

Camping with Kids and Horses

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The material provided is strictly examples and ideas, and only covers information from personal experience and research. Be sure to do your own research to confirm the items are accurate.

Be sure to check with your County Extension Agent when planning your event. Washington State 4-H has developed helpful guidelines for setting up successful events and these guidelines are available from your Extension office.

Most of the information below is relevant to an event being held in Washington State. If traveling to surrounding states please check with similar organizations for the area you plan on traveling to.

1) Participant Input

- a) Goals/Objectives – Is this an educational, recreational, or just a trip for fun? Is the goal to relax and bond as a group, or hit the trail for 16 hours a day? Do participants want to sleep in, hang out, and brush their horses? It can be any or all of the above, but it is best to make sure that all participants know what to expect before they agree to go. Be sure that riders of all skill levels will be comfortable and yet challenged at the same time.
- b) Finances – How is this trip going to be paid for? Will the group need to hold fundraisers, or are participants required to pay their own way? What will the participants be able to afford?
- c) Group Vote – This is a big undertaking and it will be very helpful to have the groups support. Make sure that the kids' interest is also going to include pre-trip help from kids and parents. Don't get stuck doing it all!
- d) Leadership – There should be a very small ratio of adults to children, and make sure that at least two of the people going have sufficient experience with horses in the outdoors, and appropriate medical training. Depending on the group and its members, some of the more mature, experienced, and responsible senior members could be a part of the Leadership team.
- e) Member Questionnaire - HANDOUT
 - i) Gather information to help guide trip planning meetings and assure that everyone's needs are met and interests are attended to. Great way to get some background information on participants that they may not usually share. Remember that any personal information that is shared is confidential and should not be repeated.

2) Information Review - Now that you have your input from parents and members, start reviewing your notes, Member Questionnaires, and other pertinent information to see what the best way to proceed is.

- a) Review - Go over each Member Questionnaire to make sure that all members are going to be comfortable and safe. Be sure to pay close attention to sensitive areas like:
 - i) Birthdate - will you be celebrating a b-day on the trip?
 - ii) Level of excitement - do they really want to go? What is their motivation? Are their parents or peers pressuring them to go?
 - iii) Personal History - THIS IS IMPORTANT!!!
 - 1) Phobias - You need to know what their fears are ahead of time. Encourage the participants to be honest about what may scare them, or really send them over the edge. Heights and darkness are both common fears, and can be an issue if not known or remembered.
 - 2) Allergies - food, bugs, plants. Important safety issue!
 - 3) Health Issues - Past Injuries, Behavior Issues, Meds, Bed Wetting, Night Terrors.
 - 4) Camping Experience - First timers may need to be reminded of the little things. They may not understand the relevance of the buddy system, poison ivy, or ant hills until they are out in the woods.
 - 5) Riding Experience - English vs western
 - iv) Limitations - Driving and riding limitations may be a matter of comfort, experience, and/or physical limitation. Sometimes the preferences are being dictated by things like a doctor's orders, small bladder, weak stomach, stiff back, short attention span, or being out of shape.
 - v) Preferences - Trip type, weather, landscapes, area, activities
 - vi) Creature Comforts - This can be a touchy subject. Some participants may require basic amenities for their comfort and sanity. As the leader you will need to determine if this is a legitimate and honest issue, or someone being a bit too needy. Toilets and showers can both be a significant concern for some, and a potential reason for people not to come or be really uncomfortable.
 - vii) Comments - if they take the time to write, than check it out.
- b) Potential Issues - Based on the information that you have it is important to try and determine how the needs of the individuals will affect the dynamics of the group.
 - i) Is the group pretty similar in goals, expectations, and skill level?
 - ii) Do you have the Leadership and Supervision to handle the number and skill level of kids that are interested?
 - iii) What kind of training, experience or education will you need?
- c) Decision - Given all the information that is currently available to you, there are a variety of options. Some of the more immediate ones are to continue as planned, scale back the event, make the event bigger, or cancel the event all together. Be realistic and honest about the groups abilities and limitations. This is not the time to be trying new things or getting over ambitious.

3) Trip Planning – This is the most important part of any adventure. This process will include researching where to go, what to do, how to get there. Then take all of the information that is gathered and bring it to the group. Making sure you have a well thought out plan that is clearly communicated to the group can eliminate a lot of problems. All group members should be aware of the trip plans and goals. The planning process can be very complex and it is a great experience for the kids to be involved.

a) Research – This is a huge project! Make sure that this step is not rushed, and every lead is followed. Research can be very time consuming and frustrating at times, but incredibly important. There is a lot of information available, but finding the right source can be difficult. In addition to finding the right source, you also need to find an accurate source. It is really a good idea to double check and cross reference information. Also, try to have at least 3 or 4 different options for the group to pick from, and have them spread out across the state.

i) Site Survey - **HANDOUT**

1) Form to help guide research and ask some of the less common questions. Be sure to touch on every point and fill in the blanks with some sort of answer. If your sources are giving conflicting information, note both sides and make sure to get the real answer.

ii) Group Variables

1) Distance – Your biggest limiting factor is most likely going to be how far away your group wants to travel, or how far you want to take them! Determine the greatest distance for your group and start identifying horse facilities within that area.

