

Sharing Our Trails

*A presentation and panel discussion on
Trail Etiquette best practices.*

Moderator:

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Panelists:

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Loving our Trails to Death

- **A growing population**, Social Media, the movie Wild, the increasing popularity of off-road cycling hiking and trail running, are all driving a steady rise in popularity of trail-based recreation
- **With more people using trails**, proper etiquette is more important than ever
- **Proper etiquette** improves the trail experience for everyone and makes land managers' jobs easier



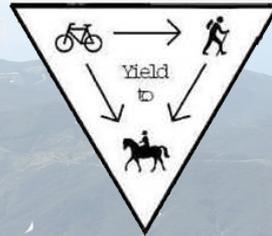
empathy

noun em·pa·thy \ 'em-pə-thē\

: the feeling that you understand and share another person's experiences and emotions

: the ability to share someone else's feelings

TRAIL COURTESY

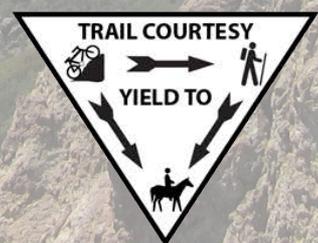


HIKERS
Yield trail to equestrians, Allow equestrians and bicyclists to pass. Never cut switchbacks.

BICYCLISTS
Ride on open trails only. Leave no Trace. Control your bicycle. Always yield trail. Never scare animals. Plan ahead.

EQUESTRIANS
Control your horse. Avoid cross-country riding.

ALL USERS
For Your Safety Please: Observe Rules And Regulations Stay on Designated Trails Be Alert And Courteous Avoid Muddy Areas





Confused?

What does "yield" really mean?



MULTIPLE USE TRAIL GUIDELINES

TRAIL COURTESY

PEDESTRIANS
Yield to equestrians and bicyclists to pass. Don't cut switchbacks.

BICYCLISTS
Ride on open trails only. Leave no trace. Control your bicycle. Always yield trail. Never scare animals. Plan ahead.

EQUESTRIANS
Control your horse. Avoid cross-country riding.

ALL USERS

For Your Safety Please:
Observe Rules And Regulations
Stay on Designated Trails
Be Alert And Courteous
Avoid Muddy Areas



What does “Yield” Really Mean?

- Yield means slow down, establish communication, be prepared to stop, and pass in a safe and friendly manner.
- Hikers yield to horses, and bikes yield to hikers and horses as shown by the arrows on the multi-use yield sign.
- Faster trail users yield to slower trail users
- Downhill traveling trail users yield to uphill traffic



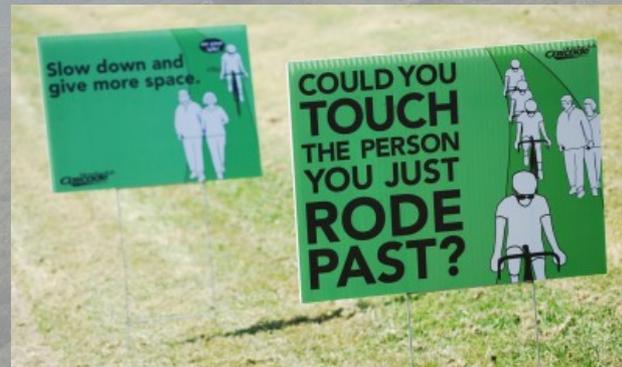
Basic Etiquette for all trail users:

- Respect.
- Smile. Greet. Nod.
- Stay on the trail.
- Don't use wet trails.
- Don't block the trail.
- Don't tune out.
- Clean up after your dog, and yourself!
- Pack it in, pack it out. (*Leave No Trace!*)

Creative Etiquette Messaging



Cascade Bicycle Club, 2012 Trail Safety Campaign





Sharing Our Trails

Hikers





Hikers...What can you expect?

- Faster trail users may be approaching from any direction, including behind you.
- You may come upon slower folks.
- Expect other trail users to be courteous (but not all will!).
- Trails in popular areas will have more people than ever.
- You may not have the solitude you want on popular trails.

