.

# Landowners and the Trails



- Trail use is a privilege, **NOT** a right.
- We all depend on private and public landowners for trail use. Please promote good relations. Though not required by law, it is recommended to get permission to ride unposted land. Always get permission to use posted land.
- Let the landowners know how much you appreciate the use of their trails.
- Landowners are not responsible to keep their land safe for recreational use—per NH law RSA 212:34 and 508:14.
- Every trail user should volunteer at least twice a year to do trail clearing and maintenance. Help fund trail care projects. Always get landowner permission before doing any trail maintenance.
- Join a club or group willing to do trail care.
- Help with monitoring trails. Report any irregularities to the property owner or trail system officials.

All trail users are responsible for watching and listening for others. Be slow and cautious at turns and curves.

Pass others slowly, be prepared to stop. Keep to the right of the trail. Ask to pass or wait for permission to pass.

Give a friendly *Hello*; let others know you are there.



## Horses Sharing The Trails

General  
Guidelines  
for a better  
understanding

*Trails users are many and divergent. All will enjoy their experience more with a little extra knowledge about how to approach the horses they meet.*

*In Unity There is Strength*  
[www.nhorsecouncil.com](http://www.nhorsecouncil.com)

The NHHHC is a non-profit organization.  
Its mission is to serve as the voice for the equine community  
by promoting the horse industry and educating the public.

NHHHC is an EquineSite.com affiliate

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