2) Time of year – the time of year will obviously be dictated by the groups availability, and can be effected by things like weather, finals, dances, school vacations, family vacations, and competitions (gaming, English, western, etc.). Looking back at the Member Questionnaires try to select an appropriate time if year for your event so you don't have miserable participants.

a) Weather –The time of year, elevation, side of the mountains, local weather norms, etc. are all things to consider. Also, if a trip is too early in the season some trails may not have been cleared yet, or campgrounds repaired and cleaned. However, if the trip goes too late in the summer some facilities may run out of water.

b) Hunting – Most of the time it can be a little unnerving to go camping during hunting season. Some horses and kids can get a little goofy when shots are being fired nearby, or an animal carcass is being transported in plain view. Check with your local Department of Fish and Wildlife, or Big Game Hunting Season and Rules publication for the dates of hunting season in various areas across the state.

(i) [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/)
(<http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/>)

- c) Competition - It is advisable to not schedule a trip very close to a show. Horses can get banged up on trips, and it would be best to not have the trip immediately before a show. Allow at least two weeks for the horses to get back home and on a normal schedule before taking off again for a show. This will give horses time to heal (if needed) and kids time to polish some show etiquettes that may have been forgotten or ignored on the trail.
- 3) Destinations – There are so many locations to select from in the great Northwest. The challenge is trying to pick just one. Using the information from the Member Questionnaires, determine what type of area the group wanted to visit. Some of the options were Ocean Beaches, Mountains, Lakes, Rivers, Deserts, Meadows, or Rainforest. This may start to narrow your focus really quickly! For example, if the group wants to head to the beach you really only have 3 options for Washington and 2 for Oregon.
- 4) Discretion – Knowing your group, think about the kids and horses involved to determine if there are any other issues that need to be considered. If it is a green group, than the beach or trails that are steep and rocky may not be the best. Out of shape horses and riders should not make long ascents or doing lengthy rides. If the participants are legitimately scared of heights then high alpine rides are probably out. Young riders may want to be near a phone in case a call has to be made to a parent for a comforting good night conversation.
- iii) Facilities – Now it is time to narrow down your options (lets just hope there are still options at this point!) :D
 - 1) Resources – These are items that I have collected in my travels and research. I am always looking for additional books or web sites that may hold a new destination, but I am afraid I have run out of options! When contacting agencies be sure to talk to someone who actually goes out and visits the campgrounds and/or trails. Do not rely on someone who only reads the reports or logs!
 - a) Personal Sources – Talk with friends and other reliable sources that have had personal experiences at the facilities in questions. Second hand information can be a bit questionable!
 - b) Internet
 - (i) [Camp Tashunka](http://camptashunka.com/planning.htm) (<http://camptashunka.com/planning.htm>)
 - (ii) [Back Country Horsemen](http://www.bchw.org/) (<http://www.bchw.org/>)
 - (iii) [Bureau of Land Management](http://www.blm.gov/nhp/index.htm) (<http://www.blm.gov/nhp/index.htm>)
 - (iv) [United States Department of Agriculture - National Forest](http://www.fs.fed.us/) (<http://www.fs.fed.us/>)
 - (v) [National Park Service](http://www.nps.gov/) (<http://www.nps.gov/>)
 - (vi) [Washington State Parks](http://www.parks.wa.gov/) (<http://www.parks.wa.gov/>)
 - (vii) [Washington State Department of Natural Resources](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/) (<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/>)

