

(TSPP) TRAIL SIGN PRESENTATION Script revised 4.1.23 BY KARIN REID OFFIELD, RFVHC PRESIDENT Please Contact: rfvhc.colorado@gmail.com

2850 Words – BETWEEN 16 AND 23 MINUTES

RED WORDS ARE ADDITIONS ADDED AFTER THE 3.30.23 WEBINAR.

#1 All of us here today, most likely bike, fish, hike and many ride horses or mules. This trail safe passing plan and trail sign can be used by all - hikers, dog walkers, fishermen, bicyclists, birders, and even motorized vehicle drivers.

We believe everyone can and should be prepared when encountering people with horses on the trails. It is important to know what to do first and what needs to be done after stopping on the trail to keep everyone safe and having fun. 1

#2 The Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Trail Sign Developed by the Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council Aspen Snowmass, Colorado 2

#3 Today's Goal for the webinar: To teach how to practice, promote, and share the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) of Stop! Speak and Stand Back.

To explain how this safety action plan can be displayed on websites, offered as a PowerPoints or as PDFs for trail user groups during meetings, released as stories in magazines, introduced in public relations campaigns, and displayed to the public by land management teams for use at the county, state and federal trailheads and welcome/information kiosks.

The Trails Safe Passing Plan can also be used statewide, in collaborative multi trail use public safety announcements. We are hopeful that our graphics will be added to the current signage available at trail heads and kiosks.

Although we know that getting new features added to government lands requires approvals, we believe that our efforts will pay off in improved safety for all trail users.

Our goal for today is to install new signage that will provide knowledge and guidance for encountering equestrians.

By clearly communicating what equestrians would like other trail users to do when they encounter them, we can help prevent accidents and promote mutual respect on the trails. We believe that adding our campaign graphics to the existing signage is an essential investment in the safety and enjoyment of all trail users. 3

#4 Back Story: It was in 2018, when the Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council's Board of Directors began to discuss the safety of our horses and members on the local trails. We recognized the number of trail users was growing and that something needed to be done to ensure the safety and enjoyment of equestrians while out on the trails.

We met Jenny Cook, Michigan Equine Trail Representative, who asked to use our trail sign for her Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back safety action plan. A workshop in Michigan with all trail user groups in February 2020 began that conversation. Jenny, Jena Cook, and Lynsey Cook wrote the 18 card PowerPoint.

Subsequently, the Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) from Lexington, Kentucky published the plan on their national website. ELCR is committed to leading the way in protecting and conserving lands for horses and horse-related activities that provide significant environmental benefits to our communities.

ELCR works in partnership with Trails are Common Ground™ (TaCG), a coalition of people, businesses, and advocacy groups working together to create a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all who step, ride or roll onto any trail, anywhere. The RFVHC believes the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back will help people become better trail citizens and give communities and agencies new tools to manage and improve their trails. 4

#5 The Next Step was for the RFVHC to produce a trail sign After many attempts to produce a sign that we liked and everyone else liked, we settled on this sign for several reasons

1. It's a simple yield sign and pleasant to look at 2. It represents the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) perfectly 3. It concentrates on horses and what to do and HOW to yield when encountering people with horses on the trails 5

#6 Who, what, when, where, why and HOW to yield to people with horses on the trails We want horses to be welcomed on more trails.

Let's start with this one lesson: Horses have their own minds, and since we cannot always control our horses, if they become frightened by an approaching biker or hiker, we felt it was important to develop a sign to help all trail users and horseback riders avoid scary encounters. Encounters which can become dangerous for the horses, the riders, and other trail users.

The Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back - is an educational resource primarily focused on addressing the needs we recognized had to be met. **It's not just about**

etiquette or the yielding order; it's a collaboration of information gathered from various articles, website content, and trail user's feedback. 6

#7 INTRODUCING THE INTERACTIVE TRAIL SIGN We ask you....

What do you do if the weather conditions are loud and windy? What do you do if there is a blind corner, a grove of trees, wild acting dogs? Where do you go on the trail if the person's horse is jumping around? What might cause the person on the horse not to hear you? What if you are hearing impaired, and cannot follow directions from the horseback riders?

We have solved these HOW TO questions with an innovative interactive sign: a QR Code linking to the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back for all trail users that can be used on websites, offered to trail user groups during meetings, used by and delivered to land management teams for public safety announcements, stories in magazines, public relations events and displayed signage at trailheads and welcome kiosks, run by county, state and federal agencies for the safety of all equestrians and multi-user groups.

