

Horses are Prey Animals/Unpredictable if Frightened....

3S Trail Safety

STOP – STAND – SPEAK

Back Country Horsemen is a volunteer group committed to keeping the trail systems on our public lands open for recreation. Members of our group cut out fallen trees, clear encroaching brush, and build new trails. Our trail systems are used by hikers, dog walkers, and bicyclists, as well as equestrians. In an effort to educate users and create a safer environment for everyone, the “3S” program was developed in 2019 by Peninsula Chapter to address trail etiquette for multiple user groups.

The safety program addresses the fact that horses are prey animals and, although they are well trained, they are very large and can be unpredictable if frightened. Not everyone understands horses; therefore, for the safety of all users, the following steps should be taken when meeting horses on a trail:

Stop – Stop moving and stay visible.

Stand – Stand still and move to the downhill side of the trail (if feasible) as horses approach.

Speak – Speak to the horse and rider.

Horses sometimes do not recognize a person with a huge coat and hood, or a backpack, or a fast moving, almost silent, bicycle, so just speak up and say, “**Hello**”! Once horses hear a human voice, they realize the approaching object is not a predator! At that point the horse relaxes, and you can communicate with the rider as to the safest way to pass one another. Technically, all trail users yield to horses, and bicycles yield to walkers, but safety is paramount, so humans should courteously decide on the best solution. Our goal is to have everyone safely enjoying a day on the trails.