- c) Books
- (i) Cohen, Jean. US Stabling Guide. Kingston: Lariat Publications, 2005.
 - (ii) Rusho, Josie. Gone Ridin'. Kittitas: Outpost Books, 2003.
 - (iii) Rusho, Josie. Trail Busters. Kittitas: Outpost Books, 2006.
 - (iv) Wolcott, John and Roberta. The Backcountry Horseman's Guide to Washington. Guilford: Falcon, 1995.
 - (v) Woodfin, Dick and LaDonna. Trail Riding and Pack Trips in Washington. Portland: Frontier Publishing, 1998.
- d) Maps – Be aware the majority of maps are not current and the best thing to do is contact the appropriate agency in charge of that area, and even make a preliminary trip out to the destination to take inventory on the site, trails, appropriateness, safety, directions, etc. Make sure that the group has been instructed on how to read and use a map. Maps are available from:
- (i) [United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service](http://www.fs.fed.us/)
(<http://www.fs.fed.us/>)
 - 1. Local USFS offices – a Listing can be found in the appendix
 - (ii) [Metsker Maps](http://www.metskers.com/) (<http://www.metskers.com/>)
 - (iii) [Green Trails](http://www.greentrails.com/) (<http://www.greentrails.com/>)
 - (iv) [REI](http://www.rei.com/) (<http://www.rei.com/>)
- 2) Site selection – This is where it is really important to watch the details. The more you know about each facility, the less surprises you will encounter when you arrive. Refer back to your Member Questionnaire to see what was preferred; your list may start shrinking as you go. Due note locations that were close, but not quite what was needed in case you run out of options. Look for important items like:
- a) People Preferences
- (i) Group Size – Most Horse Camps do not have group camping spots. Determine how important it is for your group to be sleeping in the same area.
 - (ii) Tent/Trailer Sites – If any group member is planning on bringing a motor home or camper the campground generally has restrictions on vehicle lengths. There are also going to be additional issues of hook ups, dump stations, etc.
 - (iii) Horse Friendly Sites – Confirm how many of the available sites are actually setup for horses. Some places may have you in one spot and your horses up to a ¼ mile away. This comes down to personal preference, knowing your horses, and being comfortable with the situation.
 - (iv) Campground type
 - 1. Designated – These campgrounds generally have maintained facilities and are setup for horses in a specific area.
 - a. Public – Operated by a public entity.
 - b. Private – Owned and operated by a privately held company.

2. Dispersed – These campgrounds are not maintained by any agency, and are only setup by campers that have pulled off to make their own camp.
 - a. If this is the route chosen be sure to follow Leave No Trace camping techniques and be responsible horse owners.
Leave the location better than you found it!

(v)Accommodations

1. Restrooms – It can make a difference what kind of toilet you have. Some of the options are Vault, Pit, Composting, flushing, Porta-Potty or Sanikan, and hole in the ground!
2. Bathing – The length of the trip may make this one a mute point if the group is only out a couple days. Any longer this may become an issue. One thing to look into is how close is the nearest shower facility, how much is it, and how safe.
3. Fire Rings – If the group members want to have a special meal or snack, or the weather could be questionable a fire pit may be the only way you can have a fire.
4. Picnic Tables – If the campground doesn't have one installed than the group may need to bring their own. Having a working surface for cooking, meal prep, eating, or just playing cards can be important.
5. Shelter – Most sites do not have a shelter but they can be very handy if the weather is looking bad.
6. Features – The group may have specified that they want the facility to have a field, lake, river, creek, play ground, or other neat things to pass the time.
7. Campground Rules – Review the campground rules and make sure it is something that the group will be able to handle.
 - a. Quiet Time – Some camps have a designated quiet time that should be respected. If a quiet time is not posted then determine a time that is appropriate for the age (and energy) of your group, but is also respectful of other campers in the area.
8. Water – This is a really important issue especially when camping with horses. Make sure that you know what kind of water is available, and that the source will still be running when you are there. Not all campgrounds are going to have water available. Be sure to check with the appropriate agency to see what each campsite has available. Also, some campsites will have water available on a seasonal basis but cannot be relied on in times of drought or low rainfall.
 - a. Potable – Confirm that the water is drinkable or plan on bringing in all your own water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning.

- i. Treated – You can make water safe to drink by boiling it for at least 10 minutes or by using a water treatment kit (Iodine, Purifier, Filters, Halogens, other chemicals).
 - b. Stock – Water for the horses may be the same as the drinkable water, or it could come from a trough, creek, lake, or spring. In order to reduce the chance of spreading disease, consider bringing your own water buckets instead of sharing with unknown horses. Stock tanks and/or water spigots are available at most campsites. If the water is treated the horses may not want to drink it.
 - (vi) Vehicle length – Check to see if the campground, or route to the site, has any restrictions on the length of truck and trailer that is allowed on the road or in the camping area.
 - (vii) Wild Animals - Double check to see if there are any animal issues that need to be watched. Special precautions for food and grain storage do need to be made if staying in an area populated by camp robbers, chipmunks, squirrels, crows, ravens, and especially bears.
 - (viii) Trails – Make sure that there is trail access and the trails that are available are appropriate for the group. Confirm that the trails will be open at that time, and maintenance crews will have had a chance to check everything out. Also, see if there are enough trails to keep the group busy for each day they are staying. If the group is staying more than one day it may get boring if there is only one trail that only lasts an hour! Look into any neat features that you may encounter on the trail or something that could be a trail riding destination.
 - (ix) Activities – There are a lot of things to do in camp and around the area. Some activities may be in route to the campsite, right on site, or a quick day trip.
 - 1. Experience - The Member Questionnaire asked about Hot Springs, Ghost Towns, Fossil Hunting, Rock Hounding, Swimming, Ice Cave, Lava Tubes, Hiking, Team Building, Tack stores, and Mines.
 - 2. Educate – You can also take some time to learn about local history, culture, Map Reading, Compass work, Fire Building, Shelter Building, First Aid, CPR, Knot Tying, etc.
 - (x) Calendar – This is a commonly overlooked issue, and a potentially inconvenient mistake. Be sure to ask the agency that operates the campground if they know of any large groups or special events that may be occurring during your intended trip.
 - (xi) Fees – Confirm what the fee structure is and when it needs to be paid. Double check that additional permits or passes are not required for being in the campground, and if hauling to nearby trailheads.
- b) Equine Issues

