

BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN OF CALIFORNIA

HIGH COUNTRY MANNERS

A COMMON SENSE GUIDE FOR GENTLE USE OF THE BACKCOUNTRY

TRAILHEAD MANNERS

- Leave your vehicle parked with other visitors able to exit, park, load and unload around you.
- Be sure to lock your vehicle doors, camper shells and tool boxes.
- Clean up all food scraps. Bears will break into your vehicle, if they suspect it contains food.
- Do your part in keeping the trailhead clean and accessible to others. Bring a rake and shovel.
- Use proper sanitary facilities at the trailhead.



TRAIL MANNERS

- Be polite and helpful when meeting livestock, backpackers, hikers, and other users of the wilderness.
- Always yield the trail to faster hikers or riders. Move aside as soon as you can and let them go on ahead.
- Common sense and courtesy should prevail in matters of right-of-way on the trail. In most cases, riders and pack animals do have the right-of-way. Those traveling uphill have the right-of-way over those going downhill.
- To ease possible congestion, avoid stopping in the trail at a creek or trail junction. Move to the next available place to pull out and get completely off the trail.
- Loose herded livestock are difficult to control and, in many places, illegal. It is wise to lead all your animals to minimize the chance for trail conflicts.
- Remove obstacles from trails whenever possible rather than riding around them, as this creates a secondary trail.
- Stay on the trail. Cutting switchbacks creates erosion.
- Explain to those not accustomed to stock that a hiker can control his/her movements on and off the trail easier than a rider can control the movements of a string of pack animals.
- Some horses and mules can be skittish while on the trail, therefore, it is wise to give them some room.
- Explain to those not accustomed to stock, that it is safer for you, them and the resource, to step to the downhill side of the trail and to stay in sight. Be sure the person feels safe before you start to pass.

- Explain to hikers that it would be helpful to speak in a calm voice to the animals as they pass, thus assuring the stock that the colorful hiker is not a bear. Remind them not to touch the animals as they go by and to please wait a few seconds before starting along the trail.
- Leaving any equipment in the middle of the trail, near a water crossing or bridge is like leaving your suitcase in the middle of the highway. Your equipment may get run over.
- Dogs can be good companions where permitted on the trail. Dogs not familiar with livestock can be intimidated and scare the stock. Remember to keep dogs under control at all times so they are not a threat to the safety of other visitors or to wildlife.
- An “encounter” session with local llamas and their handlers before you enter the backcountry might be worthwhile.



CAMP MANNERS

- Set up camp on hard ground away from grass and marsh areas where you and your stock will appreciate being away from mosquitoes. Be sure the location is at least 100 feet from any water source.
- Proper sanitation practices are very important. Choose a site at least 100 feet away from any water source or campsite. Use a shovel or trowel to bury human waste.
- Choose a campsite that has plenty of feed or pack in pellets and grain.
- If you need to restrain the stock, tie to a high line located on durable ground, 100 feet away from any water source, and out of sight of other camps and trails.
- The use of a portable electric fence is encouraged as it is an excellent way to control grazing pack and saddle stock. It is important to train them to respect the wire or tape prior to setting up in the backcountry. Move the fence often to avoid excessive impact on the meadow.
- Use only dead and downed firewood for fuel. Conserve wood by using a propane or gas stove for cooking.
- Pack out all garbage and trash. This means food scraps too. Remember foil does not burn.
- Remove, scatter or bury all manure in the campsite and at the trailhead.

PROPER PREPARATION

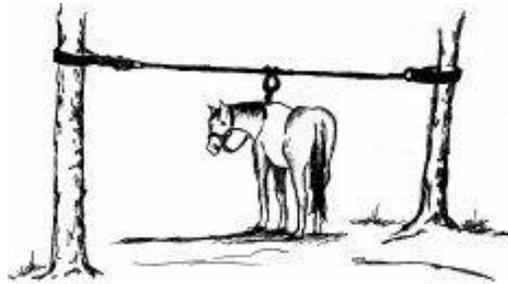
One of the most important aspects to consider when planning any trip is proper planning and preparation. This is especially true of backcountry trips. Try to be prepared for any eventuality.

- Consider the goals and needs of the group: scenery, lakes, fishing, moving camp, ages and experiences, etc.
- Know where you are going. Ask those who have been there before. Know how long it will take you to get to your destination each day of your trip.
- Know what maps you will need, study them and know how to use them. Have a compass along.
- Find out if you need to have a wilderness and/or campfire permit. Ask if there are any restricted areas you will be going through.
- Find out if you stay overnight at the trailhead. Learn what facilities are available: corrals, water, one night stay limit, manure dumps, etc.
- Know how many people are in your group and what kind of appetites/restrictions they may have.
- Determine if there is enough feed, water and proper campsite for each day's destination.
- Have first-aid kits for both people and animals, directions for use and a flashlight.
- Have at least one emergency light-weight meal along for the group.
- Be sure to have the appropriate clothing and equipment for the season.
- Have "strike anywhere matches" or a lighter in water-proof containers.

A MESSAGE TO HORSEMEN FROM YOUR FOREST SERVICE



Horses, Mules, Burros and Llamas too!



- Take only the minimum number of animals needed.
- During short stops, you may tie horses to trees which are at least eight inches in diameter.
- For long periods, tie horses to a high-line stretched between two sturdy trees. A good rule of thumb is 7 feet away from tree and 7 feet high.
- If you picket horses, move them often.
- Keep tied, picketed, and hobbled horses well away from camp, lakes and streams.
- Tie, picket, or hobble horses only in dry areas to minimize trampling.

WHO ARE THE BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN OF CALIFORNIA?

Backcountry Horsemen of California is a group of dedicated men and women working to preserve the historic use of trails with recreational pack and saddle stock. They perform public service activities for numerous land management agencies and they are continually working to educate their members on how to be "Gentle Users."

The use of livestock has played an important role in the American culture. California and the western states have particularly had a long tradition of using pack and saddle stock in the backcountry. The Backcountry Horsemen of California carry on this tradition in modern times. With this use comes the responsibility and obligation to care for our public lands and to ensure their use for generations.

Backcountry Horsemen of California works in cooperation with government agencies to help clear trails, maintain historic sites, construct new facilities, sponsor educational seminars and clinics, and assist with service projects as requested. They also strive to stay current on relevant issues and to provide input on management plans and activities that pertain to backcountry trails on public lands.

Backcountry Horsemen of California focuses its efforts in three key areas:

- Service Projects
- Education
- Public Lands Issues.



Approved for distribution by

Backcountry Horsemen of California

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