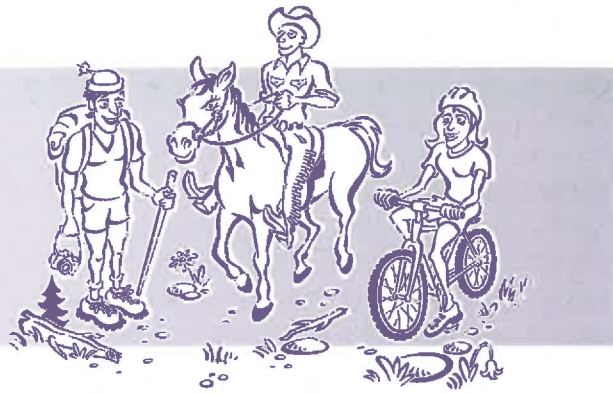


A TRAIL USER'S CODE OF ETHICS



Hikers, mountain bikers and horse riders are increasingly sharing the trails they travel. They also have concern for minimizing their impact on the backcountry.

Some dangers exist when different users share the same trails. However, all recreationists who are aware of others and practise "treading lightly" will help reduce conflicts and environmental damage, making everyone's trip outdoors more enjoyable.

TRAIL ETIQUETTE



Certain etiquette practised by all trail users is easy to do and contributes to a better outdoor experience for everyone. A simple way to adopt the essential habits is to remember the "3 C's": Common Sense, Communication and Courtesy.

1. Common Sense - Common Sense begins with planning your trip and continues to your encounters with others on the trail. Although trail travellers' protocol calls for the most mobile to yield the right of way, assess the situation and use common sense to determine who can get out of the



way most easily. In ideal cases, cyclists yield to everyone and hikers yield to horses. A loaded string of horses going uphill always has the right of way, and a cyclist climbing a steep pitch will appreciate the same consideration.

2. Communication - A friendly word of greeting reassures horses and lets others know of your presence. Communicate with other trail users to warn them of dangers or adverse trail conditions, but also to share with them an exceptional view stop or picnic area that you found. It is a good idea to tell other travellers how many people are in your group, so they can prepare to pass them on the trail.



Peer group policing is everyone's responsibility - if you see someone acting irresponsibly in the backcountry, warn him or her about the potential dangers.

3. Courtesy - Treat other trail users with courtesy. User conflicts can lead to trail closures - an unnecessary measure if people cooperate and practice the "3 C's".



HIKERS



It is essential for everyone to be aware of the fragility of backcountry areas, and to treat them with care. "Take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints" is the backpackers motto which can be adopted by other trail users as well.

Upon encountering horse riders, a group of hikers should all step off to the same side of the trail, the lower side if possible. Horses can be frightened by backpack equipment, so allow two to three metres for them to pass. A friendly exchange of greeting between hiker and horse rider will help calm the horses.

Use existing trails as much as possible. But if you are not on an established trail, avoid marking trees or building rock piles to point out your path, and dismantle makeshift bridges required to cross streams. When walking through brush, bend rather than break branches.

Groups should spread out so as not to create a trail, especially in vulnerable tundra or meadow areas. For off-trail travel limit groups at four to six hikers to minimize damaging vegetation.

Above the treeline, walk on rocks and snow as much as possible. Alpine vegetation is delicate and takes a long time to re-grow at high elevations.

MOUNTAIN BIKERS



Mountain biking is a relatively new way to enjoy the outdoors and is increasing in popularity. For the safety both of you as a rider and of others on the trail, certain aspects of bicycle travel require special attention.

Be aware of other trail users. Always anticipate a horse or hiker around a blind curve and slow down. Prevent the sudden and unexpected encounters made possible by a bike's quick and silent approach by using your bell and a friendly greeting to let others know of your presence.

Yield to hikers and equestrians. Get off your bike and move to the lower side of the trail to let horses pass because they are less easily spooked by an object lower than themselves. A clearance of two to three metres is recommended between you and the horse, depending on the terrain. In any case, follow passing directions given by the horse rider.

Learn how to minimize damage to trails through proper riding techniques. Develop your cycling skills so that you are able to ride and not slide when on the trails. Contact Cycling BC for information on riding clinics.