- (i) Horse Accommodations – This may be another quick way to eliminate some potential destinations. Check to see what the horses are used to make sure they will be in a safe situation. Confirm the type of accommodations for the horse, and ask for a verbal description, pictures, or anything that can guarantee you know what the horses are going to be sleeping in. The term stall and corral can be used pretty loosely, and do not have the same meaning within various agencies. Remember, a horse should not be tied to a tree for more than two hours. When tied their head should be able to hang comfortably at shoulder length with a taught lead high enough and short enough where they can't put a foot over it. The lead should also be secured so it will not loosed, slide down, or be allowed to get pulled loose.
1. Highline – This is a rope or cable about 8' – 10' above the ground and strung very tight between two tree's or highline poles. Some facilities will have the cable and poles already constructed, others will provide just the poles, and most will just have some trees. It is wise to pack a highline kit just in case. A highline kit consists of a very long and strong rope or cable and a tree saver for each tree. There are special items on the market like Knot Eliminators or swivel pins that help.
 2. Corral – A corral can be a large enclosure that fits multiple horses comfortably or a 12'x12' log pen that can only fit one horse. The Forest Service corrals are mainly constructed of logs, where other facilities may use lumber and chicken wire.
 3. Stall – Another confusing term that is used loosely. Some facilities refer to a 3'x6' standing rack as a stall, where other places it is a 12'x12' log pen that can fit one horse comfortably.
 4. Pasture – This is uncommon to find in campgrounds, but can generally fit multiple horses if offered. Make sure all the horses get along.
 5. Picket – Most facilities will not allow this unless you are in the back country.
- (ii) Number of horse per site – Determine what the campground limit is on the number of horses per enclosure, and the minimum or maximum number of horses per rented site.
- (iii) Feed – Contact the appropriate agency to determine if there are any feed restrictions for livestock. Some National Forest will require pelletized feed or certified weed free feed sources. This can be an enormous challenge.
1. Keep in mind that horses may eat more while on the trail because they are working harder. Most locations do not allow grazing of animals so you should be sure to bring plenty of hay for each horse.

2. When feeding the horses it may be helpful to provide a flake at a time. This allows the horse to eat all of the food in front of them before getting more hay, and tends to create less waste from the horse destroying their feed.
 3. It is best not to switch a horses feed suddenly to something new. If a certain feed or pellet is required you may want to select a new destination, or start your horses at home on the new feed well in advance of the trip. For horses that are going to only be out for a day or two it may be a better idea to select a location where each person can bring their own feed.
- (iv) Livestock inspections – If crossing state or international boundaries your horse MUST have appropriate paperwork regarding its health. When going into bordering states each horse has to have a Coggins test, and health inspection from your vet. Depending on how many states you will be visiting, how often, and for how long you can get different passports. Any federal employee can ask you for paperwork on your horses at any time. Most of the time you would be asked by Forest Rangers, State Police, Brand Inspectors, etc. Check with your local vet for pricing information. The following information is required for driving horses outside of Washington, and is required for EACH horse.
1. 6 month Coggins Test– Approx. \$35
 2. Brand Inspection – Make sure the Veterinarian is certified.
 - a. One Way – Approx. \$25
 - b. Annual – Approx. \$45
 - c. Life – Approx. \$85
 3. Hospital/Farm Call – Approx. \$25 to start. This price can be split between multiple horses and will depend on your vet
 4. Health Certificate
 - a. Travel into Idaho, Oregon, or Montana
 - i. 30 day certificate – Approx. \$55
 - ii. 180 day passport – Approx. \$100
 - b. International Travel (Canada) – Approx. \$105 and takes minimum of 10 days.
- c) Cabins – A few agencies do rent out cabins with horse facilities attached. Some cabins are fully furnished and have modern accommodations, where others are extremely limited. The cabin rentals are normally harder to come by, but could be a neat experience for those that do not want to totally camp out.
- b) Scout – Some of the group leaders may want to take a field trip in order to map out the route for gas, bathroom, groceries, and meal stops. It would also be a good idea to see what the campground really looked like, and if the trails were any good. During a scout you may be able to identify a specific

camp site that you prefer, and can request when making reservations. Also, take pictures to share with the group during trip planning meetings.

