

Next Steps - to the *BC Equestrian Trail User Study*

The Joint Trails and Access Committee (JTAC) has produced “Moving Forward: BC Equestrian Trail User Study” as a result of a survey done in 2012, which received 725 responses from across the province. JTAC is a committee of representatives of Horse Council BC, Back Country Horsemen of BC and others with trail management experience.

The study identifies key issues around equestrian trail use and profiles who is using the trails, when and how they are being used. There is a wide diversity of equestrian trail users. Some ride for health benefits, others for recreation, and many as training for competitive disciplines. There is a strong link between trail use and tourism, with almost half combining trail activity with travel and overnight stays with their horses. Respondents called for a number of enhancements to the trail systems, with the number one priority: to get equestrian use as a designated activity in BC Parks and other existing trail systems. Many other issues are identified in the survey.

All this is valuable information for land managers, trail designers, tourism officials and trail users. It will be especially useful for those not familiar with equestrian needs for safe trail use on equestrian and shared trails.

Next Steps is a working document to help JTAC and others set goals based on evidence provided by the Trail User Study. It also identifies strategies and accomplishments already achieved. But the most useful are the recommendations put forward for action. When these are completed we will truly have taken that “next step!”

To complete the “Next Steps” recommendations will take the co-operation of all stakeholders, not just the Joint Trails and Access Committee. BC is a huge and diverse province and each region has its own specific needs and challenges that require local input and knowledge. With this document, JTAC would like to encourage all stakeholders: government officials, private land owners and individual citizens to respond to the needs identified and participate in getting the tasks done. Many hands make light work!

If you are able to assist, have ideas to share or questions, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in the “NEXT STEPS”.

Yours truly,

rose

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Chair, Joint Trails and Access Committee

BC Equestrian Trail User Study 2012

NEXT STEPS

A Working Document produced by the Joint Trail and Access Committee

RECOGNITION AND GROWTH

PRIORITY	STRATEGY	STATUS/ACCOMPLISHMENT	NEXT STEPS	JTAC TARGETS
<p>Designate equestrian activity as a recognized use on existing trails</p> <p>(82% of survey respondents list as their #1 priority)</p>	<p>Share the Study Report showing results of the Survey with “public land” managers including Parks , area supervisors, and regional districts (Federal/Provincial/Municipal)</p> <p>Promote benefits to local tourism resulting from travelling equestrians</p> <p>Follow up with above to offer support and encouragement to address issues and set goals</p> <p>Create a database of successful examples and stories that demonstrate equestrians working with land managers and agencies to recognize equestrian activities on trails</p>	<p><i>“Moving Forward” BC Equestrian Trail User Study</i> published Jan.14, 2013.</p> <p>Report posted on Horse Council, BCHBC, & BCCTRA Websites.</p> <p>Hard copies mailed out to BCHC Directors & BCHBC Chairs.</p> <p>Horse Council has provided a listing of municipalities and regions.</p> <p>Successful shared trail initiatives exist (Okanagan, Skimikin, Taber/Barriere, Sayward, Manning)</p> <p>Article highlighting Survey findings published in Saddle Up, Northwest Horsemen, Island Farm & Garden (N. Vaugeois).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify key land managers in each of the regions identified by BCHC 2. Identify equestrians within each region to conduct follow-up and to be available as resources 3. Distribute Study Report with a cover letter to regional district, BC Parks, etc. 4. Promote designation of trails at the local level, encourage champions and ask how JTAC can provide support 5. Create a booklet of case studies of shared trail initiatives 6. Develop a “how-to”-handbook for Trail Development for Section 56/67 trails & the BC Parks Volunteer Program 	<p>JTAC to review area listings and, with help of their members, identify key land managers in each region. (April 27)</p> <p>JTAC to identify “champions” to follow-up with land managers. (April 27)</p> <p>HCBC to print and mail out a hard copy to each of the key land managers identified. (May)</p> <p>In addition, email PDF of report where possible to increase distribution.</p> <p>Champions follow-up with their area land managers to ensure Report received and to offer support and assistance moving forward (May -Sept)</p>

