

Park Users Get the “Scoop” on Sharing the Trails at State Park

By Sandy Rogers - WHC District 4

While the gray skies and cool temperatures on August 26th, weren't great for swimming at one of the park's beaches, it was a perfect day for a visit to the Horse Camp at Governor Dodge State Park. With the goal of promoting safety on the trails, the Friends of Governor Dodge-Equestrians hosted a two-hour Open House on Saturday afternoon. The Equestrians scooped up free ice cream (provided by the Dodgeville Kiwanis Club) to over 250 guests. What a way to brighten the day!



Guests at the Open House also got the “scoop” on how trails can be shared safely by all park users. Governor Dodge State Park boasts over 40 miles of trails, all of them open to hiking and many of them open to bicycling and horse riding. There are plenty of opportunities for trail users to cross paths! New signage provided by the Wisconsin DNR reminds trail users that hikers and bicyclists yield to horses.

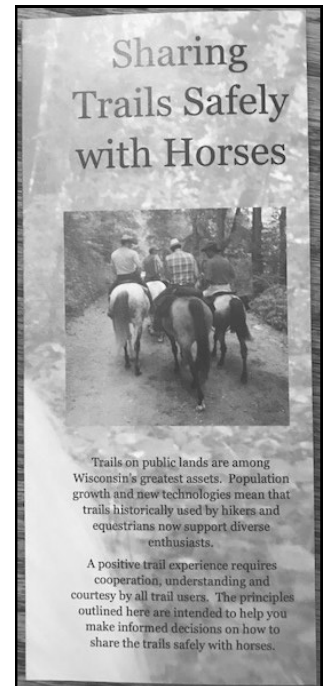


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Other tips for trail safety were served up by the Friends of Governor Dodge-Equestrians along with the ice cream. Two short videos were streaming continuously at the picnic shelter, one produced by the International Mountain Biking Association and one by the Washington Trail Association entitled "Trail Smarts: Right-of-Way on the Trail." The new WI State Horse Council brochure, "Sharing Trails Safely with Horses," was distributed to attendees. Even the kids got the message "Stop, step off the trail, and say hello" thanks to a custom designed coloring page created just for them.



The highlight of the afternoon was the hands-on interaction with the horses. One 17-year-old boy from Algonquin, IL who was visiting the park with his Boy Scout troop said with a huge smile, "This is the first time in my life that I ever touched a horse!" Younger kids squealed with joy as they brushed the horses and felt their soft noses. Folks of all ages took pleasure in feeding apples to the horses while

learning about how horses think and react. Everyone agreed that the Friends of Governor Dodge-Equestrians did a great job of promoting safety on the trails. What a fun and worthwhile afternoon!

