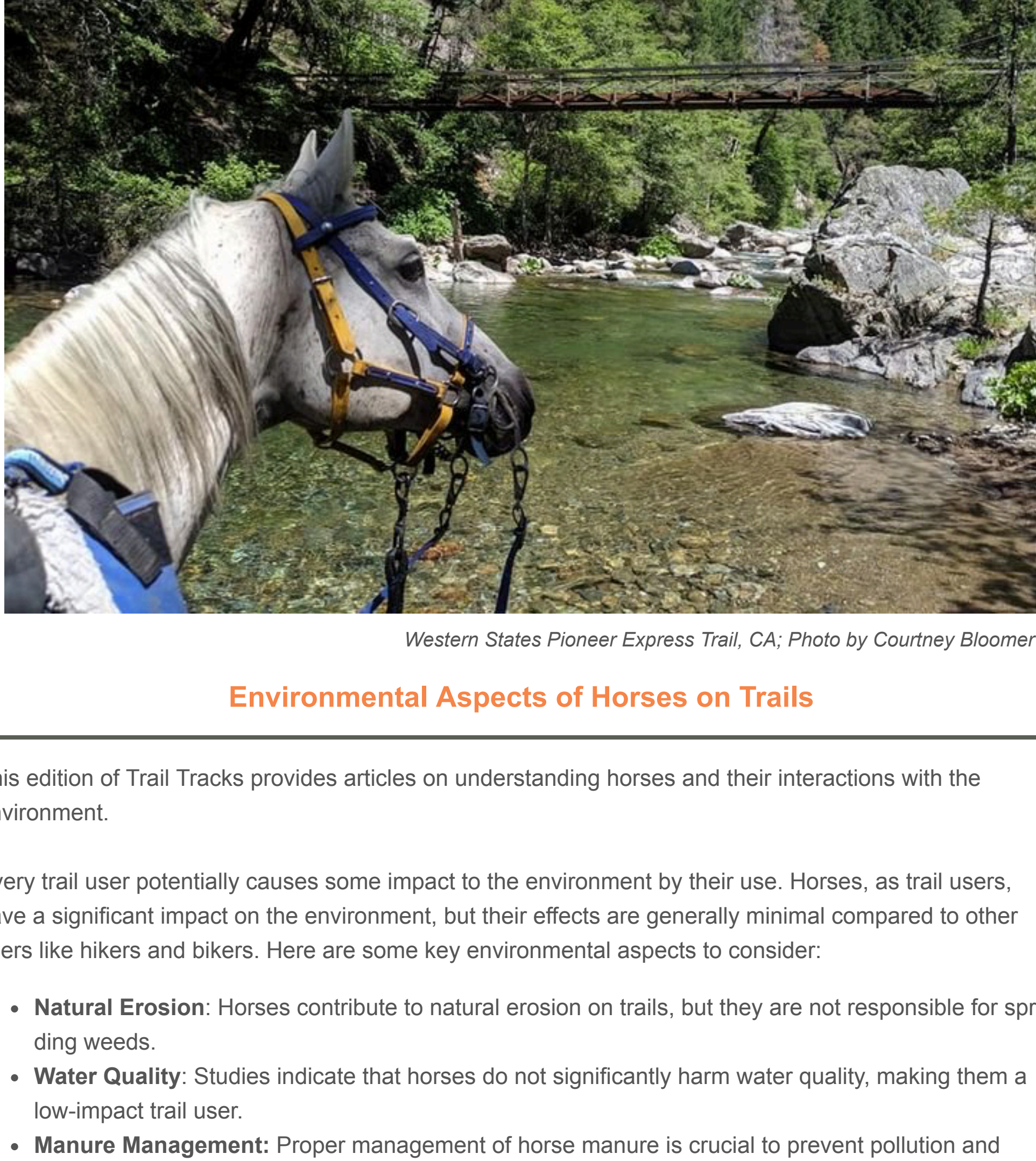




TRAIL TRACKS

November 2025

MORE TRAILS. BETTER TRAILS.



Western States Pioneer Express Trail, CA; Photo by Courtney Bloomer

Environmental Aspects of Horses on Trails

This edition of Trail Tracks provides articles on understanding horses and their interactions with the environment.

