Planning and Designing Outdoor Recreation Facilities for Horses

Sunni Bradshaw, Project Assistant

Where does a land manager, architect, or horse advocate go to find information about planning and designing outdoor recreation facilities for horses and their riders? A new guidebook from the Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) gathers helpful information in one comprehensive volume. The “Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads, and Campgrounds” (figure 1) was written for planners, architects, engineers, landscape architects, land managers, equestrian advocates, and private developers who want to create successful outdoor recreation facilities for horses and their riders. The emphasis is on highly developed recreation facilities and programs, such as those in urban, rural, and some wildland areas.

The Recreational Trails Program of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Department of Transportation, funded the guidebook. The authors—Jan Hancock, Kim Jones Vander Hoek, Sunni Bradshaw, James D. Coffman, and Jeffrey Engelmann—worked several years to produce it.

The guidebook provides practical advice for creating or improving recreation facilities and programs that meet the needs of horses and their riders. Hundreds of drawings, tables, photographs, and examples supplement the text (figure 2). Case studies examine large and small projects from around the country. Useful resources, references, and Web site addresses are given in sidebars and compiled in appendixes.

For additional information, contact: Sunni Bradshaw, project assistant; USDA Forest Service, MTDC; 5785 Hwy. 10 West; Missoula, MT 59808–9361. Phone: 406–829–6765; fax: 406–329–3719; e-mail: srbradshaw@fs.fed.us
Table 6–2—Suitability of common surface materials for equestrian trailheads and campgrounds. Specialty materials are not included. Agency specifications may vary. Note: Appropriate surface materials for arenas and round pens depend on the activities they're being used for. Consult other references for more details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface Material</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native soil</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood chips</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crushed rock with fines</td>
<td>X***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crushed rock without fines</td>
<td>XX X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rounded gravel without fines</td>
<td>XX X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinders</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil additives</td>
<td>X X****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt with chip seal</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough-textured concrete</td>
<td>XX X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete with washed surface</td>
<td>XX X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard, traction-friendly pavers</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* To reduce slipping hazards, use rubber mats in wash racks.
** Native soils are quite variable. Consult local geotechnical engineers or soil scientists for more information.
*** The surface must be compacted.
**** Soils treated with additives should not be used for tent pads.
***** Coatings and surface washes may change the characteristics of paved surfaces, including traction and appearance.

Availability

The “Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads, and Campgrounds” is available in print and electronic versions. The electronic versions of the guidebook are available at

* [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/fspubs](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/fspubs)

Files on both Web sites feature

* Full color photos
* One-click access to hundreds of Web references
* Easy online access to the guidebook contents

The sites also have PDF (Acrobat) files that are fully formatted for printing and reading.

A printed black-and-white copy of the “Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads, and Campgrounds” can be ordered from the FHWA’s Recreational Trails Program Web site at


Fill out the order form and fax it to the distributor listed on the form. If you do not have Internet access, send a fax request to 301–577–1421 or mail a request to:

FHWA R&T Report Center
9701 Philadelphia Ct., Unit Q
Lanham, MD 20706

Forest Service and BLM employees may order a printed copy from MTDC.
About the Author

Sunni Bradshaw is a visual information specialist and project assistant at MTDC. She is a graduate of the Rocky Mountain School of Photography and has a bachelor’s degree in recreation program management from the University of Montana. Before joining MTDC, Sunni was a technical writer, photographer, and award-winning journalist. Her work—including articles, photography, layout, and design—has appeared in many local, regional, and national publications.

Library Card


The “Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads, and Campgrounds” (0723–2816–MTDC) provides practical information on planning and designing outdoor recreation facilities for horses and their riders. The guidebook is intended for planners, architects, engineers, landscape architects, land managers, equestrian advocates, and private developers.

Keywords: campgrounds, facilities, Federal Highway Administration, FHWA, horses, mules, planning, recreation, trailheads, trails

For additional information about recreational horse trails and facilities, contact Sunni Bradshaw at MTDC:

Phone: 406–829–6765
Fax: 406–329–3719
E-mail: srbradshaw@fs.fed.us

Electronic copies of MTDC’s documents are available on the Internet at:
http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/t-d.php

Produced by:
USDA Forest Service
Missoula Technology and Development Center
5785 Hwy. 10 West
Missoula, MT 59808
Phone: 406–329–3978
Fax: 406–329–3719
E-mail: wo_mtdc_pubs@fs.fed.us