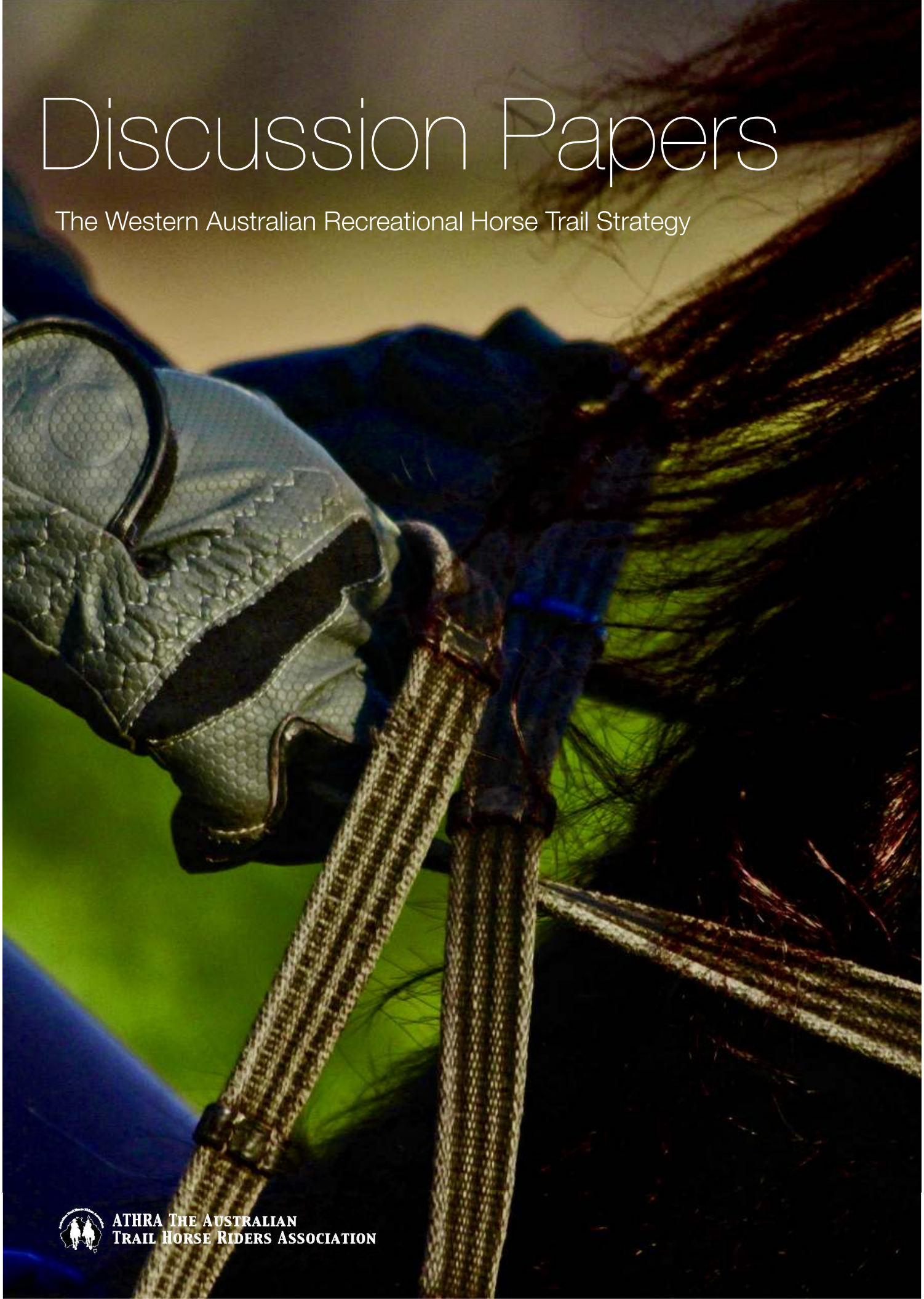
Discussion Papers

The Western Australian Recreational Horse Trail Strategy



ATHRA The Australian Trail Horse Riders Association

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Discussion Paper 1: Horse Trail Riding and Activity Benefits Overview

Why is this important?

It is important to define recreational horse trail activities and horse trails to provide scope for the Western Australian Horse Trails Strategy and to provide a consistent understanding across stakeholder groups and implementation agencies.

Outlining the physical, social and economic benefits of the activity is important when developing a strategic framework.

Definitions

Recreational - the activity is not undertaken as part of an organised competitive event; it is generally unstructured; undertaken by individuals or informal groups; is undertaken for enjoyment.

Trails

The Western Australian Trails Strategy defines trails as "areas that provide an opportunity for the community to experience recreational, health and wellbeing, environmental, economic and/or cultural enrichment through interaction with the environment"[1].

A **trail** can be a corridor, route or pathway with strong linkages with the natural environment, open space networks and cultural heritage. Land based trails typically have a trail corridor that is distinguishable from the surrounding landscape. There is normally a visible trail surface, pathway or series of signs, trail markers or landmarks[2].

Horse trail - is either specifically designated for horse riding or is multi-use and does not preclude horse riding. The Rider Survey undertaken as part of this strategy identified that horse riders used the following for recreational riding – firebreaks, road verges, designated horse trails, gazetted gravel roads, multi-use trails.

Types of Recreational Horse Trail Activities

Horse trail riding - participants ride outside of enclosed areas in the natural environment for pleasure, challenge, experience and educational outcomes. The term 'horse trail riding' is appropriately applied to long (multi day) as well as short (an hour or two) rides that can be experienced in diverse environments including metropolitan, coastal, outback and remote regions[3].

[1] Western Australian Trails Strategy 2009-2015, Department of Sport and Recreation
[2] Sustainable Recreational Trails: Guidelines for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of recreational trails in South Australia, Government of South Australia, p1.
[3] Western Australian Adventure Activity Standards - Horse Trail Riding v2.0, 2013

Endurance riding - This is a more active and intensive form of recreational or competitive horse riding. It typically involves riding horses in planned and organised events, generally on loop trails with distances of up to 160 kilometres. Horses may also be engaged in endurance training rides over shorter distances.

Horse Trekking - Long-distance riding involves the use of pack horses or support vehicles to carry overnight camping equipment and supplies, or it can be clover leaf style which involves self catering, overnight camping and requires float parking. It may occur over a number of days or even weeks, sometimes in quite remote areas.

Harness Driving - 2 or 4 wheel vehicles, minimum age of drivers is 16, must comply with Australian Road Rules.

Activity Benefits

Horse riding is a popular recreational activity that has strong cultural associations for many Western Australians and it is an enjoyable way to experience natural environments.

The WA Horse Trails Strategy Rider Survey 2014 found that respondents undertook recreational horse trail riding for:

- enjoyment and fun
- exercise and fitness for self
- exercise for the horse
- nature appreciation
- social aspects
- adventure
- training for competitive events and
- sightseeing

The Strategic Directions for Horse Riding in NSW National Parks[4] found that there are also significant social benefits associated with horse riding in national parks.

> "Horse riding has heritage value for many horse riders and horse riding on historical trails in national parks provides for the maintenance of these cultural traditions. Participation in individual and group recreational activities such as horse riding can have positive effects on people's health and sense of wellbeing. Horse riding also facilitates access to national parks to some people with mobility issues which might otherwise prevent them from exploring protected areas. Increasing the diversity of the community that experiences and enjoys national parks fosters public appreciation and understanding of natural and cultural heritage and strengthens support for protecting the park system."

[4] Strategic Directions for Horse Riding in NSW National Parks, Office of Environment and Heritage, 2012, p8

The following benefits of trails identified in the Western Australian Trails Strategy 2009-2015 are equally applicable specifically to horse trails.

Value creation opportunities/avenues			
Individual	**Local communities**	**State**	**Australia**
Developing, promoting or creating opportunities for: Active recreation. Physical and mental health benefits (inc. prevention). Social interaction. Environmental interaction. 'Escapism' and isolation. Opportunity for generational experiences. Biodiversity and wilderness appreciation and conservation. Heritage and indigenous cultural preservation and appreciation. Adventure and challenge. Transport. Excitement from planning for trails use. A sense of achievement or fulfilment when remembering the whole experience.	Developing, promoting or creating opportunities for: Community health and vibrancy. Community infrastructure and assets. Employment and revenue (particularly for small business). Alternative community resources for active recreation and passive environmental interaction (e.g. photography). Encouraging low-water recreation uses. Community safety and crime reduction. Environmental ownership by the local community. Community development. Physical connection between communities. Offsetting climate change impacts.	Developing, promoting or creating opportunities for: Attractiveness and vibrancy of the state. Economic growth (particularly in regional areas). Active recreation and lifestyles. Community safety and crime reduction. Community use and ownership of the environment. Acknowledgment and appreciation of indigenous culture and heritage.	Developing, promoting or creating opportunities for: National identity. Thought-leadership. Tourism appeal.

Table 1: WA Trails Strategy - Value Creation Opportunities/Avenues

The South Australian Sustainable Recreational Trails Guidelines[5] identified the following benefits of trails in general, which also apply to horse trails:

Social and Physical Health Benefits:

- Participation in trail activities improves physical and mental health, assists with disease prevention and management, particularly cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, respiratory, nervous and endocrine systems as well as reducing obesity, hypertension, depression and anxiety.
- Trail activities facilitate participation and interaction between a diverse range of community members, age groups, individuals and families and facilitate social interaction, e.g. community groups, voluntary trail maintenance and conservation work.
- Trails can offer a wide range of opportunities to a wide range of people. Depending upon design, trails can accommodate the elderly, people with mobility impairments or satisfy those seeking challenging adventures and a sense of achievement.
- Participation in trail activities is relatively low cost.
- Trails can introduce participants to other recreational and participation offerings in the community.
- Trails help to connect people and places and develop and grow community pride.

Environmental and Cultural Benefits:

- Trails provide opportunities for the community to experience natural and cultural environments.
- Trails help to protect the environment by localising impacts and managing visitation effects.
- Trails provide for educational and interpretive opportunities and increase environmental and cultural awareness and appreciation.
- Well-connected trail networks can decrease the use of motorised vehicles for transportation and recreation, therefore reducing the production of emissions that contribute to global warming and respiratory problems.
- Trail networks increase community ownership and assist to preserve natural and cultural values.
- Trails highlight our 'living heritage' by allowing the continuation of traditional activities such as horse riding.
- Trails provide opportunities for community participation in conservation and revegetation work.

Economic Benefits:

- Trails may generate intrastate, interstate and overseas tourism spending.
- Trails support and enhance local business opportunities.
- Trail visitors spend money in towns and communities along or near trails.
- Trail users spend money preparing for their trail experience or recreation activities.
- Trail construction and maintenance can generate employment opportunities.

[5] Sustainable Recreational Trails: Guidelines for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of recreational trails in South Australia, Government of South Australia, p9.

- Participation in trail activities improves community health and reduces health expenditure.

Relevant data from the WA Horse Trails Strategy Rider Survey: Riding Behaviours (Questions 9-18)

The survey of 446 respondents across Western Australia undertaken as part of this Strategy found the following data related to riding behaviours and perceived user benefits of recreational horse trail riding.

- 2-8 hours per week spent riding recreationally.
- More than 8 hours a week spent on non-riding tasks such as grooming, feeding and transporting.
- Three quarters of those who agist their horses (ie. pay to have their horses kept at another property) travel under half an hour to their horse.
- From there 56% can ride directly to their trails, 34% have trails within 30 minutes of their agistment location.
- Half ride 2-3 times a week with a further quarter riding once a week. 6% reported riding every day.
- Average number of trail events for these respondents = 101 per annum
- Most (76%) have only short rides of 1-2 hours.
- Most people regularly ride 2-5km (54%)
- Recreational trail riding is more of a solitary pursuit with most people regularly riding alone (52%)
- Group riding is usually with only one other rider (45%) or 3-5 riders (41%)
- The main reasons for riding trails are for fun and enjoyment, for their own exercise and fitness, to exercise the horse and for nature appreciation.
- Respondents spend 57% of time on the trail walking their horse, 30% trotting and 13% at a canter.

Conclusion

Recreational horse trail riding parallels or exceeds other active outdoor recreational activities in the commitment levels of participants and the social, health and economic benefits it delivers.

Discussion Paper 2: Legislative and Policy Overview

The following overview describes the legislative and policy framework and provides a summary of the most relevant legislation.

Why is this important?

To understand the issues facing recreational horse trail riding it is important to understand the enablers and constraints embedded in the various levels of legislation, regulations, policies and management plans. The benefits of recreation are undisputed but in some areas horse riding is not supported by legislation and/or policy (eg nature reserves and reservoir protection zones). Such limitations are embedded in risk management assessments aimed at protecting the other values of these areas.

At the same time legislation and policy can support horse riding in the right locations. There is a need to maximise the enabling processes and recognise the reason behind the constraints in order to create the opportunity for future positive change.

Some seemingly good ideas are actually prohibited by legislation and must be discarded, while other opportunities may remain concealed without a full appreciation of what is actually permitted and possible.

Regulatory Layers

Generally, the underpinning legislation empowers land managers and other regulatory authorities to create regulations and by-laws that will protect their commercial interests and core agency objectives.

Policies and management plans then seek to balance this protection with the diverse, sometimes overlapping and sometimes conflicting social (including recreational), economic and environmental calls on the land being managed.

An effective communication and relationship strategy from a particular user group can have a positive influence on the attitudes of those who develop policies and management plans. This in turn can highlight limitations in regulations and ultimately legislation. Policies and management plans tend to have more flexibility than regulations, which in turn have more flexibility than legislation. Clearly the greatest opportunity for a strategy to have short term benefit is where the objectives of the strategy are encouraged - or at least not impeded - by all regulatory levels. Where there are obstacles to be overcome, the best short term opportunities will be found where the barriers are at the policy or management plan level.

Hierarchy of Regulatory Layers

Strategy

influences

Policy

guides

Management Plans / Zoning

empowered by

Regulations

underpinned by

Legislation

Strategies

Strategies can help shape policies. The following strategic initiatives from the Western Australian Trails Strategy 2009 are examples of guidance to policymakers:

- Ensure land and urban planners consider the requirements of trails users.
- Encourage the application of water catchment policy to consider the requirements of trails users.
- Consider the adoption of “Right to Roam” legislation.
- Celebrate the use of trails for competitive events and address risk-averse attitudes.
- Develop partnerships with insurers and brokers to generate risk management frameworks and minimise excessive premiums.

Strategies can be layered with the needs of specific activity groups feeding in to the needs of the broader community. For example the Horse Trails Strategy will inform the State Trails Strategy which forms part of the State Outdoor Recreation Strategy. All of these have an influence on an overall Physical Activity Strategy as well as strategies concerned with Tourism and Economic Development.

Policies

Policies are broader instruments that guide the development of Management Plans for the lands managed by the respective government agencies. The two primary policies affecting horse riding access are the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) Policy 18 on Recreation, Tourism and Visitor Services and the Department of Water (DoW) Statewide Policy 13 on Recreation in Public Drinking Water Source Protection Areas.

These policies are explored in further detail later in this chapter.

Land Zoning / Management Plans

Land Zoning and Management Plans are developed by land managers to best fit the needs of the community with the land resource available. This usually involves taking both a current and future perspective of the land in question.

Land zoning, typically through Town Planning Schemes developed by Local Government Authorities, separates residential, commercial, rural, industrial and conservation land uses. It distinguishes between light and heavy industry, between 'hobby' and commercial farming, and between high, medium and low densities of development. In a recreation context,land zoning can define what activities are permitted, under what conditions and when - even on private property. All local government planning schemes and policies are required to be consistent with State Government planning objectives and requirements. In the context of horse ownership and trails there is an obvious correlation between land zoning that is favourable for horse ownership / agistment and the need for local trail infrastructure.

Management plans tend to operate on public land and have historically been developed with a conservation focus. There is pressure to accommodate more recreational activities on public land and this is increasing the importance of management plans to ensure that the sustainable use of the land is optimised.

Legislation and Regulations

Strategies, policies, planning schemes and management plans all rely on a legal framework to give effect to their intent. At the root of this framework is legislation - Acts of Parliament - which provide the ultimate legal reference point. Many Acts of Parliament have associated Regulations, which can be modified more easily to suit changing circumstances. In practical enforcement terms there is little difference between Legislation and Regulations, so both types of instrument will be dealt with together in this section.

The following policy, regulatory and legislative instruments are considered the most relevant to horse trails riding in Western Australia and their relevance to horse trails will be explored in more detail here:

- State Trails Strategy 2009
- Policy Statement No. 18 Recreation, Tourism and Visitor Services
- Operational Policy 13 Recreation within public drinking water source areas on Crown land 2012
- Forest Management Plan - 2014 - 2023
- Road Traffic Act 1974
- Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002
- Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage By-laws 1981
- Country Areas Water Supply By-laws 1957
- Water Services Regulations 2013
- Local Government Act 1995
- Parks and Reserves Act 1895
- Civil Liability Act 2002 and Amendments 2003

In general, the strategies, policies and regulations / legislation have the effect of encouraging diversity of recreational opportunities provided that the impacts on the environment and other land users are manageable and able to be controlled within acceptable limits.

Most of the regulations / legislation are open to at least a degree of interpretation by the land managing authorities. This suggests that the greater any activity can self-regulate, the greater will be the recreational opportunities available for that activity.

State Trails Strategy 2009

The Western Australian State Trails Strategy is intended to provide guidance to new land management plans, user-specific strategies, and local infrastructure plans.

The Strategy sets out a vision: By 2015, the use of trails will be acknowledged as providing the leading experience which creates recreational, health and wellbeing, environmental and cultural enrichment of the Western Australian community. The vision is supported by a range of desired outcomes:

1. Increased trail quality.
2. Increased usage of trails.
3. Increased profile of WA trails.
4. Increased recognition of the contribution to individuals and communities.
5. Enhanced sector governance.
6. More supportive legislation and aligned policies.
7. Continued proactive agency support.
8. A transition to a more sustainable funding model.
9. Linkage with a range of other community initiatives.

The WA Horse Trails Strategy sits as a User Group strategy within this framework and is validated and reinforced by the State Trails Strategy. The guiding principles which should flow through into the Horse Trails Strategy are as follows[1]:

Sustainability	Develop trails that are sustainable in their own right. Balance economic, social, health, environmental and cultural considerations for the long-term sustainability of the community.
Efficiency	Maximise the benefit from the application of government resources. Create and maintain trails with minimal human intervention. Provide best value for money.
Preservation	Protect the cultural and environmental identity of local areas. Ensure long-term usage is possible, considering historical and future trail corridors.
Access	Provide access for all ages and abilities.
Flexibility and Adaptability	Provide trails that match current demands and plan for the future.
Adventure and Challenge	Acknowledge some users seek challenge and adventure as a life experience.
Acknowledgement	Acknowledge indigenous people and historical settlers.

[1] Western Australian Trails Strategy 2009 p14

Policy Statement No. 18 Recreation, Tourism and Visitor Services

This Policy and its associated Policy Guidelines provides the basis for planning and management for recreation, tourism and associated visitor activities on lands and waters managed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW). It relies on the CALM Act and Regulations for enforcement support.

Policy 18 directs the Department to allow the widest range of activities consistent with the reserve purpose, noting that uses that impair other forms of use to an unreasonable extent or place the safety of other users in jeopardy should be controlled or eliminated. The policy also directs that the intensity of recreation and tourism activity should be controlled as necessary to ensure that it does not destroy the value and nature of the activity and the resource on which it is based. This policy takes the default position that all recreation is supported provided that it can be managed.

It should be noted that lands and waters managed by DPaW can also be managed by other agencies for different functions and in such cases are equally subject to associated legislation and policies.

The following table sets out clauses that specifically relate to the activity of horse riding, together with an interpreted implication for each.

Clause	Implication
Conservation of Estate Values 4.1 The natural and cultural values of the estate as a whole should be managed on an ecologically sustainable basis.	Any environmental impacts should be transient.
4.2 The natural systems (including land and seascapes, particular sites, biota) should be able to sustain the form of recreation, or ancillary activity, which is occurring or proposed.	Areas must be suitable for the recreation.
4.3 Consistent with conservation of estate values, facilities associated with recreation should be carefully controlled. Also consistent with conservation of estate values, the CALM Act (section 33) limits the ability of DEC to carry out other than 'necessary or compatible operations' on certain land categories unless there is an approved management plan in place.	Management Plans are required, but the absence of them doesn't necessarily restrict operations.
4.4 The intensity of recreation and tourism activity should be controlled as necessary to ensure that it does not destroy the value and nature of the activity and the resource on which it is based.	Limits should be placed on activity to protect the land and the quality of the activity.

Consistency of Recreation and Tourism with Purpose of the Estate 4.5 Recreation and tourism activity should be compatible with the vesting purpose of the land and water or the established land/water use priority. 4.6 The provision and management of nature based recreation and tourism opportunities on lands and waters managed by DEC should comply with other relevant Acts and regulations.	Recreation interests can't override the primary purpose of the area. Legislation - eg road rules - also apply in State Forest and National Parks
Equity 4.7 Generally the widest range of activities consistent with the reserve purpose should be allowed. Uses that impair other forms of use to an unreasonable extent or place the safety of other users in jeopardy should be controlled or eliminated. 4.8 The requirements of different cultural and ethnic groups will be considered in planning, management and facility design. 4.9 Recreation opportunities for people of all levels of physical ability will be considered in planning, management and facility design. 4.10 In certain instances, priority use may be allocated to specialised recreation activities at sites that are uniquely suited to those activities or for safety reasons.	Diversity of recreation is encouraged. Conflicts should be managed by controlling activities that impair other activities. Cultural diversity must be considered and planned for. All levels of physical ability need to be considered. Area attributes can be matched to recreational requirements to create special purpose precincts.
Management 4.11 DEC will endeavour to provide an appropriate level of supervision of activities on the lands and waters it manages. This is particularly important where natural and cultural values may be impaired. If this cannot be done, consideration may be given to restricting, relocating or eliminating the activity where practicable. 4.12 DEC will develop and implement recreation and tourism programs, services and facilities that minimise the risk of accidents and injury to people enjoying themselves on lands and waters managed by DEC, consistent with the Department's Policy Statement No. 53 – Visitor Risk Management. 4.13 Visitor activities, facilities and services should be managed in a cost-effective manner. 4.14 DEC will provide and maintain nature-based recreation areas,	Supervision will be provided if possible, otherwise recreational activity may need to be restricted. Active risk management will be undertaken by DPaW. Costs of management must be proportionate to benefit delivered. Facilities may be restricted or closed if budget doesn't

facilities, programs and services to a consistently high standard.	permit them to be maintained to a standard.
Enriching visitor experience 4.15 DEC aims to enrich the experiences of visitors and develop their relationships with Western Australia's natural and cultural values through provision of interpretive material and activities in major recreation areas or where a demonstrated desire for such programs exist. 4.16 Appropriate opportunities will be made available through tour operator licences and leases for the provision of services and facilities to the public to enhance their visit to areas managed by DEC. 4.17 DEC staff and private sector guides and operators will be trained to communicate with visitors effectively and interpret parks and reserves, and provide scientific and other information that adds value to the visitor experience.	Interpretive materials and activities are desirable. Commercial activity is encouraged where it adds value to the experience. Training and resources can be made available to commercial operators.