- c) Meetings – As soon as the research is near completion a trip planning meeting should be scheduled. Present all of the options to the group so they can decide which destination is their first choice. Have the group then select a second, third, and fourth choice option in case of weather, fire, or other unforeseen problems.
- d) Reservations – The more popular Horse Camps due take reservations and also tend to fill up pretty fast. If you are planning a trip for a large group, be sure to get your group together early, and make your reservations as soon as everyone commits. It is not a good idea to show up to a Horse Camp with a large group and not have reservations or made previous arrangements. Remember, in your trip planning that the weekends are always going to be the busiest times, on the road, in camp, and on the trails. If you have a group with some volume control issues it may be a good idea to shoot for a mid week trip to so they can be themselves. Lastly, most of the facilities that take reservations also have fairly strict cancellation policies. Make sure that when you make your reservation that the group is committed.

4) Trip Preparation

- a) Additional Meetings – may be incorporated into one big meeting, or better yet, schedule additional group meetings. Group Norms, Individual Packing List, Training, Group Packing List, Meal Planning,
- i) Group Norms – Norms can be developed at the first meeting or soon there after. This is a great time to develop a set of guidelines that are in addition the ones laid out in the Member Questionnaire, and unique to the wishes of the group members. Some topics do discuss are:
 - 1) Trip Guidelines – Discuss what is appropriate and comfortable for the group. See if they have any additional guidelines that they would like to see setup regarding quiet time, activities, etc. Be sure to cover and explain important items like:
 - a) Buddy System – A buddy system is always a great idea when venturing into public, busy, or remote areas. Kids should be required to stay with their buddies at all times, and be sure to check in with an adult before they venture to the restroom, or away from camp.
 - b) Dress Code – There are two theories on what you should be wearing into the woods. However, both points of view do stress the need for warm, dry clothing that will protect a person from the elements.
 - (i) Blend – Try to wear colors that will help you blend into the forest and its background. Incorporate earth tones, and dark colors so you won't be an eye sore on a natural canvas.
 - (ii) Bright – Wear bright clothes that make a person easy to spot in case of an emergency. Rescuers have an easier time locating people that have bright colors on than those that blend.
- ii) Individual Packing List – **HANDOUT**
 - 1) Review the Individual Packing List to make sure everyone understands which items are required, suggested, and optional. Try to go through and explain the relevance of each item.
- iii) Horse Packing List - **HANDOUT**
 - 1) Review the Horse Packing List to make sure everyone understands which items are required, suggested, and optional. Try to go through and explain the relevance of each item. There may be items that are on other lists, and it is that much more important that those items are definitely packed.
 - 2) Properly fitted Equipment – It is really important to make sure that all tack is fitted appropriately to the horse and rider. What may be uncomfortable working in the arena, could be crippling after a long trail ride.
 - 3) Less common equipment – Some of this gear may not be used on a regular basis, if at all. These items can be expensive, so it is hard to expect participants to have them. Frequently, they won't even know they need it until they are on the trail and their saddle starts shifting

on hills. Look into the relevance of items like Breast collars, cruppers, and britchin.

iv) Group Packing List - **HANDOUT**

1) Have all the participants help out in being responsible for bringing something that will contribute to the group gear. The trip could be pretty comfortable and deluxe (propane stoves, space heaters, blow up mattresses, etc.) or very rustic (open fire cooking, tin foil baking, and bedrolls under the stars). This needs to be addressed as a group, but may be dictated by the amount of storage space in vehicles.

v) Training/Classes

1) Horse Camping

a) Packing – If offering a pack trip experience it is important to know if the group will be using a decker, sawbuck, or saddle panniers. Also, know what you are packing. Some items will need mannies, boxes, top packs, etc. Each style has a very different method of packing, and there are different methods within those!

b) Highlining – Really important to have the equipment and know how to use it. Be familiar with the knots, ropes, and techniques for putting up a line.

c) Emergency Farrier Work – Check with your farrier for instruction on to remove and/or replace a shoe when needed.

d) Equine First Aid – Know the basics of First Aid for your horse and what to do for common issues when on the trail. Some situations that can be encountered are stone bruises, bee stings, lacerations, sun burns, colic, etc.

2) General Education – Classes can be taken from Red Cross, Remote Medicine Inc., REI, Search and Rescue, local Fire Department, Health Department, etc.

a) Navigation – Know how to use what you have! Whether it is a Map and Compass, or GPS system. It is important to be comfortable with what you have.

b) Emergency Response – If the trip is going to be more than 15 minutes from 911 assistance it is crucial that at least two people are well versed in Advanced Medical Training.

(i) CPR

(ii) Wilderness First Aid

(iii) Lifeguard

c) Food Handlers Card - It is a good idea for at least one person on the trip (preferably the one in charge of cooking) to have a Food Handles card. These can be obtained from your county Health Department, and generally require attendance of a short class and passing a test.

