

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.

Q6 NANCY'S PATH (HORSES & HIKER ONLY)

DIRECTIONS: *The Nancy's Path Parking Lot only accommodates a few cars. Trucks with horse trailers cannot pull in and park in this area. Nancy's Path can be reached via various trails, and truck and trailer parking is accommodated at the Glassier Trail Head Parking Lot and from the BLM's Divide Parking Lot (after an extensive trail ride from the Divide to get to the Nancy's Path turnout).*

Directions to hikers parking lot. *Turn off Highway 82 at the Emma School House, taking the right fork towards El Jebel, (Emma Road) for 1 mile to the bend and the sign says Happy Day Ranch. Turn left onto the dirt road. Just up ahead is a red roof barn at the 4-way intersection. Turn right at the barn and just behind the barn is a small, signed parking area and the trailhead.*

Did you know Nancy's Path is a seasonal trail ride, please use caution when weather and fallen leaf conditions are less than ideal.

LEGEND: Survey Monkey responses are written in black

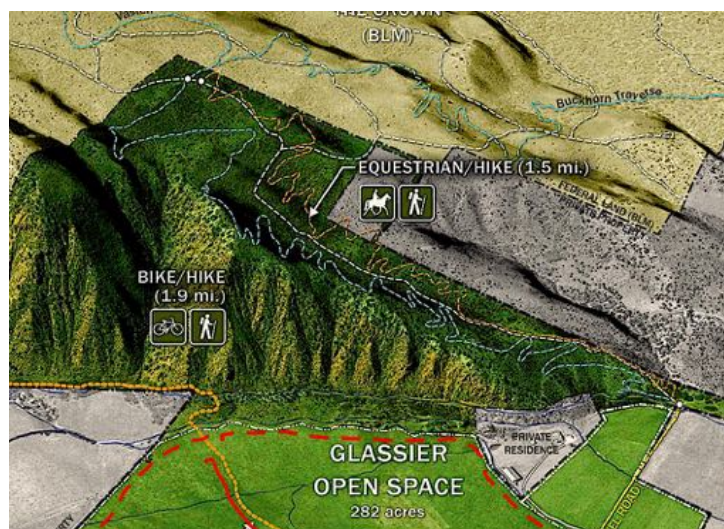
RFVHC Comments and Solutions are written in red

TRAILS

We need to gather around the campfire to talk about how many millions of acres of our public lands are accessible to open travel use on horseback, and how disproportionate that is relative to the miles of trails that mountain bikers get to use.

RFVHC COMMENT - *In specific smaller shared recreation areas it is necessary to separate the users for safety of users and animals, horses, llamas vs bikes. Recreation areas which have high concentration of bike usage often require separate trails to keep the bikes from riding off the trails resulting in confusing bandit trails and additional degradation of the vegetation and wildlife areas. Yes, equestrians generally have the right to ride more acres than a biker but generally an equestrian will "Leave No Trace".*

We rode horses on Nancy's Path before it was improved & would not have recommended it to a rider. I since hiked the path & saw it was improved. I believe it is even more improved now & would like to try it again on horseback. I have not been on this trail in over 30 years, but I have fond memories of it. I would like to see it developed more for equestrians and hikers.



The dark ravine just to the left of the Bike/Hike icon is the area of the Nancy's Path Trail .
At the bottom of this trail there is limited parking for access.



Nancy's Path Trail monument trailhead accessed from Hooks Road, in memory of Nancy Parker West



View of the Roaring Fork Valley - Basalt Mountain and Seven Castles, Frying Pan drainage - as seen from the top of Nancy's Path

RFVHC COMMENT. *Nancy's Path is a forever equestrian trail and has received some maintenance since its development. The trail is lightly used due to its rough footing, steep grades and water erosion areas. As part of PITCO Open Space and Trails this trail should receive more repairs. It does offer an experienced horse and rider a loop ride via the Glassier Equestrian or the Divide Parking "Crown Jewel Trail" on the Crown. The nature of a trail in a ravine does not lend it to becoming an easy trail with soft footing. This Trail should not be traveled in bad weather. The RFVHC and the Mid Valley Trails Committee may be able to use grant funding for improvements.*



Nancy's Path can be accessed by the Glassier Equestrian Trail



Nancy's Path cut-off from the Glassier Equestrian Trail



Taylor van Zyl entering the steep of Nancy's Path & down we go!



Marty Schlumberger- RFVHC Board Member with his sure-footed mule.