Policy 18 Horse Riding Guidelines:

The following extract from Policy 18 refers specifically to horse riding on DPaW (formerly DEC) estate:

> Horse-riding activities should only be allowed on DEC-managed lands in those locations where the impacts are considered manageable. Generally, this will mean that horse riding may be approved on land categorised under section 5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) of the CALM Act, State forest and timber reserves, national parks and conservation parks, provided that such activities will not detract from the overall values of the area, and subject to the policy guidelines below. Horse riding may not be allowed in areas of special scientific or cultural value such as wilderness/remote areas or other areas requiring special protection. Horse riding will not generally be permitted in nature reserves, except in circumstances outlined in section 2.7.3 below. Evaluation of proposals to ride horses on national parks, conservation parks and nature reserves will take into account any previous history of horse riding and may also recognise situations of undue hardship where riders may claim a prior "right of access" to cross through lands managed by DEC.
> Consideration of horse riding on lands managed by DEC might cover a range of opportunities, including day-use trails, designated areas, free-range riding and the exercise of horses on beaches.

The following table sets out the relevant clauses, together with an interpreted implication for each.

Clause	Implication
2.7.1 Horse riding is recognised as an appropriate activity in some areas managed by DEC and is permitted where environmental and social impacts are considered manageable and where the activity does not conflict with other management operations or estate values.	Recognised activity, permitted unless environmental and social impacts are considered unmanageable.
2.7.2 Horse riding will not be permitted in wilderness/remote areas, areas of special scientific or cultural value or other areas requiring special protection except with the approval of the CEO.	Some areas not suitable.
2.7.3 Horse riding will not generally be permitted in nature reserves except in some circumstances, by way of an approved management plan, where “right of access” is recognised or where the activity has been previously allowed and the impacts of the activity can be minimised and controlled.	Some opportunities in nature reserves.
2.7.4 Horse riding may be permitted in national parks and conservation parks by way of an approved management plan, or where “right of access” is recognised or where the activity has been previously allowed and the impacts of the activity can be minimised and controlled.	Some opportunities in national parks and conservation parks.
2.7.5 In the absence of an approved management plan for a national park or conservation park, the CALM Act allows for approval of horse riding and any construction of horse riding paths and associated infrastructure (e.g. yards, drinking troughs) by way of compatible operations.	‘Compatible operations’ can suffice in the absence of an approved management plan.
2.7.6 Horse riding is permitted in State forest and timber reserves and CALM Act section 5(1) (g) and (h) reserves provided it does not put natural values at risk or conflict with other users. Horse riding on these land categories is not constrained by CALM Act compatible operations requirements in the absence of a management plan.	Generally OK in State forest and timber reserves.
2.7.7 For all DEC-managed lands where horse riding is permitted, horse riding will be along defined tracks, firebreaks and roads except where accommodated elsewhere in a management plan or in accord with accepted previous arrangements.	Must stick to defined tracks, firebreaks and roads except where allowed by management plan or prior arrangements.
2.7.8 All horse riding will need to be in accord with a designated horse riding notice made under the Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002 for all land to which the regulations apply. The only exceptions will be in the period where the designated horse riding notices are being drafted or where lawful authority is given by the Regional or District Manager for horse riding to be allowed.	Must be permitted by designated horse riding notice or by authority of Regional or District Manager.
2.7.9 To control the spread of dieback and other diseases, horses are subject to the same restrictions as vehicles in disease risk areas (DRA), i.e.: • horses may use dedicated public open roads (which are not CALM Act land) that pass through DRA, but must not leave the road surface;	Horses must follow same Disease Risk Area restrictions as vehicles.

• in dry summer months, horses may be allowed to enter DRA on road surfaces if an access permit has been issued by the local office of DEC.	
2.7.10 Proposals to conduct special equestrian or horse riding events such as endurance rides or historical enactments through lands managed by DEC will require the approval of the relevant Regional or District Manager(s) in accordance with section 1.12.	Events need Regional or District Manager approval.
2.7.11 Where horse riding is permitted on lands managed by DEC, horses must be controlled at all times, including yarding or tethering overnight or during rest periods, and must be kept within specified zones or on designated horse trails, as indicated by signs, markers or brochures or as authorised by permit. (See regulation 17 of the Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002).	Horses must be controlled at all times.
2.7.12 Where practicable, paths for horse riding, cycling and bushwalking will be separated to minimise any conflicts between these activities.	DPaW will provide separate paths for horses 'where practicable'.
2.7.13 In areas where camping is permitted with horses, riders should camp at approved campsites, preferably where yards or tethering rails are available. If designated horse campsites are not provided, camps must be kept as small as possible and at least 100 metres from lakes, rivers and streams. Manure should be collected and removed from the site or, if this is not possible, buried in the horse holding area.	Camping at designated horse campsites, or elsewhere where permitted with conditions.
2.7.14 Where it is necessary to feed horses in areas managed by DEC, the use of processed, weed-free feed may be required. Horses are not permitted to graze in national parks and conservation parks and grazing may also be restricted or disallowed in other areas as determined by area management guidelines.	No grazing in national parks and conservation parks or as determined by management plans. Weed-free feed may be required.
2.7.15 Commercial horse riding activities must comply with section 1.15 and the Department's Administrative Instruction 41.	
2.7.16 Horse riding zones, trails or campsites may be closed if weather conditions, erosion, disease, weed introduction/spread, degradation of vegetation or water sources, conflict with other users, visitor safety or lack of compliance to conditions of use warrant such closure.	DPaW may close riding zones, trails or campsites for various reasons.
2.7.17 Fees for entry on horseback to DEC-managed lands may be charged in accordance with regulation 102 of the Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002	DPaW may charge access fees.

Operational Policy 13 Recreation within public drinking water source areas on Crown land

Policy 13 is the main instrument used by the Department of Water to assess applications for recreation events and facilities within Public Drinking Water Source Protection Areas (PDSWAs). PDWSA is a collective term that includes catchment areas, water reserves and underground water pollution area proclaimed under the Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage Act 1909 and the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947.

Various active and passive land based recreation activities have been assessed for compatibility with the main objective of protecting the safety and quality of public drinking water. The 'Precautionary Principle' guides this policy[2].

Generally Operational Policy 13 considers horse riding an incompatible activity for both Reservoir Protection Zones and Outer Catchment areas except when it occurs on public roads and existing designated trails.

Public drinking water source areas can occur on DPaW managed land and waters and both DPaW and DoW legislation and policy need to be met. This may constrain activities and approvals that would normally apply if the land and waters were managed by one agency only.

Compatibility of land based recreation in surface water based public drinking water source areas:

Recreation Type	PDWSA - reservoir protection zone	PDWSA - outer catchment
Riding / walking / training of animals including dogs and horses - recreational or commercial (except on public roads and designated trails)	Incompatible	Incompatible

Compatibility of water based recreation in surface water based public drinking water source areas:

Recreation Type	PDWSA - reservoir protection zone	PDWSA - outer catchment
Horse riding (the riding of horse in water)	Incompatible	Incompatible

Compatibility of recreation in wellhead protection zones and the outer catchment of groundwater based public drinking water source areas:

[2] For a definition of the Precautionary Principle see Technical Paper 3: Environment

Recreation Type	Wellhead Protection Zone	Groundwater - outer catchment
Riding/training of animals (recreational or commercial e.g. horses or camels)	Incompatible except on public roads.	Incompatible except on public roads or designated areas / trails.

Forest Management Plan - 2014 - 2023

The Forest Management Plan 2014-2023 is produced by the Conservation Commission of Western Australia and the Department of Parks and Wildlife. Its intent is to provide the general management principles for Western Australia's national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, State forests and timber reserves and in so doing allows individual area management plans to focus only on location-specific issues. This will enable local plans to be developed more rapidly and economically, which presumably will also enable them to be more responsive to changes in demand and any monitored impacts.

Goals of the Plan
The plan proposes activities at the whole of forest, landscape and/or local scales, for the purpose of seeking to provide opportunities for active and passive recreation and tourism that will meet public demand, so far as is practicable and sustainable, and to provide regional socio-economic benefits.

Identified values and threats

The plan seeks to protect and maintain the following values:

- the range and quality of recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities and experiences
- the associated physical and mental health benefits.

Threats to these values include:

- degradation of natural areas, assets and facilities that support recreation and tourism
- inadequate planning, leading to conflicts with other land uses or activities and/or recreation and tourism opportunities not matched to community demand
- poor design of assets and facilities leading to user dissatisfaction or safety risks
- inappropriate behaviour affecting the enjoyment of others, and inappropriate use of and/or wilful damage to facilities provided
- inappropriate fire regimes, including uncontrolled bushfires.

The principles are consistent with other policies in that they encourage diversity of recreational opportunity provided that the activities can be managed to limit degradation and conflict.

Road Traffic Act

Road Traffic Code 2000 - As at April 2014

Horses are considered ‘vehicles’ under the Road Traffic Act, so the following specific provisions of the Act apply.

Clause	Implication
Part 18 — Miscellaneous provisions **Division 1 — Miscellaneous provisions for drivers** **253. Driving on paths** (1) A person shall not drive a vehicle on a path. ... (5) This regulation does not apply to the rider of an animal riding the animal on a footpath.	Horses are permitted to be ridden on footpaths.
254. Driving on nature strip (1) A person shall not drive a vehicle on a nature strip adjacent to a length of carriageway in a built-up area, unless the driver is — ... (e) riding a bicycle or animal; or ... (2) A driver driving on a nature strip (except the rider of an animal) shall give way to all other persons, and to animals, on the nature strip. ...	Horses are permitted to be ridden on nature strips. Horses on a nature strip have general right of way...
Division 2 — Provisions for people in charge of animals **268. Rider of animal on footpath or nature strip to give way to pedestrians** The rider of an animal shall give way to any pedestrian on a footpath or nature strip. **269. Riding animal alongside more than one other rider** (1) The rider of an animal shall not ride on a carriageway that is not a multi-lane carriageway alongside more than one other rider, unless the rider is overtaking the other riders or droving stock. (2) The rider of an animal shall not ride in a marked lane alongside more than one other rider in the marked lane, unless the rider is overtaking the other riders or droving stock. (3) If the rider of an animal is riding on a carriageway that is not a multi-lane carriageway alongside another rider, or in a marked lane alongside another rider in the marked lane, the rider shall not ride more than 1.5 m from the other rider. **270. Proper control of animals** A person shall not on any road or place to which the public is	... except for pedestrians. It is legal to ride two abreast. If two abreast, the riders must be 1.5m or less from each other. No prescribed blood alcohol level, but riders must be able

permitted, whether on payment of a fee or otherwise, to have access — (a) drive or ride an animal while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or alcohol and drugs to such an extent as to be incapable of having proper control of the animal; (b) drive or ride an animal recklessly or without due care and attention.	to maintain proper control. Riding recklessly or carelessly is an offence under this Act.

Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002

The Conservation and Land Management Regulations are based upon the provisions of the CALM Act 1984 and provide the main governance mechanism for the control of visitors within and access to public lands managed by the DPaW.

The following table sets out the relevant clauses, together with an interpreted implication for each.

Clause	Implication
6. Designated areas The CEO may, by notice published in the Gazette — (a) declare an area of CALM land to be a designated area for the purposes of regulations 16 (dogs), 17 (horses), 21(3) (discharge of sewage from a vessel), 33 (abseiling), 51 (vehicles), 51A (bicycles), 61A (vessels on nature reserves) and 66 (camping) or any of those regulations; and (b) specify conditions which apply to the use of the designated area for those purposes. An area may be declared to be a designated area at all times or during a period or periods specified in the notice.	Certain areas can be designated for specific access and recreation purposes.
15. Bringing animal on to CALM land **...** a person must not, without lawful authority - (a) bring an animal on to CALM land; or (b) allow an animal to enter or remain on CALM land	By default, animals cannot be brought on to CALM land.
17. Horses on CALM land (1) A person may bring a horse on to a designated area. (2) A person must control and manage a horse in a designated area in accordance with conditions specified on the signs erected in or in the vicinity of that area for the purposes of regulation 6(3).	Horses may be brought on to land designated for that purpose.
43. Access to wilderness areas A person must not, without lawful authority, enter by vehicle, powered vessel or animal any land ... classified... as a wilderness area.	By default, wilderness areas are out of bounds for horses.
47. Entering CALM land via gates etc (1) If an entrance to an area of CALM land ... is controlled by a gate or other barrier, a person must not, without lawful authority, enter or cause a vehicle or animal to enter that area other than through that gate or barrier	Riders must not gain access by going around or over locked gates.

Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage By-laws 1981

These By-Laws provide the legislative underpinning and enforcement mechanism for managing recreational access in Drinking Water Source Protection Areas.

The following table sets out the relevant clauses, together with an interpreted implication for each.

Clause	Implication
Protection of Water Quality 4.3.1 No person shall throw, deposit, discharge or leave or cause, permit or suffer to be thrown, deposited, discharged or left into or upon a catchment area or water reserve any chemical, radioactive material, litter, rubbish, offal, dung, dead animal or any noisome, noxious or polluting liquid substance, matter, or thing which is likely to pollute the catchment area or water reserve or any reservoir or watercourse in the catchment area, or which is likely to affect purity of the water. 4.3.6 No unauthorised person shall enter Crown land within a prohibited zone on any catchment area except for the purposes of — (a) Travelling through the prohibited area on public roads; or (b) Travelling along private roads constructed for the Commission or Forests Department 3 and which are open for public use; or (c) Picnicking within designated picnic sites provided and serviced by the Commission.	Horse droppings within a water catchment area constitute an offence under these regulations due to water quality and pathogen risks. It is OK to travel through a catchment area (including a Prohibited Zone) if on a publicly open road or track or on private land.
Control of animals, livestock etc 4.5.1 The owner or person in charge of any animals or birds shall not cause or permit any dog, horse, goat, cattle, sheep, pig, duck, geese or fowls or other species of livestock to enter or remain on any portion of a catchment area. 4.5.3 No person shall ride a horse or any other animal on any of the Commission's catchment areas (except along public roads) without the written permission of the Commission.	Horses are generally excluded from all catchment areas... ... except on public roads or with the written permission of the Commission.

Country Areas Water Supply By-laws 1957

The Country Areas Water Supply By-Laws operate mainly to regulate houses and properties close to drinking water sources, however there are some provisions of relevance to the recreational horse trail rider. These include:

Clause	Implication
10. Manure etc., disposal of near water Refuse, dung, manure or other offensive matter shall not be deposited or be permitted to be deposited within 300 m of high-water mark or of any well or bore.	Horses must be kept well away from wells and bores or other drinking water sources.
26. Refuse etc. not to be deposited in catchment area Rubbish, filth, blood, offal or manure or any slops, soapsuds, urine, water containing urine or other refuse, noisome thing or matter, shall not be deposited or be permitted to be deposited in any part of a catchment area, where it may, in the opinion of an inspector, be carried by stormwater, into any feeder or any well or bore, but every occupier or owner shall provide and maintain proper watertight vehicles or receptacles fitted with close-fitting covers or lids for the purpose of carting or receiving same.	Riders need to be aware of streams that can flow into a catchment area and ensure that no contaminants can enter those streams.
30. Polluting activities prohibited No person shall wash clothes or other articles in any watercourse, reservoir, aqueduct, or any waterworks within a catchment area, nor shall any person wash, throw, cause or permit to enter therein any dog or other animal, or throw or convey, or permit to be conveyed or thrown therein any rubbish, dirt, filth, dead animal, or other noisome thing.	Horses are not permitted to enter any watercourse within a catchment area
36. Camping and picnicking restricted (1) No person, body corporate or association or group of persons shall at any time camp or picnic within 300 m of the high-water mark or of any well or bore or any reservoir or feeder thereto.	No camping permitted within 300m of a well, bore, reservoir or feeder stream.
40. Flora protected The removal, plucking, or damaging of any wild flower, shrub, bush, tree, or other plant, growing on any land or reserve under the care, control and management of the Corporation or the Minister, within 800 m of any reservoir or bore is prohibited.	This could well be interpreted to include trampling of vegetation by horses.

Water Services Regulations 2013

The Water Services Regulations 2013 relate primarily to land that is owner, occupied or under the control and care of a water licensee.

Penalties of $2,500 apply to anyone who trespasses on land that is declared ‘Not Open to the Public’ by way of gates, signs or other barricades. The same penalty applies to the parking of any vehicle on land that is not open to the public.

A penalty of $5,000 applies to anyone bringing an animal into an area not open to the public or who swims, bathes or washes in a reservoir.

Local Government Act 1995

The following table sets out the relevant clauses, together with an interpreted implication for each.

Clause	Implication
3.54. Reserves under control of a local government (1) If land reserved under the *Land Administration Act 1997* is vested in or placed under the control and management of a local government, the local government may do anything for the purpose of controlling and managing that land that it could do under section 5 of the *Parks and Reserves Act 1895* if it were a Board appointed under that Act to manage and control the land and for that purpose a reference in that section to a by-law is to be read as a reference to a local law.	Empowers Local Government to control land

Parks and Reserves Act 1895

The following table sets out the relevant clauses, together with an interpreted implication for each.

Clause	Implication
8. By-Laws A Board may, with the approval of the Governor, from time to time make, repeal, or alter by-laws for giving effect to this Act in respect of the land placed under its control, and in particular for — (h) regulating traffic and the use of vehicles upon roads, and the use of footpaths, and in particular — (i) prescribing the rules to be observed in respect of any vehicle being driven or used on roads, and the use of footpaths and bridle tracks on the land; (ii) regulating, prohibiting or restricting the driving of any specified kinds of vehicles or of any vehicles of any specified weights or of any vehicles carrying any specified loads on any road, footpath or bridle track on the land; (iii) prescribing the places where vehicles of any class or description may or may not be parked on the land;	Defines the scope of what a Local Government authority can do.

Regulations Governing Liability

Liability is an issue that affects both land managers and activity participants. There are three areas of legislation related to liability. Arguably the most significant of these is the Civil Liability Act 2002 and its amendments of 2003. This Act was brought in specifically to address the insurance crisis that caused the rapid and dramatic escalation in liability premiums and which (amongst a range of negative effects) forced many recreational horse riding businesses and facilities out of business.

The Civil Liability Act makes it much harder for a damages claim to be successful, however it doesn't prevent an aggrieved person from pursuing legal action, and there are still too few precedents to put the matter out of question.

Despite this lack of certainty land managers are progressively becoming more aware of and comfortable with the protection that this Act provides. Further education being initiated by adventure activity advocates and peak bodies will help accelerate this positive change in attitudes.

Occupiers Liability Act 1985

Section 5 (1) imposes on anyone occupying or having control of land a 'Duty of Care' to take reasonable steps to ensure that a person entering that land will not suffer injury or damage due to the state of the premises.

Section 5 (2) specifies that the duty of care does not apply to risks 'willingly assumed by the person entering in the premises', provided that the occupier does not act with reckless disregard for the safety of the person entering the property and does not create a danger with the deliberate intent of doing harm or damage.

Section 5 (4) states that the Duty of Care is influenced by such variables as the gravity and likelihood of the probable injury, the nature of the premises, the age of the person entering the premises, the ability of the person entering the premises to appreciate the danger and the burden of eliminating the danger as compared with the risk of danger to the person.

Civil Liability Act 2002

Division 4 – Recreational Activities – deals specifically with liability arising from activities that have an 'obvious and inherent risk'.

Section 5H states that a person is not liable for harm suffered by another person if the harm is the result of the occurrence of something that is an obvious risk of that activity, irrespective of whether or not the person suffering harm was aware of the risk.

Section 5L further absolves liability where a Risk Warning is given in a manner that is 'reasonably likely to result in people being warned of the risk before engaging in the recreational activity' but without an obligation to establish that the risk warning was actually received or understood by an individual .

A defendant in an action cannot rely on a Risk Warning where the harm occurred due to an act done or omission made with reckless disregard for the consequences of that act or omission.

Land Administration Act 1997

Division 3 – Public Access Routes – enables the Minister to 'provide members of the public with access through Crown land to an area of recreational or tourist interest'. Significantly, where a Public Access Route is declared, the relevant land manager is excused from two important obligations:

- Section 66 (2) (a) absolves a land manager from any obligation to maintain the route.
- Section 66 (2) (b) absolves a land manager from obligations as an occupier of premises under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1985.
- Section 66 (6) reinforces this exclusion of liability by explicitly stating that 'Members of the public use a public access route entirely at their own risk.'

Conclusion

With multiple regulatory authorities and overlapping and sometimes conflicting laws and policies, a sound understanding of the regulatory boundaries is essential. The relevant sections presented here illustrate the constraints that trail planners must work within, but also the rights of horse riders on public lands and the opportunities that are presented by legislation such as the Civil Liabilities Act.

Discussion Paper 3: Environmental Issues

Environmental impact is arguably the most contentious issue around recreational horse trail riding. This discussion paper presents a high level view of the land managers' perspective and the implications for the future of riding in natural areas.

Why is this important?

Like many outdoor recreation activities, 'nature appreciation' ranks high on horse riders' motivations. Better quality landscapes provide a better riding experience, but often have higher conservation values. Sometimes the perceived impact of horse riding is seen by land managers and conservation groups as being in conflict with the conservation objectives of those higher natural quality areas, and this can lead to restrictions or preclusion of riding.

To maximise the quality of the natural environment available for riding it is in the interest of horse riders to understand the land managers' point of view, which is typically a mixture of observation and assumption. By seeing the issue through the eyes of those who make or enforce policies, it is possible to work towards modifying the activity to address the real issues and safeguard the sustainability and availability of trails, as well as to build the arguments to counter any assumptions that may be based on outdated, inadequate or misinterpreted data.