(i) [King County Public Health Department](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/foodsfty/foodhandlerscard.htm) - 206-296-4600

(<http://www.metrokc.gov/health/foodsfty/foodhandlerscard.htm>)

(ii) [Snohomish County Public Health Department](http://www.snohd.org/env_health2/fle/fdwrkr.htm) – 425-339-5250

(http://www.snohd.org/env_health2/fle/fdwrkr.htm)

- d) Leave No Trace Camping
 - e) Wild Animal Encounters – Look into books, videos, or trainings on what to do if you encounter a bear, cougar, moose, or other potentially dangerous animal in the area.
- 3) 4-H Projects - These can also be turned into additional projects for members that want to take an additional step are:
- a) Animal Science: HBI – Veterinary Science
 - b) Environmental Stewardship: DA – Discovery; DAB – Outdoor Adventures; DB – Science Discovery; DDA – Forestry; DFB – Power Project; DEBA – Riflery; DEBAB – Pistol; DEBAC – Shotgun; DEBAD – Black Powder/Muzzle Loading; DEBAE – Hunting; DEBB – Archery; DBD – Water Resources Project; DBA – Geology Project; DDC – Sportfishing; D – Self Determined Environmental Stewardship
 - c) Interdisciplinary: DEAA – Challenge Project; DEAB – Portable Challenge; HAAA – From Ridges to Rivers
 - d) Plant Sciences: Plant Science
- vi) Meal Planning – Issues to consider are going to be Allergies, Cold stuff, Perishables, Pre-cooked, Bulk Shopping. A lot of food preparation can be done ahead of the trip, and simply frozen before you go. Involve the group members in planning the meals, consider any allergies or strong likes and dislikes, availability of cooking supplies and equipment, and reality of preparing meals in the great outdoors.
- vii) Time line – The group can be involved in determining the timeline involved in the actual trip. Have them help calculate how much time is needed for packing, meeting, driving, stopping for breaks, and anything else that may come up. As a group determine what time everyone wants to meet and arrive at the destination. Take the travel calculation and see if that fits within the proposed departure and arrival time. If not the group will need to modify their meeting time or arrival time to make sure everything will fit in comfortably. Once this has been finalized make sure that everyone is aware of the time line involved, and encourage everyone to be early in case there are any unforeseen hiccups.
- viii) Budget – Involve your group to set spending limits and help them see the costs that are involved. These numbers are going to be crucial when it comes to grocery shopping, reservations, or purchasing trip supplies.
- b) Risk Management Plan – **HANDOUT**
- i) Having a well thought out Risk Management plan is another important part of your trip preparation. Look at professional organizations that specialize in working with kids (4-H, American Camping Association, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, etc.) and see what their standards are. Taking the time to create a good Risk Management Plan can help bring up important safety issues that may have been overlooked, possibly prevent an unnecessary accident or injury, and help reduce the liability for all those involved. This is another very important step!

- 1) Activities – Look at what the group will be doing, what is needed for the activity, where the event is happening, who is going to be in charge, what is their experience, is there enough help, and is it appropriate for the group.
- 2) Health Care Procedures – Consider who will be in charge of any health or emergency issues, what are they allowed or authorized to do, who has the medications for each person, where is the medication being kept, are the first aid kits full, clean, and updated, and do the appropriate people know about any special needs of the participants.
- 3) Food – Who is going to be in charge of the kitchen area, do they have a Food handler’s card, what are your dish washing procedures, where will the food be stored, what are the food preparation procedures (raw meat, eggs, etc.), what is being cooked and when, and general safety in the kitchen.
- 4) Paperwork – Make sure the Risk management plan is done, complete any Insurance paperwork that is required, double check that all the necessary forms are completed, accurate, and legible.
 - a) History and Medical Forms – **HANDOUT**
- 5) Transportation Guidelines – Include the safety policies and procedures for your agency, confirm all drivers have valid WA drivers license & insurance, all drivers are enrolled 4-H volunteers and at least 18 years old, coordinate a fire extinguisher and first aid kit in each vehicle, make sure there will be proof of minimum insurance with each vehicle. It is also perfectly reasonable to ask all drivers to make sure that their vehicle and trailer is current on its regular maintenance as suggested by the manufacturer.
- 6) Supervision - Include a brief description of the experience and training that any supervisor has or will receive, and address all adults need to be approved 4-H volunteers that have successfully completed the county volunteer application process.
- 7) Rules and Guidelines – Include the Guidelines and Norms that your group has agreed to.
- 8) Trips & Travel – Describe the communication plan and trip plan for the group. Include information about the route, emergency contact numbers, and time line.
- 9) Emergency Response - Address what to about missing participants, First response actions, Fire or weather related/natural disasters, Local medical facilities phone number and address posted, Hospital emergency plan, and Notification of families.
- 10) Crisis Management – In the event of a major issue you can outline who will handle a media response, Protocol for major incidents, serious injury or death, and who will fill out the appropriate paperwork, take Witness statements: get written description of “what, where, who and when” by witnesses ASAP
 - (i) Accident/Incident Report Form – **HANDOUT**