Practice erosion-free cycling or soft cycling. Bicycle on designated trails - meadows are easily damaged by bicycle tires. Stay off trails during wet and muddy conditions as tire ruts will become pathways for water erosion. Remember that south-facing trails dry out fastest.

HORSE RIDERS



A steady, well-trained horse is essential to a good trail ride. Encounters with other trail users will be smoother if your horse is an experienced mount.

When passing other recreationists, steady your horse and give the hiker or cyclist clear instruction on how you would like them to stand clear. For example, ask them to stand on the low side of the trail, and to continue chatting.

Yield to a loaded pack string, is the general rule. In steep rough country, downhill traffic yields the right of way to uphill travellers. But use common sense - whoever can pull off the trail easiest should do so.

Warn others of danger on the trail. Wire, potholes and boggy areas can be a hazard to hikers and cyclists too.

Reduce damage to trails by using a minimum number of pack animals and avoid riding on trails when they are soft and muddy. Reschedule your trip for when the trail has dried out.

TRAIL COURTESY AND ETHICS FOR EVERYONE



Remembering the "3 C's", Common Sense, Communication and Courtesy, as well as a few guidelines for trail use will ensure your impact on the environment is minimal and encounters with other recreationists are enjoyable.

Check with local land managers for trail conditions and closures. Respect trail closures and use restrictions because sensitive environmental conditions or safety concerns may be the cause.



Look after the trails you travel on.

Respect private property and "no trespassing" signs, and leave gates as you find them.

Protect yourself from unnecessary slips and falls by staying on existing paths. A successful trip is one without injury. You will also be helping to maintain your favourite trails by not short-cutting switchbacks and corners. It may be messy, but march or ride through a muddy spot and scramble over or under fallen trees to avoid causing multiple paths created by travelling on the edge of the trail.

Look after the trails you travel on. They are easily damaged and hard to maintain. When you encounter a trail maintenance problem, fix it if you can, if not, report it to the appropriate managing agency. The Outdoor Recreation Council of BC can assist you in determining who to contact.

To order more copies of this and other brochures:

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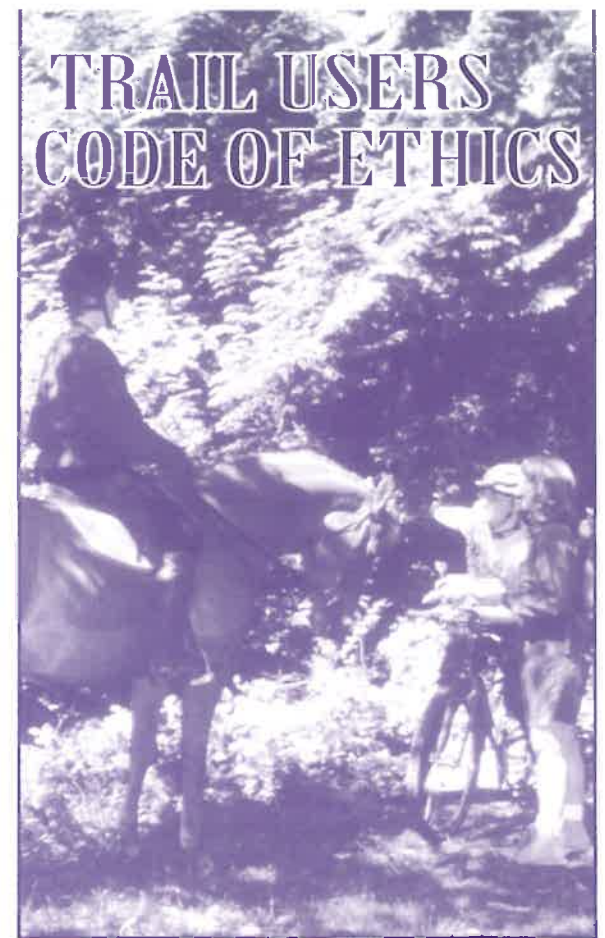
Financial assistance for third printing provided by:



Graphics: Kelly Pearce
Photography: Andy Mons



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A safety and education brochure published by:



Outdoor Recreation Council
of British Columbia