What is your responsibility?

- **Acknowledge** other users.
- **Don't tune out.** Listen for faster trail users coming from behind or out of sight ahead.
- **Yield to trail users** coming up a hill.
- **Keep your group to one side of** the trail when being passed, preferably to the right.
- **Yield to horses.**

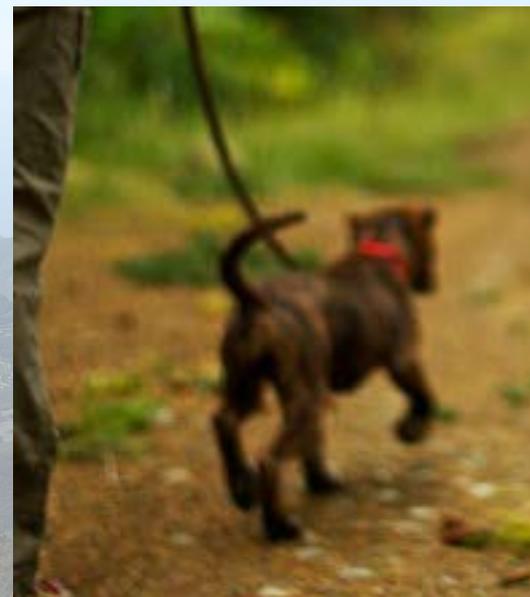


Yielding to Horses

- **Stop and wait on the downhill side** of the trail or ask the rider how to proceed.
- **Greet the rider** and tell the rider if you're uncomfortable around horses
- **Ask the rider to walk their horse** past you if they don't stop to let you go by them
- **If the horse appears skittish** or nervous, ask the rider what to do.

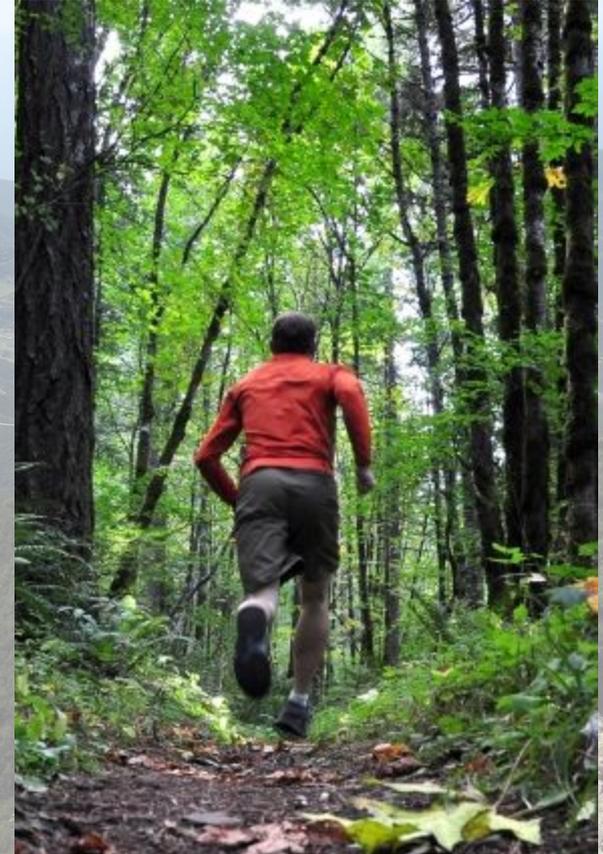
Keep your dog on a short leash!

- **Obey posted rules** regarding dogs
- Keep your dog on a short leash,
- **6' or less**
- Keep your dog **under control**
- Others may be **frightened of dogs**, and unsure how to pass safely
- **Beware of snakes**, predators and wildlife
- Always clean up after your dog and **pack out** the waste



What is your responsibility?

- **Yield to slower trail users**
- **Stay to the right**, pass on the left
- **Stay on the trail**
- Call your passes
- Always **yield to horses**
- All other etiquette guidelines apply





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Equestrians





Equestrians... What can you expect?

Inexperienced trail users!