- 11) Equipment Selection and Maintenance – make sure that everyone double check any equipment that they are providing, and it is suggested one person is identified as a double check to make sure that everything has been looked over.
- a) All Equipment should be in safe operating condition and free of any excessive wear and tear.
 - b) Communication Devices
 - (i) Radios and walkie-talkies - can be very helpful when trying to coordinate a group of riders, or even talk between vehicles when en route.
 - (ii) Cell phones - most likely will not work in the National Forest or other remote areas, and cannot be relied on for consistent communication.
 - (iii) Satellite Phones – are a great option for emergencies, and can be rented so the club does not have to buy one.
 - 1. [Day Wireless](http://www.daywireless.com/) – (<http://www.daywireless.com/>) has multiple locations around Washington for renting Satellite phones.
 - c) Liability – By doing your due diligence, and acting within your training and experience, you should be able to help limit your own liability. The unfortunate truth is that accidents do happen, and anyone can sue at anytime for anything. Do your homework and make sure you have done everything possible to assure the safety of your group.
 - d) Back Up - Identify nearby horse camps and those in route to your destination. If something happens on the way down, it is important to know where you can go with the group for emergency stabling, vet care, auto repair, or medical services. If your destination is full, or not an appropriate place for your group you need to know where else to go from there.

5) Trip Time

- a) Atmosphere – There is most likely going to be some nervousness, apprehension, excitement, and sorts of other emotions floating around. Try to keep the group on track, but not stressed out. If things are not going exactly as planned it is ok. It is better to get to your destination relaxed and in one piece, than on time and stressed or overly anxious.
- b) Final Steps – Either day before or morning of the trip there are a few items to double check. If there are any issues with the weather, fire danger, road construction, or start looking at the groups second and third choice options. Depending on the severity of the issues you will need to decide if the group can afford to lose any reservation money if plans change, or just stick to the original plan.
 - i) Weather – Check the weather forecast for your first choice area, and make sure the weather is still suitable. [NOAA \(http://noaa.org/\)](http://noaa.org/)
 - ii) Fire - Check the current fire restrictions and forest fire dangers.
 - iii) Road Construction – Make sure there are no major issues on the route that has been selected.
 - iv) Campground and Trail – Contact the campground to confirm reservations if applicable, make sure the campground is open and safe, find out if there are any trail closures or hazards, and double check with the forest service regarding driving issues in their jurisdiction.
 - v) Backup – If there are any problems with the first choice than repeat the same process for your other options. If everything is still looking for the first choice, than just be familiar with your back up plan.
 - vi) Final Meeting – When all the participants arrive have a final meeting outlining the plan, and announcing any last minute changes. If there are major changes than get the groups input on deciding what to do.
- c) Packing – Each person should be responsible for making sure that have all the items on the Packing Lists, but it may be a good idea to have a designated person that will double check to make sure nothing has been forgotten. Don't be afraid to use check off lists to make sure nothing gets left behind!
- d) Traveling – Once everything is packed and horses are loaded it is time to hit the road. Be sure everyone knows where they are going and have a way to communicate between vehicles. Keep the pace comfortable for all drivers, and try not to let anyone fall too far behind.

- 6) On Site** – Practice responsible camping techniques and be aware of other campers. Make sure group members are adhering to group norms, trip guidelines, camp ground rules, and any other policy that may be in effect. Generally, the first day is going to be pretty busy with unpacking, setting up camp, cooking the first meal, and getting the horses settled. You can have everyone be responsible for their own stuff, or have people break into teams to get everything done.
- a) Disinfection – Before unloading the horses you should make sure the horse accommodation are clean and safe. Check to see if any repairs need to be made, or if there is old poop and hay that has to be cleaned up. You can also go through with a bleach solution to help kill any germs that may be present.
 - b) Setting Up
 - i) Horses - One of the priorities is to make sure that the horses are taken care of first. They should have access to clean water and food if the timing is correct. Generally, you will want to keep the halters and lead ropes with the horse, and can hang it from the side of the enclosure if it is not being used to tie the horse. The horse area should be kept clear of clutter and debris. When leading the horses from the horse area they should have a clear path and not have to navigate through tents, chairs, or the kitchen. Watch the horses for a while and make sure they are settling in ok. One way to waste less hay is to use hay bag, or feeding on the ground give them one flake at a time. When they have finished with their first flake then give them another.
 - ii) Kitchen – Pick a suitable place for the kitchen where it will be away from the sleeping tents and horses. Look at the safety and efficiency of how your kitchen is organized.
 - iii) Sleeping Area – Tents should be setup well away from the fire pit, and any driving surfaces. Horses can be pretty busy at night so advise participants, if they are light sleepers, they may want to setup their tent away from the horse area.
 - iv) Garbage – Be sure to setup designated containers for garbage and recycling. If garbage service is available at the campground, try to deposit your garbage regularly to help minimize odor, insects, and animal issues. At night put the garbage into a trailer to keep the animals from making a mess.
 - v) Mucking – The horse area should be kept clean of dirty hay, manure, and urine when possible. Participants should frequently go through and pick up around their horse to help minimize odor and insect problems.
 - c) Leave No Trace

