

Southern Kettle Moraine Horse Trail Association  
Jennifer Haras

Dear Governor Evers,

Our group consists of horse enthusiasts in southeastern Wisconsin. Our club prides itself in working with the DNR and is dedicated to combining the fun of equestrian activities in a social setting with support for horse trails and campgrounds in the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

We would like to respectfully ask that state representatives, legislators, and Governor Evers consider reopening the horse and hiking trails in our state parks and forests. We understand that there were people who misused these areas, however the horse riders have respected and used these trails for years, without vandalism and in most cases, clean up after themselves or don't carry items in.

With the golf courses in Wisconsin opening up with safe practices, we feel that the same can be observed when using the horse trails. Social distancing on horseback is very possible. Riding on horseback provides a distance of at least 6 feet, and in most cases much more. Horses can be safely brought onto the trails at trailheads with parking or in some cases, just by riding across the road. Instead of Trails Closed Signs, there could be reminders to clean up after yourselves and practice social distancing.

Trails have also been opened for daytime use in nearby states: including Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, and Iowa. We would like to see something similar happening in Wisconsin, allowing our horse riders and hikers to safely use the trails with a trail pass. Encouraging people to purchase their trail passes online and reminding them to use social distancing and respectful care of our environment would be an important part of this reopening.

Another consideration would be the fact that our club and many others usually plan trail clean up and projects to support these trails in the spring of the year. Our work on the trails and campgrounds creates a better place for all to enjoy and we can't plan any projects without being able to access the trails. We are looking forward to planning activities supporting social distancing, but also cleaning the trails and making improvements that will be enjoyed by all.

Please consider reopening the horse trails in the state of Wisconsin as soon as it can be done responsibly and safely. Horse riders maintain social distancing while riding, respect the trails of our beautiful state, and can begin some of the important work that is usually done in the spring to beautify Wisconsin.

Respectfully submitted,  
The SKMHTA Board of Directors  
President: Jennifer Haras  
Treasurer: Amy Muth  
Secretary: Beth Schroeder  
Trail Coordinator: Robert Michaels