

Trail Riding Project

The Trail Ride Project is designed for members who want to enroll in a 4-H horse project but are not necessarily interested in show competition. The horse used in this project may be used in another project, and should be at least four years old and evaluated at the Spring Horse Clinic or have waiver from 4-H Club Leader.

Participation Requirements:

- First year trail riding members and first year trail project horses must be evaluated at the Spring Horse Clinic for safety and appropriate fit of saddle and tack. Horse Project 4-H leaders may waive the mandatory clinic if they are familiar with the 4-H student and horse.
- The Trail Ride Project is to include four (4) rides with two or more people (not necessarily 4-H members) for a total of eight (8) miles on public land leaving from a trailhead on a designated trail. Members are to include a recording of location, terrain, obstacles encountered, and how they were overcome, etc.
- All members are required, regardless of their experience level, to participate in a minimum of two (2) 4-H Horse Leader led trail rides in order to participate in the Fair Judged Trail Project Ride Competition. If riding two animals, you must attend two (2) trail rides with each project animal.
- The member should learn about the training and conditioning of a trail horse as well.
- In order to receive a ribbon rating or be eligible for other Trail Ride Project awards, the rider must complete all required rides before the Fair Trail Ride. Member may use fall rides from the previous year to fulfill required rides if signed up for project by October 1st .
- An Assessment Sheet must be turned in with the completed assessments done to date, and signed by a horse leader. If you do not have a horse leader, then contact the Horse Superintendent.
- Use the 4-H Horse Packing Manual as a reference regarding equipment, feeding, health and safety.
- Forest Service rules must be observed and obeyed.
- No Clover Buds, siblings, non 4-H friends. Must be enrolled in 4-H Horse Project to participate.
- Adults/Parents are allowed for safety reasons and must be a 4-H Leader.
- **Horses with tendency to kick need a red or orange ribbon in their tail.**

Type of Horse:

- Gentle 4-year-old or older saddle horse of any size and type suited to the member.
- Stallions cannot be used.

Equipment:

- Members may ride in either English or Western saddle.
- An ASTM/SEI approved helmet for Level 1-3.
- Blunt spurs are permitted, but not required.
- Adequate padding is required under saddle.
- Horse should be clean, in good condition, and have well-maintained hooves.
- Please see Montana State Horse Project Bit Rule Examples for allowed bits and reins.

- Halter with a 10-12 foot, at least ½ inch thick lead rope, in good condition, is required to be worn under bridle, with lead rope to be attached to saddle in a safe manner.
- Either a leather curb strap or flat metal curb chain is mandatory on shank bits.
- Tie-downs, martingales, draw reins are not allowed.
- Crops are allowed.
- All equipment should be clean and in good repair. Special attention should be given latigos, cinches, stirrup leathers, and all bridle parts.
- All equipment should be properly fitted to the horse and rider.
- Dress Code: For monthly trail rides, comfortable clothing may be worn to include Western or English boots, helmet, t-shirts and should also include a sweatshirt/jacket, long sleeve shirt, hat and rain gear appropriate for terrain and weather. This will be at the discretion of the leaders organizing the trail ride. On the day of the Fair Trail Ride, members must wear a western long sleeve shirt, western clean jeans, boots and helmet. If riding English, proper English attire should be worn. Refer to the Ravalli County 4-H Horse Project Guidelines.
- Rain gear **must** be carried or worn.
- Chaps (working – not “show” chaps) will protect legs, shed water, and provide warmth. (Optional)
- Leather Gloves.
- Saddlebags.
- Breast collar. (Optional)
- Crupper, if needed.
- Bell boots and splint boots, if needed. (Optional)
- Canteen or water bottle.
- Compass. (Optional)
- Watch.
- Hoof pick.
- Knife, adequate to cut a rope if necessary.
- First aid kits for horse and rider.
- Map of route. (Optional)
- Snack for rider. (Optional)
- Snack for horse. (Optional)

Safety Kits on all rides must include the following:

- Human: Human pain killer (Ibuprofen/Tylenol), Band-Aids- assorted sizes
- Equine: Equine pain killer (Bute (phenylbutazone)/Banamine), Vet wrap, Sterile gauze/pad

Safety Kits-additional suggested items include the following:

Equine

- Hoof boot
- Duct tape
- 2 flexible stretch adhesive bandages
- Absorbent Compress Dressings (Disposable Diapers), Kotex
- Sterile gauze pad
- Terramycin (eye ointment)
- Digital Thermometer
- Wound antimicrobial (Betadine/ Vetericyn/Nolvasan, etc.)
- Petroleum Jelly

Human

- Water proof container or Zip Lock Bag
- 1 roll adhesive tape (1” minimum width)
- Triple Antibiotic Ointment
- Instant cold compress
- Hydrocortisone ointment
- 4” Sterile Wound Dressing

- Scissors (capable of cutting bandage)
- Blanket (space blanket)
- Insect repellent
- EpiPen (if needed)
- 1 roll Gauze (2" min. width)
- Sunscreen
- Sewing kit
- 3 pair synthetic protective gloves
- Extra Medical Arm Band with blank USPC Medical Card
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Antihistamine (Benadryl)
- Tweezers

Things to Remember at Trail Head:

- Clean up manure.
- Proper parking: Park so you can get out and allow other trailers to park.
- Keep calm.
- Do not block stock ramps, hitching rails, water troughs, etc.
- Never move out until all riders are mounted and ready.
- If you need to warm horse up, warm up in a safe area away from other members and horses.
- Notify others at trailhead of any issues (behavior) or health concerns regarding yourself and horse.

