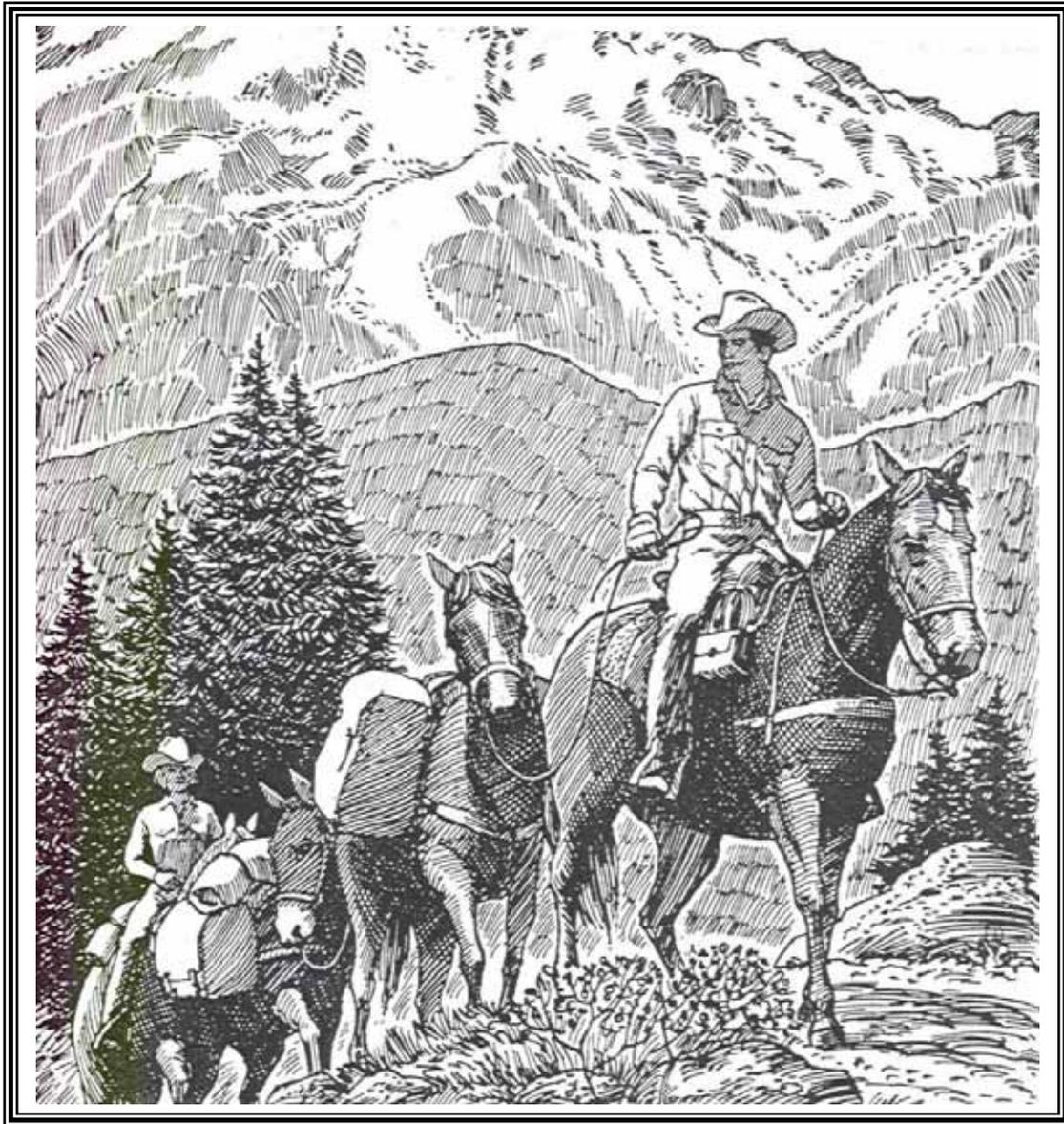


Using horses on Utah's public lands



Bridgerland Back Country Horsemen
Steve Guymon, Education Chair

As of August 29, 2005

Say that again...

With all the public land available for Utah's horsemen to ride, we often have a difficult time realizing the threat of restrictions and regulations is real. However, not every citizen in the United States shares our view of Wilderness. Viewpoints of "city" people often are so foreign to our way of thinking we'd never consider them.

