

ETI National
Suggestions for the Trail Boss
Leading Trail Rides & Camping

Pick your Campground—Reserve America has many wonderful camp sites to choose from. You can also call the ETI National office for suggestions. They can refer you to a corral in the area you are considering, for inside tips of less known camping areas.

<http://www.reserveamerica.com/unifSearch.do>

Pre-Ride the Trails

When you pre-ride the trail it is best if you take a second person with you. You never know what obstacles you may find. Your Drag Rider is always a good choice. Secure the trail and make a note of any areas of concern. Watch for soft corners on the trail. When there are only 2-3 horse passes, the trail may be perfectly safe. But when you have 15-20 horses at one time, the condition of the trail can change by the time the middle to last rider is passing a questionable soft spot.

When you send out your trail flyer, explain details of the ride schedule and facilities available at the camp site. You can use a scale of 1-4 for determining the suggested condition of the horse to comfortably handle the trails available from your camp site.

- 1) Well-Conditioned Horse - Steep trails 6-7 hours of riding
- 2) Good-Conditioned Horse - Moderate trails & grades – 5-7 hours riding
- 3) Medium-Conditioned Horse – Flat-to-low hills with 2-3 hour rides
- 4) Soft-Conditioned Horse - Trails you can ride at will and length of time desired, not determined by the trail boss.

Remember the rule of thumb as a guide: 2-4-6 rule. A well-conditioned horse has been ridden: 2 hrs a day, 4 days a week for 6 weeks. All horses and riders vary, but this is an old-time guide.

TRAIL BOSS

Pre-ride all trails to be used during the trip. The drag rider is as important as the Trail Boss. Bring him/her along with you so they are also familiar with the trails. It is the drag rider's job to communicate with the Trail Boss if there are any issues along the ride. Riders should never fall behind the Drag Rider.

The trail boss and drag rider in combination should try to have the following items on the ride. I'm not saying all of these items are necessary, but in the best of all worlds, safety is a first concern and these items help ensure the safe return of the riders:

Small First Aid kit, bandages, sanitized cleaners, first aid ointment, clean wrap, vet wrap, Chicago screws, chin strap, 8 - 10" tube, (in case of a snake bite on the horses nose), hoof pick, fence tool, collapsible water bucket, small horse

shoe repair kit, (nails, small hammer, multiuse tool such as a Leatherman), the Leatherman can also be used as a punch, to pull cactus from a horse or rider, cut barbwire if a horse becomes tangled in hidden wire, matches, long rope (40') in case you need to pull a horse over or out of a problem, easy boot, flash light, sun cream, and a hat and jacket. Bring your hand saw, small pick and clippers in case the trail has changed since your pre-ride. Of course, these are just suggestions. As you go you can build your own kit that fits your needs. Prepare a list of suggested items for your riders to have for their safety. All of the above items I have used on past rides.

If riders are going to venture out on their own, encourage them to use the buddy system and ride with a partner. Ask them to leave a basic agenda and return time with someone in the camp ground.

Include in the camping flyer, camping accommodations and the type of facilities available for your horse: Tie lines, stalls, tying to your trailer and if there is room to bring your own portable stall. It is always nice to include driving instructions with your camping flyer.

If camp fires are allowed, have your riders bring firewood to share. Camp fires make wonderful memories with great singalongs, ghost stories and past camping memories.

Detail the cost of the camping fees, per horse, per person, per pets (and specify if dogs are allowed in the campsite). Handy aids in the campground are long hoses, buckets, wheelbarrows, rakes and shovels.

Do the faucets require a special handle to turn them on? (Always double check that fresh water is available and if not, discuss the options available for providing water for your horses.

Include the ETI National Insurance Waivers. Make sure everyone has signed in as they arrive.

If you are planning a pot luck dinner, provide an outline so everyone can participate. If you are sharing all meals, plan your menu ahead of time. Include any campground regulations.

If horse manure is to be removed complete, placed in trash containers, broadcast in the brush? Leave the campsite cleaner then it was when you arrived.

You are out in the fresh air to have fun and enjoy the sites. Bring your camera so you can share your adventure when you return home.