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<p>Enhance access to private lands (Identified as high priority by 69%of respondents)</p>	<p>Build partnerships with cross-country ski courses, ranches, and others private land owners to increase access</p> <p>Promote success of equestrian tourism and benefits to private land owners</p> <p>Identify funding that may be applied to for trail improvements on private land when owners provide access for equestrian use</p> <p>Encourage and assist with dialogue and communication between user groups and landowners</p>	<p>Examples exist: 108 Mile, Larch Hills, Crystal Mountain, China Ridge (Princeton)</p> <p>Conflict Resolution Workshop (Outdoor Rec. Council, Fall 2010)</p> <p>Risk Management/Liability Workshop (Outdoor Rec. Council 2012)</p> <p>Share the Trails Workshop (HCBC Jan 2013)</p> <p>HCBC has a listing of horse camping sites</p> <p>BCCTRA has history and contacts with private land owners.</p> <p>Articles highlighting Survey findings have been published in Saddle Up, Northwest Horsemen, Island Farm & Garden (author N. Vaugeois).</p>	<p>7. Inventory private ski courses and review for suitability of equestrian use and possible partnerships</p> <p>8. Highlight benefits and successes through articles in tourism and local media venues (to be seen by a broader audience, beyond equestrians)</p> <p>9. Identify funding sources and sample agreements that can be applied to private land improvements</p> <p>10. Write articles for local area newsletters.</p> <p>11. Ask those who have completed projects with grant money to write up a highlight for local paper or regional district newsletter.</p> <p>12. Participate at workshops on shared trails to increase dialogue</p>	<p>Produce an inventory of ski resorts as potential partnering for equine trails</p> <p>Ask 108/Larch Hills to be available to other resorts interested in expanding</p> <p>BCHBC to contact potential resort partners in their areas and encourage posting on HCBC trails website</p> <p>Submit articles on Survey Results for “non-horsey” magazines such as Beautiful BC Magazine</p> <p>Collect samples of agreements with private land owners (example. follow up with Rod Bealing re Taper)</p> <p>Participate at Outdoor Rec. Council Trail Workshop (Jun 21, 2013)</p> <p>Participate at Fall Trail Workshop hosted by BC Universities</p> <p>Participate at Mt Bike Tourism Symposium.(May 6, Sooke)</p>

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<p>Develop trail systems in rural & remote areas</p> <p>(Ranked as a priority by 68% of respondents)</p>	<p>Create a database of funding sources available for trail development</p> <p>Work with Parks and Recreation to identify potential new trail systems</p> <p>Work with Regional Tourism Associations to promote equestrian use of trails for tourism activities</p> <p>Encourage use of employment skill development projects for trail development</p> <p>Promote individual or Club/Group involvement at the local level</p>	<p>Example: The North Thompson Trails Guide” was developed by the Back Country Horsemen with funds provided by Western Economic Diversification Canada</p> <p>Staffing for mapping and GPS activities was coordinated by local employment centre</p> <p>Successes: Salmon/Brewster, Prince George, Manning Park</p> <p>Friends of Manning Park Volunteer Safety Plan</p> <p>BCHBC has developed a model for a safety plan</p> <p>Horse Council’s Strategic Plan includes developing a handbook for Trail Development</p>	<p>13. Create a resource listing of funding sources, distribute to equestrian groups</p> <p>14. JTAC to identify potential contacts to act as resources for trail opportunities in remote, rural areas</p> <p>15. Collect and make available sample templates of MOU’s, agreements with land managers</p> <p>16. Provide checklists to be used when developing projects and maintaining trails</p> <p>17. Develop a how-to-handbook for Trail Development for Section 56/67 & the BC Parks Volunteer Program</p> <p>18. Gather samples of booklets that designate trail use for equestrians to share with other</p> <p>19. Promote designation of trails for equestrian use in trail guides</p>	<p>Develop an article on funding sources for Saddle up (Rose S.)</p> <p>Review BCHBC safety plan for any required updates after April 1 BC Parks (Rose S. & Ybo P.)</p> <p>Compile a sampling of agreements and share with JTAC members & distribute through BCHBC Chapters</p> <p>Share BCHBC’s sample Volunteer Safety Plan with other trail maintenance groups</p> <p>Include sample checklist for what needs to be in place on a project.</p> <p>Develop a list of Regional Tourism Associations as contacts</p> <p>Write to regional tourism associations to share report findings and offer to provide local contacts for support</p>

KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION

PRIORITY	STRATEGY	STATUS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS	NEXT STEPS	JTAC TARGETS
<p>Develop more information on location and access to trails</p> <p>(Ranked as #2 priority overall with 71% of respondents rated as a high priority, with 45% saying they were dissatisfied with information available on trails in their area)</p> <p>Develop downloadable maps & GPS</p> <p>(Identified as a priority by 63% of respondents)</p>	<p>Make existing information on existing trails more available</p> <p>Promote availability of current trail location resources such as the HCBC database, BC Backroad Maps and other trail location resources</p> <p>Increase the number of trails and expand information available on trails currently in the Trails database on BCHC's website</p> <p>Provide links to the database from other equestrian and trail user websites</p> <p>Provide maps and GPS information to inform about location & access points to trails</p>	<p>TOTA example of promoting trails as accessible for equestrian use</p> <p>Core database of equestrian trails exists on the HCBC website</p> <p>Registered Section 56 trail are included in the BC Backroad Maps Book</p> <p>Basic instructions on how to use a GPS is available on BCHBC and BCCTRA websites</p>	<p>20. Ask regional districts & municipalities to include equestrian trails on their brochures and websites showing trails</p> <p>21. Partner with regional tourism associations to develop trail guides for visitors, identifying equestrian trails</p> <p>22. Scope out options to include GPS info on trails directory in the Horse Council website</p> <p>23. Set goals and identify resources for mapping specific "in demand" trails</p> <p>24. Highlight equestrian trails on the BC Parks volunteer webpage</p> <p>25. Add to the trail database on Horse Council's website</p> <p>26. Create an inventory of supporting resources such as bed and bales/ camping sites. Explore how others such as diving groups have communicated</p>	<p>Develop a targeted cover letter for regional districts and municipalities for mailing out with Study Report</p> <p>Develop a targeted cover letter for tourism associations (NV)</p> <p>Follow up on available sources for GPS data that may be entered - without having to collect first-hand (BCCTRA, BCHBC, and others)</p> <p>Explore using a student project to collect and enter GPS info into HCBC's database (Fall 2013)</p> <p>Encourage JTAC organization members to write trails stories for the BC Parks Volunteer webpage (ongoing)</p> <p>Notify BC Parks of any incorrect trail info (ongoing)</p> <p>Ask JTAC memberships to identify trails on public lands that need adding to the database (Summer 2013)</p> <p>Identify equestrian supports and make available on HCBC website</p>