Acceptable Limits

In the introduction to the horse riding section of Policy Statement 18 Recreation, Tourism and Visitor Services, DPaW refers to the use of horses in natural areas as part of the cultural heritage of Australia and a source of pleasure and enjoyment for many people. "Horse riding is accepted as a suitable means of appreciating and enjoying those natural areas where environmental and social impacts can be kept to acceptable limits."[1]

The introduction to Policy 18 notes that the use of natural areas for active recreation always carries some risk of overuse and disturbance that may lead to deterioration of the natural values. Some of the potential impacts associated with horse riding include the possible:

- introduction of weeds or parasites
- spread of disease such as dieback
- trampling or browsing of native flora
- soil erosion
- possible water quality contamination through siltation or fouling of watercourses
- disturbance of native fauna
- the potential for conflict with other users.

An important concept is the notion of 'acceptable limits'. This term recognises that *all* activity will have some impacts, but some impacts are tolerable and others are not.

Logically, acceptable limits of impact will vary according to the significance of the landscape and other factors. Pristine wilderness can be expected to have lower tolerances to impact than peri-urban bushland that will eventually be cleared for housing.

[1] Policy Statement 18 (2006) p48, Department of Parks and Wildlife

The concept of 'acceptable limits' is not quantified, or even mentioned in the legislation. Even if it was, we do not currently have the research data to support reliable predictive modelling of impacts in any given location. However that does not mean the concept of acceptable limits doesn't exist as a policy and management influence. DPaW policy refers to impacts being 'minimised and controlled', or where environmental and social impacts are 'manageable'. The Department of Water will also consider this in evaluating applications for events within Public Drinking Water Source Protection Areas (PDWSPAs). This infers recognition of an element of unavoidable impact that falls within 'acceptable' levels.

The precautionary principle

This lack of precision can sometimes work against the interests of the activity. Recreators sometimes view the *precautionary principle* as one of "When in doubt, lock it out" - where the mere possibility of an impact is sufficient to warrant exclusion of the activity. This is an oversimplification, and fortunately such inflexible thinking is not the norm. However while proof that there can be no possible impact is rarely used as a prerequisite to access being granted, neither is proof that there *will* be unacceptable impact required for access to be denied.

Because of its importance to policy-setting it is worth exploring the concept of the precautionary principle more closely.

The precautionary principle has been defined by The United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization (UNESCO)[2] as follows:

> When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm. Morally unacceptable harm refers to harm to humans or the environment that is
>
> - threatening to human life or health, or
> - serious and effectively irreversible, or
> - inequitable to present or future generations, or
> - imposed without adequate consideration of the human rights of those affected.
>
> The judgement of plausibility should be grounded in scientific analysis. Analysis should be ongoing so that chosen actions are subject to review. Uncertainty may apply to, but need not be limited to, causality or the bounds of the possible harm.
>
> Actions are interventions that are undertaken before harm occurs that seek to avoid or diminish the harm. Actions should be chosen that are proportional to the seriousness of the potential harm, with consideration of their positive and negative consequences, and with an assessment of the moral implications of both action and inaction. The choice of action should be the result of a participatory process.

The precautionary principle was endorsed by the Parliamentary Enquiry into Recreation Activities within Public Drinking Water Source Areas, with the Committee noting:

[2] Precautionary Principle, UNESCO COMEST, 2005

> 1.8 Cumulative recreational activity has ecological impacts in catchments which pose an unacceptable risk to raw water quality. Given that there is a degree of uncertainty with respect to some of these impacts, the Committee found that a precautionary approach within a risk management framework is preferred for the recreational activity that is currently allowed in catchments[3].

The wording of this recommendation is worth noting: 'cumulative recreational activity' suggests that the risks exist not just from individual incidents but from the accumulated impacts over time. Participants often conclude that their own activity doesn't cause an impact, without considering that even imperceptible disturbances, when multiplied by a large number of participants over a long period of time can have a significant effect.

The reference to risk *management* in 'a precautionary approach within a risk management framework' implies that an element of uncertainty can exist if the risk can be managed within acceptable limits. This leaves room for interpretation on a case by case basis, however without a quantifiable and clearly understood description of what those acceptable limits are, such interpretation can be subjective and incontestable.

The dual objectives of promoting recreation diversity and conserving the landscape requires land managers to strike a balance. The growing population and pressure for land on which to recreate suggests the need for regular review and re-evaluate previous decisions. A recent example of this occurred in Queensland, where trails that were previously closed due to unquantified environmental concerns are now set to be re-opened following the initial findings of a 20 year scientific monitoring program indicating that impacts can be managed.[4]

One of the variables of impact not generally mentioned is *time*. Many impacts are transient in nature. An active trail may be an aesthetic detraction to landscape values, but if it ceases to be active then natural re-growth will reclaim it over time and there will be little if any lasting impact. By contrast, some impacts such as the spread of phytopthera, can have very long-lasting - even permanent - impacts. Trail rotation can be used to allow natural re-growth to remediate transient impacts, but the resistance of land managers to creating new trails and the difficulty in retiring old ones would need to be overcome.

The concept of acceptable impact finds its most practical application in the development of management plans for specific areas. Here the landscape and land use priorities can be considered together to determine what is an acceptable level of impact for each unique set of circumstances.

Research

A persisting limitation is the lack of definitive data on the impacts of any given recreation activity. Many studies have partially quantified impacts, but few, if any, have been able to properly isolate the target activity or project long term effects from a short term study, particularly when the variability of the topology and soil structure is considered.

[3] Parliamentary Enquiry into Recreation Activities within Public Drinking Water Source Areas, Executive Summary, pii

[4] QORF Media Release 21 July 21014

In The Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre's 2010 report: *Management of horse riding in per-urban environments*[5], various research studies were cited indicating that horse riding was found to be more damaging to the surrounding environment than other recreational activities such as hiking and mountain biking. The report noted that there are also impacts specific to horse riding, such as the production of large quantities of waste, the high potential for the transport of weed propagules and the grazing effects of horses. These are fears echoed in many management plans and policy documents.

However the report goes on to note that the lack of data regarding the impacts of horse riding has meant that trail management plans have been formulated without the benefit of significant research (Newsome et al. 2002b, 2008). This clearly makes it difficult to determine levels of 'acceptable impact' in any given circumstance.

One of the more recent studies, and the one that appears to have positively influenced land managers in Queensland, is the *Patterns of road surface movement after three endurance horse-riding events in protected areas, south-east Queensland*[6] study. This study in 2009 and 2010 took a scientific approach to the examination of the impact of three endurance rides each having between 100 and 140 shod horses. The route was on unsealed roads of the Horse Riding Trail Network of south-east Queensland. Site selection aimed to capture the diversity of physical characteristics represented by the routes, including creek crossings, ascents, descents and flat surfaces. The influence of different horse numbers was tested by sampling sites on parts of the course passed by horses once, twice, thrice or four times.

The results indicated that even with the concentrated activity of riding events, the majority of sampled areas showed no change in the areal extent of eroded area or depth of erosion. Across the study there was an average increase in eroded area of less than 2% and erosion depth of less than 1mm. Where soil movement was observed it was more likely to be related to slope or a softer substrate. The number of horses was not found to be significant in soil redistribution. While not specifically tested in the studies, observations were made where riders had gone off-road to circumvent puddles or negotiate creek crossings and in such places deep incisions in the soil and damage to vegetation were observed. The report's key finding was that even relatively high impact and concentrated horse riding activity had little measurable impact on these designated horse trails, however the importance of staying on trail was highlighted.

This study also supported the point made by Newsome et al (2004) that softer less cohesive soils are more susceptible to erosion; and the observations of Wilson and Seney (1994) where soil texture in combination with slope and wetness helped explained erosion in relation to road users. The greatest erosional loss occurred adjacent to creek crossings, which supports Pickering (2008) that creek crossings are particularly susceptible to horse-related erosion, and is consistent with other studies of horse-related erosion (eg. Deluca et al 1998). The most comprehensive modelling exercise in relation to soil loss on tracks in

[5] A case study analysis of horse riding and its management in a peri-urban setting / Eloise Abbott, David Newsome and Sarah Palmer.

[6] R.J. Fairfax, V.J. Neldner, M.R. Ngugi and R.M. Dowling - Queensland Herbarium, Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts,

relation to different user groups also found that soil texture, slope and level of use were all significant predictors (Olive & Marion 2009).

Another Queensland study[7], part of the twenty year scientific monitoring program, examined and compared the impacts of stream crossings by four wheel drives and horses. The study confirmed that both created elevations in organic and inorganic sediment, however it went on to note that: "although impacts were found, the runoff during storms and floods, especially in National Parks that are downstream of pastures and residential areas, was potentially much greater than anything that occurred during the anthropogenic disturbances captured during the [horse riding and 4wd crossing] events." The study concluded: "Therefore, as long as careful monitoring is maintained, horse riding along these trails should be allowed to continue."

Research implications

The most serious environmental concerns highlighted by the research relate to the riding of horses on natural vegetation. Trampling, grazing and the depositing of seed-containing manure directly into the natural habitat are seen as the highest level impacts. By contrast, the overall conclusions of most research appears to be that properly designed horse trails can provide sustainable recreation opportunities.

This suggests that there are good grounds to be made for broader access to even environmentally sensitive areas provided that the access is limited to appropriately designed and maintained trails.

The challenge then becomes one of compliance. If riding on established trails is sustainable, but riding off-trail and trampling vegetation is not sustainable, then educating and gaining the cooperation of riders is critical. Staying on trail, ensuring 'safe' feed, avoiding disease risk areas and preventing the spread of soil from one area to another (eg by maintaining cleanliness of horse and gear) are all essential.

Newsome et al (2002) highlight the difficulty in this for land managers: Even if most people observe the codes of conduct put in place, a small number will choose to ignore them. Without the appropriate level of management the total system then often fails, especially with activities such as horse riding, where relatively low levels of inappropriate activity can cause significant impact[8].

It is difficult to counter this argument, and this makes it unlikely that objections to the precautionary principle will succeed when applied to low probability / high consequence risks such as the perceived public health risks in drinking water source protection areas.

The distinction between the impacts of on-trail and off-trail activity in the published research highlights the need for a greater understanding of how recreational horse trail riders will behave when presented with a quality trail and associated facilities. What level of stay-on-

[7] Redfearn, S.1, Blessing, J.2, Marshal, J.2, Hadwen, W.1 and Negus, P.2 (2012). Detecting stream health impacts of horse riding and 4WD vehicle water crossings in South East Queensland: an event based assessment. Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, Queensland Government

[8] Effects Of Horse Riding On National Parks And Other Natural Ecosystems In Australia: Implications For Management. Journal of Ecotourism, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2002

trail compliance can be expected? How does trail quality affect this? What other characteristics influence compliance? And if 100% compliance equates to no unacceptable impact, then at what compliance rate does the unacceptable impact threshold get crossed and the risks become unmanageable?

The review of existing research has not uncovered answers to these questions, suggesting an opportunity for further exploration by attitudinal research and field observation.

Strategic implications

The research implications indicate the importance of stay-on-trail compliance levels to minimise environmental impact and improve the perception of horse trail riding among land managers, together with the need to develop a better understanding about the factors that can influence compliance.

The strategic implications flow on from this and set out actions that can be taken to manage the activity for greater compliance using a common framework adopted in the management of recreation generally, and recreation in natural areas particularly, *the five E's:*

- Engagement
- Engineering
- Education
- Enforcement
- Evaluation

Generally the Engineering option will be the most effective way of changing behaviours as this most directly influences what people can or can't do. Education and Enforcement are less direct, requiring a change in the *will* of the rider for effect.

Properly designed trails are an Engineering solution. They may be considered environmentally sustainable, however a challenge remains that many horse trails in current use have not been properly designed. Stock routes, roads, firebreaks and other historical trails were constructed or evolved without environmental sustainability as a primary consideration. The positive implication of this is that new trails, properly planned and constructed, should be able to be located in areas that may have not previously been suitable due to the nature of existing trails. However planning, designing and constructing a trail properly costs money, as does the and subsequent monitoring and maintenance.

Effective maintenance of trails is also an Engineering solution. Properly maintained trails are more resistant to erosion and trail braiding (where a new trail segment is formed to bypass a damaged section).

Rider behaviour is an essential ingredient in environmental sustainability. Getting riders Engaged is the first and most critical step - ie understanding the issues and willing to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Education can then have a positive effect, via a riders' Code of Conduct and associated resources.

Rider education can set a level of expectation, but as with any un-regulated and un-structured form of recreation it is impossible to guarantee 100% participant compliance. In remote areas Enforcement tends to be impractical. Land managers understand and accept

this, but it does mean that access decisions tend to be based on an anticipated level of compliance, not a theoretical maximum.

The fifth ‘e’, Evaluation is a critical tool in guiding future decisions. Scientific research that is not local may be of less value in shaping the attitudes of land managers than on-the-ground projects that can be physically monitored and reviewed locally.

Recommendations:

The environmental considerations discussed here are reflected in the following recommendations:

Strategic Priority (SP)	Recommended Action(s)
SP1 - Trails Inventory	Create a process between DPAW, other land managers and ATHRA for explicit consultation when existing horse trails and areas are under review.
	Establish and implement a planning, design, build and maintenance process for sustainable horse trails, rollout via management and governance hierarchy.
	Develop a means by which trail use can be monitored - eg trail counters, regular rider surveys. Apply techniques appropriate to level of trail significance.
	Existing standardised best practices for the development and maintenance of sustainable horse trails be adapted and adopted.
	Develop and deliver training on sustainable horse trail development and maintenance.
	Develop a pilot sustainable horse trail for the purposes of demonstration, evaluation and research.
	Develop a maintenance plan for existing sanctioned horse trails and work with the trail managers to implement.
	Undertake an Environmental Impact assessment of horse trail riding specifically to identify and assess minimal impact behaviours.
	Compile a register of former trails (no longer accessible) that might be candidates for a ‘cultural heritage’ claim and bid for re-opening
SP2 - Trails Access	Establish a volunteer-led or commercial trail inspection program with a standardised format and frequency based on the trail significance hierarchy.
SP3 - Infrastructure & Facilities	Develop grant application templates for accessing Lotterywest trails grants, Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF) funding, and environmental protection grants as appropriate
SP4 - Education & Advocacy	Strengthen relationships between: Horse trail clubs and ATHRA ATHRA and DPAW ATHRA and local government / land managers / road managers ATHRA and other trail user peak bodies AHTRA and the trails community via DSR, DPAW and the Trails Reference Group
	Ensure horse trail riders are represented on trail and land management reference groups.
	Develop a proposal for a rider education package on environmental care and

	seek grant funding and industry support for its development and distribution. Base this around ATHRA's 16 environment rules.
	ATHRA to actively advocate the benefits of horse trail riding, environmental impact mitigations and an understanding of the activity to government, planners, land managers, trail groups, other stakeholders and the wider public.
	Engage with trails and land manager policy makers to consider and include the needs of horse trail riders in relevant policies such as urban planning, road planning, trails planning, land usage, environmental protection and water catchments.
	DPAW to develop Horse Trail Riding Management Guidelines in conjunction with the horse trail riding community to actively facilitate and manage horse trail riding on DPAW estate.
SP5 - Management & Governance	Strengthen ATHRA's reach into clubs and individuals as a conduit for bringing together the horse trail community - for the purposes of communication, volunteering, advocacy and trail management and to strengthen the horse trail riding community.
	Develop a Horse Trail Volunteering Plan for the recruiting, managing, training and retaining of volunteers for each region.
	Foster a relationship between ATHRA and funding entities to improve horse trail project access to funding opportunities.
	Upskill local clubs and horse trail riding groups to take a broader on-the-ground role such as identification of required trails, planning, local advocacy, sharing with other trail users, maintenance and volunteer management.

Conclusion

The concerns held by land managers about the environmental impacts of horse riding in natural areas poses arguably the greatest threat to the future of the activity in quality landscapes.

The research indicates that environmental impact from horse riding is real, but is mitigated to a very large extent when horse riding occurs on formed trails and when riders are aware of the potential impacts and act to avoid them. Most studies conclude that riding on trails is environmentally sustainable.

The challenge is to achieve the highest possible level of compliance, then to find ways of demonstrating this to land managers in order to positively influence access and policy.

Technical Paper 4: Trail Classifications

A trail classification or grade is a “difficulty rating” for a trail or route that provides guidelines for users to help them make an informed decision before setting out on a trail.

Why is this important?

The availability of this information is important for a number of reasons, including:

- It encourages users to choose and make use of trails that match their ability level.
- It helps ensure that trail users have an experience that meets their expectations.
- It manages risk and helps to minimise discomfort or injury to trail users.
- It is useful from a promotional and marketing perspective.

Trail classifications can be used to guide the planning of a new trail or for describing an existing trail.

Classification Principles

When planning and constructing a recreation trail, the choice of trail classification will direct construction and should take into account the terrain, target user, the expected number of users and the recreational opportunities to be provided through the trail network.

Trail gradings can be applied to individual trail sections or entire routes made up of multiple sections. There are two views as to how a route should be graded:

1. By dominance of section difficulty - ie a route that has 80% Easy and 20% Moderate sections would be classified as Easy
2. By maximum difficulty - ie even if only one section is classified as Moderate the whole route would be classified Moderate

Neither of these are ideal. In the first example a novice rider may encounter an unexpectedly difficult section on the trail, while in the second example an intermediate or above level rider may find the vast majority of the trail to be lacking challenge.

This highlights the importance of considering the trail’s intended target audience in the planning stages so as to provide an experience that is consistent with the intended rating and where possible providing alternatives where the difficulty of a section of trail differs significantly from the majority.

Trail grading for trail managers

There are metrics that can be applied to certain trail characteristics that can be used to determine difficulty level. Typically these include trail surface, width, gradient (slope) and the type and dimensions of obstacles that may be encountered. The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) Standards for mountain bikes use these and DPaW is currently working to develop a similarly prescriptive model for four wheel drive and trail bike trails.

While these objective measures are useful, particularly in the planning of a new trail, the classification of existing trails typically requires an element of subjectivity. Weather conditions can temporarily influence the difficulty of some trails, and erosion and general use

can also impact over time. Other factors including remoteness and exposure should also be taken into account where appropriate.

Distance of a trail is not generally considered when classifying a trail section, however an overall route may be considered more difficult if it requires an element of endurance.

Trail grading information for users

The trail grading information provided to users should be predominantly descriptive and explain the trail from a user's point of view. Technical terminology as used by the trail manager in assessing the trail difficulty may not be understood by the trail user and should be avoided.

In addition to grading, information on the length of the trail should be provided. This should be indicated in terms of distance and / or estimated time to complete the route for the average user. Any other information which provides the user with more detail about the route should also be provided where available.

When combined, the information on the grading, the distance and the time to complete the trail will provide users with the key pieces of information required to make an informed decision about the suitability of the trail for their needs/ capability.

Trail Significance

Trail classification can be used to determine a hierarchy of significance of trails which can inform prioritisation of development, maintenance and promotion. A typical significance hierarchy is:

- International - capable of being judged alongside the best trails in the world and capable of drawing international visitors for the express purpose of riding it.
- National - capable of being judged alongside the best trails in the country and capable of drawing interstate visitors for the express purpose of riding it.
- Regional - a significant drawcard for people within and outside the immediate locale
- Local - predominantly developed to suit the needs of local residents and visitors

Inspection and Maintenance

Trail classification can also be used to specify inspection and maintenance timeframes. This can give trail users a sense of confidence about the condition of trails, and provide land managers with a level of legal protection provided that the inspection and maintenance regime is adhered to.

In application it is appropriate that the trails with the highest use, and those most commonly used by the least experienced riders, should have the most frequent inspection, while remote or infrequently used trails and those targeting more experienced riders could have the least frequent inspections.

As a guide, the Australian Standard 2156 for walking tracks provides an inspection schedule for the management of trails as follows:

Track / Trail Class	Schedule
Class 1	Tracks and adjacent natural and built elements will be inspected and maintained regularly. Inspection interval: 30 days or less.
Class 2	Tracks and adjacent natural and built elements will be inspected and maintained regularly. Inspection interval: 90 days or less.
Class 3	Built elements will be inspected and maintained regularly. Any built facilities will be managed for public risk. Inspection interval: 6 months or less.
Class 4	Tracks will be inspected on a regular basis and after major natural events such as cyclones or fires. Any built facilities will be managed for public risk. Inspection interval: 6 to 12 months.
Class 5	Tracks will be inspected on a regular basis and after major natural events such as cyclones or fires. Any built facilities will be managed for public risk. Inspection interval: 6 to 18 months.
Class 6	Tracks will not be managed for public risk. Users will be responsible for personal safety and need to exercise appropriate care.

Australian Standard 2156 for Walking tracks - classification and signage

Standards

The Australian Standard™ AS 2156.1—2001 Walking tracks - Classification and signage provides a classification system as a basis for multi-use trail standards. The standard provides guidance on the design, fabrication and use of trail markers and signage to be used for walking tracks.

There is however, no Australian standard for multi-use trails and non-motorised trails.

There are some variations on classifications for equestrian trails, however there is a high degree of commonality between them. Because of different approaches to describing characteristics such as maximum or average gradients it is not possible to draw direct comparisons.

The following table summarises a selection of horse trail classification schemes.

Conclusion

On the basis of this review the existing ATHRA model, with its clear descriptions and level of detail about trail surfaces, is considered the most appropriate. This model should be rolled out across all signage, trail maps and rider education material.

The classifications should be subject to periodic review for their applicability and appropriateness, and trails should be periodically re-assessed to take into account the effects of weathering and usage.