Every trail user potentially causes some impact to the environment by their use. Horses, as trail users, have a significant impact on the environment, but their effects are generally minimal compared to other users like hikers and bikers. Here are some key environmental aspects to consider:

- **Natural Erosion:** Horses contribute to natural erosion on trails, but they are not responsible for spreading weeds.
- **Water Quality:** Studies indicate that horses do not significantly harm water quality, making them a low-impact trail user.
- **Manure Management:** Proper management of horse manure is crucial to prevent pollution and maintain trail cleanliness.
- **Equestrian Trails:** Equestrian trails are designed to be lightweight and low impact, with careful planning to minimize environmental impact.

All trail users should be mindful of their impact and follow best practices for trail maintenance and management to help protect the natural environment for future generations.

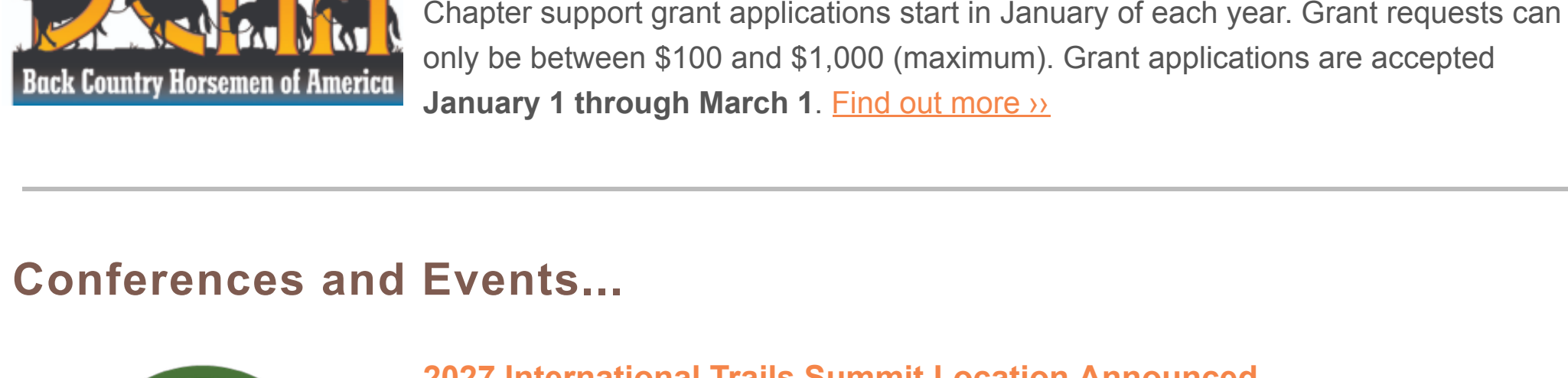
[Find out more](#)



Got Mud: Tackling Mud and Erosion on Equestrian Trails

This webinar aims to address these challenges by focusing on effective construction techniques, recommended products, and best management practices for trail planning, construction, and maintenance. Members can access a recording of this webinar for free.

[Find out more](#)



Funding and Legislation...

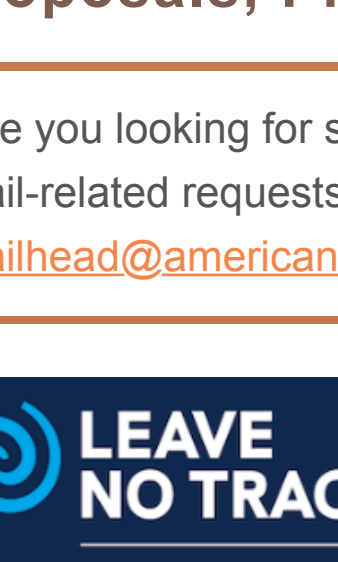
This section provides updates on legislation, funding, and public input related to trail preservation and enhancing the outdoor experience.



Back Country Horsemen of America Chapter Support Grants

Chapter support grant applications start in January of each year. Grant requests can only be between \$100 and \$1,000 (maximum). Grant applications are accepted **January 1 through March 1.** [Find out more >>](#)

Conferences and Events...



