Event "How-To"

Leading a Chapter Trail Ride

Primary role: Keep the riders safe and bring them all back!

___1) COORDINATE WITH THE ORGANIZER.
In some cases, the organizer may not be riding at the ride, and the leader may pick up some of the final details.

___2) OPRC, OPEN BUT OPRC-SPONSORED, OR OPEN (NON-OPRC).
Be aware if it is an open ride or not. For OPRC rides, participation is limited to members and OPRC considerations that apply to all events apply to this trail ride (see right). For open but chapter sponsored rides, be aware of whether the organizer has the OPRC insurance confirmed. For non-OPRC-sponsored rides, anyone may be invited, and the rules that apply to OPRC events are not enforced.

___3) FAST OR LEISURELY, EASY OR CHALLENGING.
Slow rides mean we take extreme precautions to keep everyone safe. Fast rides are for the more experienced riders and each rider will be expected to be confident and in control of their horse. The pace will be faster and/or the terrain will be more challenging. Note: We do not host fast rides and slow rides during the same event. If we want a fast ride and a slow ride on the same day, they will be organized as completely separate events. (Decision of the chapter membership in March 2011)

___4) FIRST AID KIT(S) – who will bring them?

___5) RIDE CONDITIONS.
Day of the ride, work with the organizer to decide if it is safe to still host the ride (weather and footing). For example, rain or snow can cause an event to be cancelled, as can heavy winds if the trail ride is planned through the woods. You are the primary person that day to decide if the conditions are safe for the ride. However, it is still up to the individual to decide on their own if they will ride.

___6) DAY OF THE RIDE.
Know who provided an RSVP and have cell phone info so that either the organizer (if attending) or you as the ride leader will know who may be missing. If you can't reach them, the ride will continue as planned. As the ride leader, you may start the ride on time or even a few minutes late. Use your judgment.

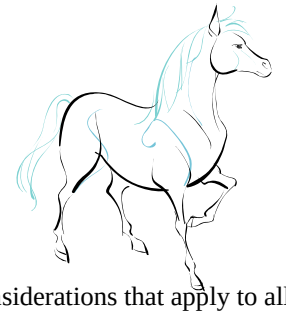
___7) SAFETY OF HORSE/RIDER TEAMS.
The organizer or leader (determined in advance) must take the responsibility to ensure all members have met the considerations to the right, and that each horse/rider combination is safe to participate. Many of our riders have confidence issues, green horses, or are beginning riders. Do not take them up and down hills, cross creeks or change the gait unless they are comfortable. When slowing down, leave ample time for people to get control and stop to avoid horses crowding each other. Your responsibility as ride leader is to ensure riders are not overfaced and that they are able to meet the demands of the ride.

___8) SETTING OUT ON THE RIDE.
Ensure you do not leave the staging area until everyone is ready. If someone decided they don't want to ride after all, coordinate with them that they are ready for the group to leave them and their horse behind, so they are not in danger of being hurt if their horse freaks out about being left behind. There is only one group for all our rides.

___9) USE YOUR EXPERIENCED RIDERS.
Find someone in your group that is a more advanced rider that can stay at back of the group to be your eyes in the back. More experienced riders should help you listen and look for riders experiencing difficulty that might need help.

___10) NOTICE THE ENVIRONMENT.
Point out dangerous obstacles (holes and low tree limbs) in the trail.

___11) BRING THEM BACK SAFE AND YOU ARE DONE!



Considerations that apply to all OPRC events:

- Safety first, fun second!
- Only members may ride in OPRC mounted events.
- All members must wear footwear with heels, helmet and armband with medical information clearly visible on the rider's person.
- All members must be rated to at least the D1 level before the event.
- First aid kit(s) should be available on the grounds.
- Have a weather plan.
- Ensure everyone knows how to find out if there has been a change in the schedule.
- Share contact information, especially cell phone numbers.
- Riders should ensure other riders are aware of any special issues they might have, such as bee allergies, and what to do about it if a problem comes up.