

Share the Trail



All of us come to a park, forest, greenway, or other public open space seeking a breather from our busy lives. We've come to a special place to appreciate nature's solace and beauty, to recharge, relax, and reflect, or for healthy outdoor exercise. Let's honor the trails and land we see about us, and respect our fellow visitors.

Hikers, bikers, horse riders, hunters, runners, skaters, snowshoers, bird watchers, and dog walkers can *Share the Trail* cooperatively. Courtesy and common sense go far to ensure that we enjoy our visit this time, the next time, and the time after that when ... *we're all in this place together.*

Unless noted otherwise, the trails and paths in Connecticut's parks and forests are designated for "multiple-use." On any given day a wide variety of activities are likely being enjoyed.

The following suggestions cover the basics for everyone . . .

- ✓ Practice common courtesy and use common sense.
- ✓ Tell someone where you're going and when you plan to be back.
- ✓ Park in designated areas; do not block entrances or gates.
- ✓ Wear protective gear (e.g., helmets) appropriate for your activity.
- ✓ Obey all posted signs that designate or prohibit certain uses.
- ✓ Know where you're going; use a map if it's a new area for you. For maps of trails on state land: www.ct.gov/dep.
- ✓ Stay to the right, pass on the left.
- ✓ When you are approaching others from behind and would like to pass, let them know you're coming (a greeting like Hello!) and then pass on the left.
- ✓ If you've stopped, move to the side or off trail to allow others to pass by.
- ✓ Dogs must be leashed at all times and waste picked up and properly disposed.
- ✓ Avoid muddy areas, or walk carefully through. Do not widen the trail.
- ✓ Respect private property.
- ✓ Carry out more than you've carried in (Leave No Trace).

The Universal Multiple-use
YIELD SYMBOL

SHARE THE TRAIL



- ➔ Cyclists and motorized users shall yield to pedestrians and horse riders
- ➔ Pedestrians shall yield to horse riders



Share the Trail also means that it's up to us, as individuals or members of a group, to be stewards and advocates for our state's natural resources. Consider volunteering to help maintain trails or to help in other ways. By joining with kindred spirits, our efforts are multiplied and our voices better heard on matters affecting these beautiful places.

The following organizations promote trail sharing and etiquette through education.

The Connecticut Horse Council
www.cthorsecouncil.org

CT New England Mountain Bike Association
www.ctnemba.net

Tread Lightly
www.treadlightly.org

Equestrian Conservation Land Resource
www.eclr.org

TIPS FOR TRAIL ETIQUETTE

presented by

The Connecticut Horse Council, Inc.
www.cthorsecouncil.org

The Connecticut Horse Council

The Connecticut Horse Council (CHC) was incorporated in 1971 as a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to serving all aspects of the horse industry in Connecticut. There are approximately 20,000 horse owners and 50,000 horses in Connecticut. Equine activities contribute more than 443 million dollars to our state's economy each year. The CHC informs its members on zoning, trail, and safety issues, and endeavors to educate the public about horses and why we love them.



Hikers/Walkers

- Walk to the right side of a trail or path so that others are able to pass on the left.

Dog Walkers

- Dogs must be leashed (7' length maximum).
- Pick up and properly dispose of waste.

Bicyclists/Mountain Bikers

- Travel single file on trails and paths.
- Be aware of sight lines and other trail users.
- Control your speed, especially on steep descents.
- Call out or signal before passing others. Be sure they have seen or heard you and acknowledged your signal. Pass on the left.
- Do not widen a trail by riding around obstacles; dismount from your bike and walk over them.
- Never cut switchbacks or make new trails.

Winter Sports (Snowmobile Users, Cross-Country Skiers, Snowshoers)

- Stay on the trails designated for your activity.

Others: be considerate of cross-country skiers – avoid leaving foot or hoof prints in their tracks if possible.

Horse Riders and Carriage Drivers

- Know your horse's limitations and attempt only as much as you both can manage safely.
- Other trail users are inconvenienced by horse manure on the trails. On well-used trails "curb" your horse or dismount and move manure off of the trail. Clean up at trail heads and parking areas.
- Discourage your horse from eating trail-side vegetation, chewing on trees or walking on delicate plants.



