

January 10, 2022 RFVHC Survey Monkey Comments and Solutions

We asked, and You answered!

In 2021 RFV Horse Council sponsored a Trail Survey for Hikers and Horseback Riders, with Questions about Trails & Equestrian Access to Parking in the Roaring Fork Valley.

Q19 & Q20 - RIO GRANDE TRAIL FROM ASPEN TO GLENWOOD SPRING

Directions: *The RFTA Rio Grande Trail is a 42.4 mile heavily trafficked point-to-point trail that follows along the Roaring Fork River and is good for all skill levels. Dogs on leashes, bikers, hikers, and horseback riders are able to use trail. Everyone yields to horses. Safety first! When you meet horses on the trails stop, step off the trail and talk to the horseback rider(s). Do not hide yourself in the bushes. Horseback riders will tell you when it is safe to pass. Remember, hikers and bikers and vehicles should yield to horses but they may not - so be prepared!*



The Rio Grande soft track trail leading from Woody Creek To Aspen.

Did you know hikers and horseback riders use the Rio Grande Trail to access many trails that begin on the valley floor. For example: There is a soft track trail going along the RFTA Rio Grande, leading through Glassier Open Space to the **Glassier Equestrian trailhead**. This trail takes you from the valley floor up onto the 9,100 acres of the Crown.



The multi-use, soft track leading from the Rio Grande Trail to the equestrian trail



The "Glassier Equestrian Trail"

Rio Grande Trail comments and suggestions by Survey Monkey Respondents

LEGEND: Survey Monkey responses are written in black
RFVHC Comments and Solutions are written in red

HORSES AND MULTIUSE TRAILS

1. The Rio Grande Trail from Wink Jaffee's in Woody Creek is excellent. From W/J toward Aspen, horses have their own soft track & some beautiful single tracks through the sage brush. One can ride a nice loop. Unfortunately parking at Wink Jaffee is limited. We used to cross the highway at Cozy Point & ride to WJ & then up to Rio Grande Trail. Again, if Cozy Point had **day parking** for trailers that would be helpful. But you still have to cross Hwy. 82. **Building dedicated horse trailer parking at W/J is an answer!**

RFVHC COMMENT – Currently there is no parking for equestrian trucks and trailers at Jaffee Park. This spot is used for rafting put-ins and hiker cars. The space is small and there is no turn around if others are parked there. We are investigating parking solutions.

2. We used to ride from Carbondale Rodeo grounds into the town of Carbondale.

*RFVHC COMMENT – This trail is being considered by RFTA in the future. RFVHC is working with the **Mid Valley Trails Committee** to accomplish this goal.*

3. The Rio Grande Trail, along Hookspur & to Glassier is excellent. There are a lot of bikes but generally the trail is wide open.

*RFVHC COMMENT – Yes, this is an excellent trail with good parking for access. **Thank you Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (Pitkin - OST)***

4. I ride bikes, run, walk, and XC ski on the Rio Grande. Riding a horse on the trail feels stressful. I would love to find alternative ways to access Carbondale's Gus Darien Arena, maybe through some cooperative agreement amongst neighbors and easements.

RFVHC COMMENT – We're working on it!

5. We'd prefer **more soft track** - for people with joint problems and horses. Also, many sections are closed seasonally for wildlife, which, of course, is fine.

6. Good location ! Used to have to ride the railroad tracks - what we have now is a great improvement.

SIGNAGE

7. We live on McLain Flats, so we have a trail with direct access to the Rio Grande. I ride on the Rio Grande almost daily, down to Jaffe Park, along the river and back home. My suggestions really focus on the **lack of education people have about coming behind horses on bikes mainly**. I feel like if we had more prominent signage at the trailheads (**BIG signs**) that alert cyclists/walkers/joggers that the trail also serves horseback riding. There needs to be a Sign that shows who yields to who, people would not be so shocked, when they see horseback riders coming down the trail on horses.

RFVHC COMMENT –



8. I have two young horses, but I also had an older 25 year-old Paint, who would get spooked by someone speeding up from behind on a bike. The **businesses renting bikes and e-bikes to tourists need to be required to emphasize the fact they might see horses on the trail**, to know and understand the way to be courteous.

RFVHC COMMENT – We suggest that providing flyers to local bike & E-bike rental businesses will alert everyone about proper etiquette, when meeting horses on multi-use trails. RFVHC intends to produce an educational flyer for this purpose.

9. We have been shocked how angry some people get on **the River Trail (near Jaffe Park)** when they see you coming and their dogs freak out. Since the trail is an off leash trail, which we totally support, because I take my dogs down there daily, we do think there needs to be a **bigger sign(s)** at the beginning of that trail letting people know there might be horses. With a bigger sign, if someone knows their dog will go crazy when seeing a horse, they might put a leash on it, for the safety of all.
10. Not sure **where to park with the truck and trailer**. Would like company for my first trip on this trail and my neighbors just moved, luckily, I have a friend who just got another horse so we will go this summer.

RFVHC COMMENT – Unfortunately, truck and trailer parking for equestrians is not available at many Roaring Fork Valley Trailheads. The RFVHC finds that the lack of equestrian parking is the most important problem to solve for trail riding access in our valley.

