



THE BACKCOUNTRY HORSEMEN OF CALIFORNIA

Gentle Use **TIPS AND TECHNIQUES**

“GENTLE USERS PLAN AND PREPARE”

- Know Before You Go! Do your homework on regulations pertaining to camping, campfires, grazing, bears, trails and terrain. Obtain maps and information on the area.
- Plan your menus, check tack and gear, and be prepared for emergencies.
- Condition your stock. Familiarize them with crossing bridges, logs, water, and rocky areas.

“GENTLE ON THE TRAIL”

- Take it easy on the trail! Remove deadfalls whenever possible to avoid creating a new trail.
- Avoid cutting switchbacks. This will help to prevent erosion and costly repairs.
- Keep stock travelling single file to avoid creating multiple trails.

“GENTLE USE OF CAMPSITES”

- Select campsites on firm, dry ground. Use existing sites whenever possible. Camp at least 100 feet from lakes and streams, where terrain permits.
- Use a stove for cooking to be less reliant on fires. Where campfires are allowed, use only dead and down wood, if available. Use an existing fire ring, particularly in high use areas.
- Naturalize your site before leaving by spreading pine needles and twigs. Scatter manure and fill in any holes that may have been created by your stock.

“GENTLE WITH WASTE MANAGEMENT”

- If you pack it in – pack it out! This includes leftover food scraps and unburned items from your campfire, such as foil, plastic and glass.
- Washing dishes, clothes, or yourself should be done at least 100 feet from any water source.
- Use “cat holes” that are 6-8 inches deep to dispose of human waste. Waste should be buried at least 100 feet from water and well away from camp.

“GENTLE STOCK MANAGEMENT”

- Ensure your stock are well prepared for backcountry challenges. Conditioning them beforehand can help prevent colic, lameness, and other illnesses.
- Have your stock accustomed to crossing bridges, logs, rocky areas and streams. These are common to backcountry travel.
- Be prepared to use highlines, hobbles, pickets, electric fences, or loose grazing. Pack supplemental feed, if needed. Practice before you go!

“GENTLE WITH PLANTS AND ANIMALS”

- Properly store your food from bears and other wildlife.
- Avoid trampling fragile vegetation in and around your campsite.

“GENTLE WITH OTHER USERS”

- Treat others with respect and common courtesy.
- Keep noise to a minimum. Use colors for equipment and clothing that blend into the surrounding.
- Be of assistance when a need arises.