2027 International Trails Summit Location Announced

SAVE THE DATE! Join American Trails and the Professional TrailBuilders Association at the 2027 International Trails Summit that will take place **April 13-15, 2027** at the Durham Convention Center. [Find out more >>](#)



America Outdoors Conference & Outfitter Expo

The America Outdoors Conference & Outfitter Expo is a national gathering for outfitters and outdoor recreation providers and their staff. America Outdoors delivers 3 days of content, crafted to help your business tackle challenges in the areas of marketing, risk management, operations and leadership. Join America Outdoors in Salt Lake City, UT on **December 9-12.** [Find out more >>](#)

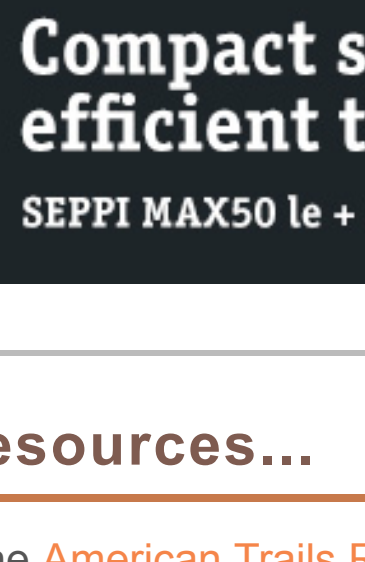
Proposals, Presenters, and Award Requests...

Are you looking for speakers, presenters, or award nominees for an upcoming conference? Share your trail-related requests with American Trails to be included in an upcoming newsletter. Send requests to trailhead@americantrails.org.



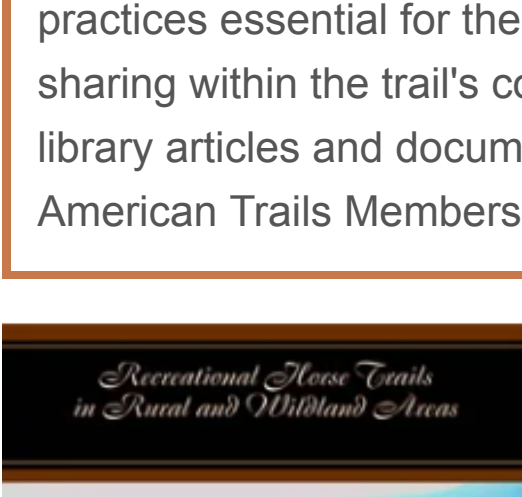
Nominate a Leave No Trace Spotlight

Bring Leave No Trace to your community, park, or protected area in 2026! Nominations for 2026 Leave No Trace Spotlights are open! Submit your nomination by **December 7** for priority consideration. [Find out more >>](#)



Share Your Expertise

The 2026 Canadian Trail Summit is seeking engaging presenters. If you have expertise, experience or innovation that aligns with the Summit's theme and streams, we encourage you to submit a proposal to present. Submit by **November 28** (by midnight, ET). [Find out more >>](#)