Safety on trails is an overlooked component of the trail experience, but signs truly are a necessity when it comes to ensuring the safety of our public lands and visitors. 7

#8 Ask GOOGLE: Google says: "Cyclists are expected to yield to all other trail users. Cyclists moving quickly and quietly can scare horses. Speak and communicate when encountering a horseback rider on the trail. The horseback rider will tell you the safest way to pass. When passing horses, use special care and follow directions from the horseback riders (ask if uncertain)."

While many trail signs, user groups and websites openly support yielding, respect, communication, responsibility, they often focus solely on the yielding pattern, with arrows pointing to horses (indicating they have the right of way over all other trail users). However, existing signs do not provide clear instructions on HOW to help equestrians in specific situations.

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#9 A QR Code is linked to the Trails Safe Passing Plan on the Trail Sign and is a great example of sign innovation. To educate and increase safe trail use, this Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back can be delivered directly to all trail users.

We recognize that every new sign innovation provides an opportunity for parks and open spaces to strengthen their identities, to reach new customers, to be inclusive and foster recreationalists' relationships. 9

#10 TRAIL SIGNS At trail heads, you've likely come across a series of signs that provide information on your location, historical context, and practical information to ensure a good trail experience.

Across the United States, we rely on signs that do not provide adequate safety information for equestrian and multi-user safety.

For some, the phrase "yield" is unclear. For example, trail users from other countries often do not understand the word "yield".

Trail signs are vital, not only for the success of a park or open space, but also for the safety of the visitors. Trail signs are an investment. 10

#11 ASKING WHY HORSES ARE ALLOWED ON CERTAIN TRAILS:

(1) Some user groups may not want to share trails in regions and some trails are not suitable for all users; (2) Land Managers want to avoid conflicts;

(3) Lack of horse education and knowledge, historically, has often led to keeping horses off multi-user trails, and these trail restrictions may have been in place for generations;

(4) If a land management team does not understand horses and the user group, horses can be prohibited on their trails

(5) When horseback riders do not speak up and publish their trails, they can lose them. 11

#12 Collaboration with other trail users and land management teams help! In Colorado, important steps are taken to ensure multi-user trails, with partners sending out messages to all trail users through radio and newspapers.

The RFV Horse Council and partners successfully ran these ads for several summers in collaboration with the local Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association (RFMBA) and our Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (PC OST). Trail users mentioned this polite and respectful advice was helpful and effective! 12

#13 A poster collaboration the RFVHC accomplished This collaboration was also with our local Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association (RFMBA). Over the years we modified the poster art to make it acceptable to more trail user groups. Today, it represents the best advice we can give you about what to do when encountering people with horses on the trails: Stop! Speak and Stand Back – Trail Sign & QR Code 13

#14 In our own Roaring Fork Valley For decades in the RFV, horses could travel from valley to valley, but now our trail access is limited due to roadways, highways, and subdivisions. However, we still share many trails with other users, such as the 42 mile Rio Grande Trail from Aspen to Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

To promote safe and respectful trail use, we developed the Trail Safe Passing Plan and Trail Sign, which we hope land managers like the Colorado Rural Transit System (RFTA) will adopt at trailheads. In a recent survey, our trail riders reported that they would not ride certain multi-user trails due to a lack of basic safety rules.

We have worked with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to implement our Trail Safe Passing Plan and Trail Sign on the Historic Sutey Ranch, and we hope to see them used more widely on other trails in the U.S. Forest Service, as well. Recreational users of our national trail systems need to know how to interact with people on horseback, which is why our motto at the RFVHC is to "Keep Horses on Trails." 14

#15 All trail users need to be respectful of Wildlife 15

#16A How to Download the Trail Sign and Graphics 16

#16B ADDED – THE 3 QR Codes

#17 Go to the RFVHC website at www.rfvhorsecouncil.org to access the art, graphics, video and PDF's • Go to our PROJECTS tab and there is a drop-down menu. • Then click on the sub menu tab: Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP). You will find everything you need for your trails to educate your recreationalists. 17

#18 To use the trail sign, QR Code and PDF's, we ask that you fill out a Trail Use Registration Form found on our website. This will give you written permission to use the copyrighted sign. Trail Sign Registration Form examples of information: • Who are the land management teams or user groups involved in your trail areas. Please give a general description of where you may utilize the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Trail Sign • What user groups share the trails in this area currently? • What are the issues on your trails? . 18