Nancy's Path Trail footing is rough in places



Taylor van Zyl & Holly McLain - RFVHC Board Members stop at one of the trail switchbacks ½ way down Nancy's Path Trail - Downhill descent continues into the steep ravine ahead.

This is a very challenging trail. Our ranch uses it for cattle drives in spring and late summer. For users, they must be aware of ranch employees on 4-wheel drive vehicles and/or horses using the trails, and keep all gates closed. Cattle are grazing on the Crown all summer, and they have horns. It is a steep rocky climb up, but worth it once you reach the plateau on top. All we can remember was that it was very hot that day. The trail is too rough and changing with seasons/weather to be safe. I have hiked from the Glassier parking lot and also from the Parker ranch. Beautiful.

RFVHC COMMENT - *The above comment from the survey is spot on! This trail is a donated memorial trail from the adjacent landowner. It is what it is, but in 25+ years of usage many people have enjoyed the challenge and the views. The RFVHC looks forward to helping Pitkin OST & MVTC for ideas to improve Nancy's Path.*

A Hiker's perspective of Nancy's Path trail – Aspen Times Commentary –

<https://www.aspentimes.com/news/on-the-trail-finally-nancys-path/>

SIGNAGE, WAYFINDING & PARKING

“Great weekday ride - park at Glassier and short ride up Emma Road to trailhead. Unfortunately, the private land access is quite confusing this year - requires several dismounts to pass through openings with boards overhead - perhaps a discussion with PITCO OST could help to create a clearer access.”

RFVHC COMMENT - *Simple signage changes/additions will resolve this issue, but until parking access is addressed horseback riders are limited to their access. We learned that in 2021, that changes were made to make these problems easier.*

SOLUTION – THE COMMUNITY FAMILY EQUESTRIAN / HIKER TRAIL

The RFVHC suggests this beginner/intermediate Glassier meadow trail, which everyone can enjoy. A two loop trail within the Glassier Open Space meadow will give equestrians and hikers a new beginner/intermediate opportunity. The Glassier/Hooks Spur Parking Lot gives access to this trail by riding the soft track trail leading onto the Glassier Open Space. Follow the red dotted line around the perimeter of Ag Lease A, Ag Lease B and utilizing the Pitkin proposed orange trail through the middle of the meadow on Ag Lease B.



Red dotted line designates the proposed “Community Family Equestrian/Hiker Trail” with two loops intersecting and using the Pitkin OST proposed orange middle pasture crossing trail.

Three alternative trail scenarios:

(Loop # 1) – Ride or hike the perimeter of Ag lease A across to the orange suggested Nancy’s Path Connection Trail. Take it back to the multi-use Glassier Trail and your origin.

(Loop #2) - From the multi-use Glassier Trail, take the left hand turn onto the Ag Lease B red dotted trail along the perimeter to the orange Nancy’s Path Connection and back to the your origin.

(Loop # 3) - From entering onto Glassier Open Space, ride or hike the entire perimeter of the Glassier Open Space Meadows around Ag Leases A & B, returning to your origin.

This gentle “Community Family Equestrian/Hiker Trail “will provide a quiet, non-challenging experience for Families with children, older adults, young inexperienced horses and riders and older physically challenged horses that still need to be ridden, but can no longer negotiate up-hill challenges of our mountain terrain. The “Community Family Equestrian/Hiker Trail” is a much needed amenity in the Roaring Fork Valley. This bike free zone will be appreciated by the hikers and horseback riders who want a peaceful walking activity.

NANCY'S PATH CONNECTION TO THE GLASSIER EQUESTRIAN TRAIL

The RFVHC appreciates the Pitkin OST & Mid Valley Trails Committee (MVTC) support to improve Nancy's Path, the hiker & horseback trail connecting with the Glassier Equestrian Trail and returning to the Glassier/Hooks Spur Parking Lot. Horse Council members rode Nancy's Path on October 16, 2020 and concluded that in its current condition it is unsafe for all except for experienced horses and riders. Extensive and expensive trail renovation would be necessary to alter the trail for less experienced horses.

*Additionally, if inexperienced riders were to venture there mistakenly, a liability issue might arise. Our suggestion is to implement the easier "**Community Family Equestrian/Hiker Trail**" described above be accomplished first.*



***Families will enjoy the beginner/intermediate
Community Family Trail***

Here is the winter & spring 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 asking for more survey responses.

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