



# Sharing Multi-Use Trails Peacefully



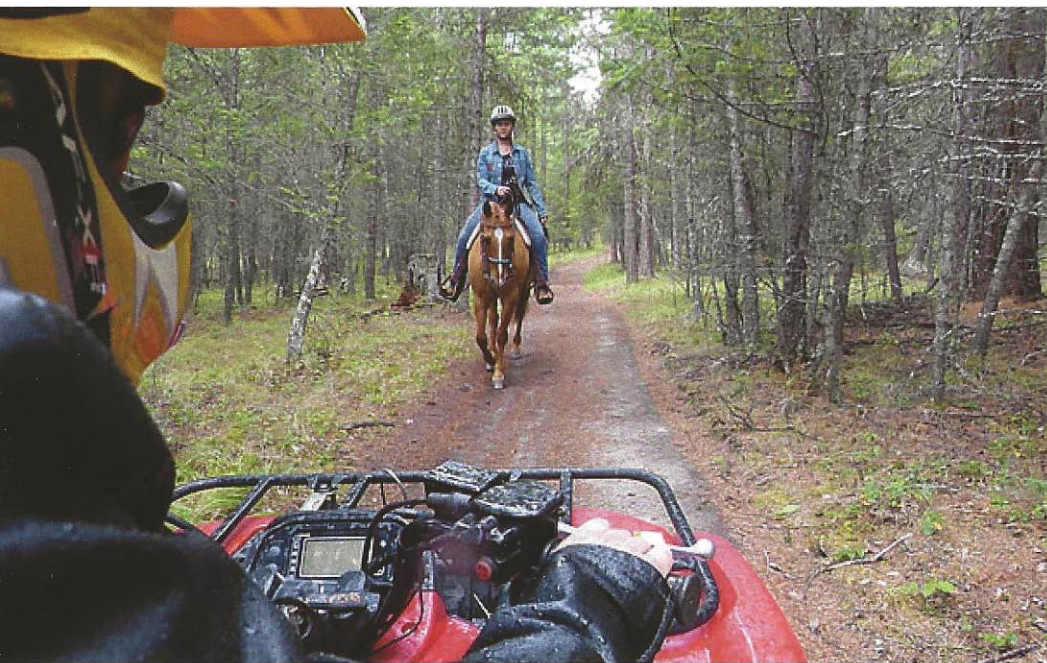
New York State  
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If you trail ride your horse, you'd probably like to feel that unless it's otherwise posted, a multi-use trail is available to you and your horse. As equestrians, we need to have an awareness that other users may not follow the same line of thinking. It was surprising to me when attending a large trails symposium, that when questioned, the Parks Department of my own county indicated plainly that when they discuss multi-use trails, the equine population is never a consideration. They pretty much stated that they assume riders (the equine industry) develop and use our own trails. It may serve us well to understand that occasionally other users may be of the same mind set.



When meeting a challenging individual along the trail, it should be of help to remember the bullet points below:

- Be pleasant, initiating a pleasant greeting.
- Remember that a smile may make all the difference.
- Avoid confrontation.
- Do not escalate.
- Take the “high road” with your personal attitude and tone of voice as well as with your choice of language. The image you leave in a person’s mind may well leave a poor impression of horses/riders in general.
- If the other trail user you encounter is particularly threatening or belligerent, do not engage. If you know it is a trail on which horses are allowed, report belligerent or harassing behavior to the proper authorities.
- Never put yourself or your horse in any possible danger.

As Kim McCarrel reports in a blog, “Trail-Sharing Tips that Riders Can Use”, (Jan. 3, 2019), “You can’t control the actions of other trail users, of course. But your actions and demeanor can make the difference between a safe, friendly interaction and a nasty confrontation.”

Remember, consideration for others is a “two-way street”. **Always** clean up after your horses in the parking area and wherever else possible. Manure should go home with you in your trailer. When it can be done, move it off the trail. Some horses can actually be backed off the trail slightly when they need to relieve themselves or can be turned to the side. Do not give other users a reason or an excuse to find equestrians unpleasant in any way. When you take the “high road”, you make a good impression for all of us.