

Ravalli County 4-H Horse Trail Riding Project Requirements

Purpose:

The Trail Ride Project is designed for 4-H members who want to enroll in a 4-H horse project but are not necessarily interested in show competition. The project will help 4-H members learn trail skills and gain confidence in their riding abilities and their horses. The 4-H member will learn what obstacles they can handle and how to take care of themselves, other riders and their horses on the trail. Safety and trail courtesy are very important, and will be emphasized and judged on the trail and in the camp/trailhead before, during and after the ride.

Leaders:

- Trail Master, the lead rider that no one should pass.
- Drag Rider, the last rider "out" and no one should fall behind.
- Obstacle Judges.

Participation Requirements:

- The horse used in this project may be used in another project, and should be at least four (4) years old.
- First year 4-H Trail Riding members and their project horse must be assessed at either the Spring Horse Clinic and/or the Mandatory Horse Clinic for safety and appropriate fit of saddle and tack.
- If a 4-H member wishes to use two (2) horses for the project, the additional horse must also be assessed.
- The Trail Ride Project is to include four (4) or more rides with two or more people (not necessarily 4-H members) for a total of eight (8) miles on public land leaving from a trailhead on a designated trail. 4-H members are to include a recording of location, terrain, obstacles encountered and how they were overcome, etc.
- All 4-H members are required, regardless of their experience level, to participate in a minimum of two (2) 4-H Horse Council-sponsored trail rides in order to participate in the Fair Trail Project Ride. If riding two (2) animals, you must attend two (2) trail rides with each project animal.
- The 4-H member should learn about the training and conditioning of a trail horse as well.
- In order to receive a ribbon rating or be eligible for other Trail Ride Project awards, the 4-H member must complete all required rides before the Fair Trail Ride.
- An Assessment Sheet must be turned in with the completed assessments done to date, and signed by their Horse Project Leader. If the 4-H member does not have a Horse Project Leader, then contact the Horse Superintendent.
- Use the 4-H Horse Packing Manual as a reference regarding equipment, feeding, health and safety.
- Forest Service rules must be observed and obeyed.
- No Clover Buds, siblings, non 4-H friends. Must be enrolled in 4-H Horse Project to participate.
- Parents can accompany their kids on the 4-H trail ride for safety reasons after becoming certified leaders with Ravalli County Extension Office.

Type of Horse:

- Gentle 4-year-old or older saddle horse of any size and type suited to the member.
- Stallions cannot be used.
- **Horses with tendency to kick need a red or orange ribbon in their tail.**

Equipment:

- Members may ride in either English or Western saddle.
- An ASTM/SEI approved helmet for Level 1-3.
- Blunt spurs are permitted, but not required.
- Adequate padding is required under saddle.
- Horse should be clean, in good condition, and have well-maintained hooves.
- Please see Montana State Horse Project Bit Rule Examples for allowed bits and reins.
- Halter with a 10-12 foot, at least ½ inch thick lead rope, in good condition, is required to be worn under bridle, lead rope tied to saddle horn.
- Either a leather curb strap or flat metal curb chain is mandatory on shank bits.
- Tie-downs, martingales, draw reins are not allowed.
- Crops are allowed.
- All equipment should be clean and in good repair. Special attention should be given latigos, cinches, stirrup leathers, and all bridle parts.
- All equipment should be properly fitted to the horse and rider.
- Dress Code: For monthly trail rides, comfortable clothing may be worn to include Western or English boots, helmet, t-shirts and should also include a sweatshirt/jacket, long sleeve shirt, hat and rain gear appropriate for terrain and weather. This will be at the discretion of the leaders organizing the trail ride. On the day of the Fair Trail Ride, members must wear a western long sleeve shirt, western black clean jeans, boots and helmet. If riding English, proper English attire should be worn. Refer to the Ravalli County 4-H Horse Project Guidelines.
- Rain gear **must** be carried or worn.
- Chaps (working – not “show” chaps) will protect legs, shed water, and provide warmth.
- Gloves.
- Saddlebags.
- Breast collar.
- Crupper, if needed.
- Bell boots and splint boots, if needed.
- Canteen or water bottle.
- Compass.
- Watch.
- Hoof pick.
- Knife, adequate to cut a rope if necessary.
- First aid kits for horse and rider.
- Map of route.
- Snack for rider.
- Snack for horse.
- Any equipment that the rider starts with must be maintained by that rider during the course of the ride.