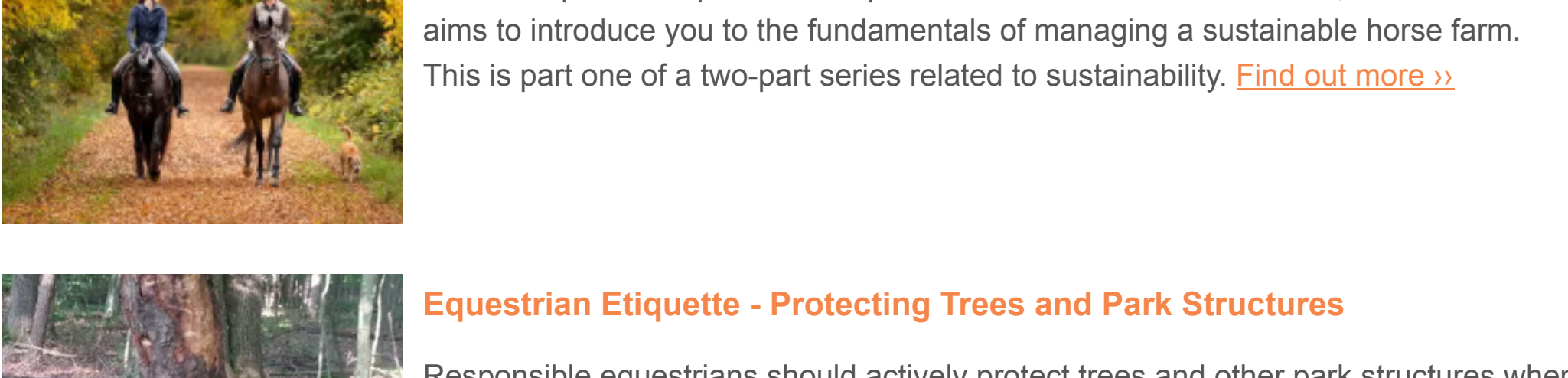
Call for Proposals

Bringing together trail planners, designers and builders, recreational professionals, community and elected leaders, tourism partners, and others to learn and share best practices to advance trail and greenway development and promotion throughout North Carolina. Save the date for August 10-12, 2026 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Deadline to submit a proposal **March 6, 2026.** [Find out more >>](#)



Call for Films: Great Trails State Film Fest

Do you have a story to tell about North Carolina's trails? We want to see it! The Great Trails State Film Festival will showcase short films that highlight the people, places, and experiences that make North Carolina's trail system so extraordinary. From mountain summits to coastal waterways, from personal journeys to community celebrations—this festival is a chance to spotlight the diverse stories our trails inspire. **Submission Deadline: June 30, 2026.** [Find out more >>](#)



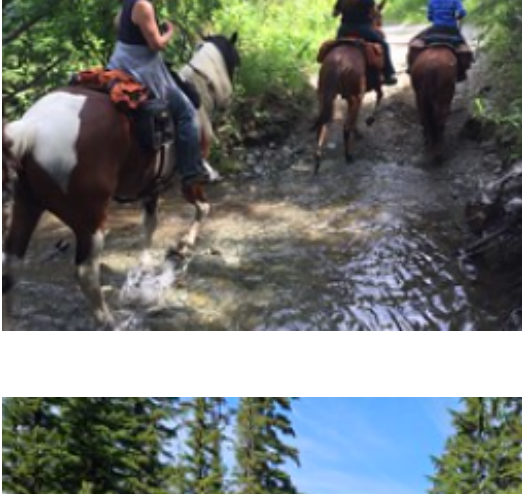
Resources...

The [American Trails Resource Library](#) is a central hub of resource links, documents, tools, and best practices essential for the development of services and capabilities needed to improve effective information sharing within the trail's community. Search for resources by category or by using keywords. The resource library articles and documents are free to access. Advancing Trails webinar recordings are free to American Trails Members. **Not a member?** [Join here >>](#)



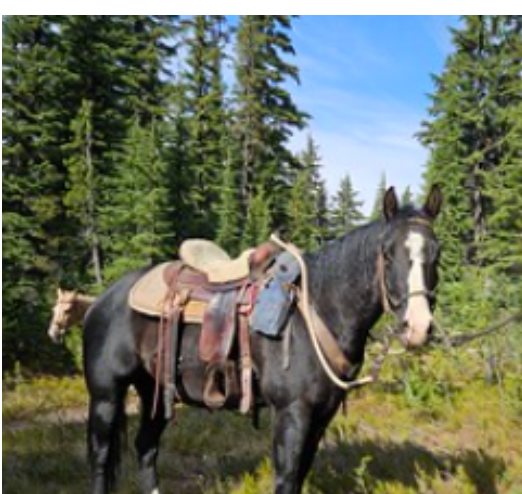
Going, Going.... Last Chance to Purchase

Recreational Horse Trails in Rural and Wildland Areas: Design, Construction, and Maintenance by **Dr. Gene Wood.** This book is to guide land managers and equestrian trail users in design, construction, and maintenance of horse trails in a manner that harmonizes with the surrounding ecosystem and landscape values. Books will be **sold by the case** of 14 for only \$28 (that is \$2/book) plus shipping. Get your copies for your own distribution or library before they are gone! [Find out more >>](#)