To illustrate the increasing number of urbanites checking out the backcountry, journalist Tom Wharton read a few actual comments collected last year from registration sheets and comment cards at entrances to the Bridger Wilderness in Wyoming's Wind River Mountains.

- "Trails need to be wider so people can walk while holding hands."
- "Instead of a permit system or regulations, the Forest Service needs to reduce world-wide population growth to limit the number of visitors to wilderness."
- "Ban walking sticks in the wilderness. Hikers that use walking sticks are more likely to chase animals."
- "All the mile markers are missing this year."
- "Found a smoldering cigarette left by a horse."
- "Trail needs to be reconstructed. Please avoid building trails that go uphill."
- "Too many bugs and leeches and spiders and spider webs. Please spray wilderness to rid the area of these pests."
- "Please pave the trails so they can be plowed of snow during the winter."
- "Chairlifts need to be in some places so that we can get to wonderful views without having to hike to them."
- "The coyotes made too much noise last night and kept me awake. Please eradicate these annoying animals."
- "A small deer came into my camp and stole my jar of pickles. Is there a way I can get reimbursed? Please call me at"
- "Reflectors need to be placed on trees every fifty feet so people can hike at night with flashlights."

Comments such as these reinforce our belief the best way to preserve our heritage of using horses in the backcountry is strong and active local Back Country Horsemen units.

On the Road Again...

Traveling with horses in Utah

Horses are fascinating. Horses captivate many people and the variety of uses for horses is an endorsement to the horse's versatility. Some horses are shown in arenas. Some horses are used for rodeo events. Some horses are used for pleasure riding along trails. Some horses pack camping or hunting supplies into wilderness areas. Some horses play polo. Some horses are used in dressage competitions. Some horses work as policemen or in search and rescue efforts. Some horses jump fences. Some horses hunt. Some horses earn their keep working on ranches. As varied as these uses are, almost every horse shares something in common – *they must be transported.*

Traveling inside Utah

Anytime you transport a horse within the State of Utah, you must have proof of ownership with you. This can be accomplished in a number of ways and your local state brand inspector will provide these forms. The first is to get a "Horse Permanent Travel Permit" (\$20.00; good for the life of the horse). The second is to get a "Yearly Travel Inspection" (\$10.00; expires on December 31 of that year). Whenever you buy or sell a horse, you will need a "Change of Ownership" (\$5.00; expires in 72 hours) that the seller should furnish to provide the buyer with "title" to the horse. If you buy a horse at an auction, the seller provides an "Auction Invoice" (good for 72 hours). A "bill of sale" does not prove ownership. A breed "certificate of registration" showing your name as the original owner (but not as transferee) will also establish ownership. No health inspections are required as long as you travel within Utah. If you are transporting horses belonging to someone else, carry written permission from the owner.

Crossing the state border

To prevent the spread of diseases between states, as well as protect against the transport of stolen horses, there are a number of requirements that must be met before horses can be transported into another state. You will need an Equine Infectious Anemia Laboratory Test (Coggins) with negative results, a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (valid for thirty days) and proof of ownership to enter another state. You must also have the same items to return to Utah.

Stopping at a "Port of Entry"

The "Vehicles with livestock must stop" sign at Ports of Entry applies not just to commercial haulers but also to anyone transporting horses as well as cattle, sheep, pigs, wildlife or fish. You must first drive your truck and trailer across the scales then go into the Department of Transportation office to complete a "Livestock and Fish Movement Report". Take your paperwork with you so you will have the certificate numbers.

So you'll know - the sign "Vehicles with livestock must stop" states a federal law. Bypassing a Port of Entry subjects you to a \$250.00 penalty if an enforcement officer accompanies you back to the Port. However, he can cite you where he stops you with penalty of \$50.00 plus \$3.00 per head.

An officer at the Port of Entry may inspect your outfit to verify your gross vehicle weight doesn't exceed the manufacturer's specifications for your truck and trailer. Your gross vehicle weight shouldn't exceed the tire rating either. Exceeding either weight could result in a citation. He may also check your lights, registration and insurance certificates.

Summary

If you are going to transport a horse, remember – you are expected to know and comply with these regulations.

