

June 7, 2009

The Back Country Horsemen of Idaho would like to give your organization this poster depicting what a horse sees when meeting a strange fast moving object on the trail.

Ninety percent of all Idaho trails on public lands are multiple use trails. It is the goal of BCHI to ensure that all trail users have a fun and safe experience when riding. If your members have little or no experience around livestock, they will be amazed to know that a bike coming quietly down a trail is more terrifying to the horse than it is to the biker. Most horses and mules have become accustomed to the noise of motorcycles, ATV's, and autos, but a silent fast moving object in body armor and full face mask is extremely scary to them. To ensure a safe encounter on the trail we would ask that you ask all bike users to think about these things when they approach livestock on the trail.

1. Stop your bike and move to the downhill side of the trail (if possible).

WHY? If you are on the uphill side of the trail then the horse perceives you as a threat, a predator.

2. Take off your helmet (if possible) and TALK to the rider and horse.

WHY? If you look like a real person and talk, the horse will recognize you as something they know.

The horse rider has a responsibility to ensure safety when meeting other trail users, hikers, bikers, motorcycles, ATV's, and, yes, even pack goats. We train our people to get to the uphill side of the trail, let the other users pass, our goal is safety for all trail users.

The Back Country Horsemen of Idaho hopes that all trail users can work with each other and the government agencies to keep trails open and safe for everyone. Safety is our goal and we would hope that by developing partnerships to maintain the trail system in Idaho, we will have continued access to public lands for all outdoor enthusiasts.

If we can ever be of assistance in working with your organization on trail projects, or speaking with bike users about livestock on trails, please feel free to contact me at 208-398-8993.

Sincerely

Phil Ryan  
BCHI State Chairman