Barn to Trail: Managing Sustainability on Equine Properties

Hosted in partnership with the Equine Land Conservation Resource, this webinar aims to introduce you to the fundamentals of managing a sustainable horse farm. This is part one of a two-part series related to sustainability. [Find out more >>](#)



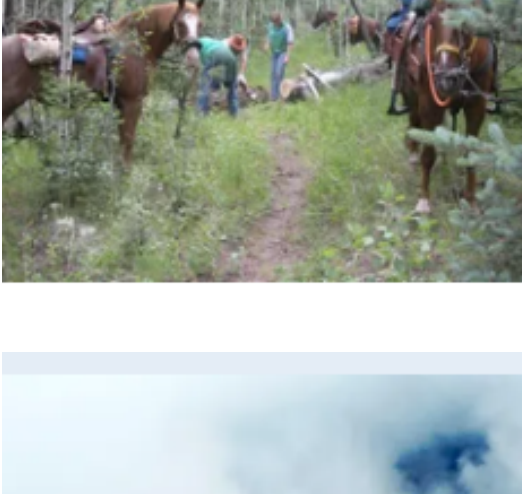
Equestrian Etiquette - Protecting Trees and Park Structures

Responsible equestrians should actively protect trees and other park structures when out on the trail. [Find out more >>](#)



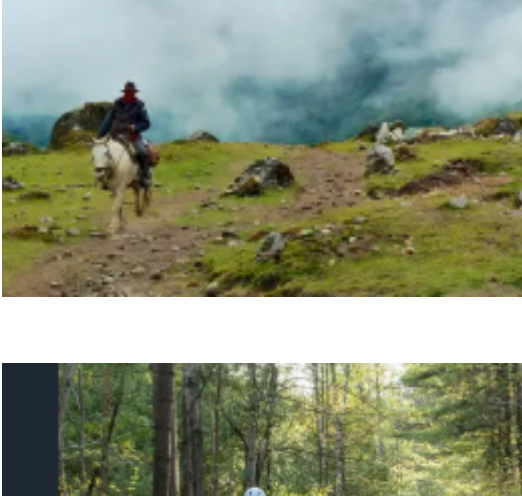
Equine Land Advocacy – A Best Practice for Equine Access

Advocating for what your equine community needs, and how to do it. [Find out more >>](#)



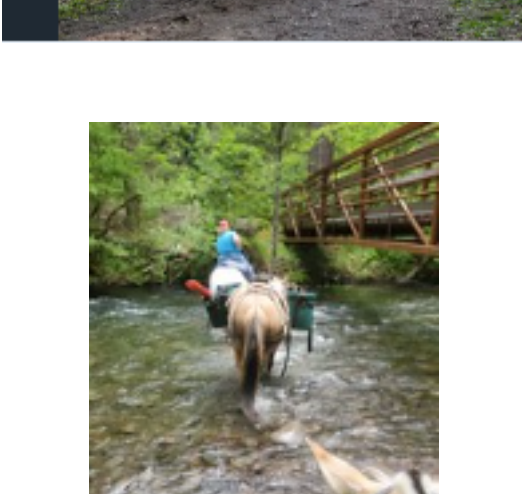
Horses & Invasive Plants: The Western USA Study

This study indicates that horses and pack stock are unlikely, if at all, to spread invasive weeds along trails under the conditions he studied in both the eastern and western United States. Article courtesy of the Backcountry Horsemen of America. [Find out more >>](#)



Horses and Pack Stock Are Not Likely Sources of Harmful Pathogens in Waterways

Dr. Atwill's work is the strongest evidence yet that stock use in the Sierra high country is unlikely to result in introduction into waterways of pathogens that cause human illness (giardia, E-coli, etc.). Article courtesy of the Backcountry Horsemen of America. [Find out more >>](#)