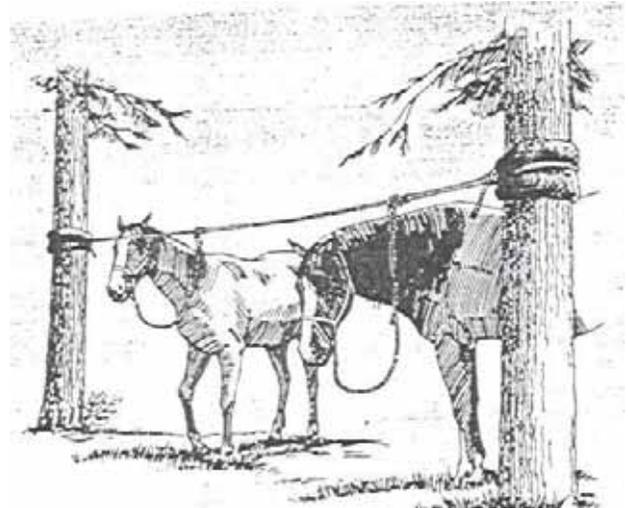
Questions should be directed to your local Utah State Brand Inspector.

Note: Montana and Wyoming do not accept Utah's Yearly Travel Permit.

Note: Coggins tests are valid for six months in California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. They are valid for one year in Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Utah.

The High Picket Line

It's up to you! There is only so much backcountry and a growing population continues to put increasing pressure on these limited areas. It is in the interest of all those who enjoy the backcountry to impact it as little as possible. The alternative is escalating regulation and restricted use.



There is no single act which brings the horseman more poor marks or leaves a more lasting effect than tying a horse to a tree.

When a horse is tied to a tree for a long time, the surrounding ground is pawed away from the roots, the tree's bark is damaged and the adjacent ground cover is broken and torn. Manure and urine are concentrated and contaminate the immediate area.

One of the preferred methods of restraining halter broke horses is with the use of a "high picket line". This is a line, approximately seven feet above the ground, tightly stretched between two trees. Lead ropes are tied to the high line at the drop knots.

The high picket line prevents the horse from getting around the tree where the bark or root systems are damaged. Horses are relaxed and content when tied to a high picket line. They seldom pull against the line because there is nothing solid to pull against. With the knot above their heads even the most skilled horses cannot untie their lead ropes or slip their halters.

Rope Selection

The same cotton rope used to stake out a grazing horse can be converted to a high picket line. However, fifty feet of 3/8-inch multi-filament polypropylene rope makes a better choice as it is strong, light and doesn't soak up water. Nylon is stretchy (although the braid-on-braid variety greatly overcomes this drawback) and stiffens in lower temperatures. While some horsemen use their pack lash ropes caution should be used since a broken lash rope will cause other problems.

Location

The high picket line should be set up away from the immediate campsite. Away from the trail and back in the trees where the least ground cover will be disturbed is the best location. Rocky soil shows less impact than softer areas.

Move the line before the trampling damage reaches the point where smoothing out the topsoil and debris doesn't erase the impact. Since one of the objectives

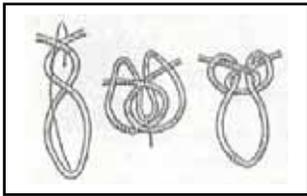
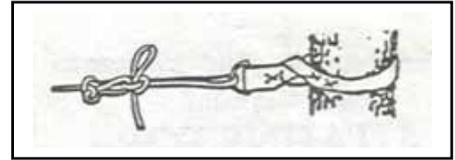
is to protect the tree, use straps, a cinch, sacks or stick spacers to keep the rope off the bark.

Set up

The high picket line can be set up properly very quickly. Select a tree and wrap it with a tree saver strap approximately seven feet above the ground.

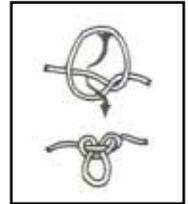


Fasten one end of your picket line to the strap's D-ring with a bowline knot. String your picket line towards the other selected tree. Tie the drop knots, or insert the accessories, to which



you will tie the lead ropes. Space these knots far enough apart so neighboring horses won't get tangled. Five or six feet (distance depends on rope length and stretch) from the second tree saver strap, tie a dutchman or butterfly knot, run the end of the picket line through the D-ring and back to the dutchman or butterfly knot. Pulling slack between the D-ring and this knot

will allow the high picket line to be pulled as tight as a fiddle string (it'll still be drooping in the morning). Get it tight – problems develop when the line gets slack.



