



## Horses and Pack Animals



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### Horses and Pack Animals in the Park

Horses and other pack animals are permitted on most established trails and beaches at Point Reyes National Seashore. They may not travel off trail because conditions are not maintained for their safety, and their presence can negatively impact sensitive habitat.

### Safety and Etiquette

To help control the spread of non-native plants, please feed horses weed-free feed for a few days before visiting the park. Please do not shovel manure out of horse trailers in parking lots or elsewhere within the National Seashore.

Always take a trail map with you. Free maps are available at visitor centers.

It is best not to ride alone. In case of an accident, send someone to the nearest visitor center or ranger station or call 911. Give a good description of your location and the nature of injury to both horse and rider.

Stinging nettle is a common plant at Point Reyes National Seashore. Horses can react strongly if they are stung by this plant's small needle-like hairs. In extreme cases, horses have died after exposure to this plant. Some trails may be overgrown at certain times of the year with nettle. Both horse and rider should

avoid this plant. The best way to do this is to stay on the trail.

The convention for yielding right-of-way on the trail is the same at Point Reyes National Seashore as at other parks. Horses have the right of way: hikers yield to horses and are asked to stand on the downhill side of slopes, and bicyclists yield to both horses and hikers. Remember that interactions can occur with little warning on curves and hills. Slow your horse to a walk when encountering other trail users. Remain alert. Share the trail.

To control erosion and lessen impact, short-cutting trails or switchbacks is prohibited. Horses may only be tied to hitching rails, not to trees, faucets, picnic tables, etc.

Allow plenty of time for your ride. Trails over Inverness Ridge can be steep and physically stressful for your horse. Plan adequate rest stops.

### Trail Rides from Bear Valley

**Arch Rock** - Easy 13.1 km (8.2 miles)  
Take the Bear Valley Trail south. This is the most direct and level route to an ocean view from this trailhead. No beach access. Bear Valley Trail is not open to horses on weekends and holidays.

**Mt. Wittenberg** - Moderate 9.6 km (6 miles)  
Take Morgan Trail to Horse Trail to Z Ranch Trail to Mt. Wittenberg Trail to Bear Valley Trail to trailhead. Horse Trail begins behind the Morgan Horse Ranch pastures, halfway between the ranch and Kule Loklo.

**Inverness Ridge** - Moderate 17.3 km (10.8 miles)  
Take Bear Valley Trail to Old Pine Trail to Sky Trail to Coast Trail to Bear Valley Trail then back to the trailhead.

**Coastal ride** - Strenuous 18.6 km (11.6 miles)  
Take Bear Valley Trail to Mt. Wittenberg Trail to Sky Trail to Woodward Valley Trail to Coast Trail to Fire Lane Trail to Sky Trail to Horse Trail to trailhead. You can get down to a beach at Coast Camp.

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## Trail Rides from Five Brooks Trailhead

**San Andreas Fault** - Easy 13.8 km (8.6 miles)  
Rift Zone Trail to Bear Valley and back. Mostly flat trail with cattle gates. The trail can be extremely muddy during rainy season.

**Wildcat Beach** - Strenuous 21.4 km (13.4 miles)  
Stewart Trail to Wildcat Camp and back. You can get down to a beach at Wildcat Camp. Many trails

exist in this area, so a variety of loop trips may be ridden.

**Lakes Tour** - Strenuous 22.6 km (14.1 miles)  
Olema Valley Trail to Bolema Trail to Lake Ranch Trail to Coast Trail to Wildcat Camp/Beach to Stewart Trail to Greenpicker Trail to Stewart Trail to trailhead.

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## Areas Closed to Horses and Pack Animals

**On Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, the following trails are closed to horses and pack animals:**

- Bear Valley Trail between the Mt. Wittenberg Trail and Glen Trail junctions
- Meadow Trail and Old Pine Trail

**Horses and pack animals may not be ridden in the following areas at any time:**

- Drakes Beach
- Self-guided interpretive trails such as the Earthquake Trail, the Woodpecker Trail, or Kule Loklo
- Off trail in campgrounds, picnic areas or vicinity. You may not leave animals for extended periods of time in campground areas unless you have obtained a permit for overnight use.
- Dunes and vegetated areas on beaches.

**The following areas have seasonal closures:**

- Dunes and areas above the high tide line on the Great Beach are closed June 15 - September 15 to protect the nests of the endangered snowy plovers.
- Elephant seals occur on the southern portion of South Beach during winter and spring seasons. This area is closed when seals are present. The Marine Mammal Protection Act requires that you stay at least 90 meters (100 yards) away from any marine mammal you encounter.

Trail conditions vary throughout the year. Check with the Bear Valley Visitor Center at (415) 464-5100 before your ride for current trail information and special closures.

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## Camping with Horses and Pack Animals

**Camping is allowed by permit only in three established campgrounds.**

Permits must be obtained at the Bear Valley Visitor Center before starting your trip. Reservations are recommended.

The maximum number of horses or pack animals permitted overnight at Sky, Coast and Wildcat Campgrounds is eight. Horses are not permitted overnight at Glen Camp.

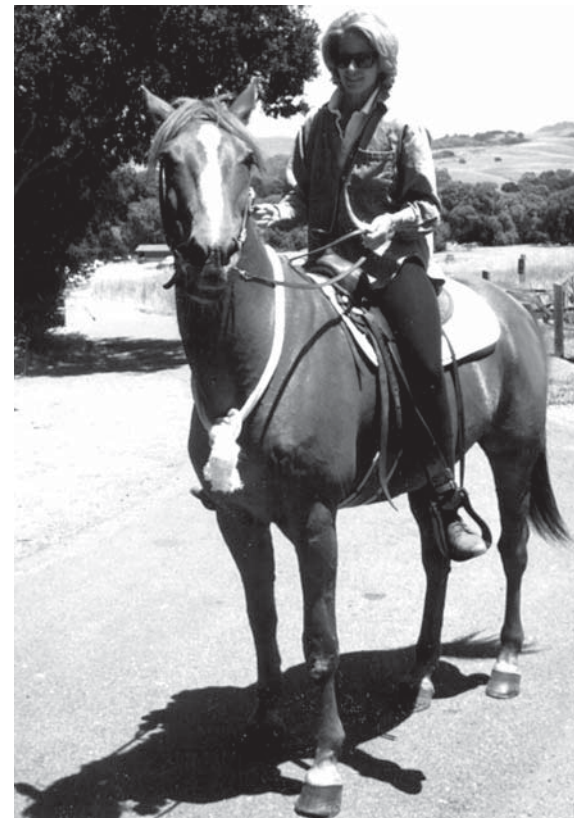
Pack animals and horses must be tied to hitching rails. Do not hitch animals to water supply faucets or picnic tables.

Grazing in the wilderness areas is prohibited. All feed for the animals must be packed in with you. In order to control the spread of non-native plants, please bring in only weed-free feed.

There is usually potable water available at each of the camps from faucets. Sky and Wildcat Campgrounds also have a water trough for horses and pack animals.

Special Use Permits are required for commercial horseback riding or pack trains into the backcountry. Call (415) 464-5111 for more information.

Overnight camping is also available at Stewart's Horse Camp. This is a privately managed camp located on Highway One, 1/4 mile north of Five Brooks Trailhead. (415) 663-1362.



NPS Photo

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