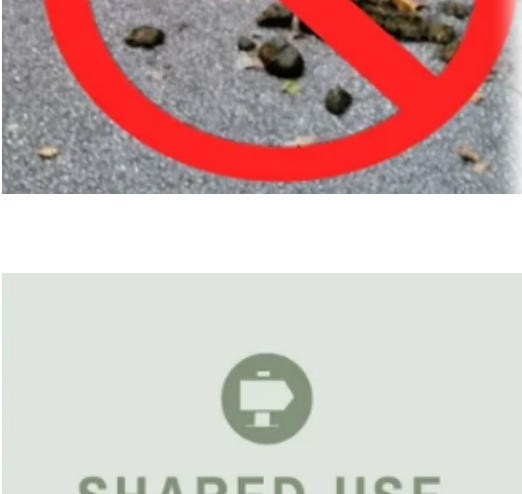
Horses as Trail Users

Horses are the only means of transport into the wilderness that has a mind of its own. [Find out more >>](#)



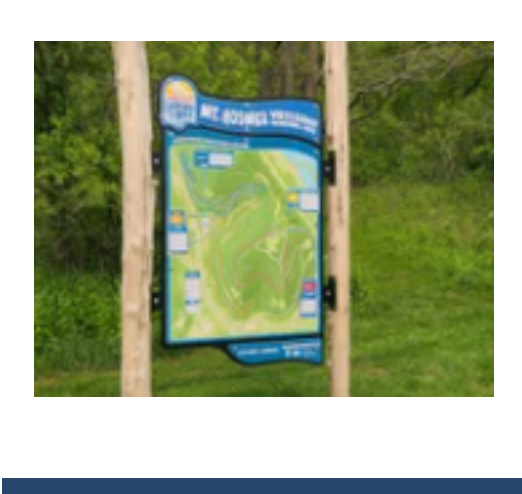
Report on Equestrian Access on Federal Land

A study by the American Horse Council (2009) to gather information about trail closures or attempted trail closures on federal public lands. [Find out more >>](#)



Successful Models in Developing and Maintaining Private Equestrian Trails

In this webinar you will learn about how three different communities have developed and maintained successful equestrian trail system on private land. [Find out more >>](#)



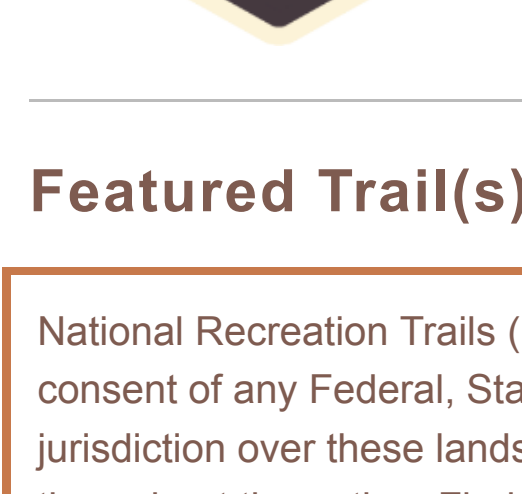
Sustainable Equestrian Trails from Grant Funding to Project Success

Part two of a two-part series related to sustainability, this webinar aims to introduce you to the fundamentals of managing a sustainable horse farm and will delve deeper into environmentally sustainable trail building and maintenance for equestrian use. [Find out more >>](#)



The Horse Owners Guide to Water Quality Protection

Horse owners can reduce the need for further regulation by taking responsibility to manage horse waste, limit erosion, control, storm water runoff, and protect creeks and waterways. Article courtesy of the Backcountry Horsemen of America. [Find out more >>](#)



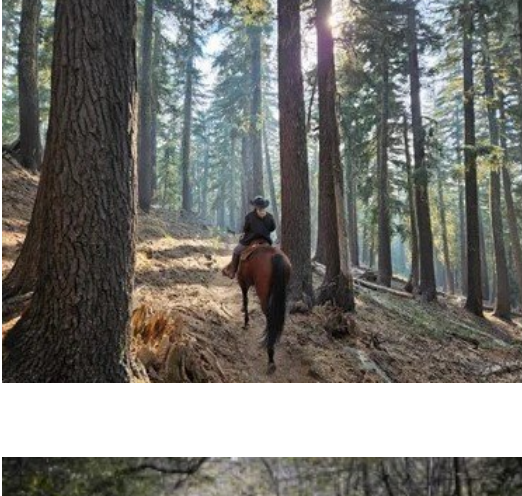
Trail Etiquette - What to Do with Horse Poo

