



SHARING TRAILS

Equestrian Etiquette and Safety Guidelines

It is our responsibility as equestrians to be good stewards of the trails and land that we ride on, so that we may continue to have trails available.

LEAVE ONLY HOOF PRINTS - One of the biggest complaints from other trail users as well as other equestrians is the presence of horse manure at the trail heads. Carry provisions to clean up after your horse at the trail heads and take the manure with you. Do not spread it on the parking area edges, but in the event it is a very rocky parking lot, clean up what you can and then spread the remaining manure out so it will dry and dissipate quickly. When riding, encourage your horse to manure off the trail when possible. When stopped for a break and your horse leaves a deposit, spread it out so it will dissipate quicker.

EXERCISE SAFETY: Helmets and appropriate safety gear are strongly recommended. Carry identification and emergency contact information, water, snacks, and at least a minimal first aid kit for you and your horse. Carry a cell phone with GPS, trail apps and GPX maps from the GCTC website and learn how to use them. Dress appropriately for changeable weather.

KNOW YOUR HORSE'S ABILITY: Acclimate your horse to expected trail encounters (fast cyclists, dogs, backpack-wearing hikers, hiking poles, llamas, etc.)

COMMUNICATE: Say hi, and acknowledge other trail users. Be friendly and speak respectfully to other trail users. Even in a scary situation maintain control of your emotions. Give any needed instructions in a calm straight forward manner.

YIELD: All other trail users must yield to equestrians, but be practical! Greet and speak to users early. Let them know if they can continue as you pass or if you need to have them stop. If you are approaching someone from behind, say hello to let them know you are there. Give a faster horse and rider room to pass from behind; give a horse and rider coming uphill the right of way. When encountering other equestrian groups, it is usually safer to have one group step off the trail while the other passes.

BE ATTENTIVE: Watch for other trail users especially in limited line of sight situations.

BE KIND TO TRAILS: Ride on designated trails only. To minimize erosion, land and wildlife habitat damage, do not go off trail, create new trails, or cut switchbacks. Avoid riding on trails when they are overly saturated with water to minimize trail damage. Ride through the middle of puddles to avoid widening and damage to trail edges.

LEAVE NO TRACE AND TREAD LIGHTLY: Minimize your impact on the environment. Don't litter or leave food scraps. Pack it in, pack it out.

REPORT TRAIL ISSUES: Contact info@GoldCountryTrailsCouncil.org with any issues.

www.GoldCountryTrailsCouncil.org