

Trail Scenarios

Dr. Jenifer Nadeau, Equine Extension Specialist
University of Connecticut

UConn | COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

EXTENSION & ANIMAL SCIENCE

Leave No Trace Principles

- ▶ Plan Ahead and Prepare
- ▶ Travel on Durable Surfaces
- ▶ Dispose of Waste Properly
- ▶ Leave What You Find
- ▶ Respect Wildlife
- ▶ Be Considerate of Other Users



Trail Situation: Crossing Roads

- ▶ Have horse acclimated to traffic
- ▶ If riding in a group, have last rider come to front and stand on yellow line, blocking road and stopping traffic for others
- ▶ Have everyone else walk directly across the road
- ▶ Be prepared for honking, stones flying, etc.



Road Safety

- ▶ Observe all traffic directions
- ▶ Ride on the right side of the road
- ▶ Stop at stop signs



Road Safety

- ▶ Signal turns if there is someone behind you
- ▶ Ride single file when sharing roads or trails
- ▶ Must carry a light visible at least 200 ft to front and rear
- ▶ Wear reflective clothing



Road Safety

► Sharrows



Trail Use Triangle



How to Pass a Dog on the Trail

- ▶ Let the dog and owner know you are coming
- ▶ Give the dog space, avoid approaching too closely
- ▶ Ask owner before petting the dog



Signs of Aggression in Dogs

- ▶ Becoming very still and rigid
- ▶ Guttural bark that sounds threatening
- ▶ Lunging forward or charging at the person with no contact
- ▶ Mouthing, as though to move or control the person, without applying significant pressure



Signs of Aggression in Dogs

- ▶ “Muzzle punch” (the dog literally punches the person with her nose)
- ▶ Growl
- ▶ Showing teeth
- ▶ Snarl (a combination of growling and showing teeth)
- ▶ Snap



Signs of Aggression in Dogs

- ▶ Quick nip that leaves no mark
- ▶ Quick bite that tears the skin
- ▶ Bite with enough pressure to cause a bruise
- ▶ Bite that causes puncture wounds
- ▶ Repeated bites in rapid succession
- ▶ Bite and shake



Signs of Fear in Dogs

- ▶ Flattened ears
- ▶ Tail tucked between the hind legs
- ▶ Cowering
- ▶ Lip licking
- ▶ Yawning
- ▶ Raised hair on the back of the neck
- ▶ Avoiding eye contact/averting the eyes
- ▶ Scratching self frequently (when he was not previously itchy)



Trail Scenarios

- ▶ Mud/Ruts
- ▶ Wet trails
- ▶ Bees - watch out!



Trail Scenarios

- ▶ Bridges - safe for all
- ▶ Sight Lines
- ▶ Safety
 - ▶ Lighting
 - ▶ Bring phone
 - ▶ Alone
 - ▶ Mace?



Trail Issues - Confrontations?

- ▶ Manure is Biodegradable
 - ▶ Parasites that infect horses not dangerous to humans
 - ▶ Free of microorganisms that infect humans
 - ▶ Does not contain *Cryptosporidium* or *Giardia*
 - ▶ Up to 80% water that evaporates or leaches into ground, rest is undigested plant parts
 - ▶ EPA excludes manure from solid waste regulations because it contains no hazardous chemicals and has no hazardous characteristics



Additional Trail Issues

- ▶ Horses can be taught to defecate off to the side, so can dogs
- ▶ Dog feces may contain toxoplasmosis, so can other domestic pets like cats - would have to drink or ingest it such as by touching soil and not washing hands though!



