Horseback Riding
in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests

11/2014

Safety Tips

- Wear a safety helmet.
- Make sure all equipment fits properly and is functional.
- Pack drinking water.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Dress appropriately and be prepared for inclement or changing weather conditions.
- Hunters also use areas that are open to horseback riding, so it is important to wear an appropriate amount of blaze orange or to ride only on Sundays during Pennsylvania hunting seasons.

Contacts

For more information, contact:

Bureau of Forestry
PAForester@pa.gov
717-787-2703

Bureau of State Parks
ra-parkinfo@pa.gov
717-787-6640

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is an engaging way to explore nature. This enjoyable activity combines the majestic beauty of horses with the treasures of Pennsylvania's natural environments. From the saddle, riders soak in an abundance of fresh air and gain a unique perspective of the surrounding landscape.

Health Benefits

A trail ride through rugged forest land can be peaceful, adventurous and exhilarating. In addition, there are many physical and psychological health benefits associated with horseback riding. Some of these include:

- Burning calories
- Toning or strengthening muscles, particularly essential core muscles
- Developing or maintaining balance and coordination
- Building self confidence
- Stress relief that comes from spending time outdoors and from the positive effects related to human-animal interactions

State Forest Riding Opportunities

Seventeen state forests provide inexhaustible opportunities for horseback riding throughout the state. There are thousands of miles of trail riding open to equestrians in the form of forestry roads, designated equestrian trails and shared-use trails. Day-use riding is popular and some state forests feature beautiful locations specifically designed for horse camping.

Horseback Riding Highlights

Elk State Forest features Dark Hollow and Gas Well equestrian camping areas. These areas are found along a loop of the Thunder Mountain Equestrian Trail, which spans approximately 30 miles in northern Elk County.

Loyalsock State Forest has a designated equestrian trail called the Bridle Trail. This trail includes 52 miles of riding divided into two loops. There is trailhead camping with a small shelter, latrines, tie rails and trailer parking.

Sproul State Forest includes a 15-mile equestrian loop that begins at Kettle Creek State Park. A trail map is available at the district office.

Moshannon State Forest provides camping at the Reservoir Road Equestrian Camping Area and at the Benner Run Road Camping area. The Three Runs region has over ten miles of equestrian trails.

Rothrock State Forest permits horseback riding on many forest roads and trails outside of its natural areas and trails marked closed to horses. Motorized Campsite #8 in the Trough Creek area is designed for horse camping.

Susquehannock State Forest provides over 80 miles of shared-use trails, most of which are suitable for horseback riding. The forest also has two areas that are open to camping with horses.

Tioga State Forest offers a unique designated horseback riding trail adjacent to the Pine Creek Rail Trail. This 5.55-mile trail runs parallel to the popular bike trail and extends from the village of Ansonia to Tiadaghton. There are many additional opportunities in this forest district.

State Park and Forest Riding Opportunities

STATE PARKS: Thirty state parks offer hundreds of miles of horseback riding opportunities. There are several bridle trails maintained for equestrians, and other trails or roadways that are open to this activity. Horseback riding may be limited in some of the parks listed as a number of them serve as trailhead parking and access points and gateways to adjoining state forests. For trail details and maps visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/recreation/horsebackriding/ or call a park office for trail riding details.

Riding opportunities can be found at the following State Parks:

In the North:
Black Moshannon 814-342-5960
Kettle Creek 570-923-6004
Raymond B. Winter 570-966-1455

In the South:
Blue Knob 814-276-3576
Canoe Creek 814-695-6807
Codorus 717-637-2816
Fowlers Hollow 717-776-5272
Gifford Pinchot 717-432-5011
Penn-Roosevelt 814-667-1800
Prince Gallitzin 814-674-1000
Susquehannock 717-252-1134

In the East:
Big Pocono 570-894-8336
Evansburg 610-409-1150
French Creek 610-582-9680
Jacobsburg 610-746-2801
Lackawanna 570-945-3239
Marsh Creek 610-458-5119
Nockamixon 215-529-7300
Promised Land 570-676-3428
Ricketts Glen 570-477-5675
Ridley Creek 610-892-3900
Swatara 717-865-6470
Tyler 215-968-2021
White Clay Creek 610-274-2900

In the West:
Cook Forest 814-744-8407
Laurel Summit 724-238-6623
Linn Run 724-238-6623
Moraine State Park 724-368-8811
Ohiopyle State Park 724-329-8591
Raccoon Creek State Park 724-899-2200

STATE FORESTS: Seventeen state forests provide inexhaustible opportunities for horseback riding throughout the state. There are thousands of miles of trail riding open to equestrians in the form of forestry roads, designated equestrian trails and shared-use trails. Day-use riding is popular and some state forests feature beautiful locations specifically designed for horse camping.

Riding Opportunities can be found at the following State Forests:

Bald Eagle 570-922-3344
Buchanan 717-485-3148
Clear Creek 814-226-1901
Delaware 570-895-4000
Elk 814-486-3353
Forbes 724-238-1200
Gallitzin 814-472-1862
Lackawanna 570-945-7133
Loyalsock 570-946-4049
Michaux 717-352-2211
Moshannon 814-765-0821
Rothrock 814-643-2340
Sproul 570-923-6011
Susquehannock 814-274-3600
Tiadaghton 570-753-5409
Tioga 570-724-2868
Tuscarora 717-536-3191
Weiser 570-875-6450

Things to Know

- Not all trails are open to horseback riding.
- Areas closed to equestrians include natural areas, Keystone Hiking Trails, and areas posted closed to horseback riding.
- Camping with horses is permitted along trail systems open to horseback riding. However, you must acquire a camping permit prior to your stay. Camping with trailers is only permitted at forestry trailhead parking areas.
- Equestrians should contact the appropriate forest district office for trail details, camping permits and for information regarding horse-trailer parking.
- Trails that are open to horseback riding are open to other activities as well. These shared-use trails require common courtesy and cooperation from all users.
- Groups conducting trail rides must secure a special use agreement.

PENNSYLVANIA Parks & Forests FOUNDATION

pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Trails Rules and Etiquette

- Know and follow all state forest and state park rules and regulations.
- Practice Leave No Trace minimum impact principles.
- Follow all camping guidelines.
- Ride only on designated horse trails.
- Do not tie horses directly to trees or shrubs.
- Provide a drinking container for your horse and do not allow horses to drink directly from earthen stream banks.
- To minimize erosion, avoid riding on wet or soft trails.
- Learn to recognize harmful invasive plants and avoid riding through them. For information on invasive species see: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/plants/invasiveplants/index.htm
- Do not move firewood when camping.
- Exercise caution where the trail follows state forest roads. Ride single file on the edge of the road; in the direction of traffic; and always be aware of approaching motor vehicles, especially on "blind curves."
- Practice proper trail etiquette to preserve the quality of the trail; to protect the land; and to help create a positive, courteous atmosphere.

Leave No Trace

- Plan Ahead and Prepare.
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces.
- Dispose of Waste Properly (Pack It In, Pack It Out).
- Leave What You Find.
- Minimize Use and Impact from Fires.
- Respect Wildlife.
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors.

leave no trace
CENTER FOR OUTDOOR ETHICS