Tying Lead Ropes

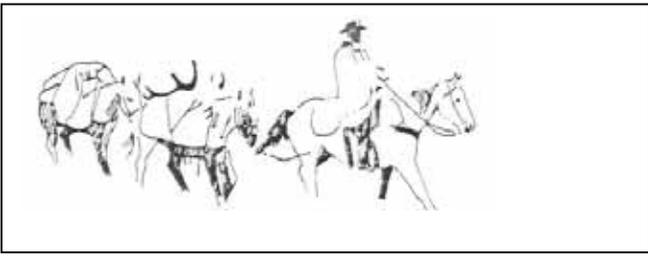
While a lead rope can be directly tied to the high picket line, there are better methods that will prevent the lead rope from sliding along the high picket line. Drop knots can be tied with either a picket line loop or a butterfly knot. A carabineer snapped into the drop knot makes a convenient and strong connection to tie to.

Tie the dutchman or butterfly knots tightly. If there is slack, tightening the high picket line will draw the slack out of the drop knot and can bind the lead rope.

The lead rope should have a swivel in it. Tie the lead rope short enough that neighboring horses can't tangle up each other. Tie it just long enough so the horse can get his head to the ground. Any longer would allow the horse to step over the lead rope and probably cause a wreck.

Summary

The Forest Service claims 80 percent of the damage to the environment from horsemen are due to improper restraining techniques. By utilizing the high picket line, horsemen can effectively eliminate the irritant most likely to lead to restrictions in their use of the backcountry.



Suggestions for Low Impact Horse Camping

It's up to you! There is only so much "back country" and a growing population continues to put increasing pressure on these limited areas. It is in the interest of all those who enjoy the backcountry to impact it as little as possible. The alternative is escalating regulation and restricted use.

Camp

A low impact camp does not happen without planning ahead. Planning can be an enjoyable part of the trip. Take only what is required. The less you take, the fewer stock will be required. Make a neat camp and keep things together so nothing will be left behind. Many National Forests require stock groups to carry an ax, shovel and bucket. A handsaw is handy.

Select your campsite at least two hundred feet from trails or water. Pitch your camp in an area where it will have the least visual impact. No one wants to go to the wilderness for solitude and camp within sight or sound of other people.

Conserve the site. Others will almost certainly use it. Plan ahead. Do not cut trees for picket pins, tent stakes or ridgepoles. Restrain your stock in an appropriate area. Don't set your corral in a place, which someone else might choose for his or her camp's kitchen or bedroom. Use existing campsites if possible.

Toilet sites must also be at least two hundred feet from any water. It is better to dig a "cat hole" than a deep latrine. Make the hole no deeper than eight inches as this is where the soil breaks down waste the quickest. Be sure the toilet paper is completely buried. No one likes to come across these "tissue flowers".

Consider cooking over propane or white gas stoves in order to save firewood. Gather firewood away from the campsite. Be sure the campfire is built with an eye towards safety and visual impact. Allowing a hot fire to burn out leaves less charred wood than throwing a bucket of water on a burning fire. Be certain your fire is out when you are finished with it. Fire safety must be ingrained in every backcountry user.

Don't use nails or wire on trees and do not leave pole corrals standing. Don't build permanent structures or caches.

No one should be able to find your campsite after you leave. Do not bury garbage. What cannot be burned must be packed out. If you packed it in – pack it out. Make an effort to preserve the backcountry by bringing any litter out with you.

Feeding stock

Horses and mules must eat and they do trample the grass. How much of an impact this makes depends upon the horseman. Train your horses to be hobbled and staked out. Move stakes frequently.

Many areas require any hay or straw brought in must be certified to be weed-free. This may be difficult and a good alternative is pelletized feed. Be sure to accustom stock to pellets before the trip.

Restraining stock

Many areas lend themselves to pole corrals. Protect the bark of trees to which you lash poles. Take the corral down before you leave.

Many horsemen are finding their stock least troublesome when held inside an electric fence. There are many portable units available. The stock must be introduced to the electric fence before the trip.