- 7) On the Trail – Stick to the trail unless there is an impassable barrier, or an obstacle that is deemed unsafe. It is amazing the amount of wear that can be caused by just one horse. Most trails do wind through sensitive areas and meandering off the trail can have long term effects on the vegetation.
- a) Hazards – It is hard to list the number and types of hazards that can be encountered on the trail. Every situation can be so unique and all horses are pretty different in what may set them off.
 - i) Common Hazards – It is fairly common to run into steep hills, logs, mud, running water, standing water, rocky terrain, narrow trails, road crossings, etc. on the trail. Know the horses and try to approach each obstacle safely and slowly. Do not rush!
 - ii) Wild Animals – Be sure everyone is aware of what to do if you encounter a wild animal. It is really important that all group members stay calm and aware if such a situation were to come up. Every situation is so different it is hard to have an actual plan for each, but more effective if you have calm and confident riders that can read the scenario and act accordingly.
 - iii) Bee Nests – This can be a significant problem because they generally go undetected, and the horses can react very quickly. This is one reason why you always want riders to be aware, holding their reins, and feet in the stirrups.
 - iv) Passing – When approaching anyone on the trail be sure to be courteous and polite. Have your Trail Master or Drag rider announce if there is someone that needs to pass or be passed.
 - 1) Hikers – Ask hikers to step to the low side of the trail, and encourage them to talk, so the horses recognize them as people. Occasionally, when a hiker is wearing a large backpack they are mysteriously transformed into a scary backpack with legs. If a horse is going to shy away from a hiker it is better for them to shy up hill than down. This is especially the case when traversing steep trails.
 - 2) Horses – Generally, the uphill group has the right of way, but there are times that the scenario will call for a different response. Sometime it is a matter of who can safely get off the trail or turn around. Other times it may be an issue of who is the more experienced group. Be aware your group and communication with the other party before leaping into action.
 - 3) Bikes – Bikers can be a problem because most of the time you can't hear them coming. Most bikers are good with horses and will slow down, or stop to let you pass by.
 - 4) ORV – Occasionally you will run into motorcycles, ATVs, or other off road vehicles while on the trails or logging roads. These vehicles are easier to hear coming than bikes, but may approach at a higher rate of speed. Work on getting the group off the trail in case the ORV comes too fast to safely stop, and try to flag them down when they come into view.

- 5) Llamas – Most horses are not too fond of Llamas, and meeting them on the trail can be a potential issue.
- v) Switchbacks – switchbacks have been designed to reduce the amount of erosion from trail use. Do not cut switchbacks as a short cut.
- b) Tying Up – If the group is stopping for lunch and tying the horses it is important that the horses are tied correctly. The horses should be able to have their head hang even with their shoulder, and the rope should be taught to the knot at a point higher up on the tree. Do not tie to a dead tree, or one that is smaller in diameter than 6". Be sure to check the ground for possible dangers including sharp sticks, ant hills, bees nests, or nurse logs. Horses should not be tied to a tree for more than two hours, and depending on the length of stay riders may want to loosen the cinch a little, and remove the bridle. If horses paw they should be hobbled, or hand held so they do not unearth the root system for the tree.
- c) Trail Leadership - On the trail it is best to have a Trail Master and Drag Rider.
 - i) Trail Master – rides in front of the line and helps navigate the trails, sets the pace, and assesses potentially unsafe trail obstacles. The lead rider should have a confident experienced horse that can successfully go over most obstacles. This will help give the following horses more confidence on the trail.
 - ii) Drag rider - rides in the back, and should be the most experienced horse person that can help identify problems before they happen. This is done by constantly watching the line of riders for any activity that could be a hazard or potential danger.
- d) Speed – Be sure to have the group stay at a comfortable pace for everyone in the line. If picking up the pace increase spacing and stay at a rate of speed that is appropriate for all group members. Walk when going up or down hills, when navigating uneven terrain, or poor visibility.

- 8) Packing Up** – The packing process can be efficiently quick or painfully long. Make sure that all participants know what time you have to check out or plan to leave. After all the gear is loaded do a sweep to make sure nothing has been forgotten, and all trash, manure and hay has been removed. Remember to leave the site better than you found it.
- a) Atmosphere – This is the final day and most likely everyone will be a bit tired and possibly sore. It is important that the clean up process is complete and efficient, but should still be fun. The last things the participants will do is packing up, and they should leave on a good note. If for no other reason than having a pleasant ride home!
 - b) Trash – Some facilities may require that you haul out your own trash, so be sure to bring garbage bags that are sturdy enough.
 - c) Manure – Some facilities may require that you haul out the manure, so bring enough bags or containers to hold all of the waste.