

Regulations that apply to stock use

A complete listing of regulations are found in hand-outs for the area you are planning to visit and on posters at trailheads.

Forest-wide Regulations

Stock Feed: All hay, cubed hay, straw, mulch, and other feed in your possession must be certified weed-free by a sanctioned certification program.

Trees: Do not cut or damage live trees.

Caches: Caching or stashing of equipment for more than 14 days is not permitted.

Outfitters & Guides: Outfitters and guides must hold a legal permit to operate within National Forests. Contact this Forest to confirm that your outfitter is permitted.

Regulations

specific to stock use within:

South San Juan & Weminuche Wildernesses

Group size: Maximum group size is 15 people per group, with a maximum combination of people and stock not to exceed 25.

Livestock: Recreational livestock are prohibited from being restrained within 100 feet of lake shores and streams or within riparian areas.

Pets must be under voice control or physical restraint.

Trails: Do not cut switchbacks.

No grazing:

- West Fork (Rainbow) Hot Springs
- in the park at the junction of Weminuche and East Fork of the Weminuche Trails.



SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS
USDA Forest Service
USDI Bureau of Land Management

Backcountry Travel with Stock

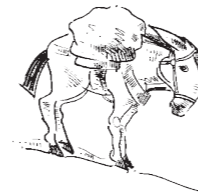


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In the 1920's, Aldo Leopold, a US Forest Service employee, argued hard for preservation of a particular kind of experience, the pack trip. Unless steps were taken to preserve large tracts of land, he said, the day would come

... when a packtrain must wind its way up a graveled highway and turn its bell-mare in the pasture of a summer hotel. When that day comes the packtrain will be dead, the diamond hitch will be merely rope, and Kit Carson and Jim Bridger will be names in a history lesson.



Protection of wild areas will never be gained simply by issuing a set of rules and regulations. It must come with love and understanding of the land. Some mark is left in wildlands each time we visit, but we can make sure this mark is a small one that does not last. Whether on foot, horseback, or with packstock, the use of low impact or Leave No Trace skills for camping and backcountry travel is easy.

The use of stock allows the traveler to go farther and carry more while expending less energy—while travelling. It also involves responsibility, planning, effort, and care. As you plan, travel, and camp, consider these suggestions.

Planning Your Trip

Contact the Forest Office nearest the area you plan to visit for information about current conditions and regulations specific to stock use: group size, feed and grazing, and stock restraint. Horses should be well-broken, well-shod, and ready for mountain travel. Use reliable, properly-fitted pack and saddle gear. Carry a first aid kit and insect repellent for your animals. Minimize the number of stock needed by using lightweight equipment. Everything goes easier if you take only what you need.

Plan meals carefully. Repackage food into reusable containers or plastic bags to reduce weight and the amount of trash to bring out.

On the Trail

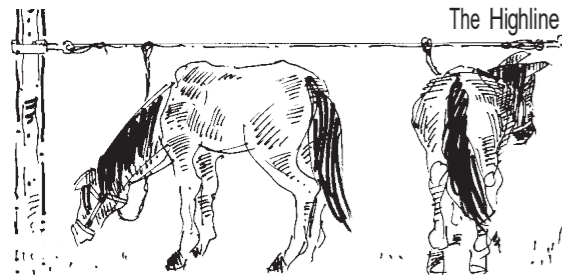
Traveling in small groups reduces impacts to the land and other visitors. Ride in single file on trails, keeping stock on the trail tread. When safe to do so, step over downed trees and cross muddy trailtread and snow banks, rather than skirting them.

Meeting Hikers. When meeting hikers, politely ask them to move to a safe area, usually on the downhill side of the trail. Say hello to hikers, and they will usually respond—which lets your stock know they are people, not predators. When stock groups meet, the group with the most room should move off the trail to allow safe passage.

Llamas. Horses may become nervous or excited at the sight or smell of a llama. If possible, introduce horses to llamas at home, rather than on the trail.

Llama Users. Safety dictates that llamas, as more maneuverable animals, give right of way to riders by stepping several yards off the trail. Let riders know that you have llamas and will move off the trail at first opportunity.

Taking a Break. Choose a site well off the trail, preferably with a durable surface, such as dry grass.



Restraining Stock

Practice methods you will use before you leave home. While best for stock and less harmful to the land when animals are allowed as much freedom as possible, you don't want to be following tracks in the morning! Animals that are with a herd, are protected from insects, and are well-fed and watered will be more content and less apt to paw.

