

Cumberland Gap

Horseback Riding

National Historical Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Introduction

A unique experience awaits horseback riders at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. In the park's magnificent backcountry, riders may travel for hours with only the natural beauty of the mountains for company. Dismount and experience the peaceful coolness of Sand Cave and the breathtaking vistas of Powell Valley viewed from high atop the precipitous White Rocks. Stroll back in time amidst the historic log cabins and the one-room schoolhouse of Hensley Settlement. Overnight visitors may secure horses to hitching posts at one of several primitive campsites along the RidgeTrail, or enjoy the rustic log cabin and corral at Martins Fork.

Preparation

Before you enter the backcountry, stop by the park visitor center for trail maps and information. If you plan to camp overnight, a free backcountry permit will reserve your campsite. Arrive early enough to ride from the parking area to the backcountry campsite. Sites may be reserved up to three months in advance. Take the minimum number of horses necessary, and be sure they are healthy, calm, and experienced.

Horse trailers may be parked in the gravel lot along the entrance road to the Wilderness Road Campground and at Dark Ridge Overlook near Sugar Run.

On the Trails

Horses are prohibited in some areas. The map on the back of this brochure shows specific trail information and mileage. Please sign all trail registers, and be courteous to hikers by slowing down to a walk as you pass. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited when riding. Where trail width permits, spread out to prevent the trails from becoming rutted and muddy; travel single file only when necessary. Ride over the center on water bars at their strongest point, and swing wide at the switchbacks. Dismount and lead horses over all bridge crossings. To minimize impact on delicate resources including Sand Cave, the White Rocks Overlook, and inside Hensley Settlement, please dismount and leave horses at the designated hitching posts.

Camping with Horses

Three of our backcountry campsites accommodate horses. All sites are free and have fire rings. **Hensley Camp** features hitching posts and accommodates 20 horses and 20 campers. Water is available ½ mile away at Hensley Settlement. At **White Rocks**, 12 campers and up to 8 horses can camp. Hitching posts are located at the top of the trailhead about ¼ mile from camp, but no water is available. At **Martins Fork**, up to 25 campers and 20 horses are welcome. A tiny, rustic log cabin can also be rented for \$10 per night. A corral is located behind the cabin, along with a stream where you can water the horses. Approach the stream on the most durable surface you can find to minimize erosion and muddying the water.

Leave No Trace Guidelines

Fires should be built in the fire rings provided. Use only deadfall wood no thicker than an adult's wrist.

To prevent bark damage and avoid trampling of root systems, do not tie horses directly to trees. Use the hitching posts or corral provided, and use a highline if more space is needed. Hobble horses prone to pawing.

Allow horses only dry feed for a day before you ride to keep manure drier and attract fewer insects. Horses should be fed from a nosebag, or their feed should be put on a groundcloth to avoid attracting wild animals. Please use only weed-free grain and processed feed pellets to avoid introducing noxious weeds to the area.

Upon your departure, please pack out all trash and leftover feed. Feed remnants should be widely scattered. Use a stick to break apart and spread manure piles to accelerate decomposition. Please leave the campsite clean.

Highline Tips

Find an area of dry, hard ground where the least ground cover will be disturbed. Stretch a rope a little over horse-head high between two rough-barked trees over 8" in diameter. Use tree-saver straps, padding, or several loops of rope to prevent girdling the trees. Tie lead ropes at intervals along the highline so that they cannot slide along the line. The lead ropes should be short enough that the horses cannot step over or loop them around their necks. Keep lead ropes far enough from the trees to avoid damaging root systems.



Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Horse Trails

Leave No Trace Guidelines for Horseback Riders

Plan ahead and prepare before you go

Minimize horse impact

In popular areas, concentrate use

In remote areas, spread use

Avoid places where impact is just beginning

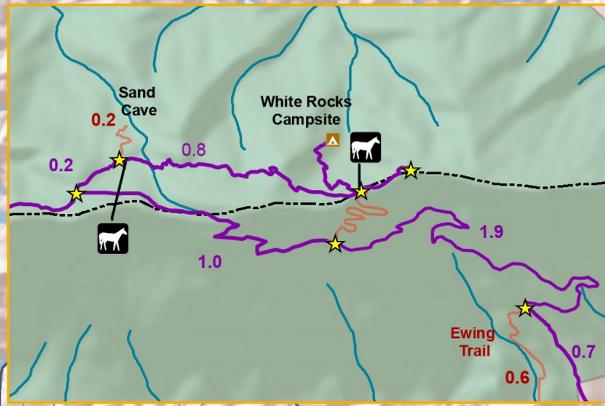
Use campfires responsibly

Pack it in, pack it out

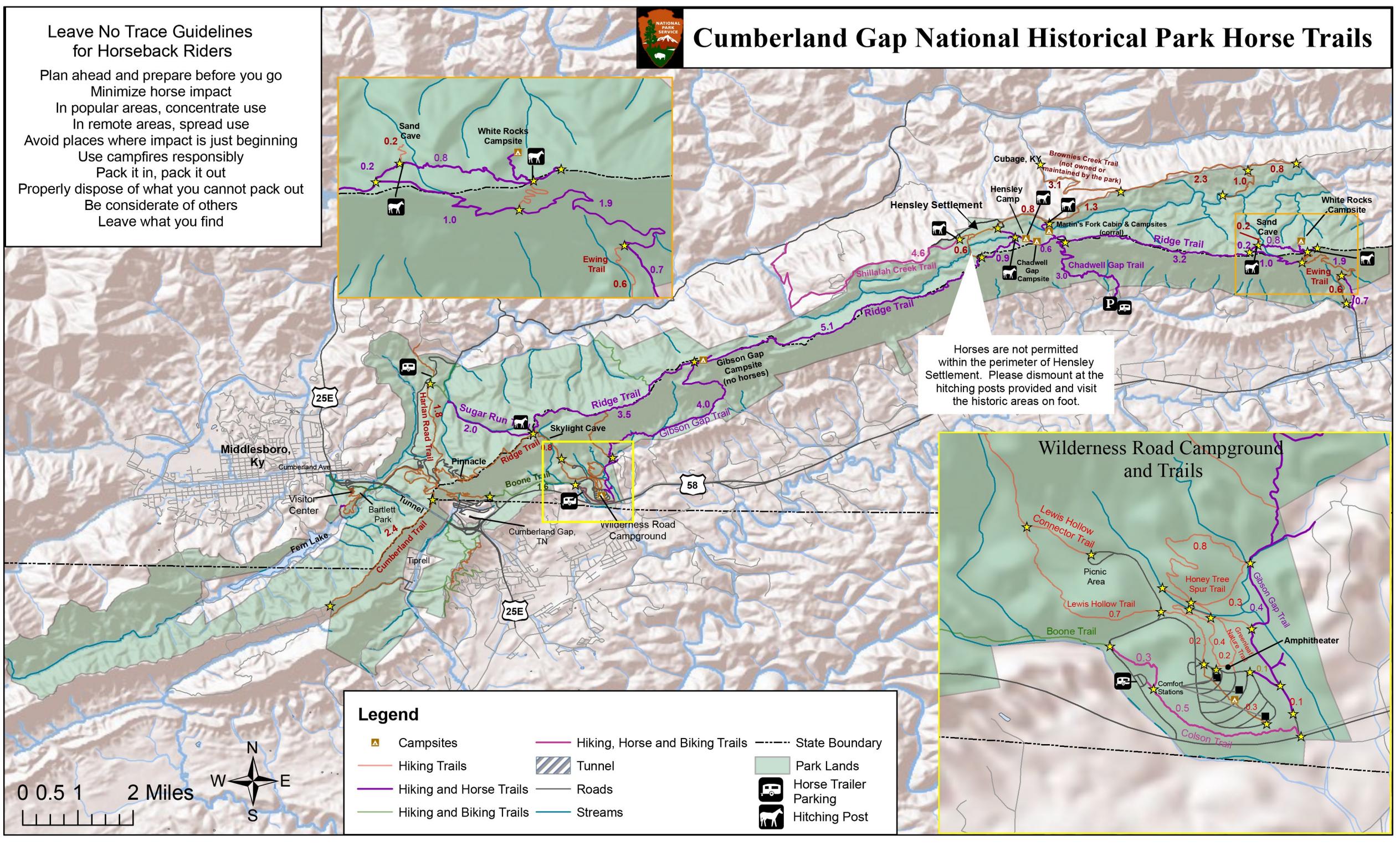
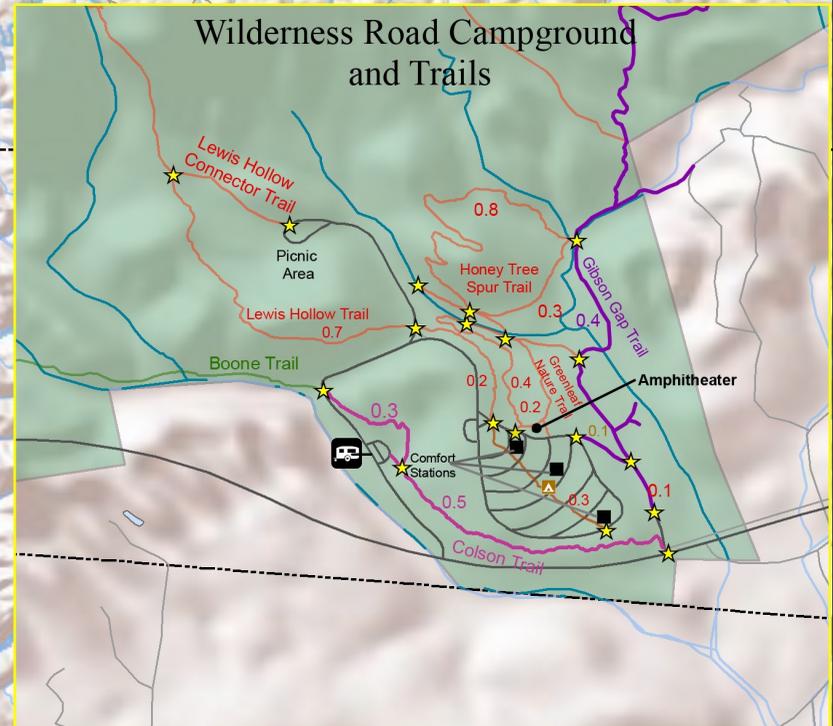
Properly dispose of what you cannot pack out

Be considerate of others

Leave what you find



Horses are not permitted within the perimeter of Hensley Settlement. Please dismount at the hitching posts provided and visit the historic areas on foot.



Legend

Campsites	Hiking, Horse and Biking Trails	State Boundary
Hiking Trails	Tunnel	Park Lands
Hiking and Horse Trails	Roads	Horse Trailer Parking
Hiking and Biking Trails	Streams	Hitching Post

