



**Equestrian Design Guidebook
for Trails, Trailheads,
and Campgrounds**

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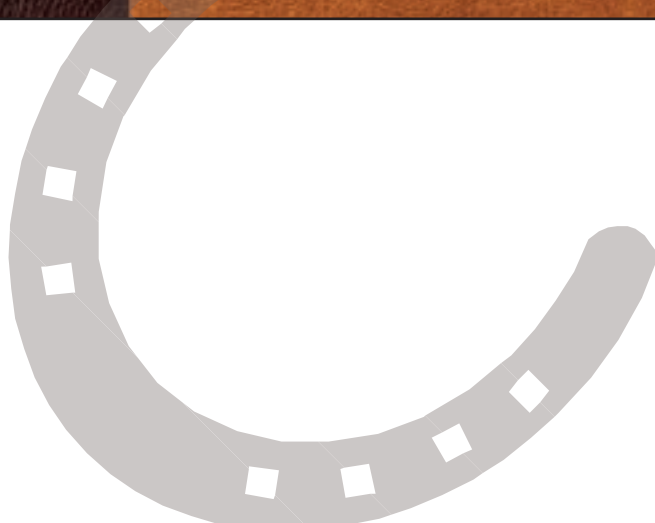
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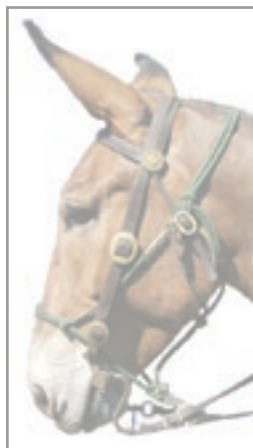
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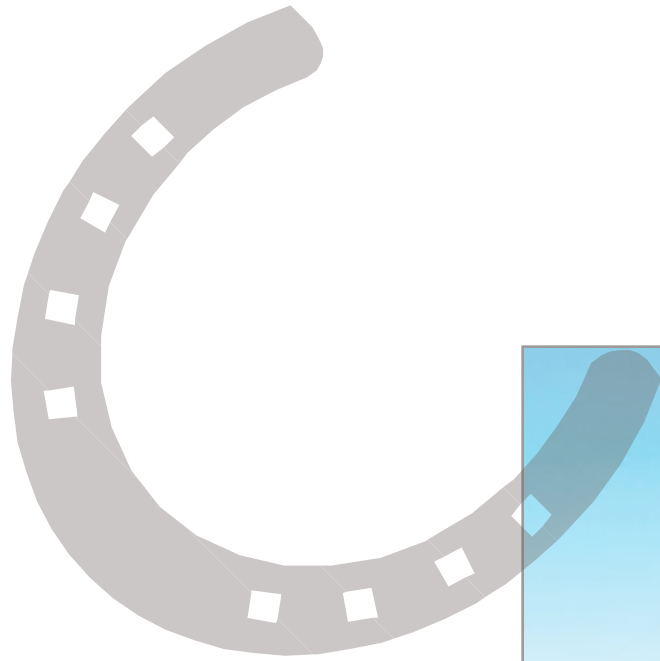
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Introduction— Climbing Into the Saddle

Why write another book on planning and designing trails, trailheads, and campgrounds? The answer is simple. Very few of the references now available address the needs of equestrians. This guidebook addresses their needs. It is written with a specific audience in mind—*planners, architects, engineers, landscape architects, land managers, equestrian advocates, and private developers who want to create successful recreation opportunities for riders.* The emphasis is on highly developed recreation facilities and programs, such as those in urban, rural, and some wildland areas.

This guidebook provides practical guidelines for developing recreation environments that are sensitive to the needs of riders and their stock. To keep the size and scope of this guidebook manageable, the focus is limited to equestrian elements—such as corrals, tread width, horse-friendly surfaces, and so forth—and a few closely related subjects. The information presented can be adapted to a variety of settings and levels of development, as well as to different jurisdictions. In many cases, the expertise of specialists—for example, engineers, landscape architects, and scientists—is required. Planners

and designers should consult other sources for basic planning and design criteria, including agency-specific guidelines, legal requirements, engineering and architectural standards, scientific expertise, and so forth. Consulting with area riders is an essential part of the planning process. Sound planning and design judgment are the keys to choosing the most appropriate elements, given local conditions. This guidebook is intended as a practical guide, not a policy manual—however, the authors believe the information is consistent with current U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service policies and direction.

Useful resources, references, examples, and other points of view appear in sidebars that accompany the text. Sidebars include:

- ★ *Lingo Lasso*—Useful terms
- ★ *Resource Roundup*—Useful print and Web resources
- ★ *Trail Talk*—Other points of view
- ★ *Horse Sense*—Useful information not included in the text

Web site addresses given in the sidebars also are listed in *Appendix C—Helpful Resources*. Numerous drawings, tables, photographs, and examples supplement the text. The figures are not construction drawings, but can serve as guidelines that can be modified to suit local conditions. Both English and metric measures are given where applicable.



Lingo Lasso

Why Equestrian?

Terms used to describe people who ride horses and the facilities they use vary around the country. In some circles, *equestrian* means a person who rides a horse or mule. Equestrian also can describe anything related to horses and mules, such as an *equestrian trail*. Some readers prefer simple expressions, for example, rider and horse trail. In an effort to include all readers, this guide uses all these terms as they seem appropriate.

For clarity, drawings and tables use English measurements only. For assistance with metric conversions, refer to *Appendix K—English and Metric Conversions*.

The authors attempted to present material applicable to many areas of the country and to include information from a variety of agencies and jurisdictions. The text presents many examples and concepts used by the Forest Service, which has a long history of planning recreation trails and facilities. Many of the concepts developed for national forests are useful models for other agencies. Because Arizona is home to several of the authors, readers may detect a southwestern influence in some discussions. Planners and designers are encouraged to adapt the information as necessary to fit local conditions.



Readers should review *Chapter 1—Understanding Horses and Mules* before turning to areas of specific interest. Chapter 1 is a horse and mule primer suitable for planners and designers who need to understand the needs and behavior of trail stock. The chapter also provides an overview of basic design considerations, such as animal size.

Although the *Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads and Campgrounds* was printed in black and white to keep costs down, electronic color versions of the guidebook are available at

★ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/publications.htm>

★ <http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/htmlpubs/html/07232816>

The t-d site requires a username and password. (Username: t-d, Password: t-d)

The HTML files on these Web sites feature live links for the numerous references and helpful resources in this guidebook. High and low resolution pdf (Acrobat) files—the best choice for printing—also are provided.



Resource Roundup

What's That?

For help with terms and acronyms, visit these online sources:

- ★ Glossary of horse terms (Gaited Horses 1998–2003) at <http://www.gaitedhorses.net/Articles/HorseGlossary.html>
- ★ Glossary of planning and trail terms from *Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access* (Beneficial Designs 1999) at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/sidewalk2/sidewalks2ag.htm>
- ★ Glossary of trail terms (National Trails Training Partnership 2003) at <http://www.americantrails.org/glossary.html>
- ★ Trail acronyms listing (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy 2007) at <http://www.railtrails.org/whatwedo/railtrailinfo/resources/acronyms.html>
- ★ For assistance with acronyms used in this guidebook, refer to *Appendix A—Acronyms*.

