

PENNSYLVANIA EQUINE COUNCIL

SHARING TRAILS with HORSES

PROTOCOL FOR HORSEBACK RIDERS, BICYCLISTS AND HIKERS

HORSE SENSE

The average horse stands over 7 feet tall and weighs more than 900 pounds and can run 30 miles per hour.

Nature has designated the horse as a prey animal, the animal that others have for dinner. Her only defense is to be exceptionally alert and attentive to her surroundings so as to be ready for instantaneous escape. An unfamiliar object, such as a backpack or a child on a bicycle can be perceived as a predator by a horse. To make matters more difficult, the horse has poor depth perception and sees little color. In this flat, colorless panorama, she is particularly sensitive to motion which can set off her alarm.

The horse does not take time to reason, she reacts by instinct. Nature designed her alarm system to move her instantly to safety.

Calm, pleasant conversation reassures the horse that all is safe. Slower, fluid movement tells the horse that you are not a threat. Please be considerate.

HIKER MEETS HORSE

CALL OUT A FRIENDLY HELLO!!!

With their poor vision, your hello reassures them that you are a human and not a hungry mountain lion. Wait for a signal from the horseperson; she/he will know whether to just keep moving, to ask you to step aside or whether it is wiser for them to step aside. Some horses do fine with hikers but become hysterical when a runner, especially a silent one, comes relentlessly towards them or up behind them.

The horse rider should greet you and let you know the preferable way of passing. Some riders are eager to stop and talk if you are. All should be friendly, but if a rider chooses to breeze on by without stopping, she may have decided that is the best way to control the horse. She is not being discourteous.



BIKE RIDER MEETS HORSE

SPEAK UP!!!!

A bicycle is generally quiet and is not heard by the horse or the rider. Say hello a distance from the horse. If she is ahead of you, ask to pass if you want to do that and then wait for the rider to tell you what to do. Most will find a wider part in the trail and then step aside so you can pass, turning the horse so she can see you. Keep responding so she knows you are not a cougar.

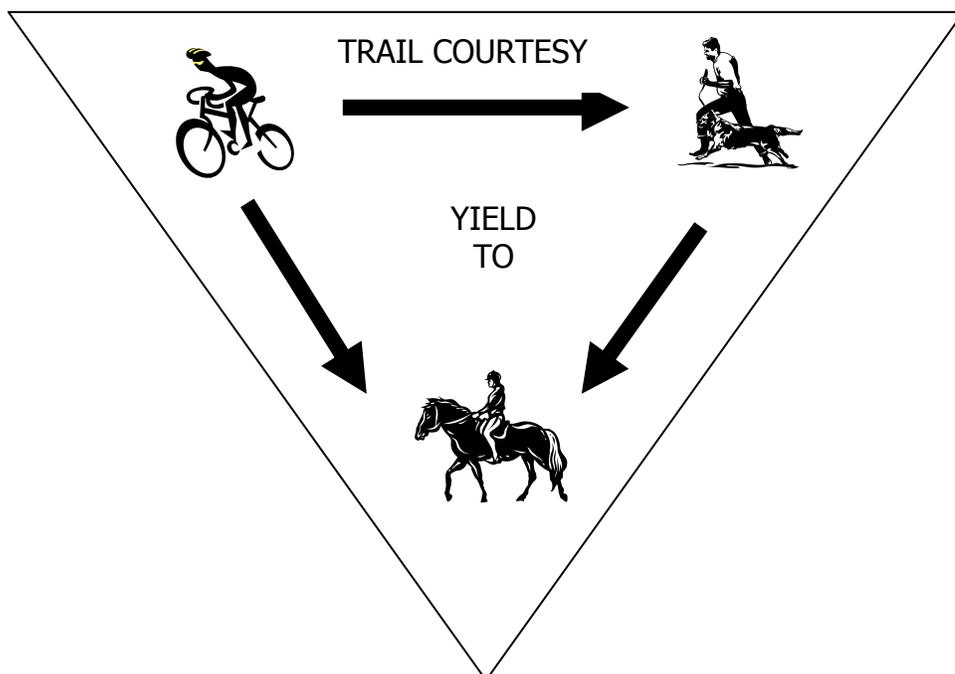
When coming towards a horse, please pull over and dismount. Speak to the rider and she will let you know the best way to continue. Usually, the horse passes by, everybody verbally admires the weather and you can get back on your way.

HORSEBACK RIDER'S JOB

BE FRIENDLY AND USE COMMON SENSE!!!!

Not every trail user knows about horses and how they react to perceived danger. We need to educate and to thank others for their courtesy so that horses continue to be welcome on trails.

Stay on the trail, slow to a walk when passing, wear a helmet and take your cell phone. Talk to people; make friends for all of us who love to ride.





GENERAL ADVICE

Be prepared for the unexpected. Slow down at curves and intersections or at any time the sightline is disturbed.

Glass, tin cans or other debris on the trail can puncture bike tires or seriously injure a horse, please pick it up and carry it out with you.

Horse manure is totally biodegradable and spreads no disease to humans or animals. Beverage cans, water bottles & plastic bags do not biodegrade.

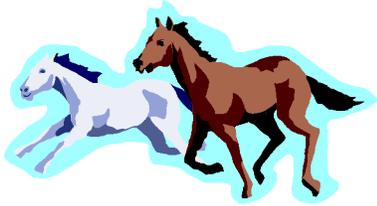
RESPECT ALL USERS

Trail users include many different kinds of enthusiasts.

All combinations of users will enjoy their activities if they display a little extra knowledge, respect and courtesy.

Trail etiquette protects users and the land over which they travel.

- ❑ **STAY ON THE TRAIL**
- ❑ **CARRY OUT MORE THAN YOU CARRY IN**
- ❑ **LEAVE NO TRACE**
- ❑ **REPORT ATV'S AND DUMPING**
- ❑ **GREET OTHER USERS**
- ❑ **PASS TO THE RIGHT**



PENNSYLVANIA EQUINE COUNCIL

The PEC represents the interests of equestrians in Philadelphia and surrounding counties.

We advocate for safe riding practices and help plan, maintain and monitor public trail systems that are multi use and non-motorized.

Our programs result in an increased public awareness of the need for open space, the value of equine activities and their economic impact.

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