	Trail Grade	USDA Forest Service[1]	Queensland[2]	SA / ATHRA	Irish Trails[3]
	Easiest		**Easiest** (not described)		
	Easy		**Easy** The easiest tracks that are suitable for users who don't have the skill or desire for more challenging trails. They have a lower level of risk for the user, and consequently offer less variety than those of greater difficulty. These tracks are appropriate for novice through to advanced users and require little skill or physical challenge to complete. They generally follow obvious, well marked tracks and roads.	**Easy (Class 1)** Most suitable for novices, social groups and others seeking a relatively short distance trail requiring a basic level of skill and horse and rider fitness. Most likely to be fire roads or wide single tracks (bridlepaths) with a gentle grade (not exceeding 10%) and a relatively obstacle free, hardened natural surface. Likely to be shared-use and frequent encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers and runners can be expected.	**Class 1** • Intended for novices; social groups and those seeking a trail requiring a basic level of skill and horse & rider fitness. • Wide enough to accommodate two-way usage. • Likely to be multi-use and frequent encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers & runners can be expected. • Most likely to include fire roads or wide single track trails with gentle slopes and relatively obstacle free, and a hardened natural surface.
	Trail Surface	Surface as needed for stability	Generally smooth, level and wide with generous clearing of trees, limbs, and other vegetation. Few obstacles will be encountered. Changes in elevation are minimal. Streams are most often crossed with bridges.	Generally a natural surface (topped with dolomite or compacted surface if desired). Hardened surfaces like concrete or asphalt to be avoided due to concussion on horse legs and poor traction with metal horseshoes. Hardened surfaces may be utilised on Rail Trails or other tracks where horses would generally only walk.	Generally a natural compacted surface. Hardened surfaces like concrete or asphalt to be avoided to minimize concussion on horse legs and poor traction for horses due to metal horseshoes. Hardened surfaces may be utilised where the trail is shared use and horses would generally only travel at walking speed.
	Trail Width	600mm		Minimum Tread : 1500mm Note: Short sections of narrower tread (.60 m to 1.2 m) are acceptable at ground level however 1.5 metres is required at the height of the riders stirrups. Minimum corridor width: 3000mm Minimum height: 3700mm	Minimum: 1500mm Minimum corridor width: 3000mm Minimum corridor height: 3700mm

[1] http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/willamette/recreation/hiking/?cid=stelprdb5103006
[2] SEQ Active Trails Implementation Guide No 1
[3] Irish Sports Council - Classification and Grading for Recreational Trails

	Trail Gradient	Average <5% Max <15% for up to 70m	Average <5%h short se Max <15% for up to 100m	Desired gradient 0 – 10% Maximum 10% Maximum sustained pitch 5% Out slope 4% maximum	Maximum: 10% Maximum sustained pitch: 5% Out slope: 4%
	More Difficult		**Moderate** Designed to meet the expectations of the majority of trail users. They require skills beyond that of a novice and will at times challenge the average trail user. These routes are suitable for intermediate through to advanced users. These trails are generally narrower, and may contain obstacles such as fallen trees or exposed roots and rocks. Changes in elevation are moderate. Streams are most often crossed by fording.	**Intermediate (Class 2)** Most suitable for individuals and smaller social groups seeking a short to medium distance trail requiring a moderate level of skill and fitness. Most likely to be a combination single trail and/or fire road with obstacles, variable surfaces, and a moderate slope. Likely to be shared-use so encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers, runners and horse riders should be expected.	**Class 2** • Intended for individuals or social groups seeking a trail requiring a moderate level of skill and rider fitness. • May be wide enough to accommodate two-way usage. • Likely to be multi-use and frequent encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers & runners can be expected. • Most likely to include a combination of fire roads and single track trails with moderate slopes, some obstacle and a variable surface. • Obstacles such as shallow fords, rocks, logs and gates that require dismounting are likely.
	Trail Surface	Roots, imbedded rocks, some logs		Generally a natural surface is desired and may include sections of rocky ground, sand, clay or gravel. Obstacles such as rocks, logs and gates that require dismounting are likely. Shallow ford crossings are acceptable. (Note: rainfall conditions vary widely - seasonal conditions may water depths significantly)	Generally a natural surface is desired and may include sections of ground with exposed rock, sand, clay or gravel.
	Trail Width	600mm		Minimum Tread : 1500mm Minimum clearing: 1500mm Minimum height: 3700mm	Minimum: 1500mm Minimum corridor width: 1500mm Minimum corridor height: 3700mm
	Trail Gradient	Average <10% Max <25% for up to 100m	Average <10% Max <25% for up to 150m	Maximum 15% Maximum sustained pitch 10% Out slope 4% maximum	Maximum: 15% Maximum sustained pitch: 10% Out slope: 4%

	Most Difficult		**Advanced** Trails designed for users with advanced skills who are seeking a higher risk level. They are recommended for advanced through to expert users only and will provide a definite physical challenge. Users contemplating these tracks should have considerable skill in their chosen activity and have a high level of competence in outdoor skills such as navigation, first-aid and survival. Trails in this category are rarely graded and may be indistinct or not be well marked in places. Minimal clearing of trees, limbs or other vegetation may result in hampering the progress of the user. Expect to encounter frequent and sometimes difficult obstacles. Changes in elevation are usually severe. Streams are most often crossed by fording and are sometimes difficult.	**Advanced (Class 3)** Suitable for individuals and small social groups seeking a very challenging trail requiring a high level of skill, fitness, and basic navigation skills. Most likely to consist of challenging single trail and/or fire road with many obstacles, variable surface, and steep sections. Some trail routes may not be marked at all. May possibly be shared-use so encounters with other users possibly including cyclists, walkers, vehicles and other stock should be expected, however, many of these trails may be located in remote areas and encounters with others is expected to be minimal.	**Class 3** • Intended for individuals and small social groups seeking a very challenging trail requiring a high level of skill, fitness, and basic navigation skills. • Most likely to consist of challenging single trail and/or fire road with many obstacles, variable surface, and steep sections. Some trail routes may not be waymarked. • These trails may be multi-use so encounters with other users including cyclists and walkers should be expected, however, due to location in remote areas, encounters with others is expected to be minimal. • Obstacles may include challenging rock steps, logs and river fords.
	Trail Surface	No graded tread	Natural terrain	Usually a variable surface with sections of rock, sand, clay gravel, etc. Obstacles may include challenging rocks, logs, Fording creeks	Usually a very variable surface with sections of rock, sand, clay gravel.
	Trail Width	460mm	Standard trail width 2000mm - 3000mm Height - 3000mm	Minimum Tread : 300mm (1500mm recommended at the height of the riders stirrups) Minimum clearing: 1500mm Minimum height: 2500mm	Minimum: 300mm (1500mm recommended at the height of the riders stirrups) Minimum corridor width: 1500mm Minimum corridor height: 2500mm
	Trail Gradient	Average <15% Max >30% for up to 150m	Average <15% Max >30% for up to 200m	Maximum 20% (Max. sustained pitch 10%.)	Maximum: 20% Maximum sustained pitch: 10%
	Expert		**Extreme** (not described)		

Discussion Paper 5: Education and Information

Education and information can have immediate or enduring effect on attitudes and actions.

Why is this important?

The WA Horse Trail Strategy Rider Survey indicated that some of the main issues for recreational horse trail riding centred around a general lack of education and information for trail horse riders and other trail user groups. In addition on-trail conflict was seen as a critical issue[1] and it is perceived that much of this conflict develops when information provision and education is inadequate.

In this context conflict on trails can best be defined as "goal interference attributed to another's behaviour"[2].

The key required elements of education and information are:

- For horse riders:
    - Where to ride, about the trails themselves ie trail type, suitability, surface, distances.
    - Code of conduct
    - Environmental minimal impact riding behaviours
    - User etiquette for shared trail use with other trail users
- For other trail users:
    - User etiquette for shared trail use with horses
- For road users - driver etiquette around horses
- For trail developers - understanding the specific requirements of recreational trail horse riding, understanding how to minimise on-trail conflicts.
- Trail:
    - Signage - on trail and on road around riding areas.
    - Interpretation
    - Maps and brochures
    - Trail classifications

Education

Education is required to positively influence the user's interaction with and impact on other trail or road users, the trail and its surrounds and the type of trail being ridden. There are 3 main focus areas for education:

1. User etiquette for shared trail use
2. Minimal impact and environmental care
3. Road safety

[1] 81% of respondents had experienced conflicts with other trail users - motorised trail bikes (72%), uncontrolled dogs (55%).
[2] Conflicts on multiple use trails, Federal Highway Administration and the National Recreational Trails Advisory Committee.

1. User etiquette for shared trail use

From the rider survey:

"I would like the information to be accessible so that everyone can enjoy the trails while knowing the rules about trail sharing and environmental issues."

"Increase awareness of non horse riders on how their behaviour/actions can potentially result in serious injury or death."

"Educate trail bike riders to go slow approaching horses and for a considerable distance after horses have passed."

Information and education programs related to promoting trail sharing can include:

Messages:

- The broader value of trails in the community
- Why some trails are shared and that cooperation can benefit all
- Teach about trail user similarities to ease "us and them" perceptions
- Communicate the consequences of problem behaviours
- Who should yield to whom and why
- What interferes with the enjoyment of other trail users

Communication channels, media:

- Create as posters, brochures, newsletter content, in maps, on trailhead information, videos
- Trail user public meetings between different user groups to understand each other better.
- Website posts and media articles.
- User involvement - hands-on working with other trail users and land managers to better understand one another's needs, build cooperation and trust.

ATHRA have an ongoing program named "Sharing the Bush"[3] to work with other bush user groups for better understanding and cooperation. The published "Guideline - Sharing the Bush" provides 11 items for other bush users to understand how to approach horses or behave around horses on the trail. There are a further 9 items for horse riders to understand how to behave around other trail users. It is recommended that this guide be further developed with a version for each trail user type created in conjunction with each trail user peak body eg:

- Trail bikes - the Recreational Trailbike Riders' Association
- Mountain bikes - West Cycle
- Bush Walkers - the WA Bushwalker Federation
- Four Wheel Drives - the WA Four Wheel Drive Association

ATHRA should then work with each peak body and their corresponding national bodies to promote and distribute this information to horse riders and trail users for each user group.

2. Minimal Impact - Environmental care

The WA Horse Trail Strategy Rider Survey found that 46% of respondents have some interest and are aware of their environmental impacts.

[3] Guideline - Sharing the bush, ATHRA, IMS-GU-022 2013

The ATHRA Code of Conduct[4] lists "The Sixteen Environmental Rules" to help minimize the impact of horses on the environment and to promote safe and environmentally responsible trail riding.

1. Only allow your horse to eat weed free feed at least 48 hrs prior to entering bushland areas. Weed free feed includes clean chaff, pellets and cracked, rolled or steamed grains. Never take meadow hay as it often contains weed seed.
2. Undertake some basic education in weed identification, and whenever possible assist land managers in quickly identifying and eliminating new outbreaks of problem species.
3. Members should become familiar with and put into practice the "ATHRA Guidelines to Combat Phytophthora". (Refer to the ATHRA website at www.athra.com.au or Schedule 8 of this Code).
4. Always be observant and avoid unduly disturbing unstable or erosion prone soils and vegetated sand dunes. Avoid disturbing coastal birds nesting in soft sand and ride between the high and low tide water marks when you have reached the beach.
5. Rather than risking damage to fragile creeks, streams and riverbanks, select firm, stony crossings. Use bridges wherever possible and when safe to help limit erosion and ensure good water quality.
6. Do not to allow your horse to defecate or urinate during stream crossings. Stop prior to entering the water to allow your horse to rest, relax, and (hopefully) to eliminate waste PRIOR to crossing. By not allowing your horse to stop or dawdle in the water you may also help prevent contamination.
7. Carry and use canvas or collapsible buckets, and/or pump and hose, where possible to water and wash horses. Wash horses at least 50 meters away from any watercourse.
8. All ATHRA members are to utilise supplied facility yarding where it is logical and appropriate. Members should be conscious of the space they take up within the yard to ensure efficient and shared use of the available area.
9. Always camp horses well clear of watercourses – at least 50 metres, unless camping areas or yards provided by the governing authority are constructed / situated contrary to this rule.
10. Avoid horses denuding vegetation especially during stays of more than one night by regularly relocating nightlines and portable yards.
11. Use tree protectors and suitable length stops to prevent damage to trees caused by nightlines and horses.
12. Where possible make nightline length 15 metres or more to reduce concentrated impact.
13. Avoid horses not already familiar with each other being yarded together. This will avoid conflicts in establishing a new social order.
14. Dispose of or disperse manure from overnight camp sights.
15. Remove all rubbish from campsites, don't bury as feral animals may dig it up. Where possible remove unsightly litter left by others. Take out what you take in.
16. Always be friendly and civil to other bushland users. Members should always take the initiative to avoid any conflict or potentially dangerous situations involving your horses and the general public.

It is recommended that a more user friendly brochure is developed for distribution along the lines of the South Australian "Minimum Impact Trail Use" but specifically created for horse riding.

The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources of South Australia produced a flier "Phytophthora dieback horse riding guidelines"[5] which focuses on how to clean your

[4] Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, Code of Conduct, 2012

[5] http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/files/038be896-ee14-40f4-8abf-a40200cfd4ee/horse-riding-in-parks-fact.pdf

horse's hooves. This has been included in the ATHRA Code of Conduct but could be reproduced separately for Western Australia with DPAW.

Horse SA with funding from the Australian Government Water Fund have created a "Tips for horse trail riders to help protect water quality" brochure. It is recommended that the WA Department of Water is consulted and funding obtained for a similar education resource.

Other activities to educate riders on minimising environmental impacts and producing environmental benefits can include:

- Retailers to distribute fliers.
- Club workshops on minimal impact use and trail sharing.
- Involving horse riders in trail planning, building and maintenance workshops with land managers.
- Volunteer trail groups.
- Further plans and activities to be developed by clubs in consultation with ATHRA.

3. Road Safety

The horse is considered a vehicle on the road and is therefore permitted to be ridden on the road and road related areas. Few riders never have to ride on the road or alongside the road on verges to access their trails however the WA Horse Trail Rider Survey 2014 for this project indicated that concern about traffic and safety on roads was high.

From the rider survey:
"lack of information if any trails in my area that are safe to use. I have 2 children that would like to ride out on trails more but its not safe we would have to ride along roads with people beeping horns, yelling out windows, swerving at us laughing as they think its funny. I float to Darling Downs to access trails for safety."

"Safer riding environments, more driver awareness on roads of encountering horses"

"promote safety with horses to all motor bike and car drivers. Ie. make it part of their lice testing that they slow down and don't use the horn when approaching ridden horses"

"Educate other road users as to safe driving behaviours around horses and respect for the needs of float drivers."

The Horse Riding and Road Safety in Australia booklet provided by Horse SA is a resource to promote responsible, considerate and courteous riding on the roads by all riders. Replicating and distributing the Horse SA booklet to riders in Western Australia will raise rider awareness of road safety.

Horse Riding and Road Safety Summary[6]:

1. Know and obey the Australian Road Rules
2. Ride on the left hand side of the road, with the flow of the traffic
3. Use clear hand signals
4. Wear fluorescent/reflective clothing
5. Inexperienced horses should always be accompanied by experienced horse/rider combinations

[6] Horse Riding & Road Safety in Australia, Horse SA 2006

6. Wear an approved safety helmet and footwear safe for horse riding
7. Ride with a positive attitude
8. Use the 'Lifesaver look' - look, check, look again
9. Be a courteous road user

The WA Office of Road Safety "WA road rules relating to horses and riders" (2010) provides an interpretation of the law relating to the riding and leading of horses on public roads. It provides tips for riders and for drivers in areas where there are horses. It is recommended that this be reviewed, updated, published in a format suitable for riders and drivers and promoted and distributed.

The South Australian Government has produced online information for road users regarding encountering horses and their riders on roads[7] which links to the Horse SA booklet.

Information

To inform their riding decisions, riders need information either before, at the start or during a ride. This can also include interpretative information which seeks to engage, inform and possibly entertain by revealing the meanings and relationships of the cultural and natural heritage to the trail user.

Participants in the rider survey expressed a need for better information:
"I really would like a publication detailing all the trails as I am limited to the few I have learnt about by word of mouth and would like much more variety."

"I would love more information about trails outside my own area, I would travel to them if I knew where they were and that they were worth the drive."

"How to find them! I know about the Darling Downs Bridle path system and learned about it mainly by exploring it myself. It would be great to have a decent website with WA trail riding. I'd love to float up to SEC for a ride, but it's a long drive to go to a place where you have no idea where to start, where are you allowed to ride and park. Social Media is great help to find new trials but peoples explanations of "how to get there" don't always get you there. I'd also LOVE to ride more in the Byford Hills, i know there is trail riding, it's very close to my place, it apparently very nice but i have NO idea where to park or where to go."

"I might go further afield and float to more places if I knew there was adequate float parking and trails were maybe published in one website giving details and maps of trails."

"trail riding guide showing were the trails are, what amenities' it has, float parking etc, and a rating for each trail, and map of trail."

Promotion of horse trails and multi-use trails suitable for horse riding, is generally poor and specific information on trail conditions is not available. This leads to a lack of trail variety for riders who then stick to the trails they know.

Some examples of required information:

- Trail heads are clearly signposted and have information panels about the trails to be accessed.

[7] http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/towardszerotogether/safe_road_users/horses

- All trails to be available via a website and brochures available via clubs, shires, retailers and other relevant associations with
    - maps, GPS data
    - trail classifications
    - trail surface information
    - how to access the trailhead
    - trailhead information - float parking, facilities available, access to trails
    - topographical features,
    - trail notes describing key points along the way
    - interpretative information - culture, history, geography
    - other trail users if multi-user with required etiquette and code of conduct
    - environmental issues and considerations with minimal impact suggestions
    - management and maintenance information including phone numbers for reporting trail related matters
    - cultural heritage values
    - potential problems eg: adjacent to railway line for 300m or need to cross flowing river, go through a tunnel under railway or road.

Code of Conduct

The aim of a Code of Conduct is to educate, guide and promote safe and environmentally responsible trail horse riding and in doing so, help preserve the heritage of horse trail riding.

This is done by maximising safety and enjoyment whilst minimising potential environmental impacts and maintaining harmony with other trail users.

There are a number of horse trail riding codes of conduct already developed including:

- Code of Conduct, 2012 ATHRA
- NSW code of practice for horse riding in parks (April 2014) - NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service.
- Code of Practice, bush trail riding - Equestrian Landcare Association WA
- Horse riding code - horse riding in the Australian alps national parks 1994
- Code of conduct for recreational horse riding on multi-use trails - Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (all environmental minimum impacts)
- Trail Riders Code of Practice, Horse SA

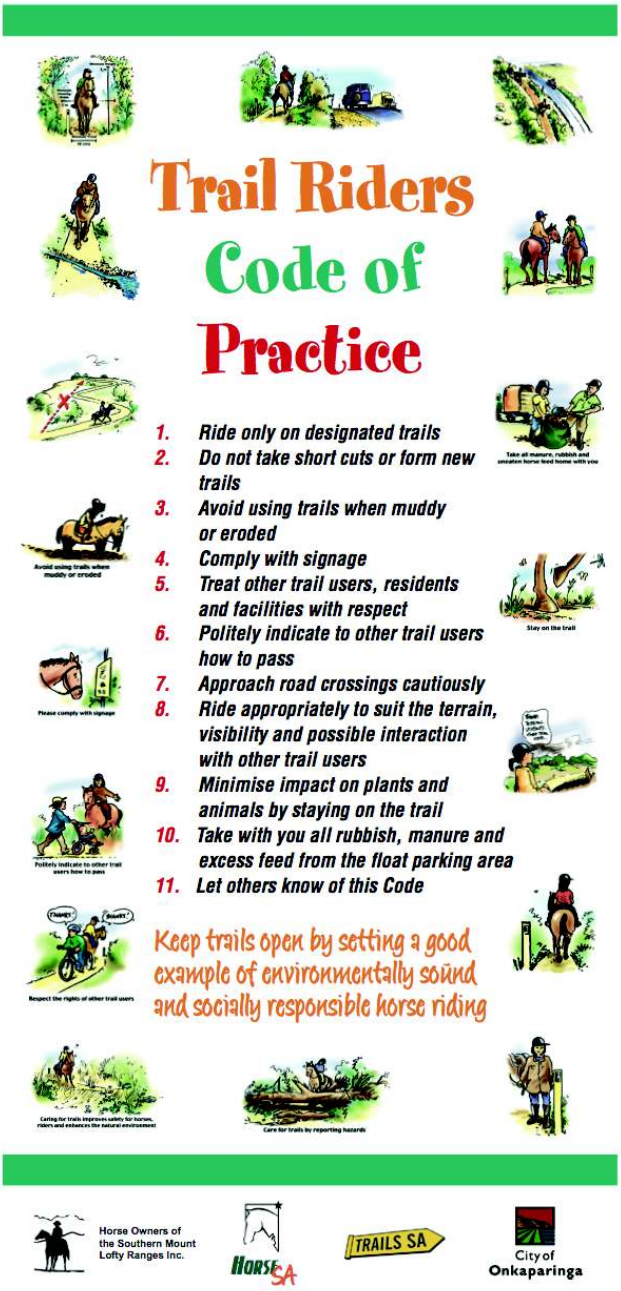
Common themes in each of the Codes of Conduct are:

- Planning - Plan your ride, know where you can ride and what to expect when you get there.
- Facilities - Use of facilities where provided.
- Safety:
    - appropriate clothing, footwear and safety gear
    - carry a first aid kit for both horse and rider
    - check all equipment before setting out
    - ensure horses are under adequate control at all times and are accustomed to things they may encounter on the trail
    - is there mobile phone coverage?

- Behaviour:
    - Other trail users - suggested behaviour around other trail user types.
    - Guidelines for camping with your horse
- Environment - Protecting the environment / minimal impact:
    - Avoid riding during wet weather or waterlogged areas
    - Stay on trail
    - avoid sensitive areas such as bogs and moss beds
    - don't allow horses to graze on small trees and shrubs
    - check a horses coat and hooves for seeds before riding
    - use weed free feed before riding
    - scatter manure away from rest stops
    - cross streams at bridges or culverts where possible

As listed above ATHRA already have a Code of Conduct however this is a 42 page document aimed mainly at ATHRA affiliated clubs and includes extra items such as risk management and running rides and events.

It is recommended that an abridged version of this Code of Conduct be developed aimed at the individual trail rider (ie removing the group ride protocols) along with a summarised brochure format for riders as a quick reference. A good example is the South Australian "Trail Riders Code of Practice" depicted below.



Conflict Management

Objective: trail sharing in which conflicts have been minimised or avoided.

Conflict on trails can best be defined as “goal interference attributed to another’s behaviour”[8].

[8] Conflicts on multiple use trails, Federal Highway Administration and the National Recreational Trails Advisory Committee.

Conflicts can be with trail users engaged in the same activity, in different activities, with animals, trail managers, road users and land managers and land owners. As multi-use trails become the norm, managing and minimising trail user conflicts becomes more critical.