Safety Kits should include the following (suggestions):

Human

- Human pain killer (Ibuprofen, Tylenol).
- Water proof container or Zip Lock Bag.
- Band-Aids, assorted sizes.
- 1 roll adhesive tape (1” minimum width)
- Triple Antibiotic Ointment. Exp? _____
- Instant cold compress.
- Hydrocortisone ointment.
- Scissors (capable of cutting bandage)
- Insect repellent.
- Sunscreen.

Equine

- Equine pain killer (phenylbutazone tabs or paste).
- Vet wrap or Coban Self-Adherent wrap.
- Duct tape.
- Hoof boot.
- 1 roll Gauze (2” min. width).
- 2 Flexible Stretch Adhesive/Cohesive Bandages
- 4” Sterile Wound Dressing.
- Blanket (space blanket).
- Pliers or nippers (to pull nails on shoe).
- Tweezers.

- Antihistamine (Benadryl).
- Extra Medical Arm Band with blank USPC Medical Card
- 3 pair Synthetic Protective gloves
- Flashlight with extra batteries.
- Sewing kit.
- Insect repellent
- Antiseptic/antibacterial/antimicrobial scrub.
- Absorbent Compress Dressings (Disposable Diapers).
- Digital Thermometer
- Petroleum Jelly

Things to Remember at Trail Head:

- Clean up manure.
- Proper parking: Park so you can get out and allow other trailers to park.
- Keep calm.
- Do not block stock ramps, hitching rails, water troughs, etc.
- Never move out until all riders are mounted and ready.
- If you need to warm horse up, warm up in a safe area away from other members and horses.

Trail Courtesy to be Observed:

- Wait for person at obstacle or when requested by another.
- Do not allow branches to snap back at other riders, etc.
- Warn other riders behind you of potential dangers/obstacles on the trail by saying something like wire ahead, holes ahead, hikers ahead, bicycles ahead, etc.
- Do not ride too close to the horse in front of you or lag too far behind. 4-H members shall maintain a space of at least one horse length at a walk and increase the distance between horses as the pace increases. If lagging behind, request group to wait so you can catch up. The group will then stop and wait. No trotting to catch up.
- If you must adjust equipment, take a photo, water your horse, etc., notify the group before riding out of line so the group can stop and wait for you.
- If you need to pass another rider, wait for a safe place to pass and let others know what you intend to do. You may walk by quietly and courteously.
- Riders will use the buddy system on the trail, never leaving an inexperienced rider or horse alone.
- Walk up hills, down hills, on hard surfaces, when vehicles are present, and where footing is uncertain (mud, rocks, roots, holes, etc.). No trotting or loping on the trail. When footing is soft and level a trot (jog) or slow canter (lope) is acceptable as long as the whole group is in agreement and will also be at the discretion of the leaders.
- Do not cut across switchbacks.
- Be courteous to other trail users.

Judged (Fair) Trail Ride:

- Members must ride through an obstacle course on a planned trail ride.
- Members must turn in an assessment sheet with all completed assessments done to date, and signed by a horse leader at the Fair Trail Ride. If not completed and turned in, then points will be deducted.
- Member is judged on the horse's manner and ability, and member's ability to aid his horse through the obstacles.
- The horse and rider shall be judged as a "team" when negotiating obstacles. The "team" will be observed and scored according to criteria such as refusing or skipping obstacle, riding off course, maintaining unsafe distance between hoses, rushing through obstacles, traveling at unsafe speed, leading horse through an obstacle (such as over a bridge or logs) or taking feet out of stirrups or irons.