Trail Courtesy to Be Observed:

- Wait for person at obstacle and water crossings or when requested by another.
- Do not allow branches to snap back at other riders, etc.
- Warn other riders behind you of potential dangers/obstacles on the trail by saying something like wire ahead, holes ahead, hikers ahead, bicycles ahead, etc.
- Do not ride too close to the horse in front of you or lag too far behind. Try to keep single horse spacing between riders. If lagging behind, request group to wait so you can catch up. The group will then stop and wait. No trotting to catch up.
- If you must adjust equipment, take a photo, water your horse, etc., notify the group before riding out of line so the group can stop and wait for you.
- If you need to pass another rider, wait for a safe place to pass and let others know what you intend to do. You may walk by quietly and courteously.
- No trotting or loping on the trail. This will be at the discretion of the leaders.
- Do not cut across switchbacks.
- Be courteous to other trail users.

Judged (Fair) Trail Ride:

- Members must ride through an obstacle course on a planned trail ride.
- Members must turn in an assessment sheet with all completed assessments done to date, and signed by a horse leader at the Fair Trail Ride. If not completed and turned in, then points will be deducted.
- Member is judged on the horse's manner and ability, and member's ability to aid his horse through the obstacles.

Faults of Horse and Rider:

- Bouncing in saddle.
- Heavy handedness.
- Jerking horses head.
- Excessive spurring.
- Toe is often lower than heel.
- Following too close to horse in front of you.
- Failure to properly execute any of the required movements.
- Not sitting in saddle correctly.

Obstacles Which May Be Included for Judging: The type of obstacles and degree of difficulty will differ with the level of horsemanship in which the member is enrolled.

LEVEL 1:

All members may be required to do the following:

- Lead horse from ground.
- Mount and dismount correctly.
- Tie horse correctly.
- Go between two trees with low branches.
- Ride through heavy timber.
- Pass beside a camp site.
- Ride single file in a group.
- Follow trail markers.
- Pass a motorcycle or mountain bike.
- Pass another animal (llama, mule, donkey, etc.).
- Pass a horse or hiker with packs.
- Cross a bridge.
- Cross a creek.
- Go over logs.
- Go through brush.
- Open & close a gate while dismounted.
- Ride along road.
- Climb hill.
- Descend hill.
- Cross a very rocky area.
- Put on slicker and mount horse.
- Water crossing

LEVEL 2:

Members in Trail Riding Project Level II and higher may be asked to do the following:

- Mount & dismount from either side of horse. The side you use will depend upon the terrain. You should use the uphill side to dismount in steep country, depending on the footing. If it is slippery, it may be safer to dismount on the downhill side.
- Tie a trail marker.
- Put on slicker while mounted.
- Climb a steep hill or bank.
- Descend a steep hill or bank.
- Open & close a gate while mounted.
- Lead another horse while mounted.
- Back your horse out of a tight spot.
- Lead your horse on a narrow trail.
- Use a saw.
- Turn 180 degrees on a narrow trail.
- Ride horse away from group.

Trail Markers:

Trail markers (ribbons) will be placed along the trail. These will be in plain sight and easily visible. The turns will be well marked. Sometimes markers will appear on both sides of the trail, indicating that you will be going both ways on that section of the trail. Trail marker positions will be clarified at the pre-ride meeting.

Day of Judged Trail Ride:

1. Each rider will either receive a map or be accompanied by a horse leader to the designated obstacles after check-in. Riders will ride to the obstacles located along the trail.
2. At each obstacle, a 4-H Trail Project Ride Judge will mark a score sheet with a score at the completed obstacle. Riders and horses will also be judged on overall trail riding ability and etiquette. The highest scores will determine the winner.
3. Participants will space out and wait at markers so individuals pass through the obstacle individually.
4. Riders will return to check-in, cool horse down and unsaddle. Upon return of the last group, riders with identical scores may be asked to return to the check-in to perform a horse-related task or answer trail-related questions. These tasks and questions will be age appropriate.

Possible tasks could include:

- Walking and turning horse
 - Cleaning feet
 - Applying fly repellent
 - Tying horse
 - Saddling horse
 - Grooming horse
 - Mounting horse
5. Based on their score, participants will receive blue, red or white placing. Champion and Reserve Champion awards will be determined in Junior and Senior age groups.
6. An example of what the Fair Trail Ride Schedule may look like:
- 8:30 a.m. Trail Judges will be at a designated place and receive instructions and score sheets. Trail Judges will go to their obstacles around 9:30 a.m.
 - 9:00 a.m. Members will meet at a designated area without their animals to receive marked maps and materials. Members will be assigned who they will ride with and groups will be split based on the numbers of riders. Each group will consist of both junior and senior members and 2 or more adult riders assigned to their group.
 - 10:00 a.m. Members will meet with their group in the designated area with their animals and hit the trail with their group.
 - Riders will be checked back in by approximately 12:00 noon. At 12:30 pm, Judge's will return to campground.
 - Optional: 1:00 p.m. A carry in lunch will be served. All participants and their families as well as all other 4-H Horse members and parents are invited; or members bring sack lunch.
 - Conclusion: Recognition of Trail Ride Project members and completion.

