

Specific Trail Info

#1 - Getting to the Park

All year long, lucky riders and horses will take to the series of pathways that take us safely to the crossing at SW Marine and into Pacific Spirit Park. A little knowledge about where we guide our horses' feet is a good thing.

On the river's edge, ride as far from the edge as you can- this lessens the impact where it's most prone to erosion and puts you in a safer position should there be any disturbances. This really applies at the narrowest point, where it's easy to see erosion's effects.

Before the bridge, space out so it's easy for your horses to walk over one at a time. If there are people at the bridge, ask them to walk off the bridge.

All along the golf course be aware of golfers and be quiet for those teeing off or about to swing. The Golf Club owns the land that part of the trail is on and we use it as part of a generous agreement.

The dike leading away from the river along the golf course is City land but we are still requested to be aware of golfers and traditionally don't canter, as well as slowing to a walk when there are golfers swinging. Horses sound very loud to those not riding!

Safety tip: asking other users of the dike to be on the water side of the trail puts you in a safer position.

Bordering the Musqueam Reserve our trail continues under City Parks Board jurisdiction. When it was upgraded for equestrian use in 1986 the agreement was that we would take our horses ONLY on the main trail, not on any side trails in Musqueam Park or onto any part of the lovely grass bordering SW Marine Dr. at the traffic light. We are still bound by this agreement - **PLEASE**. We would only have high-risk street access to the Park if this were to be closed to horses. There has been recent major work in the ravine just before SW Marine, so we know the City is watching!

As well, there is lots of foot traffic along this route, so apply all courtesy and common sense as you pass - at a walk- and let walkers, runners and bikers know how you can pass each other safely.

#2 Approaching and Passing Other Trail Users

ATTENTION TRAIL RIDERS- and this means you even if you wander out below the McCleery Golf Course on the City Greenways trail or just go to the bridge by the Point Grey Golf Course!

A trail ride is a great alternative to a crowded Club clinic or show weekend and gives both horses and riders a refreshing change of scene. If you're new to riding in the Park, or even up to SW Marine Dr., take along someone who isn't. If your horse is worried about new things try to put him in a "trail sandwich": between two other horses who are calm.

Please remember that we share all trails. Almost everyone loves seeing us riding, but some people may not feel positive about horses. Take the time to say hello as you walk past, and if your horse is the sort, invite a pat from those you pass while you chat a bit. It keeps our profile friendly.

Be courteous and cautious when approaching and passing all those you meet. A greeting and maybe a word about how much our horses enjoy "getting out" goes a long way toward dispelling worries that many have about horses in our midst being a dangerous quantity. Always walk around or past others, and let them know how to make it better if an awkward situation develops.

AN EXAMPLE is when a person with a dog holds the dog off-trail, crouching in the bushes and making your horse apprehensive, dancing around, etc. If you ask them to slowly stand up and say something so that your horse will recognize them as human it will usually solve the problem and they will know how to be the next time they meet a horse. Every meeting with the public affects us all, so be in control, be friendly, and have fun! "A Short Guide to Trail Riding" can be downloaded from the Safety Tips page of this website.

#3.UEL Trailriders' Report re SW Marine Trail

In December our members attend the Pacific Spirit Park Society's Work Planning meeting which updates information from all user groups under the PSPS umbrella, and outlines what is in the works for the next year in the Park. Trail Riders have a well-heard voice as one of these groups, even though we are now counted as only 1% of the park visits! In 1998 equestrian use was counted as 4% of park visits. The resurfacing, crowning, ditching and culverting of most of the length of the SW Marine Trail which occurred over 2 summers was done with lots of input from us as to what made it a really good horse trail, and the GVRD staff did us proud. We can now use it year-round, something not possible (at least not advisable) since 1987 when this rider began trail riding in the Park.