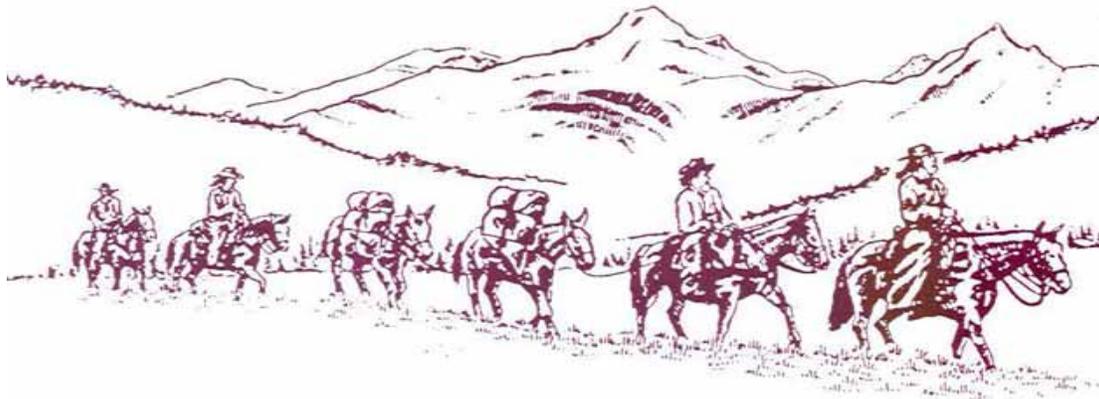
Nothing causes horsemen such bad marks as tying stock to trees. Many animals will chew the bark off the tree. Inevitably damage occurs to the root system. Use a high picket line and move it before any permanent damage occurs.

Before you leave a place, spread the manure. While moist, it is easy to break up and spread. Once dried, it is difficult to break up and becomes unsightly to many backcountry users in addition to attracting flies.

Be aware of the damage your horses may do and try to eliminate it. Keep improving your minimum impact camping techniques. While it is tough for the horse camper to leave no trace, it can be done.

Summary

A pack trip through beautiful backcountry is a great experience. We must take care of the backcountry so future generations will be as fortunate as we to ride good horses through the same unspoiled country.



Mountain Manners

Finally, all the planning, preparations and travel are complete and now you're at the trailhead ready to head into the mountains for this year's "trip of a lifetime". Riders and horses are excited and anxious to get on the trail. It seems forever before everything is ready and the ramrod sings, "Move out!" Once in motion, it doesn't take very long for the horses and their riders to settle into a comfortable walk on the trail into the backcountry. Soon each rider is lost in their own thoughts as the beauty of the pristine wilderness moves by at the relaxing rhythmic beat of horse's hooves. What could be better? A trip into beautiful backcountry is a fantastic experience.

Many times I've been in meetings and wished I was in the mountains, but...I've never been in the mountains and wished I was in a meeting!

Other people also enjoy this same experience but may travel differently than horsemen. With the limited amount of backcountry available, it is inevitable those who use it will come into more and more contact with each other. This contact need not cause conflict. To avoid regulation and restricted use, it is in the interest of all those who enjoy the backcountry to have good mountain manners. Courtesy and common sense will resolve any situation.

Your string of horses on the trail

Avoid surprises while on the trail. Designate a rider to ride "point" about thirty yards ahead of the pack string. This rider will be alert to overtaking or meeting other groups. Obstacles will be evaluated and the rest of the group advised.

Few things are better than riding a good horse into new country!

The pack string comes next. Put a rider on "drag" behind the string to watch the packs, be alert to anything dropped on the trail and watch for other parties overtaking the pack string.

Other pack strings

When two pack strings meet head on, usually the more

maneuverable of the strings is the one that yields the trail. When large pack strings meet along a steep, narrow grade, it is traditional for the string going uphill to have the trail right-of-way. The rules of reason and common sense should prevail.

Pedestrians

Many horses are not familiar with the profile backpackers present. The point rider should explain this to the hikers and, since they are usually more maneuverable, politely ask them to step off the trail far enough to the downhill side to let the horses pass. Advising the hikers to speak to the passing stock will assure the horses there is no danger. Occasionally you'll meet hikers leading llamas and although many horses have not been introduced to llamas this may

not be the best time or place. The most maneuverable party should yield the trail. Courtesy and common sense will resolve this situation.