- Trailhead manners and attention to the well-being of horses will also be judged.
- Judging will start at the beginning of the orientation session and will be completed after final judging.
- Each rider will receive a map with designated obstacles at check-in. Riders will ride to the obstacles located along the trail.
- Exhibitor numbers will be assigned. This number is to be worn at all times on the day of the Fair Trail Ride. Riders not wearing a number, or wearing a number that is not visible, cannot be scored.

Faults of Horse and Rider:

- Bouncing in saddle.
- Heavy handedness.
- Jerking horses head.
- Excessive spurring.
- Toe is often lower than heel.
- Following too close to horse in front of you.
- Failure to properly execute any of the required movements.
- Not sitting in saddle correctly.

Obstacles Which May Be Included for Judging:

The type of obstacles and degree of difficulty will differ with the level of horsemanship in which the member is enrolled. All members may be required to do the following:

- Lead horse from ground.
- Mount and dismount correctly.
- Tie horse correctly.
- Go between two trees with low branches.
- Ride through heavy timber.
- Pass through a camp site.
- Ride single file in a group.
- Follow trail markers.
- Pass a motorcycle or mountain bike.
- Pass another animal (llama, mule, donkey, etc.).
- Pass a horse or hiker with packs.
- Cross a bridge.
- Cross a creek.
- Go over logs.
- Go through brush.
- Open & close a gate while dismounted.
- Ride along road.
- Climb hill.
- Descend hill.
- Cross a very rocky area.
- Put on/take off slicker.
- Water crossing.

Members in Trail Riding Project Level II and higher may be asked to do the following:

- Mount & dismount from either side of horse. The side you use will depend upon the terrain. You should use the uphill side to dismount in steep country, depending on the footing. If it is slippery, it may be safer to dismount on the downhill side.
- Tie a trail marker.

- Climb a steep hill or bank.
- Descend a steep hill or bank.
- Open & close a gate while mounted.
- Lead another horse while mounted.
- Back your horse out of a tight spot.
- Lead your horse on a narrow trail.
- Use a saw.
- Turn 180 degrees on a narrow trail.

Trail Markers:

Trail markers will be placed along the trail. These will be in plain sight and easily visible. The turns will be well marked. Sometimes markers will appear on both sides of the trail, indicating that you will be going both ways on that section of the trail. Trail marker positions will be clarified at the pre-ride meeting.

Sample Day of Judged Trail Ride:

1. At each obstacle, a 4-H Trail Project Ride Judge will mark a score sheet with a score at the completed obstacle. The lowest scores will determine the winner.
2. Participants will space out and wait at markers so individuals pass through the obstacle individually.
3. Riders will return to check-in, cool horse down and unsaddle.
4. Riders with identical scores may be asked to return to the check-in to perform a horse-related task or answer trail-related questions. These tasks and questions will be age appropriate.

Possible tasks could include:

- Walking and turning horse
 - Cleaning feet
 - Applying fly repellent
 - Tying horse
 - Saddling horse
 - Grooming horse
 - Mounting horse
5. Based on their score, participants will receive blue, red or white placing. Champion and Reserve Champion awards will be determined in Junior and Senior age groups.
 6. An example of what the Fair Trail Ride Schedule may look like:
 - 9:00 a.m. Trail Judges will meet at a designated place and receive instructions and score sheets. Trail Judges will go to their obstacles around 9:30 a.m.
 - 9:30 a.m. Members will meet at a designated area without their animals to receive marked maps and materials.
 - 10:00 a.m. Members will meet with the group in the designated area with their animals and hit the trail with the group.
 - 12:00 noon, riders must be checked back in at trail head.
 - At 12:30 pm, Judge's will return to the trail head.
 - 1:00 p.m. A carry in lunch will be served. All participants and their families as well as all other 4-H Horse members and parents are invited.
 - At 1:30 p.m., Recognition of Trail Ride Project members and completion.