> *"Reduction in user conflict comes with the recognition of other legitimate trail activities. In a time of increasing population and decreasing trail budgets we must work towards expansion of recreational trails for all rather than restriction of opportunity for some"*

The main trail conflict issues for trail users and managers include[9]:

- Maintaining user safety - unsafe situations or conditions caused by other trail users can keep horse trail riders from achieving their desired trail experience. This is also the case for car drivers on parallel roads or on roads where verges are used for trail access.
- Providing high-quality user experiences - trail users value solitude, experiencing nature, social time with friends and family, challenges. Trail or parking crowding (subjective); the use of different levels of technology; different environmental attitudes can cause unsatisfying user experiences.
- Protecting natural resources - resource impacts such as trail erosion and damage, litter, vandalism and other indications of the presence of others can lead to feelings of crowding and conflict.

There are several recognised ways to avoid or minimise conflicts on multi-use trails[10], including:

- Physical responses - Different users often have very different needs and desires in terms of physical trail attributes such as surface, slope, length, safe sight distances and amenities.
    - Encouraging required trail behaviour through trail design, layout and maintenance.
    - Provide adequate trail mileage and variety of trail opportunities to disperse users quickly.
    - Provide separate trail heads or trailhead areas for different users.
- Management responses -
    - Information and education
- User involvement - actively involving horse trail users in trail planning and management and conflict resolution.
- Regulations and enforcement - Most trail-sharing programs will not succeed without regulations and effective enforcement for those whose lack of consideration could negate the positive impact made by the majority.

Whether the behaviour being promoted is called trail etiquette, trail ethics, trail courtesy, or trail sharing, information and education efforts are almost universally supported as an essential strategy for providing opportunities for high-quality recreation experiences.

[9] Ibid
[10] Ibid

Influencing human behaviour through information and education is an attractive alternative to controlling or coercing compliance.

The South Australian Sustainable Recreational Trails Guidelines[11] advised the following in regards to the role of education and information as regards managing conflict management.

> *Most on-trail conflict develops when information provision and education is inadequate. Sometimes conflict can occur between legitimate users, while on other occasions it may be between the legitimate user group or groups and 'illegal' users. In both cases, information and education are the key tools for trail managers. Enforcement should only be necessary as a last resource.*
>
> *Single-use trails should be clearly signposted as such at all access points. Brochures, maps and media material should also reinforce the message that this is a single-use trail. It is extremely helpful to explain why this is the case. For example, it may be that the trail passes through land that has limitations on access due to its tenure, or the nature of the environment or the trail design itself may preclude some users.*
>
> *The design of the trail can also assist in managing unwanted user groups. Bear in mind that conflict may occur with users from beyond the common trail user groups such as trail bikes or four-wheel drives. Seek support from trail partners in managing these issues, and use the media to publicise the impacts such usage is having.*
>
> *Shared-use trails should have built-in the provision of adequate information during the planning phase. Common guidelines should be developed for 'who gives way to whom' on shared use trails. Signage and information reinforcing these rules of trail etiquette should be prominent on the trail and in any public information.*
>
> *If conflict develops, it is worth getting the different groups together to talk about their issues. It may be that the conflict is identifying some weakness in the trail design. Each group should help find potential solutions.*

Conclusion

With better information, more use can be made of the existing trails network. More effective rider education materials can help reduce environmental impact and help safeguard the future of the activity, while educating other trails users about trail etiquette in the presence of horses will help reduce trail conflicts, improve safety and rider satisfaction and enhance trail harmony.

[11] Sustainable Recreational Trails: Guidelines for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of recreational trails in South Australia, Government of South Australia, p9.

Discussion Paper 6. Trails Audit

Throughout 2014, ATHRA members conducted an audit of known equestrian trails in the Perth, South West and Great Southern regions.

A total of 30 trails have been reviewed covering 573km of trails and described according to the following characteristics:

- Name of trail
- Type of trail
- Tourism region
- Land manager
- Protected Area
- Water catchment
- Loop or destination trail
- Other access points
- Length of trail (km)
- Degree of difficulty
- Suitable for horses /carts
- Time to complete
- Number of days
- Specific skills required
- Well maintained
- Agency responsible for maintenance
- Existence of management / maintenance plan
- Trail surface
- Hazard details
- Infrastructure on trail
- Water (for humans and / or horses)
- Float parking, including ease of access and condition
- Directional signage
- Ease of finding start / finish
- Existence of trail head
- Adequacy of trail marking
- Points of interest
- Availability of brochures, maps and / or web site
- Closest visitor centre
- Availability of current trail conditions
- Availability of horse hire
- Attractions nearby trail
- Accommodation by type

The comprehensive audit provides a valuable insight into the state of equestrian trails and makes good progress towards a State Equestrian Trails register.

Audit Limitations

A discussion of the findings of the Audit needs to be prefaced by some observations about the process. Nine people contributed data about trails, so there will inevitably be an element of subjectivity on issues such as level of maintenance. However the audit tool was piloted, the auditors were trained to ensure consistency and most of the questions were objective, restricting the impact of auditor bias. Other questions such as 'degree of difficulty' were guided by ATHRA Trail Classifications.

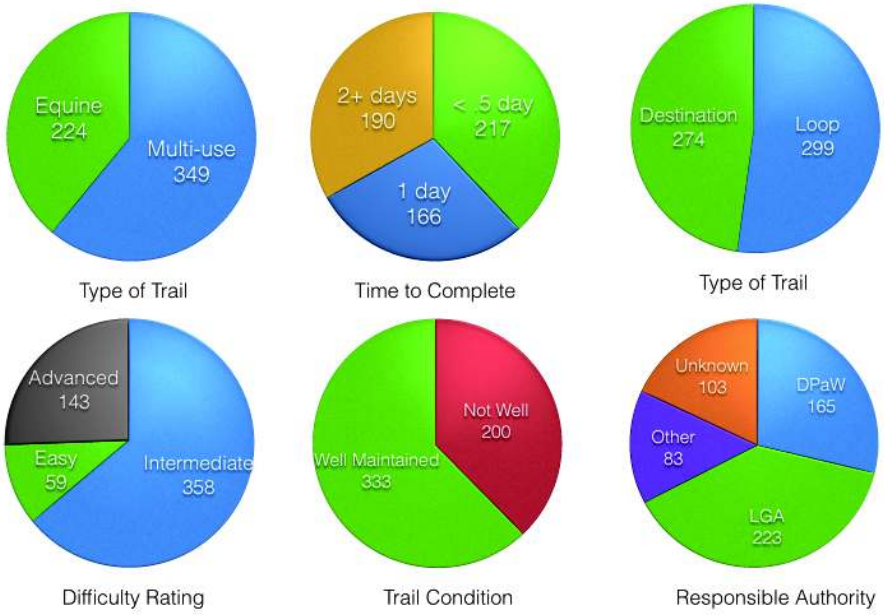
A more significant limitation is the number of trails that are not included in the audit. The 2014 audit added a significant level of detail to trails identified in the Equestrian Tracks and Trails Study of 2006, however the 2006 study acknowledged the incompleteness of the list. This means that ratios of maintained to unmaintained trails and the proportion of trail kilometres serviced by trailheads with float parking, for example, are not representative of the total trails picture.

The fact that the audited trails are the higher profile, more popular ones, suggests that the picture painted by the trails audit is possibly more favourable than it would be if *all* trails were to be included. If 58% of the trail miles on the audit trails are considered to be well maintained, then it is likely that the overall percentage would be considerably lower if all trails were to be considered.

Key Points

The above limitations mean that the data in the trails audit cannot be interpreted as absolute, however the information in the audit is still valuable in providing a snapshot of the state of major trails.

Trails Audit - Selected Data by kilometres of trails



Among the key points:

- Less than 40% of trail kilometres are horse-only trails. 60% are multi-use.
- 38% of trail kilometres (70% of trails) can be completed in under half a day
- Loop trails represent approximately half the audited inventory
- 27% of trails are considered ‘Easy’, however this represents only 10% of trail kilometres.
- Just over half (53%) of trails are considered well maintained.
- Trails with management / maintenance plans are more likely to be well maintained (75%). 53% of trails have management / maintenance plans, however not all of these are current and there is considerable variation in the level of detail.
- 60% of trails are considered to have inadequate trail marking.
- 37% of trails have a defined trailhead, however of these only a minority are considered up to expected current standards.

- 40% of trails have well maintained float parking. 40% do not have any float parking. The Audit did not estimate float capacity, but anecdotally most cater for 2-3 floats.

24 of the trails identified in the 2006 study were no longer available for horse riding in 2014. Generally this was either because of urbanisation of previously peri-urban areas or by management plans not providing for horse access. In several cases the trails still exist but are now designated as walk or walk / cycle paths.

Gap Analysis

From the trails audit and the rider survey it is not possible to deduce the extent to which there are mis-matches in trails demand and supply. This is because the survey was self-selecting rather than a census or statistically valid random sample, and the trails audit is not a representative cross-section of all trails throughout the state.

The following chart highlights areas where improvements can be made. These are reflected in the strategic priorities.

Among the most significant gaps emerging from the audit and the rider survey are the relatively few kilometres of trail serviced by easily accessible, well maintained float parking and trailheads, and the lack of information (depicted here by the availability of brochures).

The following table presents selected characteristics of each of the trails audited in 2014, together with a list of trails identified in 2006 which are no longer available for horse trail riding in 2014.

2014 AUDIT SUMMARY

TRAIL NAME	KM	WELL MAINTAINED?	FLOAT PARKING?	TRAIL HEAD?	ADEQUATE TRAIL MARKING
Byford Trails	8.6	Yes	No	No	No
Bungendore Park	1.6	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Serpentine Bridle Trails	5.22	No	No	No	No
Jarrahdale (Langford Park) Bridle Trail	26	No	Yes	No	Yes
Jandakot Regional Park	13.3	No	Yes	No	No
Railway Reserves Heritage Trail	59	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wungong Regional Park	18.2	No	No	No	No
Kep Track	75	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cardup Trails	7	No	Yes	No	No
Forrestdale Lake Trail	3	No	Yes	No	No
10th Light Horse Trail - Yalgorup	56	No	No	No	No
Oakford Trails	15.7	No	No	No	No
McNeill Road Estate	7	Yes	Yes	No	No
Joshua Mews Bushland	5	No	No	Yes	No
Bold Park Bridle Trail	7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dugdale Road	7	Yes	Yes	No	No
Boranup Bridle Trail	24	Yes	Yes	No	No
Baragup Bridle Trail	40	?	?	?	?
Les Couzens Bridle Trail	17.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Byford Meadows Trails	2	No	No	No	No
Lower Helena Bridle Trail	40	No	No	No	No
John Forrest National Park Bridle Trail	16	Yes	No	Yes	No

Yalgorup National Park Bridle Trail		No	No	No	No
Bickley to Ellis Brook Bridle Trail	9	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mike Stidwell Horse Trail	30.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mundabiddi- Torbay to Elleker Rail Trail	8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Denmark to Nornalup Rail Trail	47	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Hay River to Denmark Rail Trail	12	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Deanmill Heritage Trail	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bullsbrook Bridle Trail	6.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Balmoral Blue Rock Road Ride	?	?	?	?	?
Cardup Trails	?	?	?	?	?
Dryandra Forest - Loop 1	?	?	?	?	?
Dryandra woodlands 2	?	?	?	?	?
Collie Darkan Rail Trail	47	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

TRAILS IDENTIFIED IN 2006 (No longer available for horses in 2014)		
Karri Gully Loop Trail	Very Short Walk Trail	Other User Group
Leschenault Peninsula Cons Park	Horseriding not permitted in Park	Management Plan/Horse Access Not allowed
Stockyard Gully Trail	Horseriding not permitted in Park	Management Plan/Horse Access Not allowed
Paganoni Bridle Trail	2.4km long, small trail difficult to access. No horse access now acknowledged	Management Plan/Horse Access Not allowed
Beelia Regional Park Bridle Trail	Not in Current Management Plan	Management Plan/Horse Access Not allowed
Thomas Lake Bridle Trail	Horseriding permitted in 2005 Management Plan, but no longer feasible due to development	Urbanisation and increased population

Neerabup National Park	10th Light Horse Heritage Trail - Current Management plan does not mention horse riding	Management Plan/Horse access not allowed
Denis De Young Reserve (Jandakot RP)	Jandakot Regional Park Management Plan	Management Plan access defined elsewhere
D Haer Reserve (Jandakot RP)	Jandakot Regional Park Management Plan	Management Plan access defined elsewhere
Middleton Bay Path	Now only walk/cycle	Urbanisation and increased population
Ellen Cove Board Walk	Now only walk/cycle	Urbanisation and increased population
First Settlement Heritage Trail	Now only walk/cycle	Urbanisation and increased population
Manea Park	Now only walk/cycle	Urbanisation and increased population
Tramway Reserve	Short Walk Trail only - been cut up by development	Urbanisation and increased population
Mt Magnet Road	Geraldton - Enquiries made resulted in no responses as to location	Details unknown
Rowan Reserve	Greenough Town - Enquiries made resulted in no responses as to location	Details unknown
Lions Weir / Ranford Bridle Trail	2.5km Walk Trail only	Other User Group
Garvey Park	Unofficial Trail used by Trainers only	Use by trainers only
Mathieson Rd Horse Walkway	Unofficial Trail used by Trainers only	Use by trainers only
Wallangarra Drive Bridle Trail	Bridle Trails to Wallangarra Pony club, some now not accessible due to railway blocked off	Urbanisation and increased population
Irwin Street reserve	Only 1 km available, taken over by development	Urbanisation and increased population
Henley Brook Bridle Trail	Only 1 km available, taken over by development	Urbanisation and increased population
Shannon and D'Entrecasteaux National Parks	Currently for commercial operators only	Commercial use only, currently being considered for potential pilot trail
Murray Bridle Trail	Forrest Highway Development, Busy Roads	Urbanisation and increased population

Summary of Data:

	Length	Number	Length %	No %
TYPE				
Multi-use	349.2	16	61%	53%
Equine	223.9	14	39%	47%
TOURISM AREA				
Great Southern	97.5	4	17%	13%
Perth	381.1	20	66%	67%
South West	94.5	6	16%	20%
LAND MANAGER				
DPaW	268	13	47%	43%
LGA	230.1	16	40%	53%
Other	75	1	13%	3%
PROTECTED AREA				
Yes	152.6	8	27%	27%
No	420.5	22	73%	73%
WATER CATCHMENT				
Yes	145.5	3	25%	10%
No	427.6	27	75%	90%
LOOP TRAIL				
Yes	298.8	15	52%	50%
No	274.3	15	48%	50%
DIFFICULTY GRADE				
Easy (1)	59.3	8	10%	27%
Intermediate (2)	357.8	18	62%	60%
Advanced (3)	143.2	4	25%	13%
SUITABLE FOR CARTS				
Yes	197.1	8	34%	27%
No	376	22	66%	73%
TIME TO COMPLETE				
Less than .5 day	217.4	21	38%	70%
1 day	165.7	6	29%	20%
2+ days	190	3	33%	10%
WELL MAINTAINED				
Yes	332.7	16	58%	53%
No	200.4	13	35%	43%
RESPONSIBILITY				
DPaW	165	10	29%	33%

National Trust	75	1	13%	3%
Friends Group	7.6	2	1%	7%
Albany	38.5	2	7%	7%
Armadale	7	1	1%	3%
Chittering	6.5	1	1%	3%
Denmark	59	2	10%	7%
Gosnells	9	1	2%	3%
Mundaring	59	1	10%	3%
Serpentine-Jarrahdale	38.5	5	7%	17%
Swan	5	1	1%	3%
Unknown	103	3	18%	10%
MANAGEMENT / MAINTENANCE PLAN				
Yes	329.1	16	57%	53%
No	237.5	13	41%	43%
Unknown	6.5	1	1%	3%
FLOAT PARKING				
Yes	291.4	18	51%	60%
No	281.7	11	49%	37%
EASY ACCESS FOR FLOATS				
Yes	206.4	15	36%	50%
WELL MAINTAINED FLOAT AREA				
Yes	133.4	12	23%	40%
DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE				
Yes	221.4	11	39%	37%
START / FINISH EASY TO FIND				
Yes	323.8	16	56%	53%
TRAILHEAD				
Yes	239.5	11	42%	37%
TRAIL MARKING ADEQUATE				
Yes	287.6	12	50%	40%
BROCHURE AVAILABLE				
Yes	315.6	11	55%	37%
HORSE HIRE AVAILABLE				
Yes	198.7	7	35%	23%
ACCOMMODATION NEARBY				
Yes	455.6	17	79%	57%

Discussion Paper 7: Economic Benefits

Recreational horse trail riding is already a significant contributor to the economy, and there is potential to grow this.

Why is this important?

Like commercial entities, government seeks a return on the funds it invests in programs. The return can include social and health benefits, but it is equally important to not overlook the direct and indirect economic impacts of the activity, as this helps provide a sense of scale and economic leverage.

Best Estimates

Although there are no precise figures available, an estimate of value to the WA economy can be extrapolated from related national research.

The most recent comprehensive review of the equestrian industry was the 2001 Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) report which indicated a contribution to the national GDP of $645.8 million.

GDP Contribution $m	**2001**
Recreation City	229.8
Recreation Country	344.6
Paddock bashers	71.4
TOTAL	645.8

Assuming the industry remained constant, and after adjusting for inflation, this equates to a national figure of $894.5 million in 2013.

Applying the proportion of national horse riding that occurs in Western Australia, (based on the participation rates from the ERASS 2010 study) it is possible to extrapolate a contribution to the Western Australian GDP.

Estimated contribution to WA GDP based on 9% share of Participation (ERASS 2010) = **$80.5 million.**

Using the same process of extrapolation from national RIRDC data the following estimates of the number of recreational horses in Western Australia can be made.

Estimated number of horses in Australia[1] (excludes an estimated 300,000 feral horses).

Purpose of horse ownership	Number of horses
Racing	45,943
Breeding	142,502
Events	199,612
Recreation	**327,763**
TOTAL	**715,820**

Estimated horse numbers by purpose of ownership

Estimated number of recreation horses in WA based on 9% share of Participation (ERASS 2010) = **29,498**

The Tourism Opportunity

"*Our findings indicate that adventure travel is diffusing in the market. More people, who in the past chose to engage in other types of travel, are indicating that on their next trip they will be more adventurous in their activity and destination choice. Product developers and marketers should capitalize on these dreamers and create soft options to ease them into the world of adventure travel*."

Adventure Tourism Market Report - August 2010

There is an opportunity to develop horse trail riding as a soft adventure tourism product in Western Australia.

According to the Western Australian Tourism Council, it's time to capitalise on adventure as a hallmark Western Australian experience.

No Australian tourism region has emerged as the adventure tourism capital. With accessible natural assets, great weather and active outdoor lifestyle, Perth is ideally suited to become Australia's leading adventure tourism destination[2].

Adventure experiences traditionally reserved for regional Western Australia should be incorporated into Perth's visitor offer, demonstrating the unison between the city and its surrounding environment.

Perth has already established adventure tourism experiences such as long distance walking trails, mountain biking, sky diving and hot air ballooning in the Avon Valley. Events such as the Avon Descent reinforce Perth's place as an adventure destination.

[1] RIIDC Horse Industry Report Table 4.7

[2] DESTINATION PERTH Developing Perth's Visitor Economy - Tourism Council - March 2014

This suggests that horse trail tours and guided expeditions (including multi-day treks) could be developed to tap the emerging market for soft adventure. This opportunity can now be assumed to be open to commercial operators, however the quality tourism experience will be impacted by the quality of trails and infrastructure available.

Conclusion

With an estimated economic impact of over $80 million, and emerging opportunities for equestrian soft adventure tourism product, recreational horse owners and trail riders already make a substantial contribution to Western Australia. Increases in numbers of riders, numbers of horses or frequency of riding will all deliver incremental economic benefit to the state. The economic case would be strengthened by more direct Western Australian data collection.

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WA Horse Trails Strategy

Recreational Rider Survey Results & Analysis

September 2014

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Survey period: 11th August 2014 - 30th August 2014
Total responses: 446
Complete responses, all questions: 312
Number of questions: 52

Demographics (p55-p60) **& Riding Ability** (p20-21)

- Female (94%)
- 30-44 years (35%) and 45-54 years (30%)
- lower income brackets of less than $60,000 per year (53%)
- from the south west of WA followed by 17% from the Perth hills (Wundowie through to Roleystone) with the Byford region shown separately with 12%
- 44% are in a household with only one rider and a further 36% with 2 riders.
- highly skilled riders with 46% claiming advanced riding ability and 37% had intermediate skills.
- very experienced with 60% having ridden for more than 20 years and 80% having ridden for over 11 years.

Horse Ownership (p3-7) **& Agistment** (p8-11)

- 33% of horse owners owned 2 horses. 27% have 4 or more horses.
- Of those who lease a horse 84% lonely lease one horse.
- 64% spend 2-8 hours per week riding recreationally.
- 40% spend more than 8 hours a week on non-riding tasks such as grooming, feeding and transporting.
- 38% spend $5,000-$10,000 per annum on their horse(s) and equipment.
- Results show an average spend of $10,000 per annum across all respondents.
- Three quarters of respondents had the horse on their own property.
- Of those who agist elsewhere, 94% do so because their home is not suitable, 24% do so to be closer to their trails.
- Three quarters of those who agist travel under half an hour to their horse.
- From there 56% can ride directly to their trails, 34% have trails within 30 minutes of their agistment location.

Horse Use (p12-23)

- 83% of respondents regularly or always use their horse for recreational trail riding (indicating the correct sample for this survey), 39% only sometimes ride competitive events and 50% never do endurance rides or treks.
- Half ride 2-3 times a week with a further quarter riding once a week. 6% reported riding every day.
- Average number of trail events for these respondents = 101 per annum
- Most (76%) have only short rides of 1-2 hours.
- Most people regularly ride 2-5km (54%)
- Recreational trail riding is more of a solitary pursuit with most people regularly riding alone (52%)
- Group riding is usually with only one other rider (45%) or 3-5 riders (41%)
- The main reasons for riding trails is for fun and enjoyment, for their own exercise and fitness, to exercise the horse and for nature appreciation.
- Respondents spend 57% of time on the trail walking their horse, 30% trotting and 13% at a canter.