#19 We offer the library of signs and graphics with QR Codes that you can personalize! 19

#20 Here is an example of the Trails Safe Passing Plan in Action! The RFVHC presents a 1 minute 35 second video entitled Stop, Speak, Smile: The Key to Sharing Trails Safely, hosted on our new RFVHC YouTube Channel. We feel this video best represents the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP). The film is brought to you by Central Oregon Chapter of Oregon Equestrian Trails and a coalition of partners, including the Central Oregon Trail Alliance, East Cascades Chapter of Back Country, Horsemen of Oregon, Sister Trails Alliance, Deschutes Trails Coalition and filmmaker Wahoo Films. We thank you all for allowing us to use it in today's presentation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-nmrS9yuiq> 20

#21 What to do about Dogs and Children Dogs are natural predators, and running loose they can startle horses, approach them aggressively, anger other dogs, and even start a dog fight. Many land managers do not allow dogs on trails without a leash. When encountering horses on trails, the first reaction of a hiker or biker with loose dogs should be to call the dogs back to attention and do their best to contain or secure them with a leash. It's important not to allow aggressive dogs to pull away and confront the horses. By standing back on the same side of the trail with the children, dogs and other trail users, people with horses can pass by confidently and comfortably at a walk. Mountain bikers support yielding, respect, communication, responsibility, and knowledge. Thank you for helping to the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) for posting the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back on their global website under RIDE VIBES - Mind all Animals. 21

#22 Higher Risks of injury Compared to most trail users, horseback riders do have a higher risk of injury. This is because horses often hear other trail users before the rider does and then they may become wary of hidden dangers like things in the brambles or bushes, or even across the lake. When riding in a group, the horses may hear an approaching trail user at different times, causing a ripple effect among the horses. As riders, it is the responsibility of the horseback rider to be the leader of their horses and ensure the horses safety, much like taking care of children. To keep both horses and humans safe on the trails, the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back asks trail users to keep children from rushing toward the horses. It's crucial to post the TSPP and trail signs on websites, trailheads, and kiosks to emphasize the importance of keeping children safe while on the trails. Remember, at blind corners, if bikers or runners come around fast, it can cause problems such as startling horses or dogs, injuring a child, or just disturbing someone who was enjoying a peaceful outing. 22

#23 A Story Our older friend and his horse went out for an afternoon trail ride, and he met a hiking neighbor on the trailside. The neighbor was carrying some tree cutting equipment and was standing behind a couple trees when the horse and rider approached. Instead of speaking up right away and saying hello to the horseback rider, the hiker stayed hidden, until suddenly the

horse spied him, whirled away, and dumped the rider. This encounter ruined the rest of the summer for our horseback riding friend. Stories like these can be avoided, if we are well educated. Let's all openly support yielding, respect, communication, responsibility, and knowledge. 23

#24 Using a bell to alert horses is not effective. Although horses can be trained, they are still living, prey creatures. Every trail ride is a new experience for horses to navigate. Many webinars and websites advise bikers to use bells as far away as 150 feet or when they get close to signal to horses and hikers that they are approaching. However, horses cannot recognize bells, and do not understand the meaning of bell sounds. Bells are not used in the stables, or in training. While people with horses may recognize the noise, using the human voice is a better option. That's why we recommend that when people encounter horses on the trail, they follow the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back. Stopping gives horseback riders time to assess the situation, the trail, and the horses, and then communicate with other trail users. The human speaking voice is comforting and familiar to horses, making your voice the ideal choice for communicating on the trail. When encountering horses, an announcement that you have approached, where you are, and a friendly greeting like "Wow, you have a beautiful horse! Have a wonderful trail ride!" can make all the difference. By standing back on the side of the trail, far enough away from the horses, but not hiding, trail users can ensure a safe passage for everyone. 24

#25 Conclusion: We recently spoke with a gentleman that has hearing disabilities. He told us he wanted to know what to do when encountering people with horses on trails BEFORE he goes out on a hike or a bike ride. Then, he said that if he followed the Trails Safe Passing Plan (TSPP) Stop! Speak and Stand Back he'd feel comfortable, confident and safe on the trails. This presentation is dedicated to this gentleman – a recreationalist that wants inclusive, safe and fun trails. Thank you for your attention. 25

#26 Thank you to our partners, and the Equine Land Conservation Resource in Lexington, Kentucky

#27 ELCR Who we are

#28 ELCR What we do