Hunting/Trapping

Hunting and trapping are closely regulated by the state and are allowed in most state forests and wildlife management areas.

Know hunting season dates and regulations. To learn when seasons start and end visit www.ct.gov/dep. Small-game and deer season begins the third Saturday in October and continues through December, but there are other seasons to be aware of. Early morning and late afternoon hours are the most active. Best advice for non-hunters: stay out of hunting areas when hunting is allowed. If you are hunting or not, in a hunting area during an active season:

- Call out to hunters you see or hear to identify your position.
- Wear bright fluorescent orange. Do not wear white, gray, brown or tan.

About Horses and How to Meet and Greet Them

Horses have benefited mankind throughout the ages, serving important roles in warfare, transport and industry. They've earned their current jobs as recreational companions, after centuries of much harder work.

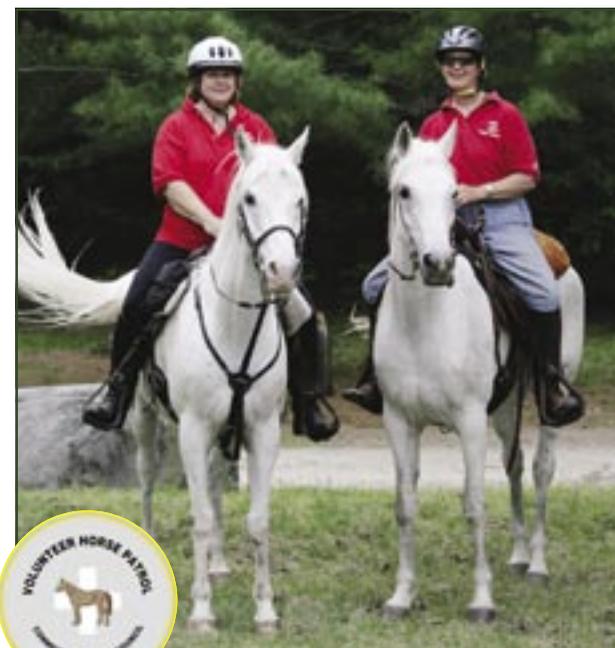
Horses are herbivores – they eat grains and grasses. Their excrement is biodegradable and dissipates quickly. When composted, manure becomes excellent fertilizer for farms and gardens.

Running away fast is a horse's survival mechanism, because they are prey animals, not predators. While their first instinct is to flee from danger, a horse might resort to biting or kicking when cornered. They are also known for moving sideways quickly and unpredictably, which is called "shying."

Horses' eyesight and hearing are acute. Their eyes are placed wide on the sides of their heads unlike ours that are together in front. This allows horses to see all around them to spot predators from a distance. Loud noises, quick movements, even vibrations of a moving object can be perceived as danger prompting a bolt or a shy. Horses have two blind spots: right in front of the face and directly behind the tail.

If you encounter horses on the trail, the CHC suggests the following:

- Unless encouraged by the rider to continue, step to the side of the trail to allow horses to pass (remember the YIELD rules). Continue on your way when the rider signals it's okay.
- Do not come up behind the horse where he can't see you.
- Keep your movements slow and steady.
- Don't wave your arms or fling objects in the air.
- Be sure your dog is leashed and stays away from the horses' rear hooves.
- Always ask the rider for permission to approach the horse. Watch your toes! Horses weigh about 1,000 pounds.
- Pet a horse alongside his neck rather than putting your hand on his face.
- Greet the horse with a calm reassuring voice so that he knows you are a person, not a predator. A hiker with large backpack or hood can look scary like a bear to a horse!
- Motorized off-road vehicle riders, please shut off your motor.



The CHC Volunteer Horse Patrol

The Volunteer Horse Patrol (VHP) operates under the auspices of the CHC in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. Patrol volunteers serve as "eyes and ears"; share information about regulations, facilities and features in the parks; and promote trail etiquette on the multi-use trails where they patrol and maintain trails. Patrol members wear red shirts or jackets with the VHP patch.

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