

MOUNTAIN BICYCLES, HORSEBACK RIDING, AND PACK ANIMALS

Philosophy:

Trails on state lands provide much needed recreation for a wide variety of users. However, because much of state-owned land is on steep slopes with shallow soils, it is prone to erosion, especially under heavy use. Also, many tracts support other natural features or areas that could be damaged or destroyed by incompatible uses. Thus, the state has a responsibility to protect the land base and fragile resources under its jurisdiction. It also has a responsibility to work with various user groups to reduce or avoid trail conflicts.

Policy:

Mountain bicycles, horseback riding, and pack animals (including but not limited to horses, donkeys, mules, goats, and llamas) are permitted only on state-owned roads and trails specified by the Commissioner (see Attachment 1). Even on specified roads and trails, use may be prohibited at certain times of the year or allowed only by special use permit or license, depending on location, other conflicting uses, environmental conditions, vulnerability of resources, or other factors (for example: during the period from snow melt until roads and trails dry out, which is usually about Memorial Day).

Procedure for Implementation:

Requests for new, expanded, or reduced trail uses should be made in writing to the Forestry District Manager or Parks Regional Manager. Each request will be handled on a case-by-case basis. In evaluating the request, the District/Regional Manager will consider the site location, natural resources present, effect on other users, and the ability of a supporting organization to assist in the maintenance of the trail. Following this review, the District/Regional Manager will make a recommendation and forward it to the Commissioner, through the appropriate Division Director, for action.

Conrad M. Motyka, Acting Commissioner

Effective Date: May 15, 1991

Attachment (1)

MOUNTAIN BICYCLES, HORSEBACK RIDING, AND PACK ANIMALS

Attachment 1

STATE-OWNED ROADS AND TRAILS SPECIFIED FOR USE FOR MOUNTAIN BICYCLES, HORSEBACK RIDING, AND PACK ANIMALS

The Commissioner has designated the following roads and trails for use for mountain bicycles, horseback riding, and pack animals:

- 1) Gravel surfaced roads.
- 2) Forest highways (see note 2 below)
- 3) Delaware and Hudson railroad trail.
- 4) Montpelier to Wells River railroad trail.
- 5) State Park roads (see note 3 below).

Notes:

1. Mountain bicycles, horseback riding, and pack animals are prohibited on the Appalachian Trail and Long Trail.
2. Forest highways are defined as roads used in the long-term management of state lands.
3. Horseback riding and pack animals are allowed on state park roads only outside of the regular operating hours and/or season.
4. Questions on specific trails should be directed to the appropriate District or Regional office of the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.