Trails and Facilities (p24-38)

- Firebreaks, private property, road verges and designated horse trails are the most ridden trail types.
- Most are fully confident about whether horses are allowed on all or most of the trails they ride on. However 28% are not sure about most of the trails on which they ride.
- Darling downs, Perth hills, Serpentine and forests such as Julimar, Karragullen, Tuart, Waroona, Myalup are the most popular riding locations.
- Most people rode their horse to their usual trails which is usually less than 10 minutes away.
- When floating to the trail, the trails are between 30 minutes to 2 hours away.
- Respondents are prepared to ride up to 60 minutes to access quality trails or up to 2-3 hours when floating.
- Intermediate to more difficult trails are preferred.
- The trail location being close to home or agisted location is the most important factor in choosing their trails. Next is quality of the trail itself and low probability of conflict with other types of trail users.
- Respondents were mostly satisfied with their access to quality horse trail riding experiences. 42% were satisfied or very satisfied, 23% neutral and 35% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- Float parking, trail user separation (particularly trail bikes and motorised vehicles), better road and trail signage and better and more information were suggested for required infrastructure and facilities to make trails more accessible and user friendly.

- Traffic separation, more distance between trail and roads alongside with cars and more separation on the trail with other users (particularly trail bikes and 4WDs) is seen as most important for riding enjoyment.
- 80% of respondents would be prepared to pay, with 54% prepared to pay $10 a ride of $100 for a year for a specifically maintained higher quality trail experience.
- Word of mouth and exploring are deemed the most useful way to get information about horse trails, followed by club and organised groups and social media.

Volunteering (p39-42) and Club Membership (p43-45)

- Only 13% of respondents currently volunteer in trail care or construction activities. Of those who don't currently volunteer, 29% would be and 59% might be interested in the future.
- Current volunteering is mainly at a club busy bee level with some trail maintenance.
- Most volunteer activity occurs at Darling Downs and the Stidwell bridle trail in Albany.
- The main reason for not volunteering is that respondents are unaware of where and how to volunteer with no groups or activities organised in their area.
- Club membership is very diverse with 39% belonging to an adult riding club, 27% with Equestrian WA, 24% with a PCAWA affiliated club or a breed organisation. 17% do not belong to any club. This data would be skewed by the involvement of the various organisation in distributing the survey amongst its members and it is expected that non-membership amongst the general riding community would be a lot higher.
- 59% of respondents have not participated in an organised trail ride in the past 12 months. This is mostly because they are unaware of such rides or they prefer to ride alone.

Horse Trail Issues (p46-52, 61-63)

- Respondents are happy with the quality of trails, location and setting of trails but not with the number of trails or with information about their location. Trail infrastructure and access to trails could also be improved.
- The main issues that concern riders are:
    - Lack of information about where to ride, about the trails themselves ie trail type, suitability, surface, distances.
    - Lack of suitable trails nearby - not enough designated horse trails, better trail connections, loops, routes and access to the trails, trail closures, insufficient funding for new trails.
    - Trail user conflicts and specific safety concerns regarding motorised vehicles on trails, specifically trail bikes.
    - General safety concerns such as dogs, rubbish, traffic and overcrowding.
    - Lack of trail maintenance (no management plans, strategies, funding, resources)

- Trail conflicts are prevalent with 81% of respondents experiencing conflicts with other trail users - motorised trail bikes (72%), uncontrolled dogs (55%) and four wheel drives (35%).
- Factors that would encourage or enable respondents to ride more often are:
    - Trails – more, better, safer, connected, closer, legal, surfaced, maintained.
    - Information - more and better regarding trail locations and details of each trail
    - Trail access - better and safer access to trails.
    - Trail conflicts - no motorised vehicles on the trails, improved safety.
    - Infrastructure - secure float parking facilities, water and toilets.
- Other initiatives that government could undertake to improve the trail riding experience for horse riders were:
    - Signage - on trail and on road around riding areas.
    - Education - for car drivers and other trail users regarding behaviour around horses.
    - Recognition - horse trail needs, existence, better understanding amongst planners, government, positive and proactive action
    - Funding - for trail development and maintenance of horse trails.

Environment (p52-54)

- 46% of respondents have some interest and are aware of their environmental impacts while only 14% don't believe their riding has any impacts.
- Almost all riders specifically do not leave rubbish, the vast majority don't ride in environmentally sensitive areas and understand and respect disease risk areas. Least undertaken was only feeding horses weed free feed, avoiding muddy trails and cleaning equipment and horses feet.

Western Australian Horse Trails Strategy - Owner / Rider Survey

Tuesday, September 02, 2014

446

Total Responses

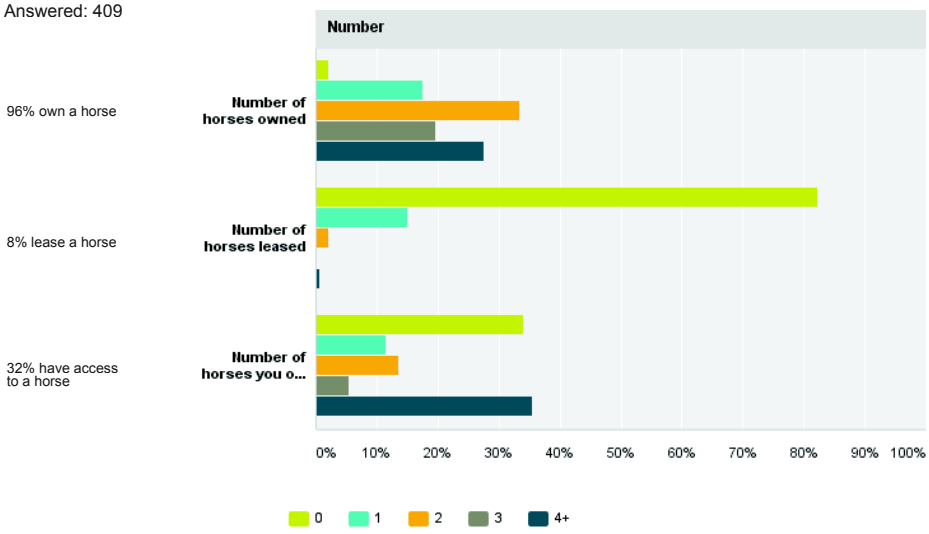
Only 5 answered No to initial filter question: Do you currently, or would you like to, ride on recreational horse trails?

Complete Responses: 312

Horse Ownership

Q2: Do you, or anyone in your household own, lease or have regular access to a horse?

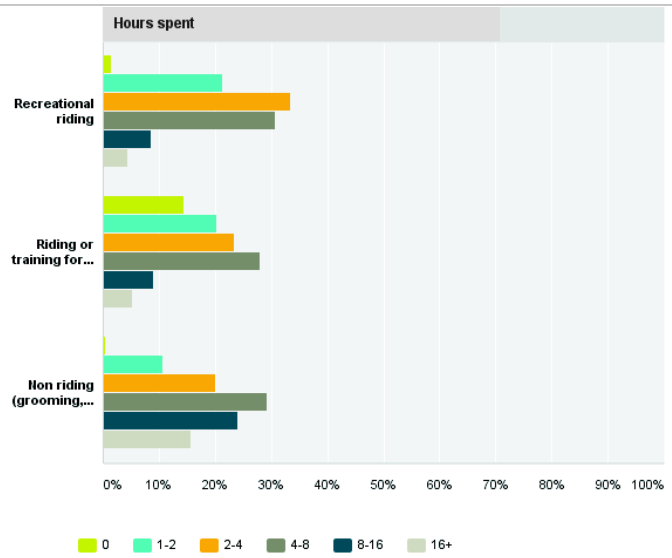
Answered: 409



33% of horse owners own 2 horses. 27% have 4 or more horses. Of those who lease a horse 84% only lease one horse. Of those who have access to a horse 54% have access to 4 or more horses.

Q3: In an average week approximately how many hours do you spend with your horse(s)

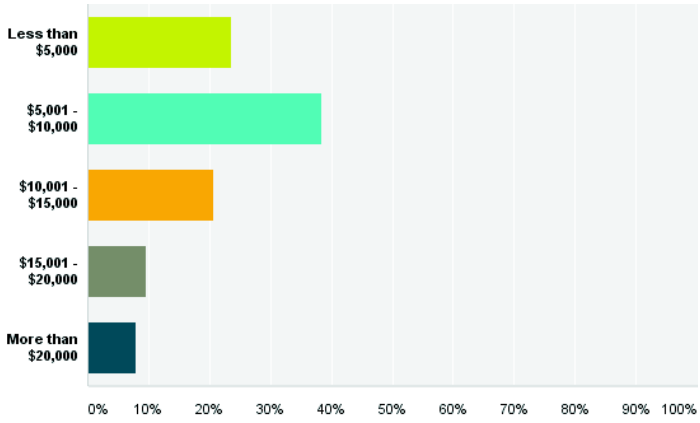
Answered: 412



64% spend 2-8 hours per week riding recreationally. 14% do not spend any time riding for training for competition, 71% spend 1-8 hours riding for training. This shows that there is a lot of overlap in reasons for riding however with only 1% not spending time riding recreationally the survey has correctly skewed to recreational riders. Hours are much higher for non-riding tasks such as grooming, feeding and transporting with 40% spending more than 8 hours a week on these tasks.

Q4: Approximately how much money in total do you typically spend on your horse(s) AND equipment annually?

Answered: 408



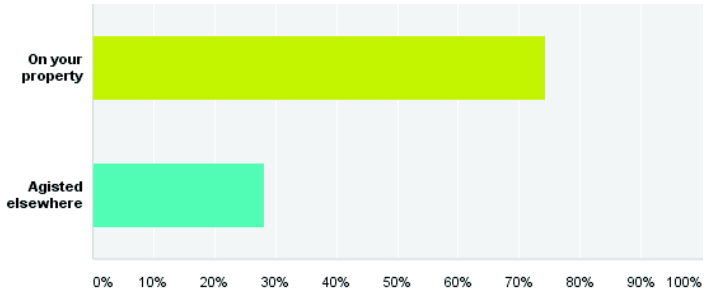
38% of respondents spend $5,000-$10,000 per annum on their horse(s) and equipment.

The following analysis shows the expenditure by the number of respondents to get an average spend of $10,000 per annum across all respondents of this survey.

$2500 x 96 respondents = $240000
$7500 1x 57 respondents = $1177500
$12500 x 84 respondents = $1050000
$17500 x 39 respondents = $682500
$30000 x 32 respondents = $960000
total = $4110000
Average = $10,073

Q5: Where does the horse you usually ride live:

Answered: 396

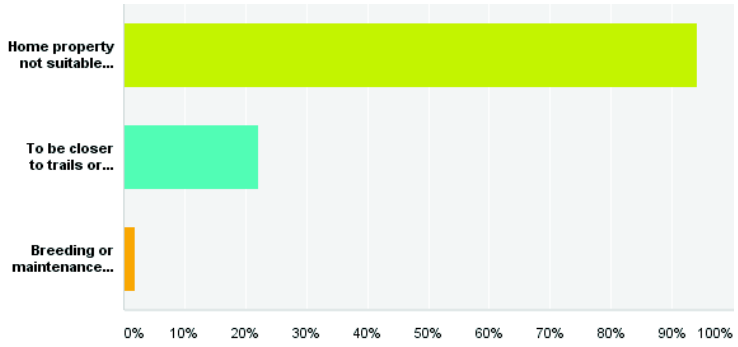


Three quarters of respondents had the horse on their own property. 28% agisted elsewhere indicating that a small number had both.

Agistment

Q6: Why do you agist your horse elsewhere?

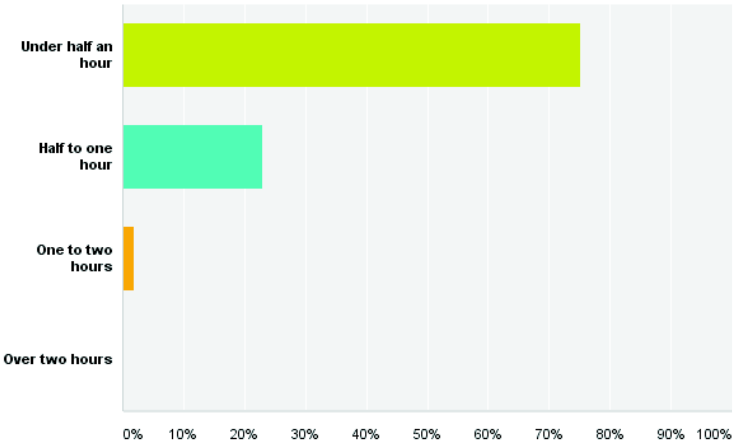
Answered: 104 Skipped: 342



94% home not suitable, and for 24% was also to be closer to riding areas and for breeding or maintenance purposes.

Q7: How far do you have to travel from home to where your horse is agisted?

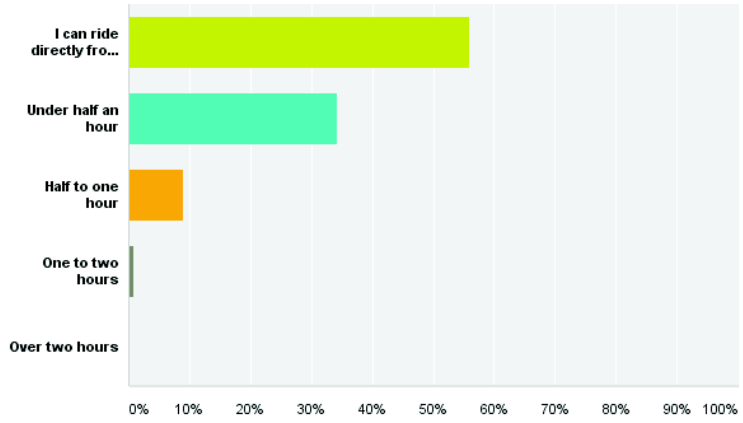
Answered: 104 Skipped: 342



75% under half an hour, 98% under an hour.

Q8: How close to the trails or areas you normally ride is the agistment location?

Answered: 111 Skipped: 335



56% can ride directly from the agisted location to the trails. 34% have trails within 30 minutes of their agistment location.

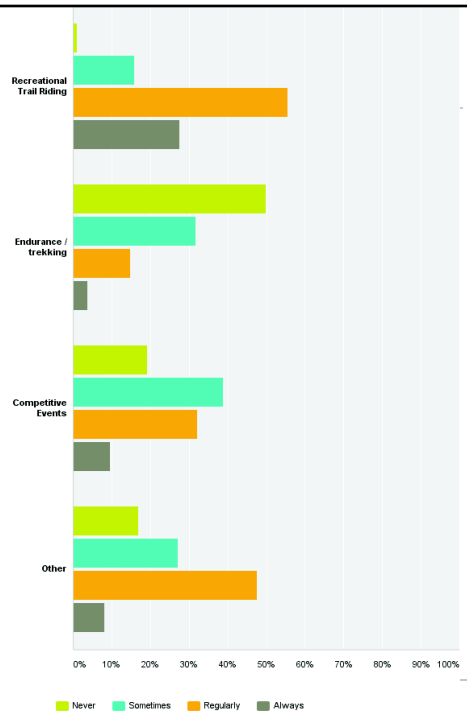
Horse Use

Q9: What do you generally use your horse for?

Answered: 390

	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	Always	Total
Recreational Trail Riding	1.04% 4	15.89% 61	55.47% 213	27.60% 106	384
Endurance / trekking	49.82% 135	31.73% 86	14.76% 40	3.69% 10	271
Competitive Events	19.29% 60	38.91% 121	32.15% 100	9.65% 30	311
Other	17.01% 25	27.21% 40	47.62% 70	8.16% 12	147

Other:
- Pony/riding club
- Clinics, workshops, training
- Arena or home riding



83% of respondents either regularly or always use their horse for recreational trail riding, 39% only sometimes ride competitive events and 50% never do endurance rides or treks.

Q9: What do you generally use your horse for? - Other

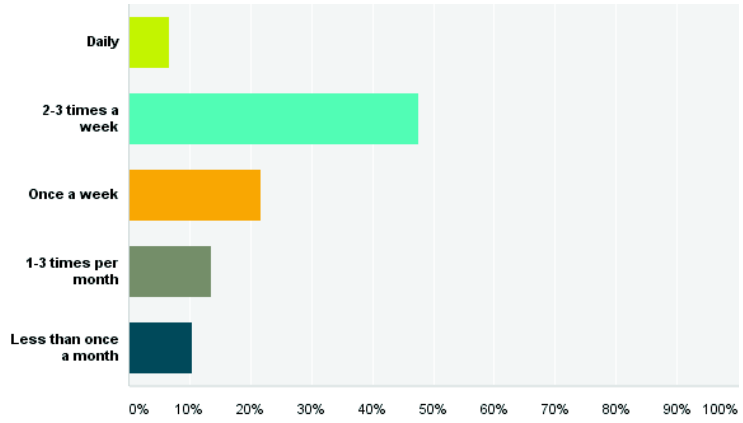
Answered: 115 comments

27 most important words and phrases

Other activities included pony or adult riding clubs, clinics and workshops or arena riding.

Q10: How often do you typically use a trail?

Answered: 395



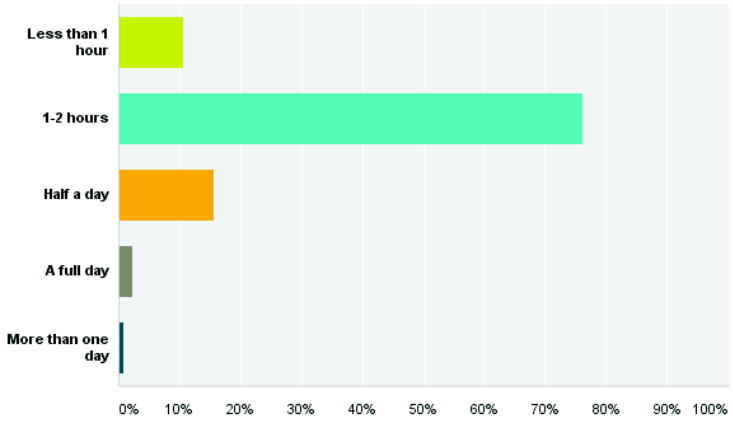
Almost half of all respondents (48%) ride 2-3 times a week with a further 22% riding once a week. 6% reported riding every day.

An analysis of this data of riding days per respondent provides the number of "trail events" per year for this sample set of riders (survey respondents)
356 rides x 26 = 9256
130 rides x 188 = 24440
52 rides x 86 = 4472
24 rides x 54 = 1296
10 rides x 41 = 410

total trail events for 395 riders = 39874
Average number of trail events for these respondents = 101

Q11: What is the typical duration of your trail use?

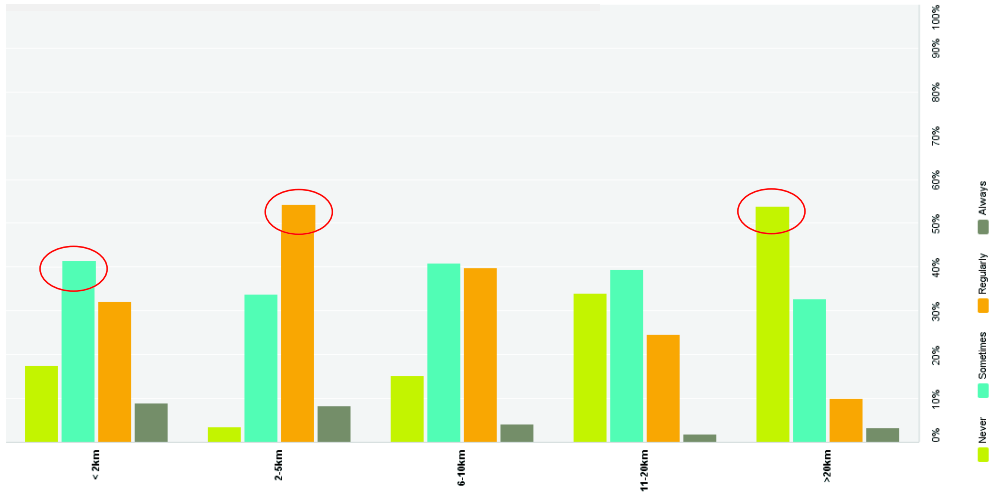
Answered: 396



Vast majority (76%) have a short ride of between 1 and 2 hours, with a further 16% riding for half a day.

Q12: What length trails do you use?

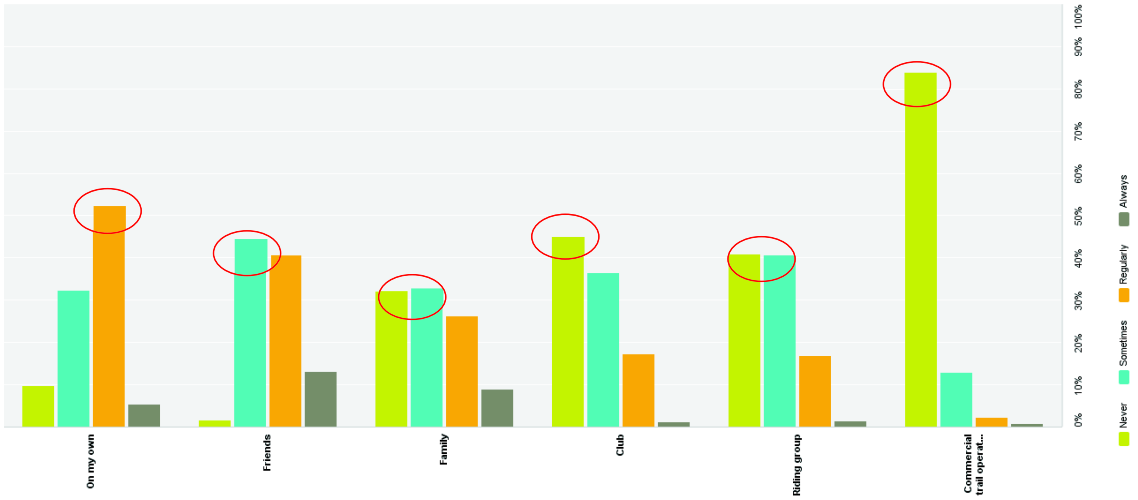
Answered: 383



Most people regularly ride 2-5km (54%)
Most people sometimes ride less than 2km or less 6-20km (80%)
Most people never ride more than 20km. (54%)

Q13: When you ride on trails who do you ride with?