Trail Situation: Crossing Streams

- ▶ Have horse negotiate water in ring
- ▶ Sandwich effect
- ▶ Look straight ahead
- ▶ Allow horse to touch water with hoof, sniff, take a drink, encourage it to go forward



Trail Situation: Going Uphill

- ▶ When going uphill, that changes horse's center of gravity
- ▶ Stay out of horse's way
- ▶ May need to use a breast collar to keep saddle in place
- ▶ Lean forward slightly to center your weight over the horse



Trail Situation: Going Downhill

- ▶ Again, when going downhill center of gravity will change
- ▶ Lean back slightly to center your weight over the horse
- ▶ Trust horse
- ▶ Look up and ahead



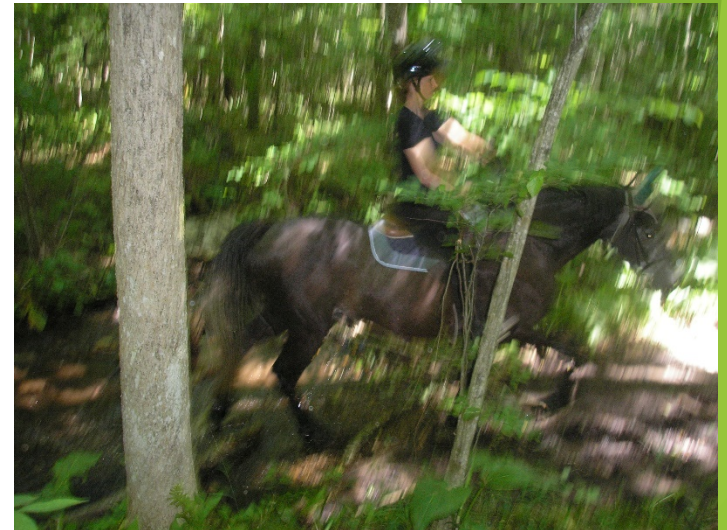
Trail Situation: Wildlife

- ▶ Sudden emergence of wildlife may cause a horse to spook
- ▶ Horse = prey animal
- ▶ Keep a bold horse at the lead of the ride
- ▶ Teach horse to recover rapidly through ground handling and exercises



Ideas for Practicing for Trail Situations

- ▶ One-rein stop
- ▶ Desensitization
- ▶ “Stick and String” - Stacy Westfall
- ▶ Crossing foreign objects
- ▶ Introducing the exercise ball
- ▶ Introducing water hole



Trail Situations: Overview

- ▶ Slowing a horse down on the trail shows control and trust
- ▶ Let horse investigate unfamiliar objects - remain patient
- ▶ Reward for success
- ▶ The more you put your horse in safe situations, the more it will have confidence in you as a rider

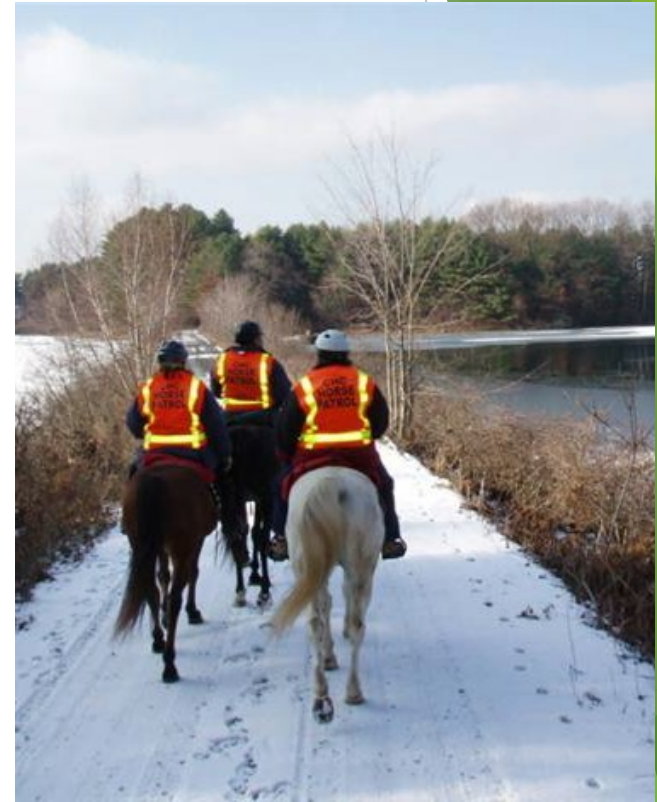


Additional Resources

- ▶ [My Horse University: Trail Riding 101 Short Course](#)
- ▶ [Stacy Westfall's Ride Safely on the Trail](#)



Thank you and be **safe!!**



*Happy Trails !!!
Questions??*