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<p>Educate all users, both equestrians and non-equestrians on “how to” share trails</p> <p>(Ranked as #4 overall priority, While a high level of satisfaction with the etiquette of other equestrians, there was less satisfaction with others understanding how to interact and share the trail with equines. 68% identified a priority to increase education in this area)</p> <p>Promote trail sharing etiquette by all</p>	<p>Use magazine articles to promote trail etiquette and trail sharing</p> <p>Submit articles on “sharing trails with equines” to non-equestrian trail magazines and newsletters</p> <p>Meet with other trail user groups to increase understanding of each other’s needs and increase respect across the user groups</p> <p>Connect with other local trailuser groups, including motorized, to work on common events promotions & share the trail resources.</p>	<p>HCBC has a handout available “Road Safety”</p> <p>BCHBC and HCBC have created a “Sharing the Trail” video that is viewable online</p> <p>Recent workshop on “Sharing the Trails” hosted by Horse Council gathered representatives from wide variety of trail users to increase dialogue</p>	<p>27. Use magazines like Saddle Up and Pacific & Prairie Horse Journal to highlight “best practices” for trail sharing</p> <p>28. Create a downloadable collection of “trail safety”, “trail etiquette” articles & promote availability of existing handouts and videos</p> <p>29. Provide Etiquette Guidelines for meeting horses/mules on the trail. Put on motorized and non-motorized websites</p> <p>30. Promote Horse Week event as a multi user event – get the public involved</p> <p>31. Set up meetings and communication across user groups at the local level</p> <p>32. Use events such as International Trails Day, Horse Week, VISTA Ride, and other multi-user trail events to promote understanding and mutual respect</p>	<p>Writing of articles is ongoing. JTAC members to encourage writers from their memberships (on-going)</p> <p>Create a spot for posting downloadable articles on BCHC website and provide link to others (Mel)</p> <p>Get “Share the Trail” Rack Cards out to Tourism Centres & keep ICBC offices, community police offices, riding clubs stocked (HCBC)</p> <p>Create a sign: “Caution Horse Event in Process” that can be used for horse events and traffic control (HCBC, sell through office)</p> <p>JTAC memberships to identify events that can be named to promote Horse Week (May)</p> <p>Participate at ORC Trail Workshop (RS, Jun 21, 2013)</p> <p>Participate at Fall Trail Workshop hosted by VIU, TRU, and UNBC (NV/RS/Mel/YP, Oct)</p> <p>Participate at Mountain Bike Symposium (YP, May 2013)</p>

KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION

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<p>Provide education on trail riding (43% were dissatisfied with educational opportunities)</p>	<p>Provide information on skills required (for both horse and rider)</p> <p>Continue HCBC and BCHBC funds for educational events</p> <p>Promote educational activities using HCBC's activity calendar</p> <p>Promote trail riding education through the use of the CHA Trail Rider Program</p> <p>Promote EC's Trail Rider and Guide Cert Program when available</p> <p>Use group rides and pleasure rides to emphasize trail education</p>	<p>BCHBC has a four level trail riding education program in place based on the Certified Horsemanship Association's Trail Rider Program (CHA)</p> <p>BCCTRA has a conditioning and training program for horses and riders,</p> <p>On the ERABC website, there are numerous articles and links on conditioning, training, and trail etiquette.</p> <p>Member organizations all promote trail riding education</p> <p>HCBC has a recently developed handout on "Trail Riding" with basic information</p> <p>HCBC has a "calendar of educational events" on its website</p> <p>Year two of BCHBC series of educational workshops open to all hosted on lower mainland</p>	<p>33. Make the CHA trail riding program outline available for downloading</p> <p>34. Encourage memberships to submit educational events for entry on HCBC calendar</p>	<p>Post CHA skill listings on BCHBC website and provide link to HCBC</p> <p>Provide the entry form for HCBC's Events Calendar on other websites for downloading</p> <p>Promote trail riding education at the BCHBC Rendezvous</p> <p>Promote trail riding skills at BCCTRA pleasure rides.</p>

INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPROVEMENTS

PRIORITY	STRATEGY	STATUS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS	NEXT STEPS	JTAC TARGETS
<i>Getting to the Trail....</i>				
<p>Provide pull-offs and rest areas for those traveling with equines</p> <p>(50% of respondents were dissatisfied with services while traveling to trailheads including the lack of highway pull outs, rest stops and accommodations)</p>	<p>Notify Min. of Transportation of this priority identified in survey</p> <p>Provide local and provincial governments with examples of good roadside services</p>	<p>Samples exist from which we can draw (Oregon State)</p>	<p>35. Provide Min. of Transportation with Study Report with emphasis on this infrastructure priorities identified by respondents</p> <p>36. Provide local tourism offices with results and work with them to identify areas where services that meet needs and areas which could be improved</p> <p>37. Develop a portfolio of examples of good roadside services including rest stops, access points, and pull-offs suitable for traveling with equines</p> <p>38. Identify and share stories of good services, identifying these for equestrians (include in travel brochures, Saddle Up articles, etc.</p>	<p>Develop a cover letter targeted to Min. of Transportation (HCBC) for distribution with Study Report</p> <p>Include gaps noted in cover letter sent to tourism offices.</p> <p>Collect examples of good roadside services using videos and photos</p> <p>Highlight service areas that provide good pull-offs/rest areas when traveling in BC and write article for Saddle Up</p>