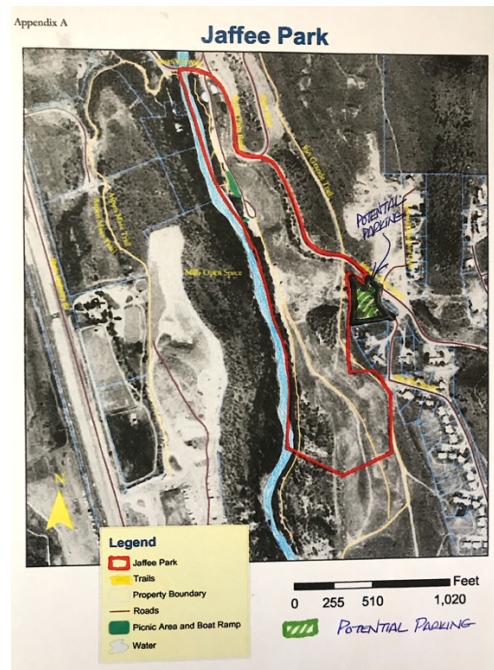
11. We have biked the Rio Grande, and we are not aware of **access points to other trails**.

RFVHC COMMENT – These are some trails are accessed from Rio Grande: *Buckhorn, Light Hill, Nancy's Path, Old Stagecoach Road in Basalt, Albany Kittle Trail, Aspen Valley Ranch Trail to the top of the mesa, and all of the Independence Trails above the Town of Aspen.*

PARKING

12. The Rio Grande Trail from Wink Jaffee's in Woody Creek is excellent. From W/J toward Aspen, horses have their own soft track & some beautiful single tracks through the sage brush. One can ride a nice loop. Unfortunately parking at Wink Jaffee is limited. We used to cross the highway at Cozy Point & ride to WJ & then up to Rio Grande Trail. Again, if Cozy Point had **day parking** for trailers that would be helpful. But you still have to cross Hwy. 82. **Making dedicated horse trailer parking at W/J is an answer!**

RFVHC SOLUTION –
We are looking for
Additional Equestrian Parking –
Above Jaffee Park off of McLain Flats
Road, before the W/J & White Star
driveways.



Q20 - Why do you not use the Rio Grande Trail?

1. I would never risk riding a horse on the Rio Grande. Too many selfish, fast bikers that don't signal and blow past me even as a hiker/walker or roller skater. **Dangerous.** I just feel like this paved route isn't the best place to mingle a prey animal with a significantly higher volume of users, especially given etiquette-lacking e-bike tourists are now allowed to travel the corridor and there is little to no enforcement of their speeds.

RFVHC COMMENT – *Soft Track accommodates hikers, horseback riders and many people like soft track for running. Significant widening and flattening of existing soft track, while adding soft track along the Rio Grande Trail is an excellent needed amenity, which will keep all trail users safe.*

2. The addition of electric bikes is making it even scarier! We've watched progression of use over the years (and sat in 100's of hours of meetings in the additional development of the Rio Grande Trail). It seemed like for awhile road bikers had taken it over as a racetrack route; and that observation seems calmer.

RFVHC COMMENT – *It has been recommended by users that in some locations on the Rio Grande Trail, speed bumps with pre-warning signs might give the fast moving bikers a pause to slow down.*

3. Not fun to ride a horse on with all the traffic. Too many bikers that come up on the horses fast. Too much fast-moving bike traffic, kids who fail to pay attention, strollers, rollerbladers...etc. The best trained horses can handle aloud of chaos, but even then, it's a sketchy ride. Not worth the conflicts.
4. I have to be very careful on a bike because most people seem to take over the entire path, walking biking side by side or just staying in the middle of the path. I use it walking through Carbondale. But not for horseback riding nor hiking. Dogs must be leashed.

RFVHC COMMENT – *Respect for others is a problem in our society today. If we can educate all trail users to understand how to be respectful share our trail. Education and empathy will bridge the misunderstandings.*

5. Too much bike traffic but necessary for some to access the rodeo grounds. I bike and rollerblade the Rio Grande from Glenwood to Carbondale and couldn't imagine it would be much fun on a horse.

6. I just feel like this paved route isn't the best place to mingle a prey animal with a significantly higher volume of users, especially given **etiquette-lacking e-bike tourists are now allowed to travel the corridor and there is little to no enforcement of their speeds**. I don't mind the separated sections where there is a parallel route on soft surface, but I don't think it should be promoted as equestrian use.

RFVHC COMMENT – *Equestrian use on the Rio Grande Trail is dangerous without significant changes to widen the intermittent soft track sections. Because of fast moving bikes and E-bikes along the Rio Grande route, many families with children and dog walkers are afraid to use this wonderful recreational asset.*

7. Demonstrating to the public that we can ride on public roads and trails like this also calls attention to the idea that maybe our animals aren't as skittish as we tend to claim, and it undermines the leverage argument that mountain bikes should be kept much further away from our cherished animals to avoid startling them (at Sutey Ranch, for example).



RFVHC COMMENT – *Horses are 2 and ½ times wider than a human riding a bike. Rio Grande soft track can be made wider to accommodate horseback riders. Many runners and walkers prefer soft track to the unforgiving asphalt underfoot. Making the soft track wider and more level will accommodate the large number of hikers and equestrians who feel vulnerable because of the fast moving mountain bikes. This slower moving walking and horseback riding group enjoys using the Rio Grande Trail and would appreciate the added security of a safe soft track trail.*

Here is the winter and spring 2021-22 RFVHC Survey about RFV Trails for Equestrians and Hikers.

Instructions for filling out this survey

Answers to the following questions are optional. While we hope that you will provide answers to all of these questions, you are not obligated to do so. You may simply scroll past any question that you prefer not to answer. You may scroll up and down through the questions at any time. We are asking for more survey response.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JL23DN3>

Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council
P.O. Box 127, Snowmass, Colorado 81654
* 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization *

rfvhc.colorado@gmail.com Facebook: www.facebook.com/keephorsesontrails/
Instagram : www.instagram.com/rfvhc/