Bicycles

The speed and quietness of bicycles create the major hazards to an encounter. The point or drag riders should politely ask the bikers to stop, move

to the side and talk to the horses as they pass. All riders should thank the bikers for their courtesy.

Vehicles

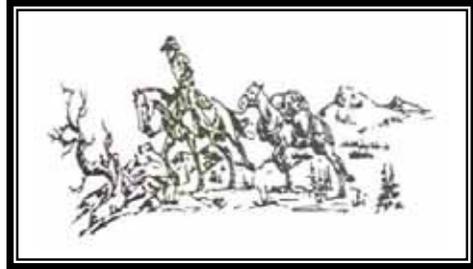
ATVs, motorcycles, jeeps and trucks, while limited where they may travel, are nonetheless encountered off roads. The point or drag rider must advise the other riders of the oncoming traffic and make himself visible to the vehicle's driver. Most states require drivers to obey hand signals given by a mounted horseman – but don't count on it! It is best to get completely off the track and let them slowly pass.

Summary

We must take care of the backcountry so future generations will be as fortunate as we to ride good horses through the same unspoiled country. Since others use this same country, we will all have to get along. No rules will ever replace courtesy and good manners.

Rules for Visitors to Utah's Public Lands

Living in the West, horsemen are very fortunate to have access to so much public land. Whether the land is administered by the USDA Forest Service, the National Park Service, the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service, Utah State Parks & Recreation, the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources, the Bureau of Land Management or the Bureau of Reclamation, today's Utah horsemen can pretty much ride where they want relatively unencumbered by prohibitive regulations.



Part of the Back Country Horsemen's purpose is to perpetuate our heritage of common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's backcountry. One of the strategies to accomplish this goal is to avoid creating situations where regulations become necessary. As a visitor to Utah's public lands, you are asked to follow certain rules designed to protect the land, the natural environment, to ensure the health and safety of others and to promote pleasant and rewarding outdoor recreation experiences for all visitors.

Campfires

- Obey restrictions on fires. Open fires may be limited or prohibited at certain times.
- Within campgrounds and other established sites, build fires only in fire rings, stoves, grills, or fireplaces provided for this purpose.
- Be sure your fire is completely extinguished before leaving. You are responsible for keeping fires under control!

Property

- Do not carve, chop, cut or damage any live trees. Do not drive nails or stick an axe into live trees.
- Leave natural areas the way you found them.
- Enter buildings, structures or enclosed areas only when they are expressly open to the public.
- Native American, old cabins, and other structures, along with objects and artifacts associated with them, have historic or archeological value. Do not damage or remove any such historic or archeological resource.

Sanitation

- Throw all garbage and litter into containers provided for this purpose or take it with you. "Pack it in – pack it out". Show our concern for the public lands by cleaning up after others.
- Wash food and personal items away from drinking water supplies. Use water faucets only for drawing water.
- Prevent pollution – keep garbage, litter, and foreign substances out of lakes, streams and other water.
- Use toilets properly. Do not throw garbage, litter, fish cleanings, or other foreign substances into toilets and plumbing fixtures.

Operation of Vehicles

- Obey all traffic signs. State traffic laws apply to all public lands (unless otherwise posted).
- When operating vehicles of any kind, do not damage the land or vegetation or disturb wildlife. Avoid driving on unpaved roads or trails when they are wet or muddy.

Pets

- Pets must be restrained or on a leash while in developed recreation sites.

Fireworks and Firearms

- Fireworks and explosives are prohibited on public lands.
- Firing a gun is not allowed: a) in or within 150 yards of a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation site or occupied area; b) across or on a road or body of water; and c) in any circumstance whereby a person may be injured or property damaged.

Horses

- Saddle or pack animals are allowed within recreation sites only where authorized by posted instructions.
- Stay on trails. Cutting across switchbacks damages the trails, vegetation and our image.
- Scatter all manure. Scattered manure is fertilizer but manure piles are offensive to non-horsemen. Don't scrape fertilizer out of your trailer and pick up manure that falls out while unloading and loading.
- Feed stock only weed-free hay (and straw) or commercially prepared pellets while on public lands. Besides avoiding fines, we avoid introducing noxious weeds into the very backcountry we're trying to preserve.
- Do not tie horses to trees. Nothing gives horsemen poorer marks than trees killed by horses pawing the dirt to expose the roots or chewing the bark. Use a high picket line – your horses (and the public) will thank you for it.
- Be courteous on the trail. Although regulations are posted as to who has the right-of-way on the trail, nothing works like courtesy.