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<i>At the Trailhead...</i>				
<p>Improve parking and turnarounds at trailheads</p> <p>(49% were dissatisfied with infrastructure at the trailhead)</p>	<p>Review priority areas in need of improvement</p> <p>Encourage the use of Trail Standards for good trailhead layouts</p>	<p>We have good examples: Manning Park, Sayward Brewster, Glenora Trailhead, Cobble Hill Recreational Area, and other success stories</p> <p>We have design references available that have successfully used by land managers/local governments to update trails and trailheads</p>	<p>39. Identify trailheads needing improvements that already have permission of the land manager (low lying fruit)</p> <p>40. Share Trail Standards with local land managers using recognized documents</p>	<p>Review and document HCBC and BCHBC funding submissions and identify those that improved parking or other improvement to trailhead</p> <p>Provide downloadable copy of the <i>Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads, and Campgrounds & BC Parks Standards</i> on HCBC website</p>
<p>Provide facilities such as water and manure stations</p> <p>(Identified as a needed improvement)</p>	<p>Review priority areas that would benefit from further added improvements such as water & manure stations</p>	<p>We have samples of good design and success stories available</p>	<p>41. Identify specific trailheads that would benefit from improvements for water and manure stations.</p>	<p>Develop a description of the benefits of adding water & manure stations so this can be shared with land owners</p>
<p>Improve signage at trailheads</p> <p>(Identified as required infrastructure for trailheads)</p>	<p>Promote standards of good signage for trailheads</p> <p>In areas of multi-use trails, use signage that encourages proper etiquette and trail sharing</p>	<p>Designs have been developed and we have samples available</p>	<p>42. Review signage options with land managers & promote availability of designs</p> <p>43. Find funds to pay for signage</p>	<p>Post samples that can be downloaded so they can be shared with land managers</p> <p>Recognize signage cost as a priority for funding approval criteria</p>
<p>Increase horse camping facilities (45.9% combine trail riding with overnights stays)</p>	<p>Define needs and set priorities</p>	<p>We have samples of good designs</p>	<p>44. Work with local equestrian groups and land managers to identify priority areas</p>	<p>Note priority need in the cover letters to tourism organization (HCBC)</p>

INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPROVEMENTS

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<i>On the Trail...</i>				
<p>Provide and improve signage on the trail</p> <p>(Identified both as required infrastructure and to provide recognition of equestrian use as a designated activity)</p>	<p>Provide samples of signage (both multi-user and sole equestrian-use)</p> <p>Share success stories</p>	<p>HCBC has a good collection of designs and samples</p>	<p>45. Promote availability of designs</p> <p>46. Promote funding sources available to pay for signage</p> <p>47. Develop a portfolio of good examples of signage for on the trail</p> <p>48. Promote the use of good design for signage across jurisdictions</p>	<p>Post downloadable copies on website (HCBC)</p> <p>Email link out to JTAC memberships for distribution so they can be shared at the local level</p> <p>Create a list of potential funding sources (RS/Mel/NV)</p>
<p>Improve footing & bridges for greater safety on existing trails</p> <p>(65% wanted to see enhancements to existing trails to improve footing and bridges for safety)</p>	<p>Identify priority areas and address issues with local land managers</p>	<p>Standards exist for trail safety</p>	<p>49. Identify projects of priority</p> <p>50. Provide land managers with published standards and samples</p> <p>51. Seek funds to assist with improvements</p> <p>52. Share stories/examples with others doing same.</p>	<p>Identify past funded activities that provided improvements for footing and/or bridges (HCBC, BCHBC)</p> <p>Share list with JTAC to distribute to members including contact info, so others can seek advice and learn from their experience (HCBC, BCHBC)</p>