- While all trail users *should* yield to equestrians, many are intimidated by large horses, or just don't know what to do.

What is your responsibility?

Manage your horse!

- **Train and familiarize your horse** on wider multi-use trails or fire roads with room to maneuver so the horse can become more comfortable with cyclists, dogs, backpack-wearing hikers, etc.
- **Your horse should be comfortable with other trail users before venturing onto narrower shared-use trails.**
- Consider desensitization training for your horse if it remains skittish around other trail users.

What is your responsibility?

Negotiate safe passes!

- **Greet trail users early.** Hikers and bikers yield to horses, but many novice trail users don't know what to do.
- **Guide trail users to move to the downhill side of the trail,** where appropriate.
- **Communicate with other trail users** and let them know where to stand and/or on which side to pass you. Continue speaking with them until they have passed.
- **Expect the unexpected.** Small children, the elderly and dogs can be easily frightened by horses and act unpredictably.
- **Only pass others at a walk, never at a trot or gallop.**



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Mountain Bikers



Mountain Bikers... What can you expect?

Surprised trail users!

Faster-moving bikes can startle others, especially when coming around a blind turn or approaching from behind.

What is your responsibility?

Mountain bikers yield to hikers, horses and oncoming uphill-riding cyclists.

- **SLOW DOWN** around other trail users and anticipate people or animals around blind turns.
- **Consider using a bell** to help avoid surprising others. Be exceedingly friendly and communicative.
- **On wider trails and fire roads keep to the right.**
- **Always ride under control** and avoid skidding. Never put others at risk.

What is your responsibility?

Passing Hikers

- **Greet hikers** early with a friendly “howdy” or “good morning.”
- **SLOW DOWN** to about the same speed as the hiker.
- **Pass slowly and be prepared to stop** if necessary. Others’ **perception** of a safe, courteous speed may be different to yours. Show your appreciation if they step to the side for you.
- **Expect the unexpected.** People and animals can be unpredictable or easily spooked or startled by cyclists.
- Though “on your left” is usually understood by other cyclists, it can confuse hikers

What is your responsibility?

Passing Cyclists

- **Announce your intention to pass** with a friendly “Let me know when it’s safe to pass.”
- **Use the “singletrack yield” on narrow trails:** the yielding rider should stop to the side, put one foot down and lean both body and bike away from the trail.
- **Give uphill riders the right of way when you’re going downhill.** It’s much harder to get started again on a climb.

What is your responsibility?

Passing Horses

1. **Immediately slow down and stop at least 30 feet from the horse.**
2. **Greet the equestrian and the horse.** Speaking shows the horse you are human and not a threat.
3. **Ask how or when to pass safely.** Offer to get off your bike.
4. **Pass slowly and steadily, but only after the equestrian gives you the go-ahead.** Sudden movements or noises can spook a horse. Where possible, pass on the downhill side of the animal.

Passing slower trail users from behind

- **Slow down** and maintain some distance. Don't tailgate.
- **Greet them with a friendly "Hello!"**
- **Many trail users are confused by calls of "on your left"**
- **"Let me know when it's safe to pass."** Allow them to find a safe and comfortable place to step to the side.
- **If they have heard you approaching** and already stepped to the side to allow you to pass, thank them profusely!
- **Slow down to a walking speed to pass,** and give them some space.
- **Their perception of a safe distance and speed** may be different to yours.
- **Thank them some more! Let them know if more riders are following.**



Handling difficult situations

- If another user is rude, don't return the action.
- Avoid arguments, confrontations.
- Know that not everyone will be won over.
- If you're involved in an accident or a threatening situation, report it.
- Most all users want to enjoy their time and not cause problems.
- There are bad apples in every trail user group, and they don't represent all members of their group.



In Conclusion ...

- Enjoy your outdoor experience!
- Teach your kids a culture of courtesy and sharing with other trail users.
- We need to allow for others (and our own) faults and mistakes.
- We don't need to "fix" every situation.



Start them young!

Sharing Our Trails



**Questions
&
Discussion**

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Etiquette for All

Thank you choir for listening to us preach!



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