Most public lands have unique and interesting attractions and are managed for visitors to enjoy. If all visitors use common sense and courtesy, these attractions will be there for many future generations to enjoy.

Lead the way – show others how much horsemen value Utah's public lands!

Weed-free horse feed

The problem:

Weeds are a subject which may not seem worth much thought when measured against the myriad activities of our daily lives. Most people think of weeds as dandelions but the fact is thousands upon thousands acres of Utah's public lands are infested with noxious weeds.

Noxious weeds are a serious problem in the western United States and are rapidly spreading at a estimated rate of 14 percent each year. These weeds, many of them introduced by early settlers, interfere with the growth of useful plants, clog waterways and in some cases, can even threaten the lives of animals which feed on them. Species like Leafy Spurge, Squarrose Knapweed, Russian Knapweed, Musk Thistle, Dalmatian Toadflax, Purple Loosestrife, and many others, are alien to the United States and have no natural enemies to keep the population in balance.

"Among other things, widespread infestations can lead to soil erosion and stream sedimentation," explains Larry Maxfield, Utah BLM State Office Range Conservationist. "These noxious weeds impact revegetation efforts by out-competing desirable species, they reduce wild and domestic grazing capacities, can occasionally irritate public land users by aggravating allergies, and certainly threaten our federally protected plants and animals."

The solution:

Back in 1994, to halt the spread of noxious weeds into backcountry areas, a program was started to ban the use of single ingredient feeds that were not certified to be free of noxious weed seeds. This program has evolved to the point where on February 11, 2003, Jack G. Troyer, the Regional Forester for the Intermountain Region of the U. S. Forest Service signed order number 04-00-097 which prohibited **possessing, storing or transporting, non-pellitized hay, straw or mulch on National Forest System Lands without having each individual bale or container tagged or marked as weed free, or having original and current evidence of weed free certification documentation present.**

Any violation of this prohibition is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000.00 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization and/or imprisonment for not more than six months.

The effect of this prohibition is horsemen (as well as hunters, woolgrowers, cattle ranchers, government trappers, conservation officers, forest rangers and anyone else who transports feed) are required to use "certified noxious weed-free feed". Utah grown feed that has been certified will have a tag attached stating the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has inspected it. The states of Colorado, Idaho, Nebraska,

Utah's 18 most wanted

- Bermuda grass
- Bindweed (morning glory)
- Broadleaved Peppergrass
- Canada Thistle
- Dyer's Woad
- Johnson grass
- Leafy Spurge
- Musk Thistle
- Russian Knapweed
- Scotch Thistle
- Whitetop
- Squarrose Knapweed
- Diffuse Knapweed
- Yellow Starthistle
- Medusahead Rye
- Spotted Knapweed
- Purple Loosestrife

North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Utah have agreed to accept each other's certification tags. Other approved products for livestock feed on public lands include pellets, hay cubes, processed and certified hay available at some feed stores in Utah. Grains are not included in this order.

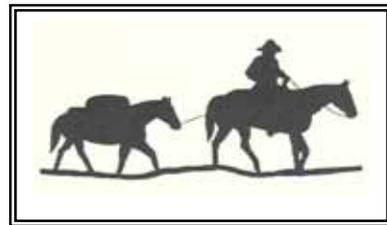
A commercially prepared feed containing more than one ingredient is defined as a "commercial feed" and falls under a different set of regulations. These feeds meet other standards and have already been inspected so they are exempt from this Forest Service ban.

While not covered by this specific order, the ban on non-certified hay, straw and mulch also applies to lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Your questions should be directed to your County Weed Supervisor or Agricultural Inspector.

This order applies to the Ashley, Boise, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, Dixie, Fishlake, Humboldt-Toiyabe, Manti-LaSal, Payette, Salmon-Challis, Sawtooth, Uinta and Wasatch-Cache National Forests.

The Greater Yellowstone area in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming (including National Forest System Lands, Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park as well as Park and Teton counties in Wyoming) also require the use of certified forage.



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Steve Guymon, Education Chair