

January 10, 2021
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.

Q11 IN THE AREA OF SNOWMASS CREEK – WINDSTAR

Directions:

*Windstar/Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Easement (**horses & hikers only**) Turn off Highway 82 onto Snowmass Creek Rd at the Conoco Gas Station, follow to the fork and go left. Follow to the signed driveway to Windstar on the right.*

Caution: *At this time, there is no appropriate truck and trailer parking due to the uneven shoulder of the road, where a truck and trailer needs for turn around. At the Windstar gate, there is room to park only several cars with room to turn cars safely around.*

Did you know - Windstar is a nature preserve and property once owned by John Denver. There is a meditation platform overlooking the property and John Denver Meadowlands. This is a 957-acre property in Old Snowmass, CO. Dogs are not allowed on the trail and the trail is not a groomed Nordic trail.

Please tell us about your experiences on Windstar and the parking

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

HORSES AND HILKERS ONLY TRAILS

It was about 20 years ago that I had a friend with horses near there. It was wonderful! Great riding experience. Easy access. Quiet and peaceful. Have been to weddings and parties there . . . never a horseback ride. When I rode, I had been invited by Lazy 0 boarder so am not familiar with parking problem. Increasing access would be great. We are grateful to the owners of the Windstar Valley Ranch for this trail and to the New Spring LLC for use of their road. We hope to find a solution.

PARKING

We love riding the area and the access is always unknown. The gate to the "old" John Denver parking area should be taken down to allow access to the parking lot & easy turnaround area. We are frustrated as we pack and plan to ride there and then get to a locked gate or rifles firing when equestrian access is posted as accessible and then we can't. The "pedestrian" gate is too narrow to safely and comfortably lead a saddled horse through the gate.

I have communicated (calls & photos of situations) with Gary Tannenbaum, Director, Pitkin County Open Space, and other land stewards and rangers of the same agency, about access, safety, and parking concerns. Please work to assure access, parking, and safety for people & equestrians. We never see dogs on this property, and as a wildlife sanctuary, of course, that is important.

The parking lot needs to be improved so you do not have to back your horse trailer down the road. It is dangerous and near impossible for many drivers. I love this trail. I trailer my horses here often. The only problem is it is very challenging to turn a trailer around in the parking area. I have

to go on the hill to the right and hope for the best. I am terrible at backing my trailer up, so it would be nice if they would open that gate and let us turn around where we used to be able to park. Poor parking. A long time ago - it is an amazing area - we could easily park - it's perfect for hot summer days and now needs private and government assistance, to get our trailer parking problem fixed - it will be an easy fix to move dirt so a horse trailer can turn around! Hope the land managers that read this survey and will help out - for hiker parking too ! It's unfinished business I have not been recently due to the fact there may not be parking for trucks and trailers. I have been working on getting better and permanent parking for Windstar. I would like to ride this area once trailer parking is provided.



Windstar affords beautiful gentle two track riding with wonderful ranchland views.

Hard to get to ride there if there is no trailer parking available. We have ridden this trail for decades. With gate closed and parking limited we only come when there are no cars parked, turn around and then take over the parking area. As I said above, If they opened the gate, trailers could turn around and park more easily. it is not ideal and NOT what was promised for Windstar. Would be nice to create parking access for horse trailers. I have ridden from a nearby ranch in this area. VERY RECENTLY we tried to access Windstar Ranch, but the gate for vehicle entrance was locked, and we have spent much time trying to track down someone to get info to gain access.... as trail riders we are willing to donate, make reservations, whatever it takes, for a peaceful safe ride!

RFVHC COMMENT: Windstar is a wonderful ride that is ideal for any level of rider or horse. We have investigated the trailer parking situation and according to Pitkin County, the public has an access easement for Windstar (trails), and we do not have a parking easement. The RFVHC is looking for a solution from the owners and the neighboring landowners allowing us to have a truck and trailer parking solution for summer of 2022. Contact us with your support.

RFVHC SOLUTION – We will work with Pitkin County, the current Windstar landowners and neighboring property owners to explore truck and trailer parking to access Windstar.

1. The original existing John Denver/Rocky Mountain Institute parking area has plenty of room for equestrian parking with easy turn around for exiting. The area could be minimally improved, and an attractive fence could define the parking area. A large ranch access gate would be kept closed for ranch only access, with a horse/hiker walk-through opening to access the trail easement. Signage would alert equestrians the keep the parking area clean of manure and trash. Leave no trace, so pack everything out. Cars could park in a designated part of this lot. Respect for the beautiful Windstar land is of foremost concern and no horses/hikers would stray onto the private upper meadows owned by the Hildebrand Family. Signage will be very important for education, way finding and to keep this very special place pristine.
2. There might be alternative parking options, which we are looking into.



Horseback riders gather in the original Windstar - John Denver/Rocky Mtn. Institute Parking area. Notice the ample space for truck and trailer turn around and parking.

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

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

Instructions for filling out this survey

Answers to the following questions are optional, while we hope that you will provide answers to all.

questions. You are not obligated to do so. Simply scroll past any question that you prefer not to answer. Scroll up and down through the questions at any time. We are hoping for more survey responses.

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