

Information Sheet

Parks and forest management

Code of conduct for recreational horse riding on multi-use trails in designated State forests, forest reserves and protected areas

The purpose of this code of conduct is to prescribe standards of conduct applying to recreational horse riding, whether privately or as part of an organised group, on State forests, forest reserves and protected areas. Horse riding on these lands is regulated under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Forestry Act 1959.

Overview

Horse riding may occur on some of Queensland's protected areas, where designated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Horse riding may also occur on areas of State forests and forest reserves under the *Forestry Act 1959*.

In addition, a network of trails has been established throughout areas of former State forests transferred to national park following the South East Queensland Forests Agreement (SEQFA). Specific provision has been made to authorise horse riding on these trails, which are separate from the national park and remain in forest reserve tenure.

To address the potential impacts of horse riding on State forests, forest reserves and protected areas, this code prescribes standards of conduct in relation to the following issues, with a view to eliminating or reducing impacts of the activity:

- soil erosion;
- trampling and grazing impacts;
- the introduction and spread of noxious and exotic plants;
- damage to waterways;
- damage to significant and environmentally sensitive areas;
- disturbance and displacement of flora and fauna;
- damage to cultural sites; and
- conflict with other users.

This code will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains relevant to the management of these areas and that it reflects contemporary scientific knowledge.

What the Code of conduct means

This code provides minimal impact guidelines for recreational horse riding, whether by independent users or participants in organised group or commercial activities, on Queensland's State forests, forest reserves and protected areas. To support the effective management of horse riding, this code will be linked to offence provisions.

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This code does not apply to pulling a carriage with a horse, or to horse riding for stock mustering authorised under a stock mustering permit granted under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NC Act).

Where the code of conduct applies

This code applies to horse riding in Queensland's State forests, forest reserves, national parks (recovery), conservation parks, resources reserves, and along the Bicentennial National Trail where it intersects protected areas.

Standards of conduct for horse riders

Horse riders are to minimise impacts to an area by complying with the following provisions.

- Ride only on formed management roads or areas designated for horse riding. Do not take shortcuts or form new trails.
- Obey notices and signs erected by the chief executive.
- Obtain a permit before conducting a group ride, as per requirements in the EPA operational policy *Horse Riding*.
- Obtain a permit before conducting organised riding events (e.g. competitive rides, special equestrian events or commercial activities), as per requirements in the EPA operational policy *Horse Riding*.
- Do not allow horses to remain in a State forest, forest reserve or protected area overnight other than in designated areas.
- Only allow horses to cross natural watercourses at designated crossing points on the trail, for the protection of watercourses in the area.
- Do not allow horses to enter or remain in or near natural watercourses. Do not wash horses in natural watercourses. Use designated watering points to water horses, where provided.
- Do not mark trees or place any navigational marks or other signs in the area, unless authorised under a permit.
- Ensure horses are under control or securely tethered at all times. Horses must be controlled so that they do not annoy or place another person in danger, or cause damage to the area.
- Remove all litter brought into the area by the rider.

Additional guidance for horse riders

There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that some horse riding activities additional to those described above may impact on the environment. The following guidelines complement the above provisions, and it is recommended that horse riders adopt these guidelines to further minimise their impact on these areas.

- Avoid riding during or immediately after wet weather conditions.
- Avoid spreading weeds. Horse riders should:
 - Provide weed-free, good quality, processed feed to horses at least 48 hours prior to entering a forest reserve or protected area; and
 - Ensure that horses' coats, hooves, equipment and floats are clean and free of seeds before park visits.

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- Tether horses at hitching posts or resting areas only for short periods to minimise local impacts (erosion and compaction of soil or contamination of the site by accumulation of faeces and urine).
- Minimise damage to vegetation. Do not allow horses to graze on any vegetation while in the area.
- Be considerate of other park users.
- Horse riders should select trails that match their ability.
- Report damage or problems to your local Queensland Parks and Wildlife Office. For contact details visit www.epa.qld.gov.au.
- Share these messages with other trail users.

References

Operational Policy – Visitor Management – *Horse Riding*

Operational Policy – Visitor Management – *Group Activity Permits*

Operational Policy – Visitor Management – *Commercial Activities - General Requirements*

Disclaimer

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Approved By

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Signature

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Date

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