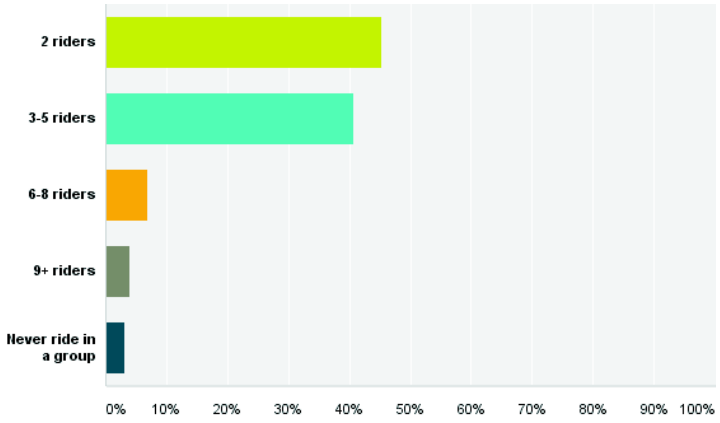
Answered: 395



Recreational trail riding is more of a solitary pursuit.
Most people regularly ride alone (52%) or with friends (41%).
Riding with family was more evenly spread between never (32%), sometimes (33%) and regularly (26%).
Most people (84%) never ride with a commercial operator, riding school, riding group or club.

Q14: When you ride in a group, how many normally ride?

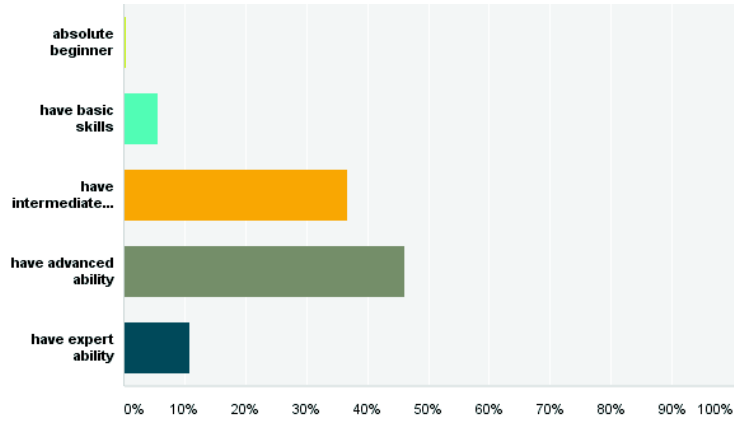
Answered: 395 Skipped: 51



In line with the previous question, when riding in a group 45% ride with only one other rider and 41% ride with 3 to 5 riders.

Q15: How would you rate your current horse riding ability:

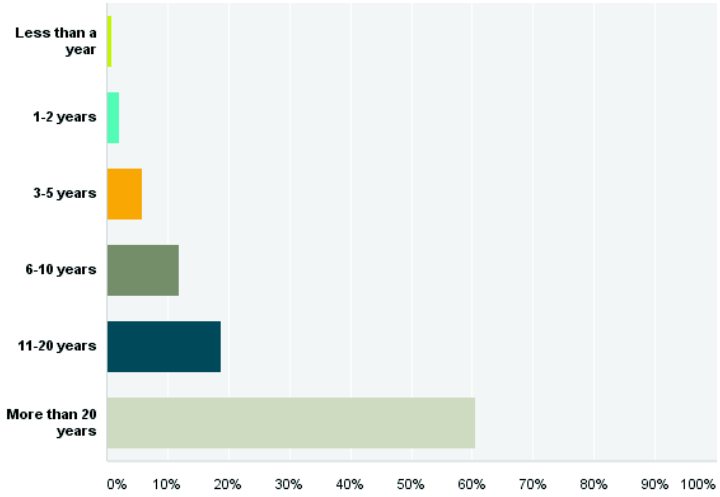
Answered: 384



Respondents were highly skilled riders with 46% claiming advanced riding ability and 37% had intermediate skills.

Q16: How long have you been riding horses for?

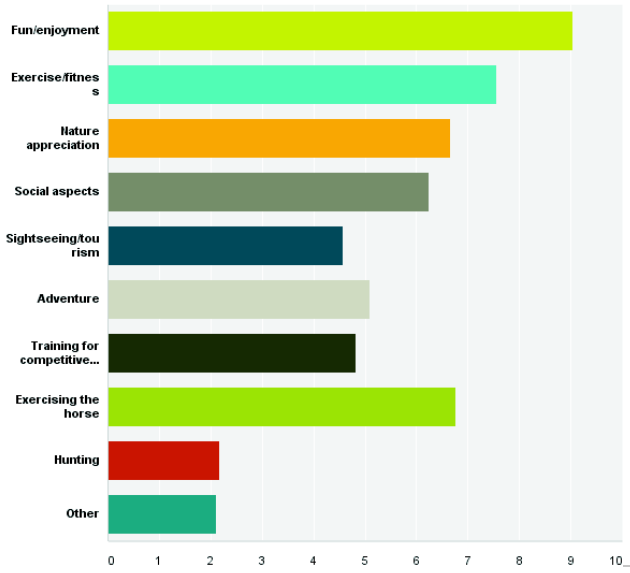
Answered: 392



The vast majority of respondents were very experienced with 60% having ridden for more than 20 years and 80% having ridden for over 11 years.

Q17: What are the main reasons for riding on a trail? What are you looking for in the experience?

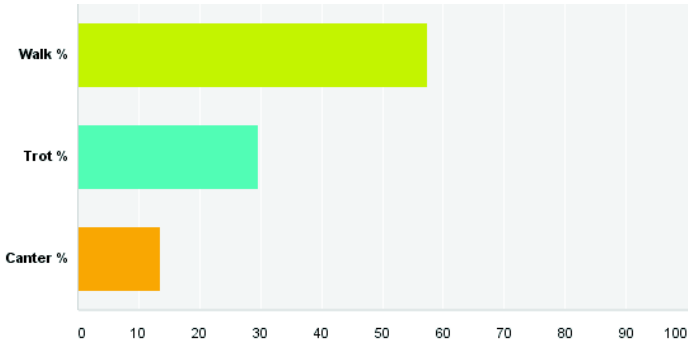
Answered: 381



73% ranked fun/enjoyment first or second
59% ranked exercise/fitness second or third

Q18: When on the trails, please estimate the percentage of time spent at a walk, trot and canter:

Answered: 377

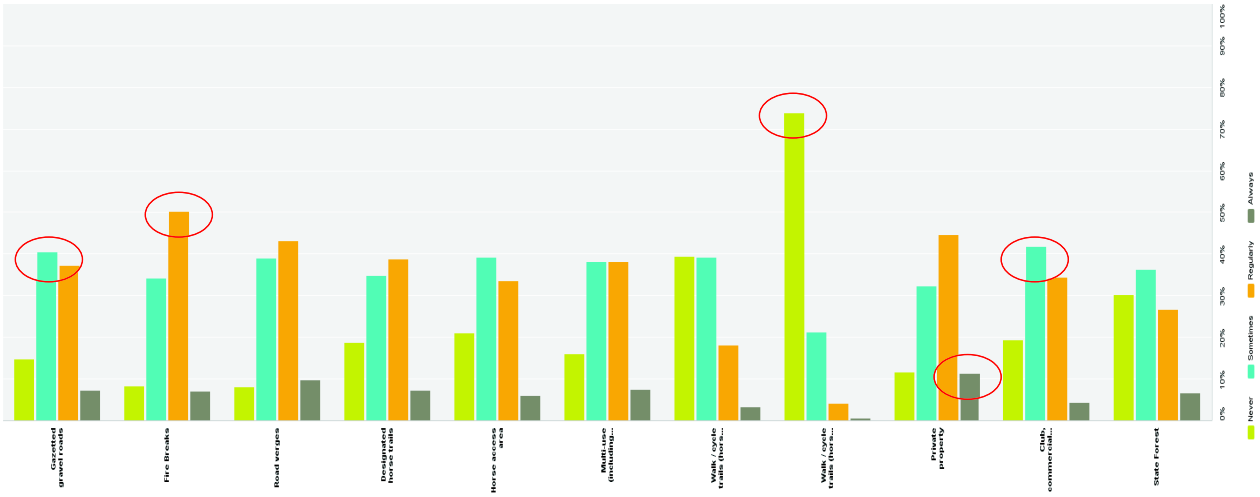


The average response was to spend 57% of the time walking, 30% of the time trotting and 13% at a canter.

Trails & Facilities

Q19: How often do you ride the following types of trails?

Answered: 370



Firebreaks are the most ridden trail type with 57% regularly or always riding firebreaks. Next is private property (56%), road verges (53%) and designated horse trails (46%).

42% sometimes ride at club or commercial facilities and 40% sometimes ride on gravel roads.

74% never ride on walk or cycle trails where horses are excluded and 40% don't ride these trails even when horses are not specifically excluded.

Comments – 6 respondents also said they ride on the beach, pine plantations.

Q19: How often do you ride the following types of trails?

Answered: 370

	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	Always	Total
Gazetted gravel roads	**14.81%** 52	**40.46%** 142	**37.32%** 131	**7.41%** 26	351
Fire Breaks	**8.43%** 30	**34.27%** 122	**50.28%** 179	**7.02%** 25	356
Road verges	**8.12%** 29	**38.94%** 139	**43.14%** 154	**9.80%** 35	357
Designated horse trails	**18.87%** 67	**34.93%** 124	**38.87%** 138	**7.32%** 26	355
Horse access area	**21.05%** 72	**39.18%** 134	**33.63%** 115	**6.14%** 21	342
Multi-use (including horse) trails	**16.03%** 55	**38.19%** 131	**38.19%** 131	**7.58%** 26	343
Walk / cycle trails (horses not specifically excluded)	**39.47%** 133	**39.17%** 132	**18.10%** 61	**3.26%** 11	337
Walk / cycle trails (horses excluded)	**73.94%** 244	**21.21%** 70	**4.24%** 14	**0.61%** 2	330
Private property	**11.73%** 42	**32.40%** 116	**44.69%** 160	**11.17%** 40	358
Club, commercial facilities	**19.42%** 67	**41.74%** 144	**34.49%** 119	**4.35%** 15	345
State Forest	**30.33%** 101	**36.34%** 121	**26.73%** 89	**6.61%** 22	333

Q20: How confident are you about whether horses are allowed on the trails or areas you ride?

Answered: 368

Answer Choices	Responses	
Fully confident about all trails	**18.75%**	69
Fully confident about most trails	**51.09%**	188
Not sure about most trails	**27.72%**	102
Don't know, don't care	**2.45%**	9
Total		**368**

70% are fully confident about whether horses are allowed on all or most of the trails they ride on. 28% are not sure about most of the trails on which they ride.

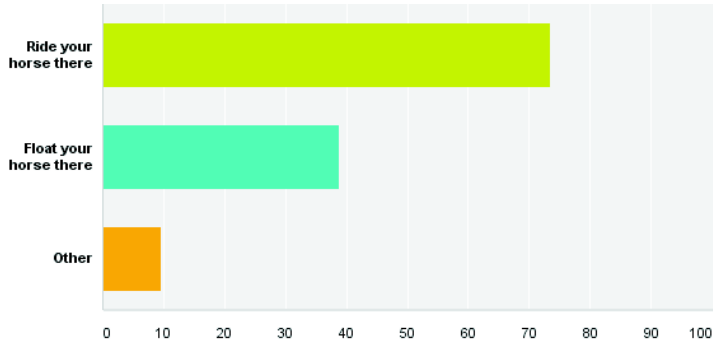
Q21: Where do you normally ride?

Answered: 308

- Darling Downs
- Perth hills
- Serpentine
- Forest – Julimar, Karragullen, Tuart, Waroona, Myalup
- National parks
- Gidgegannup
- Pony club
- Private property
- Equestrian centre
- Brigadoon
- Henley Brook
- Manjimup
- Busselton
- Chidlow
- Stoneville
- Helena Valley
- Gnangara pines
- Lower Chittering
- Oakford Wandi
- Bullsbrook bridle path
- Chapman river reserve

Q22: To access your usual trails what percentage of the time do you:

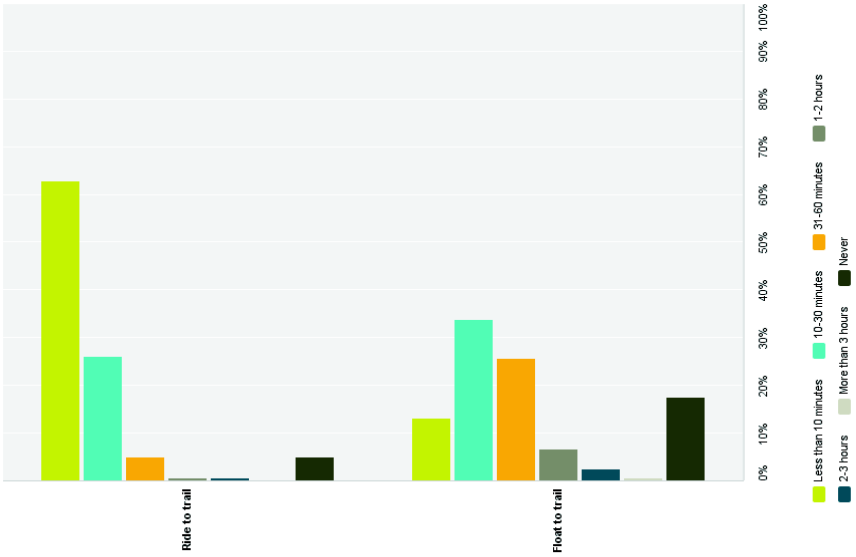
Answered: 332



Most people rode their horse to their usual trails with the average response being that they rode their horse 73% of the time versus on average people float their horse 39% of the time.

Q23: On average how much travel time does it take to get to where you ride?

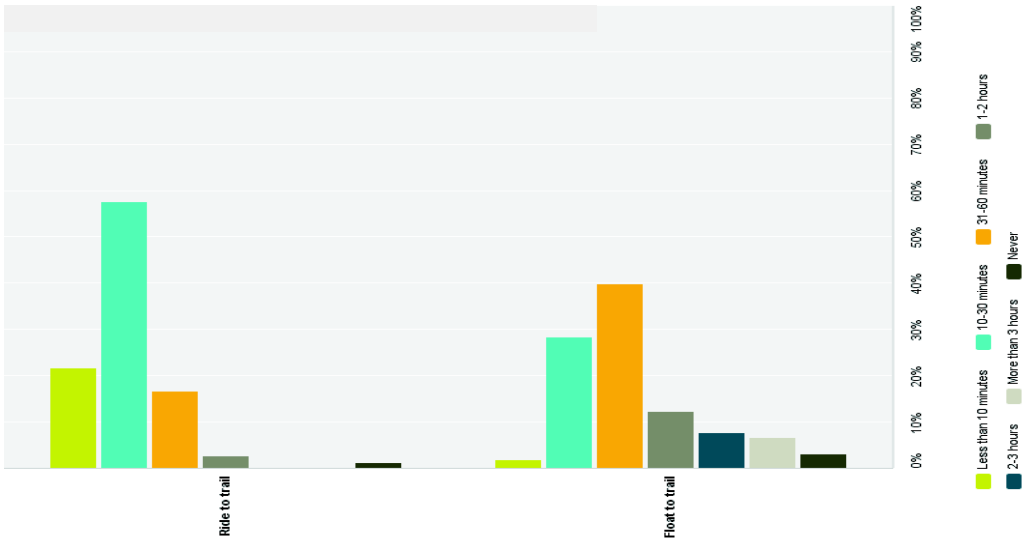
Answered: 341



63% of the time when riding to the trail, the journey is less than 10 minutes and 89% less than 30 minutes. When floating to the trail, 34% of the time it is 10-30 minutes or 33% 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Q24: How far would you be prepared to travel to access quality trails and settings that met your needs?

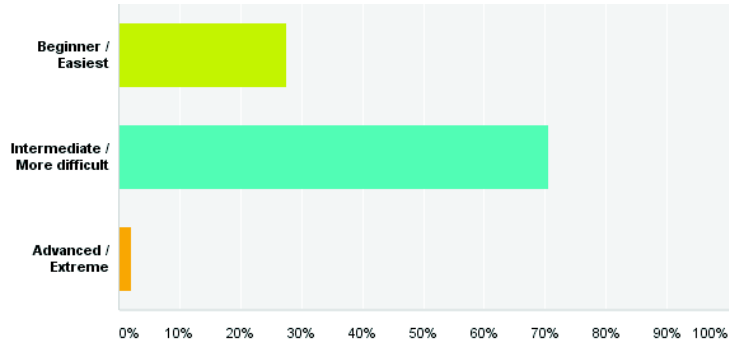
Answered: 350



Respondents are prepared to ride up to 60 minutes to access quality trails or up to 2-3 hours when floating.

Q25: What grade of difficulty are the trails you prefer?

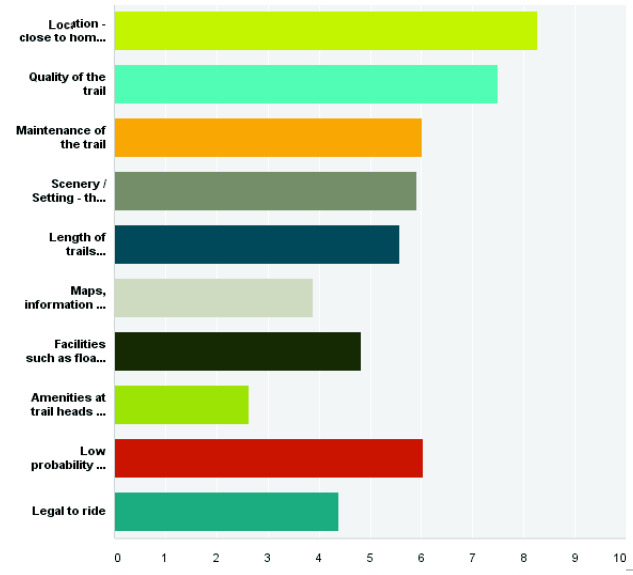
Answered: 346



70% of respondents prefer intermediate or more difficult trails which would be consistent with the experience profile of these survey respondents.

Q26: What are the most important factors for you when judging the attractiveness of a horse trail?

Answered: 340

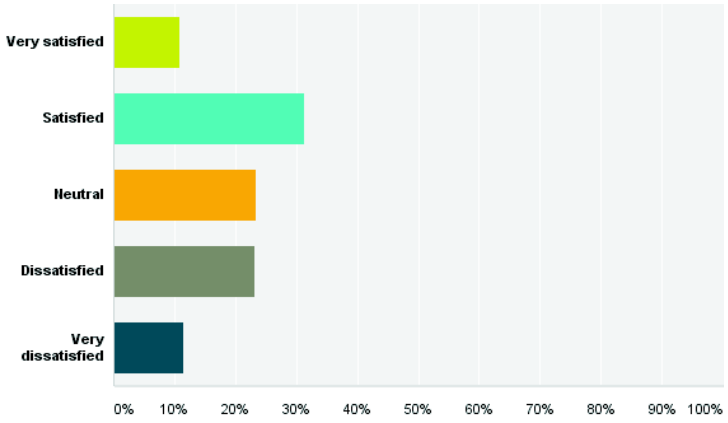


Respondents indicated that the trail location being close to home or agisted location is the most important factor in choosing their trails. Next is quality of the trail itself and low probability of conflict with other types of trail users, this shows that the issue of trail use conflict is a factor for riders.

Of least importance are trail head amenities, maps and information and facilities such as float parking. This may be as a result of the majority of riders riding to the trails, confirmed by the number on ranked factor being that the trail is close to home or agistment.

Q27: How would you rate your general level of satisfaction regarding the access you currently have to quality horse trail riding experiences:

Answered: 342



On the whole the respondents were mostly satisfied with 42% satisfied or very satisfied, 23% neutral and 35% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

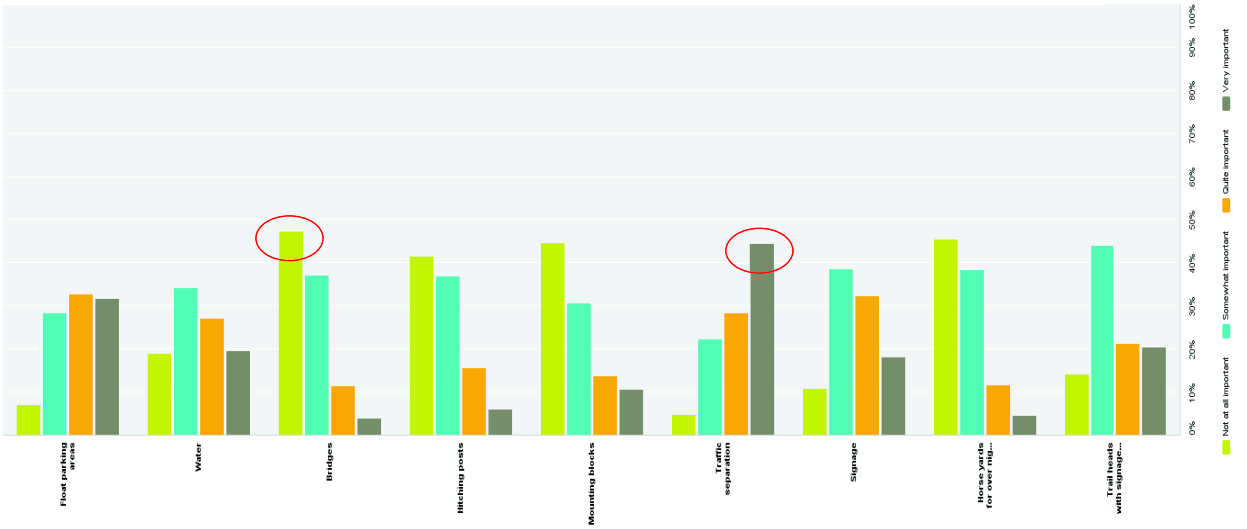
Q28: What infrastructure/facilities do you feel are needed to make the trails more accessible and user friendly?

