



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the  
Interior

Bryce Canyon National Park  
P.O. Box 640201  
Bryce, Utah 84764

435-834-5322  
[www.nps.gov/brca](http://www.nps.gov/brca)

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For Immediate Release  
Kathleen Gonder, 435-834-4741

## **Revised Rules for Horseback Riding Take Effect February, 1 2015 at Bryce Canyon National Park**

Bryce Canyon National Park initiated a public comment period for 30 days beginning March 26, 2014 regarding proposed changes for users of privately-owned stock on designated horse trails within the park. Changes are intended to ensure the safety of all visitors and to protect park resources. Trails open to horseback riding are steep and narrow given the terrain below the Canyon rim and offer limited space for stock groups to pass. It is the intent of the park, the trail ride concessioner and private equestrian users to promote, and be proactive in, equestrian safety and safe trail use. The new rules below take effect February 1, 2015. Details and specific requirements can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/brca/planyourvisit/trailrides.htm> Park Superintendent Jeff Bradybaugh thanked the many people that responded during the public comment period: “Approximately 400 individuals or organizational representatives responded and provided comments via mail, phone, and principally by e-mail. With expert assistance from the park’s trail ride concessioner and officers from Backcountry Horsemen of Utah, the park has analyzed the issues and public comments and has devised solutions. Bryce Canyon National Park appreciates the many constructive comments and suggestions provided and we have utilized them in finalizing rules for private equestrian use at the park.” An analysis of issues, comments and solutions can be found at the website listed above.

### **Required Use of Guides**

The park initially proposed that all private equestrians would be required to hire a guide to maximize safety and reduce trail conflicts. Respondents universally felt a guide was unneeded. The new rules will not require private equestrians to hire a guide. Park Rangers will discuss safety procedures, Leave No Trace and trail etiquette during private equestrian groups check-in, similar to long-established procedures at the park, but will provide greater emphasis on trail directional routing (one-way only), areas of steep or narrow trails, and the area with two-way horse traffic. Eliminating the guiding requirement places responsibility on all equestrian users to carefully adhere to trip scheduling and directional routing on the park horse trails to maximize safety.

### **Scheduling**

Scheduling for private riding parties was recommended by most respondents and will be used as a technique to avoid potential crowding, encounters with concession rides and to help alleviate associated safety concerns. Park staff, concessioner and officers from Backcountry Horsemen of Utah examined scheduling options at different times of day. Departure times for private equestrian groups from the concession day corral will be: 7:30am; 12:30pm; 4:30pm and every half hour thereafter up to 1 hour before sunset. Private equestrians will be required to schedule their ride for one of these times at least 72 hours in advance by contacting the Park via e-mail:

[BRCA\\_Information@nps.gov](mailto:BRCA_Information@nps.gov)

### **Trail Routing and Wayfinding**

Trail routing will remain the same as it is currently. Additional signage will be added to assist equestrians in route finding where trails intersect and to provide users with directions for safe flow. Scheduling of both private equestrian rides and concession trail rides will be used to minimize 2-way encounters of horse ride groups moving in opposite directions on the portion of the trail

between the Rim and the head of Binkie Hollow (Falling Rock) and to maintain safe separation of groups on one-way sections, particularly on the west side of the Peek-a-Boo Loop where the trail is exceptionally steep and narrow.

### **Equestrian Group Size**

A number of respondents commented that specifying group size may assist in managing equestrian safety and use. Most private equestrians visiting the park consist of groups of less than 8 riders and horses. For safety reasons, the park trail ride concession must maintain a guide to guest ratio of 1 guide per 10 riders or less. The park has established a limit of 10 riders and their mounts per private equestrian group.

### **Equine Health and Testing for Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins Testing)**

Equine Infectious Anemia is an infectious disease of horses for which there is no vaccine, treatment or cure. Utah law requires that all stock entering from outside of Utah must have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection and the certificate must show a negative Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins) test within the past 12 months. This applies to stock domiciled in Utah that leave Utah and subsequently return to the State. Equines domiciled in the State that do not leave Utah are not required to have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection nor documentation of a negative Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins) test. Park staff, concessioner and officers from Backcountry Horsemen of Utah discussed these requirements and Park staff consulted with the State Veterinarian's Office, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, in order to develop a practical rule in compliance with state law and protective of equine health.

The following requirements will be in place for the park and apply to concession, privately-owned or NPS-owned or contracted horses and mules:

- a) All stock brought to the park that originate from outside of Utah must have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (valid for 30 days) and the certificate must show a negative Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins - AGID or ELISA) test within the past 12 months.
- b) Utah equestrians must certify that their animals have not left the State in the past 6 months; otherwise the requirements for Certificate of Veterinary Inspection and a negative Coggins test will apply.
- c) Utah law requires that owners of any horses being transported within Utah, whether originating in Utah or from another State must carry proof of ownership. Approved forms of proof of ownership are found at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food website:  
<http://ag.utah.gov/animal/animal-identification/36-animals/238-livestock-movement.html>  
Proof of ownership will also be used to verify the requirement for a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection and Coggins testing, for out-of-state horses.
- d) Rangers will check the documentation described above prior to stock being allowed in the park and equestrians will be required to provide proper documentation and certify that their stock meet these requirements.

Bryce Canyon National Park greatly appreciates the many constructive comments and suggestions provided by the public. We encourage equestrians to visit the website listed above to find detailed information on horseback riding and to help them plan and enjoy their equestrian experience in Bryce Canyon National Park.