Keep restrained stock out of camp and far from lakeshores, streamsides, and wet meadows. Allow horses in the camp core only for loading and unloading. To prevent damage from pawing, trampling, or overgrazing, move stock frequently.

Tying to trees. Do not allow stock to damage trees. Tie to trees only for a short time during breaks, loading or unloading. Select a tree at least 8" in diameter since large trees are more resistant

to trampling of and damage to bark. Loop the lead rope twice around the tree to reduce damage. For restless animals, use hobbles.

Highline. The preferred low-impact method for restraining horses for long breaks or near camp is the use of a highline which prevents horses from tramping the root systems and bark of trees.

Find an area of dry, hardened ground or a site where the least vegetation will be disturbed. Stretch a rope tightly a little over horse-head high between two live trees at least 8" in diameter and 20 feet apart. To prevent damage to trees, use wide nylon tree-saver straps or several loops of rope to spread the constricting force. Gunny sacks can be used for padding.

Tie stock several feet from tree trunks using a quick-release knot that doesn't slide. The lead rope should be just long enough for animals to touch noses to the ground, but not to allow them to step over the rope.

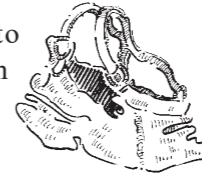
Generally, horses are less restless if more than one animal is tied to a line. Remove saddles, if stock will not be closely watched or will be tied for more than a few minutes. Check the rope for slack from time to time.

Temporary corrals. To prevent over-trampling, select a large area of hard, rocky ground. Pad all trees to protect bark. A two-rope corral can be used to contain stock. If you use hitchrails or log corrals, use rope to hold them in place. Do not use nails or wire and do not cut or damage live or standing dead trees. Protect trees with padding or by placing sticks between rope and bark. Dismantle hitchrails and corrals before leaving.

Grazing. Free roaming stock grazing on ample grass cause little long-term impact. Restricted stock are generally more restless. The more restrictive the confinement, the greater the impacts. Leave plenty of grass for other visitors and wildlife.

Loose grazing. To be sure you can catch loose horses, practice at home! Horses confined by their herd-bound instincts cause the least impact. Know your stock—the buddies and the leaders. Which ones lack the courage or ambition to leave the rest of the bunch? If you can identify these individuals, you can restrain them by confining their buddies or leaders.

Livestock are easier to catch if you always feed them grain when you let them go and catch them. Place bells only on lead animals.



Study the terrain to predict where your animals may go when turned loose. Stock tend to leave an area by the way they came in.

Hobbles. Hobbled horses have freedom to graze.

Hobbles tend to lose effectiveness as animals become used to them. As with free grazing, you may wish to use a more restrictive method on leaders and buddies.



Electric Fence. Electric fences are lightweight, versatile and easy to set up and move. Part of the herd can be kept inside while other animals graze outside. Keep an eye on the grass and move as necessary to prevent trampling and overgrazing. The larger the fenced area the better for both stock and meadow.

Pickets. Of the methods described here, tying to a picket is the most impactful. Therefore, choose the site for a picket carefully. Open, dry meadows, free of obstacles which tangle ropes, are best. To prevent overgrazing and trampling, move pins before you see a circle beginning to develop in the vegetation. For the safety reasons, it is preferable to picket at least two animals. Pack in picket pins and remove them when you leave.

Watering Horses

Wet, marshy areas, stream banks, ponds and lakeshores are susceptible to trampling, bank erosion and pollution. Water your horses at an established ford or low, rocky spot to minimize damage.

Heading Home

Keep and leave a clean camp. Pack it all out. Your panniers are lighter on the way home, so pack up all trash, food waste, and equipment. If you are hunting, be prepared for a successful hunt and allow for space to pack out the carcass and all that you brought in. Have a trash bag handy for cigarette butts, candy wrappers, twist ties, cord and fishing line. Do not bury trash or food waste. Cans, plastic, foil, and glass do not decompose or burn.

Animals will dig up buried trash and food.

From squirrels to bears, animals which become accustomed to leftovers from humans become a nuisance, then a threat to humans.

Do not cache food or equipment for later use. Spread manure piles to hasten decomposition.

For more information about stock use and minimum impact practices:

Leave No Trace, Outdoor Skills and Ethics Series, Horse Use. Available from Leave No Trace, 800-332-4100 or www.lnt.org.

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