Answered: 236

- Float parking, room to turn, secure parking – 36%
- No motorised vehicles, no trail bikes on the trails – 22%
- Better trail and road signage – 16%
- Better and more trail information, where are the trails and about the trails – 16%
- More dedicated horse trails and areas just for horses – 14%
- Water – 12%
- Toilets – 9%
- More trail maintenance – 4%
- Better connected trails, linkages, longer routes without roads – 4%
- Better pathways and access to trails – 4%
- Better trail surfaces – more sand and less rock – 4%
- Camping facilities – 4%
- Greater separation from roads and traffic – 3%
- More access to regional and national parks – 1%

Q29: Please rate the importance of the following facilities for your riding enjoyment:

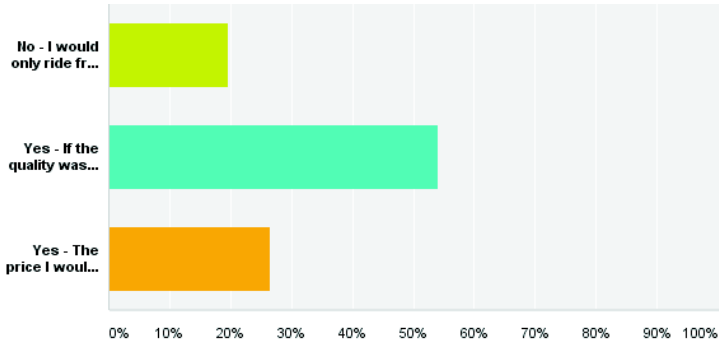
Answered: 338



Very important – traffic separation. More distance between trail and roads alongside with cars. More separation on the trail with other users (particularly trail bikes and 4WDs).
Quite important – float parking areas.
Somewhat important – signage.
Not important – bridges, horse yards, mounting blocks, hitching posts.

Q30: If a new trail was developed, or an existing trail improved and maintained to provide a higher quality trail experience, would you be prepared to pay to ride it?

Answered: 337



80% of respondents would be prepared to pay, with 54% prepared to pay $10 a ride of $100 for a year.

Q36: How do you usually get your information about horse trails?

Answered: 329

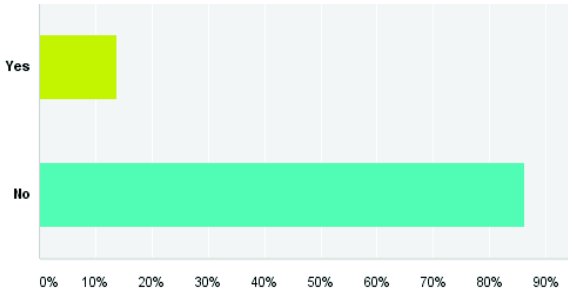
	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Total
Word of mouth	1.24% 4	10.53% 34	34.98% 113	53.25% 172	323
Clubs and organised groups	13.02% 41	24.44% 77	37.78% 119	24.76% 78	315
Social media	15.29% 48	23.25% 73	34.71% 109	26.75% 84	314
Websites	19.29% 60	32.48% 101	31.51% 98	16.72% 52	311
Printed guides	25.73% 79	37.79% 116	27.36% 84	9.12% 28	307
Exploring and finding them myself	11.43% 36	29.52% 93	28.57% 90	30.48% 96	315
Magazines	44.55% 135	33.33% 101	17.49% 53	4.62% 14	303
Mass Media (newspapers, radio, tv)	52.63% 160	27.96% 85	15.79% 48	3.62% 11	304
Other	68.67% 114	21.08% 35	7.83% 13	2.41% 4	166

Word of mouth and exploring are deemed the most useful way to get information about horse trails, followed by club and organised groups and social media. Websites and printed guides are only slightly useful.

Volunteering

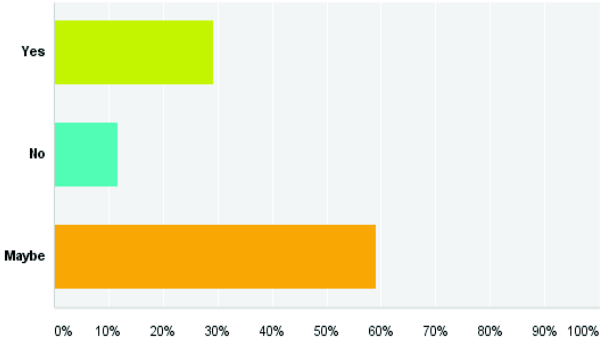
Q31: Do you currently participate in volunteer trail care/construction activities?

Answered: 333



Q35: Might you be interested in becoming involved in volunteer trail care activities in the future?

Answered: 284



Only 13% of respondents currently volunteer in trail care or construction activities. Of those who don't currently volunteer, 29% would be interested, 59% might be and 11% would not.

Q32: What type of volunteer trail care of construction activities do you participate in?

Answered: 48

- Pony club and adult club busy bees, help
- Trail maintenance – clearing, weeding, filling in erosion
- Picking up rubbish
- Tree planting
- Advocacy – getting trails

Q33: Where do you do most of your volunteer activity?

- Darling Downs
- Stidwell bridle trail in Albany
- Ludlow
- Augusta / Margaret River
- Serpentine, Byford, Jarrahdale

Q34: What's the main reason for not participating in volunteer trail care/construction activities?

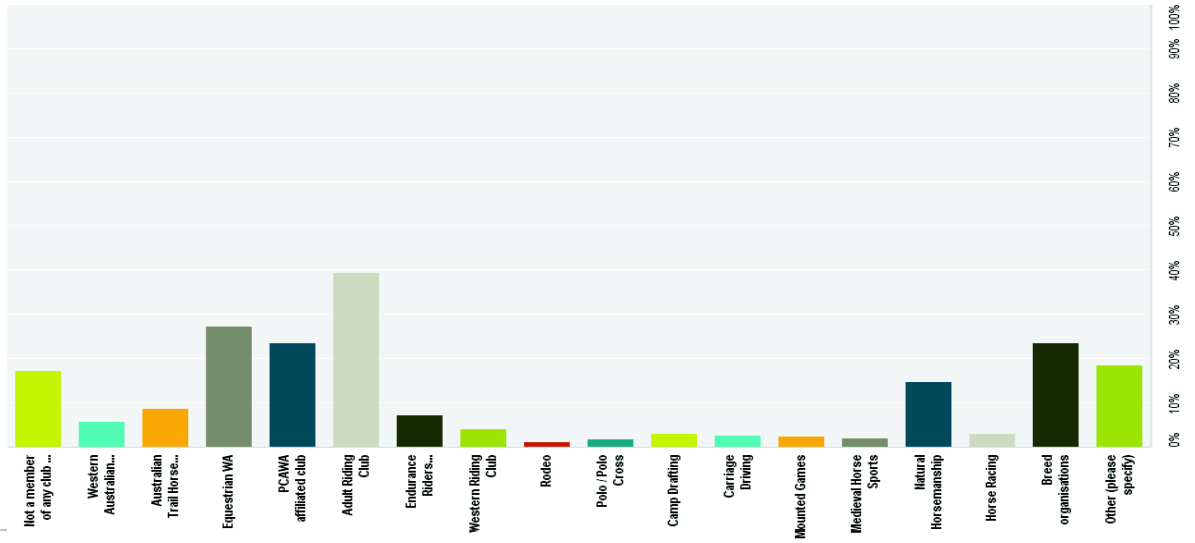
Answered: 247

Currently respondents do not volunteer as they are unaware of where and how to volunteer with no groups or anything organised in their area.
Too busy.
Already volunteer with pony clubs.
No trails in our area to maintain.

Club Membership

Q37: To what organisations or clubs do you belong?

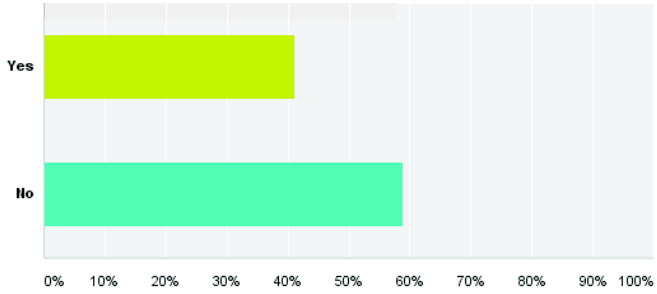
Answered: 330



Club membership is very diverse with 39% belonging to an adult riding club, 27% with Equestrian WA, 24% with a PCAWA affiliated club or a breed organisation. 17% do not belong to any club. This data would be somewhat skewed by the involvement of the various organisation in distributing the survey amongst its members and it is expected that non-membership amongst the general riding community would be a lot higher.

Q38: Have you participated in an organised trail ride in the past 12 months?

Answered: 329



- Not aware of any
- Ride alone for time and availability reasons – like to do my own thing
- No float, can't get there
- Don't like to ride in large groups
- Prefer to ride with family and friends
- Young, inexperienced, unsuitable horse

59% of respondents have not participated in an organised trail ride in the past 12 months.

Horse Trails Issues

Q39: Please rate your current level of satisfaction with the following:

Answered: 321

	Not at all satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Quite satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Quality of trails	11.69% 36	36.36% 112	44.48% 137	7.47% 23	308
Number of trails	45.71% 144	32.70% 103	17.78% 56	3.81% 12	315
Location and setting of trails	19.61% 60	39.22% 120	34.97% 107	6.21% 19	306
Access to trails - transport corridors	31.15% 95	40.00% 122	24.92% 76	3.93% 12	305
Trail safety	20.79% 63	43.56% 132	30.69% 93	4.95% 15	303
Trail infrastructure such as parking, hitching posts, mounting blocks, signage	37.79% 113	43.81% 131	15.72% 47	2.68% 8	299
Information about trails and their location	60.06% 188	30.35% 95	8.31% 26	1.28% 4	313

Respondents are happy with the quality of trails, location and setting of trails but not with the number of trails or with information about their location. Trail infrastructure and access to trails could also be improved.

Q40: What are the main issues that concern you about horse trails in Western Australia?

Answered: 273

- Lack of information – where are we allowed to ride, where can I ride, what will I find when I get there, trail types, suitability, trail surface, distances, where are the trails? 35%
- Lack of suitable trails nearby – not enough horse specific trails, more connected trails, trails being closed and no new ones being open, trails being given to other user groups, trails too far away - 32%
- Specific safety concerns with motorised vehicles on trails, mostly trail bikes – 28%
- General safety concerns – dogs, rubbish, traffic, over crowding, multi use – 16%
- Trails and riding areas being closed off, access removed/denied - 13%
- Access routes via roads, verges along roads are dangerous – not enough trail connections – 8%
- Lack of float parking, if you can't park a float then you can't get there – 7%
- Urban sprawl taking riding areas, new developments not creating trails, having to go further for trails – 6%
- Lack of trail maintenance on the trails we do have – 4%
- Longer trails with overnight stay facilities – 2%
- Access being closed due to environmental impact without being fully verified – 2%

Lack of information about what is available – where can I ride? Trail types, suitability, trail surface, distances, difficulty, where nearby?
Trail blocking to keep vehicles out also keeps horses out.
Anti horse stance by government, trails being taken over officially for MTB
Not enough horse only trails, multi use not safe, not enough interconnecting trails without road use, trails being closed and new ones not being developed in new areas.
Trails all too far away – need to float too much, can't just go for a ride.

Q41: Please rate the following according to whether you see this as an issue:

Answered: 311

	Not an issue	A minor issue	A significant issue	A critical issue
Trail user conflict and related safety issues	7.84% 24	29.41% 90	32.68% 100	30.07% 92
Inappropriate horse riding / speed on trails	32.01% 97	45.21% 137	18.48% 56	4.29% 13
Safety of trails	12.54% 38	30.69% 93	39.27% 119	17.49% 53
Unauthorised use by other trails users on horse trails	6.27% 19	23.76% 72	37.62% 114	32.34% 98
Unsuitable terrain	21.67% 65	36.67% 110	30.67% 92	11.00% 33
Increasing urbanisation of areas once used for horse riding	4.87% 15	12.34% 38	34.74% 107	48.05% 148
Lack of adequate management plans (in some areas)	5.70% 17	30.20% 90	42.95% 128	21.14% 63

Trail user conflicts, unauthorised trail use, increasing urbanisation and lack of management plans are significant to critical issues.

Q41: Please rate the following according to whether you see this as an issue, cont'd:

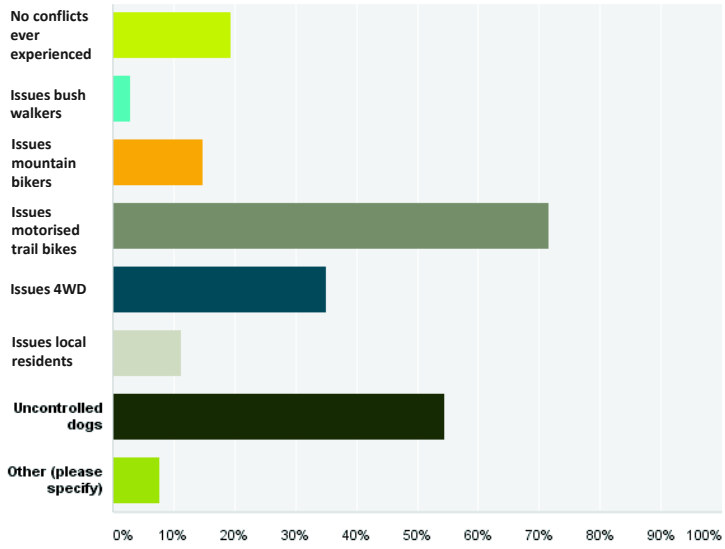
Answered: 311

	Not an issue	A minor issue	A significant issue	A critical issue
No strategies in place to maintain trails	8.28% 25	25.17% 76	51.32% 155	15.23% 46
Lack of adequate signage/maps	10.30% 31	36.21% 109	38.21% 115	15.28% 46
Need to promote a Code of Conduct for riders	17.22% 52	42.38% 128	31.79% 96	8.61% 26
Lack of funding and resources to maintain trails	4.97% 15	18.87% 57	48.68% 147	27.48% 83
Limited funding opportunities to develop new trails	3.31% 10	11.92% 36	51.32% 155	33.44% 101
Insufficient information on the extent of tracks/trails	4.92% 15	19.02% 58	40.33% 123	35.74% 109
Lack of appropriate infrastructure (vehicle/float parking)	7.74% 23	33.67% 100	41.08% 122	17.51% 52

Trail maintenance (lack of strategies, funding and resources), funding to develop new trails and insufficient information about existing trails are significant to critical issues.

Q42: Have you ever experienced any conflicts with other trails users?

Answered: 310



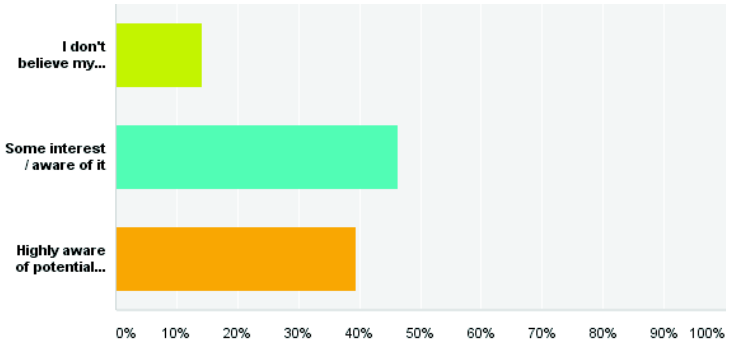
81% of respondents indicated that they have experienced conflicts with other trail users. The largest response was to issues with/from motorised trail bikes (72%), uncontrolled dogs (55%) and four wheel drives (35%)

Other: vehicles close to trails, trotters and gallopers, cars, rubbish dumping, barbed wire, roo shooters, road traffic, wild animals, other horse riders.

Environment

Q43: When horse riding on trails how much do you think about your environmental impact?

Answered: 315



46% of respondents have some interest and are aware of their environmental impacts while only 14% don't believe their riding has any impacts.

Q44: What do you personally do to limit your environmental impact when out riding?

Answered: 314

Answer Choices	Responses		
Ride only on designated trails	71.66%	4	225
Don't take shortcuts, form new trails or ride off trail	64.97%	5	204
Don't ride in environmentally sensitive areas	79.30%	2	249
Avoid using trails when muddy	32.17%	9	101
Don't allow grazing whilst out riding	40.76%	7	128
Cross watercourses only at designated crossing points	50.64%	6	159
Don't leave any rubbish	96.82%	1	304
Only feed my horse weed-free feed for 48 hours prior	16.24%	10	51
Clean all equipment and horse's feet before riding	37.26%	8	117
Understand and respect disease risk areas	77.39%	3	243
Other (please specify)	6.37%		20
Total Respondents: 314			

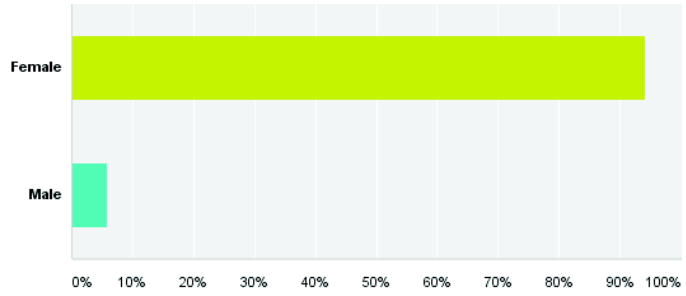
Almost all riders specifically do not leave rubbish, the vast majority don't ride in environmentally sensitive areas and understand and respect disease risk areas. The majority only ride on designated trails, do not take short cuts or create new trails and half only cross water crossings at designated crossing points. Least undertaken was only feeding horses weed free feed, avoiding muddy trails and cleaning equipment and horses feet.

Other reported behaviours – picking up manure, only walk.

Demographics

Q45: What is your gender?

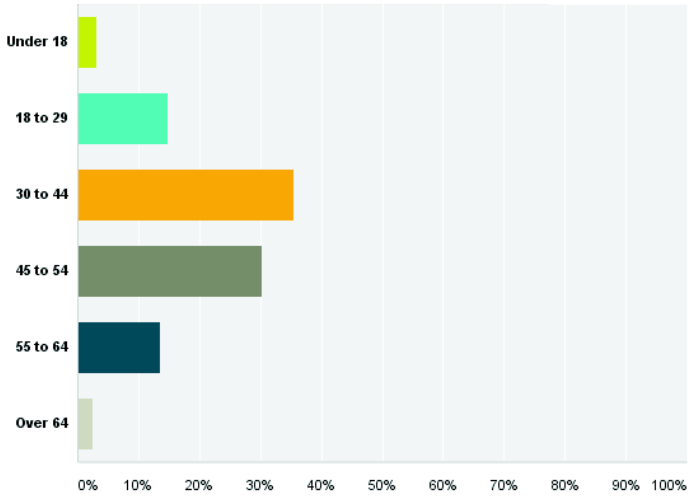
Answered: 307



94% of respondents were female.

Q46: What is your age?

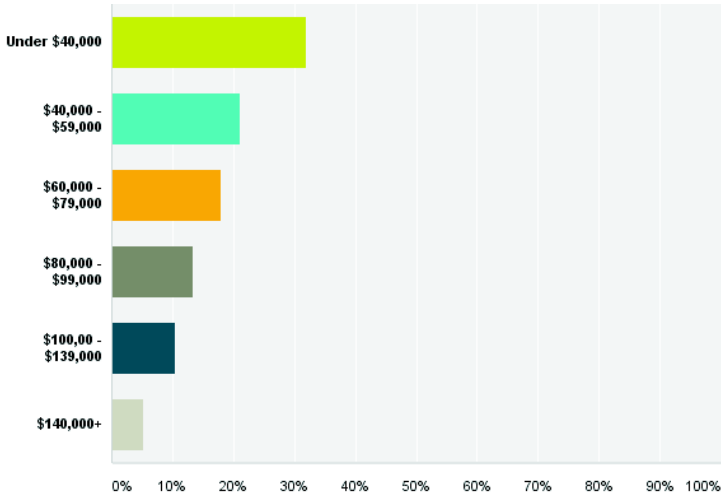
Answered: 310



Respondents were predominantly aged 30-44 years (35%) and 45-54 years (30%).

Q47: What is your approximate annual personal income?

Answered: 285



Respondents were in the lower income brackets of less than $60,000 per year (53%).

Q48: Where do you live?

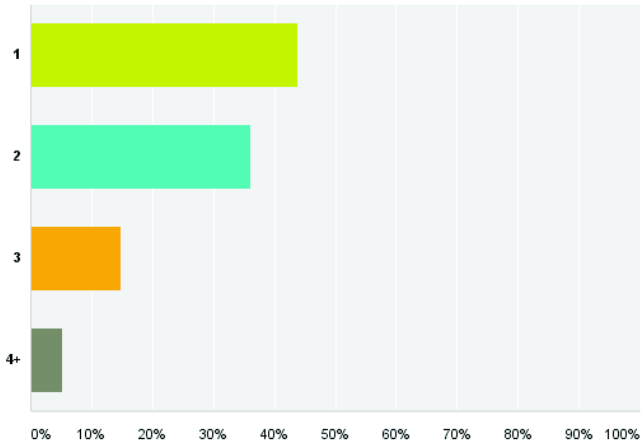
Answered: 301

- South west – 24%
- Perth hills – 17%
- Swan valley – 12%
- Byford region – 12%
- Albany – 5%
- Baldivis area – 5%
- Wanneroo area – 3%
- Toodyay – 2%
- Forestdale area – 2%

Almost a quarter of all respondents came from the south west of WA followed by 17% from the Perth hills (Wundowie through to Roleystone) with the Byford region shown separately with 12%.

Q49: How many people in your household ride horses?

Answered: 312



44% of respondents are in a household with only one rider and a further 36% with 2 riders.

Final Comments

Q50: What would encourage or enable you to ride more often?

Answered: 243

- Trails – more, better, safer, connected, closer, legal - 66%
- More and better information of where the trails are and about the trails – 17%
- Roads – less riding along roads, road crossing, traffic safety, noisy - 16%
- No motor vehicles on trails, safety concerns, conflict, noisy – 12%
- More suitable trail surfaces for horses, better maintained – 4%
- Longer trails, treks, overnight stays - 4%
- Better infrastructure eg secure float parking, water, toilets – 4%

Q51: What could the government, local government and land managers do to improve the trail riding experience for horse riders?

Answered: 240

- Provide improved trail access – more, better, safer, connected, closer, legal, easier and safer to get to - 50%
- Provide more and better information of where the trails are and about the trails, horse rider rights to access and ride along the road – 20%
- Separate horse and motorised vehicle use, can share with walkers and maybe MTBs but not trail bikes or 4WDs – 16%
- Recognition of horse trail needs, existence, better understanding amongst planners, government, positive and proactive action – 13%
- Provide improved trail maintenance and more suitable trail surfaces for horses – 13%
- Take action to improve safety for horse riders - 12%
- Provide better infrastructure and trail signage – 11%
- Education campaign for other trail users and car drivers – 7%
- Government to provide more funding for trail development and maintenance and horse trails in general – 6%
- Provide float parking facilities – 5%