Lora Goerlich, American Trails contributor and equestrian expert, shares trail etiquette around horse manure. [Find out more >>](#)



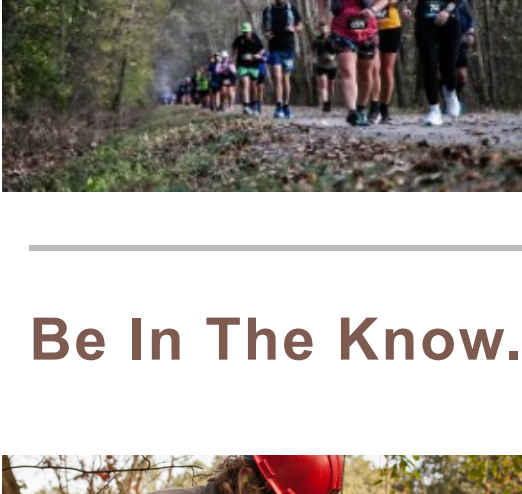
More Resources on this Topic

The Shared-Use Trail Hub includes websites, articles, videos, and other online resources that share various community-related information for organizations and amplify the voices of those less represented in the trail community. [Find out more >>](#)



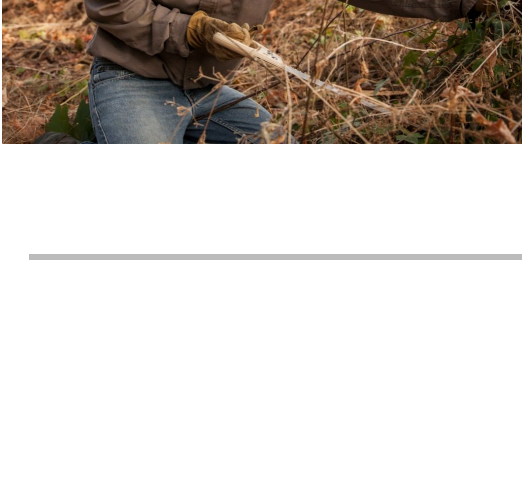
Trailhead, Blazers, and Breadcrumbs

New signage leads the way through the Lansing, Iowa, trail expansion project. [Find out more >>](#)



Featured Advertiser: iZone Imaging

iZone Imaging is the trusted partner in providing durable signage and graphics from the only completely in-house manufacturing facility dedicated to producing CHPL (Custom High Pressure Laminate) products. [Find out more >>](#)



Find Trail Related Businesses

American Trails Business Directory contains over 5,000 trail and outdoor recreation-related businesses and organizations and we keep adding more! Find your trail-related product or service or add your own company for free! [Find out more >>](#)

Featured Trail(s)...

National Recreation Trails (NRT) are recognized by the federal government, with the consent of any Federal, State, Tribal, local, nonprofit, or private entity having jurisdiction over these lands. Today, over 1,350 of these trails have been designated throughout the nation. Find more trails using the NRT [Trail Finder](#).



Featured NRT: Great Pinery Heritage Waterway, Wisconsin

About this month's featured trail(s): The Great Pinery Heritage Waterway is a navigable water trail located in Northcentral Wisconsin. Situated on the Wisconsin River and its tributaries, the trail spans several counties and is 108 miles long. [Find out more >>](#)

NRT Photo Contest is Open!

American Trails sponsors this contest for photographs of designated NRTs across the nation. The goal is to highlight the diversity of the NRTs and increase familiarity with these great trails. **Photos submitted must be taken on an NRT** (click the link to confirm NRT designation status). **The deadline to submit photos is December 15.** [Find out more >>](#)

Deadline to Apply Extended to December 1

The deadline to apply for NRT designation has been extended to **December 1.** National Recreation Trails and National Water Trails must meet eligibility criteria and follow and use the same application process. [Find out more >>](#)

Be In The Know...

Join the Trail Workers of America Group

American Trails advances the development of diverse high-quality trails and greenways for the benefit of people and communities. We created this group for trail workers and volunteers to connect, ask questions, and discuss trail-related issues. [Join here >>](#)

Connect with us!

Our Contact Information
{{Organization Name}}
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{{Organization Website}}

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