



## VERMONT HORSE COUNCIL

"Creating a unified equine voice"

[www.vthorsecouncil.org](http://www.vthorsecouncil.org)

Horse riders share the trails with other users such as hikers & bikers. Be happy to encounter anyone who is out enjoying our lovely Vermont state and show them the love & respect we hope they will show us. Let's help them to understand our needs and also strive to understand their needs.

Our goal as good citizens is to ensure everyone leaves the trail with a good experience.

Follow the below tips to help create a good experience while Sharing the Trail!

- Be a polite advocate and practice good citizenship. There are plenty of stories of rude, entitled horse riders. Please don't join that group!
- Always smile and engage in conversations with those you meet on the trail as well as in parking areas. Politely voice your intentions in a friendly voice.
- Safety always come first, for you & your equine partner.
- Wear a certified helmet & proper footwear.
- Wear bright clothing to help others see you & your horse early enough to pass safely.
- Keep less experienced riders/horses between experienced riders when possible. On the trail allow the less experienced rider/horse to follow an experienced rider/horse.
- When encountering other users, ride in a single file allowing others to pass safely on the left.
- Riders are to stay right on all trails & roads. Do NOT move into the middle to be seen better, this does not make a safe environment for your equine partner.
- Maintain a slow & steady speed where encounters may occur. Give extra care to corners. Watch for those 'fun' spots and prepare for the unexpected as much as possible.
- If it's been rainy stay off the wood trails where horses can do serious damage causing ruts and erosion, be mindful that it can take a long time to renew & repair trails that have been turned by hoof prints.
- Got a horse who's spooky around bikes? Practice at home. Expose your horse to bikes in a more predictable environment. Make bikes a positive experience. Be prepared for other users coming behind you as well as ahead of you.

- Assume the worse. Don't put you & your horse in a position where things can go sideways. If you see or know of other user presence, set yourself up for a safe encounter. Even if this means hustling off the trail or dismounting to keep everyone safe, stay calm and follow your instincts. And breathe.
- Trust your mount to show you what makes them uncomfortable, be ready to be a calm, confident leader. Show them you're in control and will keep them safe.
- If your horse drops nuggets please keep them moving forwards. A few nuggets in a line is better than a pile. Remember it's about what's on other users shoes or wheels as well as what composts quicker.
- Be aware of the impact horse manure may have on other users. If you're able to dismount and kick the manure off the trail, especially narrow paths, it would be greatly appreciated.
- ALWAYS pick up around your trailer. All dropped pieces of hay and manure should be raked and carried away. Remember it's a carry in/carry out policy everywhere you go.
- Volunteer information about you & your equine partner to help engage other users to learn about horses in Vermont.
- Above all else be a good citizen and respect all who you encounter during your day. Help them to understand the Horse better and how the horses instincts make them a very unique partner.